

Pharmacognosy and Medicinal Plants

FOXGLOVE: THE POISON AND THE ANTIDOTE

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Foxglove or *Digitalis purpurea* is a very toxic plant used by folklorists and herbalists, years ago to treat congested heart failure, boils, wounds, ulcers, oedema, epilepsy and other seizure disorders as well. Some symptoms of ingesting *Digitalis* include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, wild hallucinations, delirium, and severe headache. The victim may as well suffer from irregular and slow pulse, tremors and various cerebral disturbances, especially of a visual nature, convulsions, and deadly disturbances of the heart as well as blurry vision. *Digitalis* toxic symptoms cover all parts of the body system not just the heart because at the end of the day all body parts are related. In homeopathy, *Digitalis* is a great remedy described by Samuel Hahnemann in his book "Materia Medica Pura" to deal with a holistic picture of the disease where both objective and subjective symptoms are considered. Homeopathic practitioners believe that every living

thing has got another electrical copy beside the biological one, and it uses this electrical copy of the living plant to convey remedies and heal the human body using the same concept. Pharmaceutical methods of preparing the drug follows the chemistry application of extracting the active ingredient in the plant and conveying it orally or via injection to the heart, using the blood as a vehicle, whereas, the homeopathic preparation follows the physics theory when they extract the energy or the electrical copy of the whole leaves, using the nervous system as a vehicle to convey the remedy to all affected parts of the body in a short period of time. This paper will discuss about the difference between the pharmaceutical drug digoxin and the homeopathic remedy *Digitalis*; both are derived from foxglove.

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