

## PHYTOMEDICINE: THE ROLE OF AI IN PHYTOMEDICINE

**Shashank Tiwari<sup>1\*</sup>, Mohd. Wasiullah<sup>2</sup>, Piyush Yadav<sup>3</sup>, Vikash Yadav<sup>4</sup>**

1. Research Scholar, Department of Pharmacy, Prasad Institute of Technology, Jaunpur, U.P, India.
2. Principal, Department of Pharmacy, Prasad Institute of Technology, Jaunpur, U.P, India.
3. Academic Head, Department of Pharma: Chemistry, Prasad Institute of Technology, Jaunpur, U.P, India.
4. Assistant Prof., Department of Pharmacy, Prasad Institute of Technology, Jaunpur, U.P, India.

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### Abstract

The therapeutic application of medicinal plants, or phytomedicine, has a long history and is still vital to the world's healthcare system. The field confronts obstacles despite its potential, such as uneven quality, poor clinical validation, safety issues, and variability in the content of bioactive compounds. These problems can be revolutionized by recent developments in artificial intelligence (AI), which offer tools for quick bioactive compound discovery, precise plant identification and authentication, pharmacological activity prediction modeling, and formulation optimization for individualized treatment. AI technologies, such as computer vision, machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing, make it possible to combine traditional knowledge with contemporary pharmacological research, improving the safety, efficacy, and repeatability of herbal remedies. The main uses of AI in phytomedicine are highlighted in this paper, including quality control, toxicity and dosage prediction, integration with databases used in traditional medicine, and the identification of new herbal chemicals. Prominent case studies show how AI-driven methods might improve precision herbal therapy. Additionally, the paper highlights the significance of AI in transforming phytomedicine into a data-driven, scientifically verified, and customized therapeutic platform while discussing present limitations, ethical issues, and future potential.

**Keywords:** *Phytomedicine, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Deep Learning, Traditional Medicine, Herbal Drug Discovery, Quality Control, Precision Herbal Therapy*

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### Corresponding Author

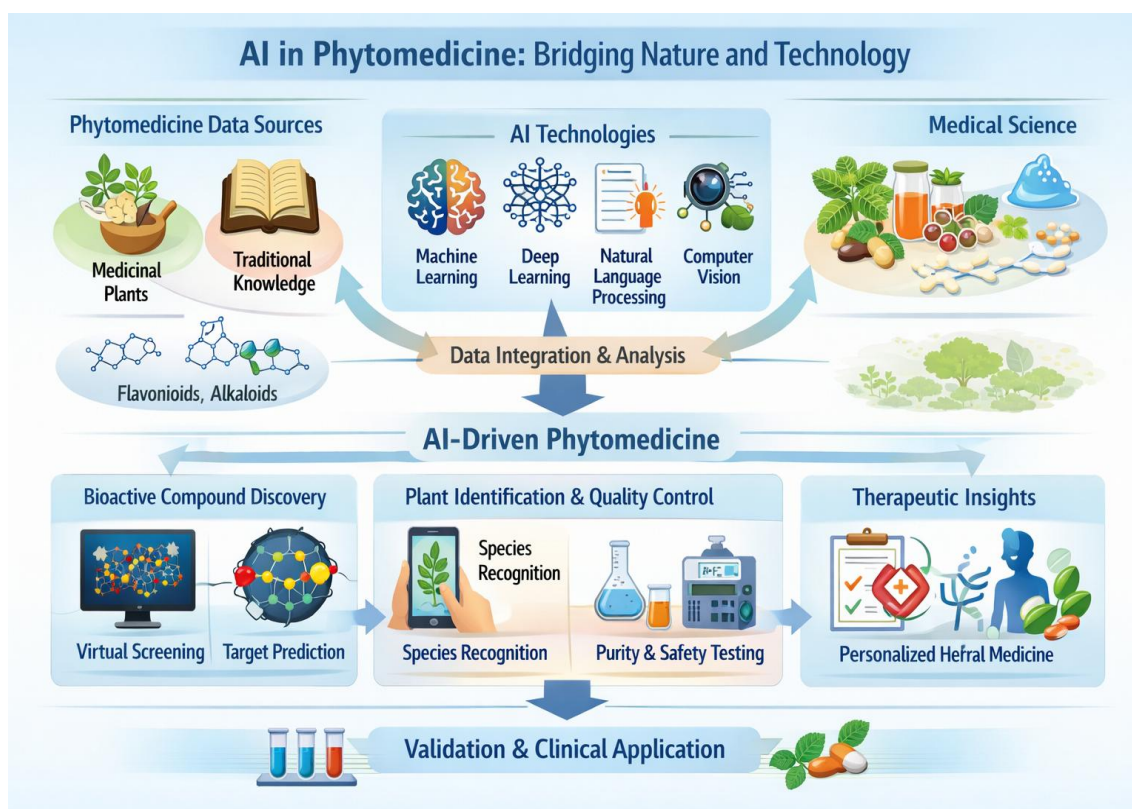
Shashank Tiwari, Research Scholar  
Prasad Institute of Technology, Jaunpur, U.P  
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**Fig 1: Graphical Abstract**

### 1. Introduction: Bridging Nature and Technology

One of the first medical practices in human history is phytomedicine, which includes the use of plants for therapeutic purposes. Medicinal plants have been essential to health and well-being throughout history, from Ayurveda in ancient India to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Unani, and indigenous practices all over the world. In addition to their direct therapeutic benefits, these natural items are prized for their use in complementary therapy, holistic health, and preventative medicine in addition to conventional medications (Newman & Cragg, 2020). Growing knowledge of the negative effects of synthetic pharmaceuticals has led to an increase in the demand for herbal remedies worldwide, which has rekindled interest in phytomedicine research and established it as a vital part of contemporary healthcare systems.

Phytomedicine has been used for centuries, yet it still confronts regulatory and scientific obstacles. Reproducibility and clinical dependability may be hampered by inconsistent bioactive chemical concentrations caused by variations in plant species, geographic origin, and processing techniques. Concerns regarding efficacy, safety, and standardization are further raised by the fact that many herbal preparations lack thorough clinical validation (Bent, 2008). In response, traditional knowledge is being validated and herbal medication

research is being optimized through the use of contemporary analytical and computational technologies.

In this regard, artificial intelligence (AI) has become a potent enabler. AI can speed up the identification of bioactive chemicals, forecast therapeutic potential, optimize formulations, and guarantee quality control by utilizing machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing, and computer vision (Hussain et al., 2021). Additionally, AI makes it possible to combine ancient knowledge with contemporary pharmacology, enabling centuries-old empirical data to guide the development of evidence-based herbal drugs. Phytomedicine has undergone a paradigm shift as a result of the convergence of traditional medicine and computer intelligence. It is now a data-driven, scientifically proven field.

This review aims to investigate the developing role of artificial intelligence (AI) in phytomedicine, emphasizing its applications in bioactive component discovery, plant identification, quality control, safety prediction, individualized therapy, and formulation optimization. Practical innovations, case studies, and future prospects—such as the possibility of AI enabling precision herbal medicine, in which treatments are customized to specific patient profiles and molecular traits—are highlighted.

## **2. Phytomedicine: Scope and Significance**

### **2.1 Key Bioactive Compounds and Therapeutic Roles**

Secondary metabolites are the main source of pharmacological activity and are the foundation of phytomedicine. Alkaloids, flavonoids, terpenoids, saponins, phenolic acids, and glycosides are among these extremely varied substances, each of which has special medicinal qualities. For example, morphine exhibits strong analgesic effects, and alkaloids like berberine have antibacterial and cardioprotective benefits. Widely found in fruits and vegetables, flavonoids are recognized for their cardioprotective, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties, providing defense against long-term conditions like diabetes and atherosclerosis (Panche et al., 2016). The antimalarial, anticancer, and immunomodulatory effects of terpenoids such as artemisinin and ginsenosides have been thoroughly investigated (Christensen, 2009; Efferth, 2017). Phenolic acids have anti-inflammatory, anti-aging, and neuroprotective properties that make them useful for treating oxidative stress-related illnesses and neurodegenerative diseases (Shahidi & Ambigaipalan, 2015).

Phytomedicine often uses multi-component formulations in addition to isolated substances, demonstrating a synergistic approach to treatment. For complicated illnesses like cancer, metabolic syndrome, and chronic inflammation, where altering several pathways at once can improve treatment results, this multi-target approach is particularly helpful. These

formulations, which draw from millennia of traditional practice, offer a crucial basis for fusing modern pharmacology with holistic health methods (Mukherjee, 2019).

Phytomedicine has a wide range of applications. It covers everything from managing infectious infections, metabolic problems, and chronic illnesses to preventive care and improving wellness. Many traditional herbs that were previously thought to be anecdotal treatments now contain powerful bioactive chemicals that, in some situations, can supplement or even replace current medications, according to recent study. This historical and contemporary relevance highlights the ongoing importance of phytomedicine in international healthcare systems.

**Table 1: Key Bioactive Compounds in Medicinal Plants and Their Therapeutic Roles**

Plant	Bioactive Compound	Chemical Class	Therapeutic Role
<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Curcumin	Polyphenol	Anti-inflammatory, Anticancer
<i>Andrographis paniculata</i>	Andrographolide	Diterpenoid	Antimicrobial, Immunomodulatory
<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Azadirachtin	Terpenoid	Antimalarial, Antimicrobial
<i>Panax ginseng</i>	Ginsenosides	Saponins	Antioxidant, Neuroprotective

## 2.2 Bottlenecks in Discovery and Standardization

Phytomedicine has a lot of promise, but there are a lot of obstacles in the way of clinical translation and drug discovery. The intricate chemical variety of plants is one of the main obstacles. Hundreds of secondary metabolites can be found in a single medicinal plant, and their concentrations vary depending on the plant's age, the season, the quality of the soil, and its location. Pharmacologically active molecules are more difficult to isolate, characterize, and reproduce due to this inherent heterogeneity (Heinrich et al., 2020).

The absence of defined quality control methods is another significant drawback. The chemical profile of herbal products can be changed by variations in harvesting, drying, extraction, and storage, which could result in variable efficacy and possible safety issues. These difficulties are made worse by instances of adulteration or substitution with the wrong species, highlighting the necessity of strict authentication and chemical profiling techniques (Ekor, 2014).

Additionally, safety and dosage determination are still in their infancy. The development of therapeutic windows and adverse effect profiles is hampered by the paucity of preclinical and clinical research for many phytomedicines. Additionally, uneven regulatory frameworks with varying national criteria impede commercialization and broader adoption (Bent, 2008).

Researchers are increasingly using sophisticated analytical methods including mass spectrometry, NMR, chromatographic fingerprinting, and—most importantly—artificial intelligence to get around these bottlenecks. AI fills in the gaps between conventional research methods and contemporary clinical needs by enabling quick analysis of complicated datasets, bioactivity prediction, quality standardization, and customized therapy creation. These techniques have the potential to turn phytomedicine into a treatment platform that is repeatable, evidence-based, and available worldwide.

**Table 2: Challenges and Limitations in Phytomedicine Research**

Challenge	Impact on Phytomedicine	AI-Enabled Solutions	References
Bioactive compound variability	Inconsistent therapeutic outcomes	Predictive modeling, multi-omics integration	(Kumar et al., 2022)
Plant misidentification	Risk of toxicity, adulteration	Computer vision, spectroscopic fingerprinting	(Zhang et al., 2019)
Safety & dosage uncertainty	Limited clinical adoption	ML-based toxicity and dosage prediction	(Banerjee et al., 2018)
Limited data integration	Underutilization of traditional knowledge	NLP, knowledge graph creation	(Zhao et al., 2020)

### 3. Artificial Intelligence in Herbal Research

#### 3.1 AI Technologies Relevant to Phytomedicine (ML, DL, NLP, Computer Vision)

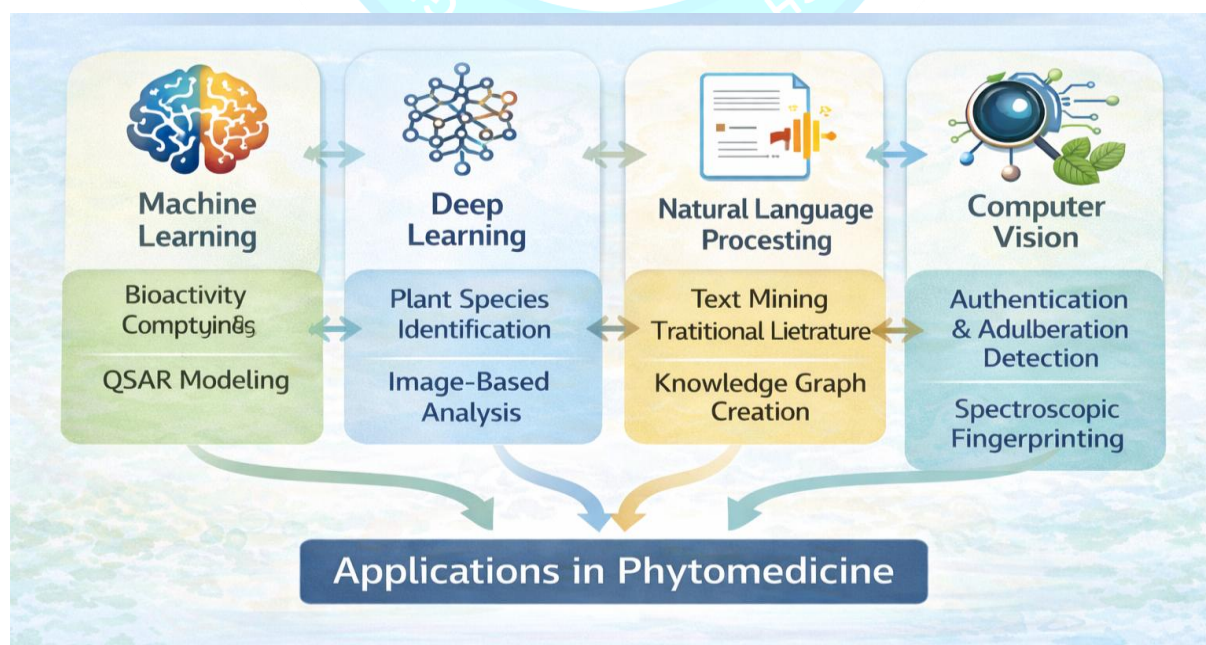
In contemporary phytomedicine research, artificial intelligence has emerged as a crucial instrument, providing innovative techniques to evaluate intricate datasets and expedite drug development. Machine learning (ML) is one of the AI technologies that enables computational models to find patterns in big datasets and predict bioactive chemicals and their pharmacological effects without requiring extensive laboratory research (Hussain et al.,

2021). Plant metabolites, for instance, can be categorized, their therapeutic potential predicted, and candidates for experimental validation prioritized by machine learning algorithms.

A specific kind of machine learning called deep learning (DL) uses multilayered neural networks to handle high-dimensional input, like chemical structures and photographs. DL is being used more and more in herbal research for image-based plant recognition, chemical fingerprint analysis, and metabolomics datasets. This allows more precise compound bioactivity prediction and makes it easier to find new phytochemicals (Chen et al., 2021).

By making it possible to extract structured knowledge from unstructured text sources, such as centuries-old traditional medicine literature, scientific papers, and patents, natural language processing (NLP) offers an additional path for the use of AI. NLP efficiently converts qualitative traditional knowledge into quantitative data by identifying connections between medicinal plants, their bioactive chemicals, and established therapeutic benefits (Gupta et al., 2022).

Lastly, using photos of leaves, flowers, or fruits, computer vision (CV) algorithms enable automatic identification and verification of plant species. A crucial issue in herbal quality control has been addressed by CV techniques, especially convolutional neural networks (CNNs), which have demonstrated exceptional accuracy in identifying adulteration and distinguishing morphologically identical species (Singh et al., 2021). By bridging the gaps between conventional methods and advanced pharmacological analysis, these AI tools collectively offer a full toolkit for contemporary herbal research.



**Figure 2: Classification of AI Technologies in Phytomedicine**

**Table 2: AI Techniques Applied in Phytomedicine Research**

AI Technique	Application in Phytomedicine	Example Outcome
Machine Learning (ML)	Bioactive compound prediction	Prioritized novel compounds for experimental validation
Deep Learning (DL)	Plant species identification, SAR analysis	Automated recognition of 1000+ plant species
Natural Language Processing (NLP)	Extraction from traditional medicine texts	Identified plant-compound-therapy relationships
Computer Vision (CV)	Authentication of herbal raw materials	Detected adulteration in commercial samples

### 3.2 AI-driven Plant Identification and Authentication

Accurate identification of medicinal plants is crucial for the safety, efficacy, and repeatability of phytomedicines. Traditional morphological identification methods are labor-intensive, often requiring expert knowledge, and prone to misidentification due to phenotypic similarities between species. AI has fundamentally altered this process by enabling the fast and automatic identification of plant species from images, particularly with computer vision and deep learning. Convolutional neural networks have been successfully used to classify thousands of plant species; they can even detect subtle differences in floral structure or leaf venation that are challenging for human experts to identify (Liu et al., 2020).

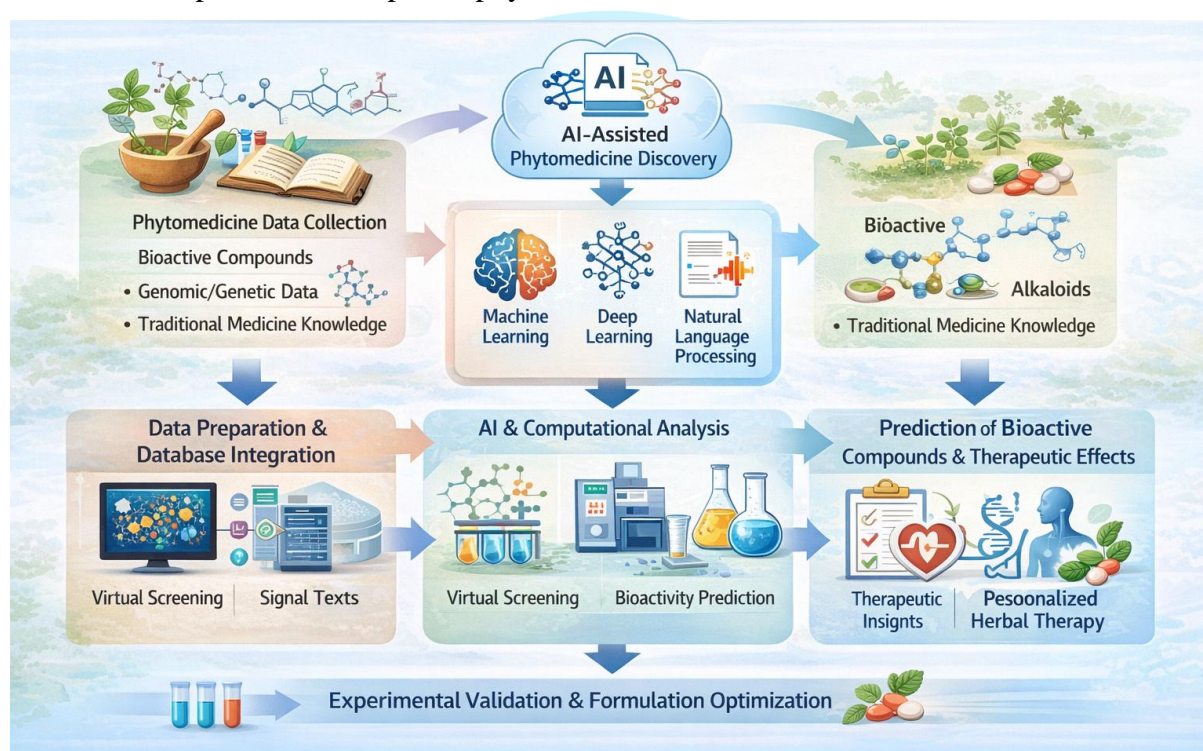
AI verifies plant extracts using both image-based identification and chromatographic and spectroscopic data. By comparing chemical fingerprints created by techniques like FTIR, NMR, and HPLC, machine learning models may detect adulteration and verify the authenticity of herbal raw materials, ensuring quality and safety for downstream applications (Zhang et al., 2019). Combining chemical profiling with image analysis results in a robust framework for standardizing herbal products, which is essential for both commercial and research applications.

### 3.3 Bioactivity and Phytochemical Predictive Modeling

One of the most revolutionary uses of AI in phytomedicine is predictive modeling, which enables scientists to predict a compound's bioactivity before conducting an experiment. Machine learning algorithms can predict drug-likeness, target interactions, and ADMET (absorption, distribution, metabolism, excretion, toxicity) features of phytochemicals by

combining chemical structural data, molecular properties, and existing pharmacological information (Kumar et al., 2022). By significantly reducing the number of compounds that must be manufactured and evaluated, this method speeds up and lowers the cost of the discovery process.

By recognizing structure-activity correlations (SAR) and emphasizing molecular characteristics essential for particular bioactivities, deep learning models further enhance prediction capabilities. AI can forecast a compound's direct therapeutic effect as well as its impact on intricate biological networks when paired with multi-omics datasets, providing a systems-level view of herbal medication efficacy (Zhang et al., 2021). Predictive modeling like this makes it possible to find substances with the most therapeutic potential, opening the door to more specialized and potent phytomedicines.



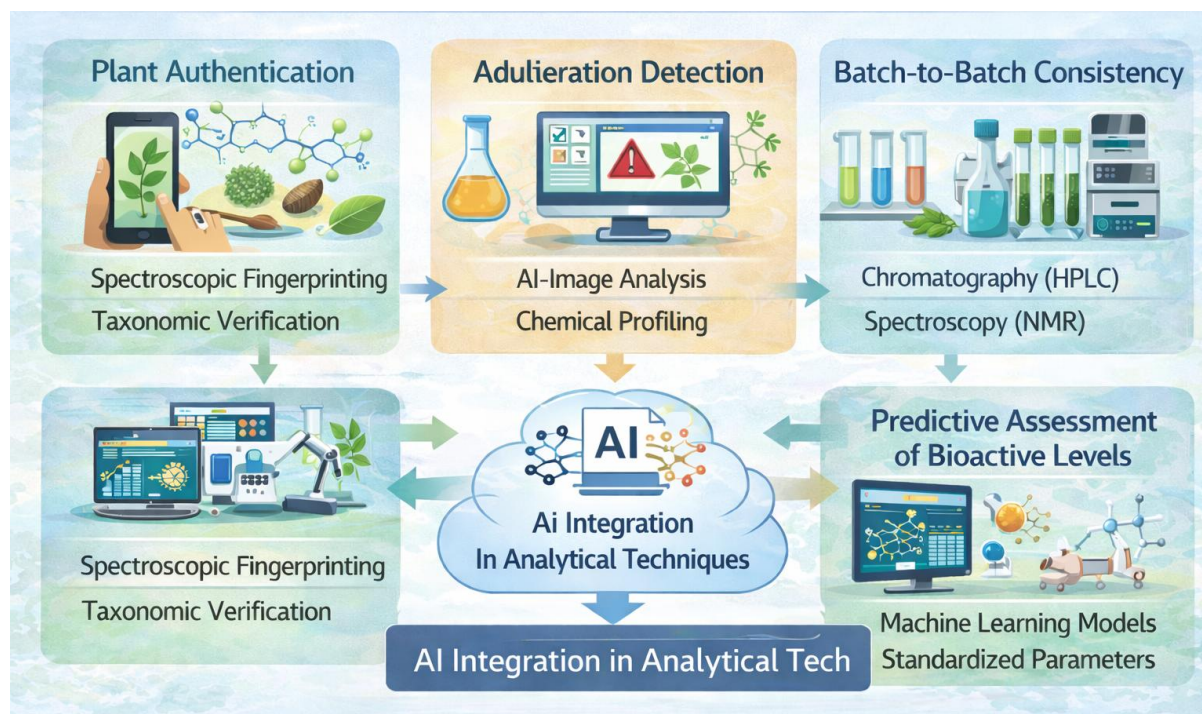
**Figure 3: Workflow of AI-Assisted Phytomedicine Discovery**

## 4. AI-Enhanced Phytomedicine Applications

### 4.1 Quality Control and Standardization

Because plant sources, growing techniques, and processing processes vary widely, quality control in phytomedicine continues to be a major concern. By combining chemical, morphological, and genetic data to evaluate product consistency, AI offers a potent standardization method. Classifying batches of herbal goods, identifying contaminants, and guaranteeing constant concentrations of beneficial substances are all possible with machine learning models trained on chromatographic and spectroscopic datasets (Huang et al., 2022).

This system offers high-throughput, repeatable quality evaluation while lowering human error and speeding up the verification process. AI can also monitor batch-to-batch variation over time, providing insights into variables like seasonal shifts, growing conditions, and storage techniques that impact phytochemical composition, improving consumer safety and regulatory compliance.



**Figure 4: AI-Enhanced Quality Control & Standardization of Herbal Medicines**

#### 4.2 Safety, Toxicity, and Dosage Prediction

Due to complicated phytochemical mixes and a lack of clinical evidence, determining the safety and ideal dosage of herbal medications is a continuous difficulty. By examining current pharmacological and toxicological statistics, AI models—particularly those that use machine learning—can forecast possible toxicity, side effects, and herb-drug interactions (Banerjee et al., 2018). Predictive models, for instance, have been created to evaluate the hepatotoxicity, cardiotoxicity, and mutagenicity of specific phytochemicals. These models can direct the development of safe formulations and clinical testing.

These AI-driven forecasts offer initial safety profiles for chemicals being studied and lessen the need for lengthy animal research. Additionally, customized dosage recommendations are made possible by the integration of patient-specific data with AI models, bringing traditional herbal use into line with precision medicine principles (Sharma et al., 2022).

#### 4.3 Personalized Herbal Therapy and Formulation Optimization

Personalized herbal therapy, which optimizes formulations and dosages based on specific patient factors including genetics, microbiota makeup, and illness phenotype, is now possible because to AI. AI can forecast which herbal combinations are likely to be the most beneficial and least harmful by examining patient-specific data in addition to phytochemical characteristics (Kaur et al., 2021).

Additionally, AI helps optimize formulations, such as designing herbal products that are nano- and micro-encapsulated to increase stability, bioavailability, and targeted distribution. This feature is especially crucial for substances that metabolize quickly or have low solubility. AI makes it possible to rationally create herbal remedies that are both clinically successful and scientifically confirmed by fusing formulation science and predictive modeling. This is a major improvement over conventional empirical methods.

## **5. Case Studies and Breakthroughs**

### **5.1 AI-Powered Discovery of Novel Herbal Compounds**

By bridging the gap between traditional ethnopharmacology and contemporary drug research, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformational force in the discovery of novel bioactive chemicals from medicinal plants. Traditional approaches to finding herbal compounds mostly rely on labor-intensive procedures like extraction, isolation, and high-throughput screening, which are frequently costly, time-consuming, and constrained by human prejudice. By virtually screening large libraries of phytochemicals and forecasting their therapeutic potential, AI-driven methods, especially machine learning (ML) and deep learning (DL) algorithms, offer the ability to get beyond these restrictions. By analyzing molecular structures, predicting physicochemical characteristics, assessing binding affinities to particular protein targets, and prioritizing compounds with high probabilities of biological activity, these computational models can greatly reduce the workload associated with experiments (Ghosh et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022).

The discovery of new curcuminoid compounds from *Curcuma longa*, which showed significant anticipated binding to several oncogenic proteins implicated in cell growth and death pathways, is a noteworthy advancement. These substances, which had not been studied experimentally before, were later shown to have anticancer action in lab tests, demonstrating the ability of AI to unearth untapped medicinal potential (Wang et al., 2022). AI models have effectively predicted antibacterial and antiviral chemicals from plants like *Andrographis paniculata*, *Azadirachta indica*, and *Terminalia chebula* in addition to anticancer research. These predictions were validated in the lab, proving AI's ability to rank the most promising candidates for testing. Furthermore, phytochemicals that can inhibit important viral enzymes,

such as SARS-CoV-2 primary protease, have been found using AI-assisted predictive models, demonstrating the usefulness of AI in addressing pressing global health issues (Zheng et al., 2021).

Incorporating AI into phytochemical discovery not only speeds up the drug development process but also makes it possible to rationally create derivatives with improved target specificity, decreased toxicity, and optimum bioavailability. AI enables researchers to investigate a wider chemical space by concentrating experimental resources on high-probability candidates, making it easier to find new phytopharmaceuticals that could have been missed with more conventional methods.

## **5.2 Integration with Traditional Medicine Databases**

Centuries of empirical information about the therapeutic uses of medicinal plants can be found in traditional medical systems like Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), and Unani. Systematic scientific analysis has historically been difficult due to the fragmentation of this richness of material across handwritten manuscripts, literature reports, and unstructured digital sources. AI offers a strong foundation for extracting, organizing, and interpreting this unstructured knowledge, turning it into organized, analyzable datasets, especially through natural language processing (NLP). Network pharmacology investigations that reveal synergistic effects inside complicated herbal formulations are made easier by NLP algorithms' ability to recognize links between plants, phytochemicals, and disease targets (Zhao et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021).

For instance, the prediction of multi-component herbal combinations with improved therapeutic efficacy for ailments like inflammatory disorders, diabetes, and metabolic syndromes has been made possible by AI-assisted mining of thousands of digitized TCM books. These algorithms aid in the clarification of mechanisms of action and the discovery of hitherto unidentified pharmacological interactions by mapping the molecular targets of chemicals generated from plants. Additionally, researchers can predict the pharmacokinetics, toxicity, and target interactions of bioactive substances prior to laboratory testing by combining cheminformatics and predictive modeling with traditional medical expertise. This method offers a methodical and scientifically sound basis for current phytomedicine research while maintaining conventional wisdom and bringing it into compliance with modern evidence-based standards.

Cross-cultural knowledge synthesis is also made easier by AI-enabled database integration. AI algorithms can uncover novel candidate plants, highlight conserved therapeutic principles, and rank compounds for experimental validation by comparing ethnomedicinal practices

across various locations. This promotes global standardization of research on herbal medicine and speeds up discovery, allowing for greater reproducibility and applicability.

### **5.3 Notable Success Stories in AI-Phytomedicine**

Numerous groundbreaking findings demonstrate how AI is really speeding up phytomedicine development. New *Artemisia annua* compounds with improved antimalarial activity were found using AI-assisted molecular docking and virtual screening, which overcame several of the drawbacks of traditional artemisinin treatment (Liu et al., 2020). Novel curcumin analogs with possible anticancer action have been predicted by deep learning models; many of these have shown in vitro potency against a variety of cancer cell lines. AI has also transformed quality control and safety in herbal medicine. Rapid authentication of hundreds of herbal samples, adulteration detection, and batch-to-batch uniformity have all been made possible by machine learning applied to spectroscopic and chromatographic data (Huang et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2021).

AI has made it easier to forecast the best extraction techniques and formulation parameters for herbal products in addition to compound discovery. Predictive models, for instance, have improved the efficiency and repeatability of herbal formulations by optimizing temperature, extraction duration, and solvent selection to maximize yield and stability of bioactive chemicals. Furthermore, in order to improve safety profiles and promote regulatory compliance, AI-assisted pharmacovigilance technologies are being developed to track side effects of herbal products in real time (Zhang et al., 2022).

Together, these success stories demonstrate AI's dual function in contemporary phytomedicine: providing high-quality, repeatable, and safe herbal products while expediting the development of novel treatments. AI offers a scalable, evidence-based framework for international cooperation in plant-based medicine development by fusing computer intelligence with conventional botanical expertise, ultimately leading to more potent and scientifically verified phytopharmaceuticals.

## **6. Advantages, Challenges, and Future Directions**

### **6.1 Key Benefits of AI in Phytomedicine**

There are many important benefits to using AI in phytomedicine research. First off, it greatly speeds up the process of identifying and optimizing bioactive chemicals, which lessens the need for time-consuming experimental screening (Ghosh et al., 2021). AI also improves the precision and dependability of plant verification and identification, lowering human error and

guaranteeing raw material integrity. Additionally, by combining chemical, genomic, and pharmacological datasets, AI enables data-driven insights that help researchers comprehend the intricate connections between phytochemicals and their biological targets.

AI is also essential to personalized herbal medicine, which optimizes herbal formulations by combining patient-specific data, such as genetic profiles and disease symptoms, with computational modeling. Precision herbal medicine may benefit from this strategy, which enables customized treatment plans that optimize effectiveness while reducing side effects (Kaur et al., 2021). Furthermore, AI-driven formulation modification, such as nanoparticle-encapsulation methods, might increase the stability and bioavailability of herbal ingredients, improving therapeutic results.

## **6.2 Current Limitations and Ethical Considerations**

AI in phytomedicine has many obstacles despite its revolutionary promise. The quality and accessibility of data is a major constraint; many databases of medicinal plants are unstructured, inconsistent, or incomplete, which might affect model projections (Shen et al., 2021). Furthermore, despite their strength, deep learning models frequently function as "black boxes," making it challenging to understand how particular predictions are produced. Clinical translation and regulatory adoption may be hampered by this lack of interpretability. Additionally, ethical issues come up, especially when it comes to traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights. There are concerns around equitable benefit sharing and ownership because many AI models rely on data from centuries-old customs in local and indigenous groups. Personalized herbal therapy applications also require careful management of patient privacy and informed permission. Lastly, commercialization and worldwide acceptance are hampered by the lack of existing regulatory frameworks for AI-assisted herbal medication development (Teng et al., 2020).

## **6.3 Future Prospects: Precision Herbal Medicine**

The combination of AI, multi-omics data, and precision medical techniques will shape phytomedicine in the future. AI has the ability to create customized herbal regimens by forecasting the best plant combinations, doses, and delivery techniques for specific patients. The solubility, stability, and targeted distribution of herbal components can be improved by innovations like AI-guided nanoformulations, allowing for more effective treatments with fewer adverse effects.

Furthermore, AI-powered network pharmacology models can clarify the synergistic interactions of various phytochemicals, revealing new treatment pathways and combination approaches. Real-time patient reaction monitoring and dynamic treatment modification may

be made possible by integration with wearable and Internet of Things devices. All of these developments point to a paradigm shift away from conventional, one-size-fits-all herbal medicines and toward data-driven, precision herbal medicine that is individualized, globally accessible, and validated by science (Zheng et al., 2021).

## **7. Conclusion**

Based on centuries of traditional knowledge and supported by contemporary scientific research, phytomedicine still has enormous medicinal potential. However, issues including uneven quality, insufficient clinical validation, safety concerns, and unpredictability in bioactive chemicals have historically prevented its broad use in modern healthcare. A revolutionary answer is provided by the use of artificial intelligence (AI) into herbal research, which makes it possible to optimize customized formulations, identify plants accurately, anticipate therapeutic activity, and find bioactive components more quickly. AI-driven methods also improve standardization, safety evaluation, and quality control, bridging the gap between conventional wisdom and evidence-based medicine.

AI has the ability to completely transform phytomedicine, as evidenced by recent developments that show it can identify new chemicals, incorporate historical medical information, and direct precision herbal therapy. Ongoing developments in AI technologies, multi-omics integration, and computational modeling promise a future where herbal medicine is scientifically validated, repeatable, and customized to each patient's needs, even though obstacles like data quality limitations, regulatory barriers, and ethical considerations still exist. In the end, the combination of phytomedicine and AI represents a paradigm shift in drug research and healthcare, opening the door for precise, secure, and successful herbal remedies on a worldwide basis.

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## **9. Conflict Of Interest**

No authors declared Conflict of Interest.

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