Review of pharmacological effects of Glycyrrhiza sp. and its bioactive compounds.

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Abstract
The roots and rhizomes of licorice (Glycyrrhiza) species have long been used worldwide as a herbal medicine and natural sweetener. Licorice root is a traditional medicine used mainly for the treatment of peptic ulcer, hepatitis C, and pulmonary and skin diseases, although clinical and experimental studies suggest that it has several other useful pharmacological properties such as antiinflammatory, antiviral, antimicrobial, antioxidative, anticancer activities, immunomodulatory, hepatoprotective and cardioprotective effects. A large number of components have been isolated from licorice, including triterpene saponins, flavonoids, isoflavonoids and chalcones, with glycyrrhizinic acid normally being considered to be the main biologically active component. This review summarizes the phytochemical, pharmacological and pharmacokinetics data, together with the clinical and adverse effects of licorice and its bioactive components.

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