Abstract

Olive tree (Olea europaea) leaves have been widely used in traditional remedies in European and Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Spain, Italy, France, Turkey, Israel, Morocco, and Tunisia. They have been used in the human diet as an extract, an herbal tea, and a powder, and they contain many potentially bioactive compounds that may have antioxidant, antihypertensive, antiatherogenic, anti-inflammatory, hypoglycemic, and hypocholesterolemic properties. One of these potentially bioactive compounds is the secoiridoid oleuropein, which can constitute up to 6-9% of dry matter in the leaves. Other bioactive components found in olive leaves include related secoiridoids, flavonoids, and triterpenes. The evidence supporting the potentially beneficial effects of olive leaves on human health are presented in this brief review.

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