

Botanical Origins of Pharmaceutical Medicines

– Wednesday 29 May 2024

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Professor Alan Boyd is a Consultant Pharmaceutical Physician and CEO of Boyds, a leading international drug development consultancy. He has developed over 20 medicinal products to approval, working for Glaxo, ICI and Zeneca as the Global Head of Medical Research. In 1999 he established Ark Therapeutics Ltd as the R&D Director, one of the first companies in the world specialising in the development of gene therapies. He founded Boyds in 2005 to support life-science companies and universities develop their research ideas into medicines. His experience in medicines development and regulatory affairs is recognised globally.

Over the past 25 years he has concentrated on the development of cell and gene therapies and has worked with nearly half of these approved medicines in Europe and the USA. He also contributed to the development and approval of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. He is a Past-President of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Medicine and was a Trustee on the Board of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. In May 2021, he was awarded the Fellowship at the Academy of Medical Sciences for his contributions to medical science and medicine.

Compounds isolated from plants have been the mainstay of drug therapy for centuries, with well-known examples such as digoxin for heart failure and aspirin for pain. Around 25% of current prescription medicines are derived from plants treating many diseases. There are around 250,000 plant species, but very few have been investigated to see if they are useful as a medicine. This lecture, the Botanical Origins of Pharmaceutical Medicines details which current and future medicines derived from plants.

