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Herbal medicine: summary for the public

Javanese turmeric

Curcuma xanthorrhiza Roxb. (*C. xanthorrhiza* D. Dietrich), rhizoma

This is a summary of the scientific conclusions reached by the Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products (HMPC) on the medicinal uses of Javanese turmeric. The HMPC conclusions are taken into account by EU Member States when evaluating applications for the licensing of herbal medicines containing Javanese turmeric.

This summary is not intended to provide practical advice on how to use medicines containing Javanese turmeric. For practical information about using Javanese turmeric medicines, patients should read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact their doctor or pharmacist.

What is Javanese turmeric?

Javanese turmeric is the common name for the root of the plant *Curcuma xanthorrhiza* Roxb. (*C. xanthorrhiza* D. Dietrich).

The HMPC conclusions only cover Javanese turmeric preparations which are obtained by drying and comminuting (reducing into tiny pieces) the root, or by using a technique to extract compounds by putting the plant material in a solvent (such as ethanol or acetone) to dissolve compounds and form a liquid extract. The solvent is then evaporated to obtain a dry extract.

Herbal medicines containing these Javanese turmeric preparations are usually available as herbal tea to be drunk and in solid forms to be taken by mouth.

Javanese turmeric preparations may also be found in combination with other herbal substances in some herbal medicines. These combinations are not covered in this summary.

What are the HMPC conclusions on its medicinal uses?

The HMPC concluded that, on the basis of its long-standing use, these Javanese turmeric preparations can be used for treating digestive problems such as feelings of fullness, slow digestion and flatulence.

Javanese turmeric medicines should only be used in adults. If symptoms last longer than 2 weeks or worsen during the use of the medicine, a doctor or a qualified healthcare practitioner should be



consulted. Detailed instructions on how to take Javanese turmeric medicines and who can use them can be found in the package leaflet that comes with the medicine.

What evidence supports the use of Javanese turmeric medicines?

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these Javanese turmeric medicines for digestive problems are based on their 'traditional use'. This means that, although there is insufficient evidence from clinical trials, the effectiveness of these herbal medicines is plausible and there is evidence that they have been used safely in this way for at least 30 years (including at least 15 years within the EU). Moreover, the intended use does not require medical supervision.

In its assessment, the HMPC also considered a clinical study in 12 healthy people which compared the effects of curcumin, which is an important constituent of Javanese turmeric, with placebo (a dummy treatment). Although curcumin was shown to increase the emptying of the gall bladder, which could assist in digestive complaints, the data were not sufficient to draw firm conclusions on Javanese turmeric. Therefore, the HMPC conclusions on the use of these Javanese turmeric medicines are based on their long-standing use.

For detailed information on the studies assessed by the HMPC, see the HMPC assessment report.

What are the risks associated with Javanese turmeric medicines?

Mild side effects have been reported with Javanese turmeric medicines and include dry mouth, flatulence and stomach irritation. Their frequency is unknown.

Further information on the risks associated with these Javanese turmeric medicines, including the appropriate precautions for their safe use, can be found in the monograph under the tab 'All documents' on the Agency's website: ema.europa.eu/Find_medicine/Herbal_medicines_for_human_use.

How are Javanese turmeric medicines approved in the EU?

Any applications for the licensing of medicines containing Javanese turmeric have to be submitted to the national authorities responsible for medicinal products, which will assess the application for the herbal medicine and take into account the scientific conclusions of the HMPC.

Information on the use and licensing of Javanese turmeric medicines in EU Member States should be obtained from the relevant national authorities.

Other information about Javanese turmeric medicines

Further information on the HMPC assessment of Javanese turmeric medicines, including details of the Committee's conclusions, can be found under the tab 'All documents' on the Agency's website: ema.europa.eu/Find_medicine/Herbal_medicines_for_human_use. For more information about treatment with Javanese turmeric medicines, read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact your doctor or pharmacist.