

Editorial

Policy on plant extracts and other complex mixtures¹

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It is important to understand the genetic activity of mixtures of chemicals that occur in our food, water, and other environmental components because these are the most common modes of exposure for humans and other life forms. Thus, we continue to encourage the submission of manuscripts that contribute to an improved understanding of the mutagenic or anti-mutagenic activity of combinations of agents that are encountered in the environment.

However, the widespread availability and use of routine genetic toxicity assays, has led to the capacity of laboratories around the world to assess the mutagenicity and anti-mutagenicity of individual chemicals, as well as complex, uncharacterized mixtures of chemicals from a wide variety of sources. This has led to submission of an increasing number of papers to Mutation Research, Section on Genetic Toxicology and Environmental Mutagenesis, that deal with the mutagenic or anti-mutagenic activity of extracts of plants, foods, water, air, soil and other

sources. Many of these papers, while not technically flawed, offer no new knowledge on the active components of these extracts or their mechanisms of action.

Considering the number of plants or environmental samples that can be extracted, and the array of mutagenicity assays to which these extracts can be applied, we could be faced with a virtually endless flow of manuscripts that add little or nothing to our understanding of mutagenic or anti-mutagenic effects of such extracts and mixtures.

Therefore, it will be the policy of the Managing Editors to conduct a preliminary review of each submitted manuscript that reports results of studies on extracts or complex mixtures. If such papers do not offer new data and insight on the chemical nature of the active components or their mechanisms of action, the manuscript will be returned to the authors without being sent to members of the Editorial Board for further review.

¹ This editorial has been published in the front matter of all sections of *Mutation Res.* and appears here in a version slightly edited by the authors.