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## **Astrophytomedicine: I. Introducing a New Sub-Discipline**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The paper presents the interdisciplinary nature of the subject Astrology, botany of the celestial plants and traditional Indian medicine, with the emergence of a new sub-discipline Astrophytomedicine that deals with the study of plants associated with celestial bodies in Astrology. The study reveals that celestial plant species associated with specific celestial bodies emancipate the harmful effects of the planets on humankind and the associated celestial plant itself is a remedy for the diseases associated with celestial bodies. Astrophytomedicine, explores the knowledge about the plant taxonomy, ecology and healing properties of astrological plants with respect to celestial bodies and validate scientifically the pharmacological and medicinal aspects of Astrological plants. The celestial bodies influence on medicinal plants throws light on unknown key aspects there by increasing the scope in understanding celestial bodies – plant - human relationship along with the practical knowledge of Astrology for the treatment of various diseases and focus on the therapeutic connectivity of drugs, a new concept for complementary medicine that is lacking as on date.

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Keywords: Astrology, Astrophytomedicine, Ayurveda, Celestial bodies, Complementary medicine, Plants, Siddha, Traditional Indian medicine

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### **Introduction**

Astrology is the practical study of the movements and relative positions of celestial bodies interpreted as having an influence on human affairs and the natural world. This traditional science has been deep-rooted in most of the societies. Almost every culture on the planet in some form follows this traditional practice since ancient times. Astrology was widely used by people in early days with the belief that it can emancipate problems and fill one's life with lot of happiness. In course of time, its use declined partially or fully due to lack of compatibility statements, beliefs, or practices with the scientific method and referred as Pseudoscience. Hence, this field has limited scope with respect to various science disciplines. Astrology was realized to be with its much broader scope, than what it was expected to be with the time. In the present scenario, the interdisciplinary nature of the subject gained recognition, with the interaction of various branches of science. Thus, astrology, a combination of astronomy and geometric calculations now regain its importance and becomes one of the fields of human interest. The present article introduces a new sub-discipline Astrophytomedicine that focus on the therapeutic connectivity of plant drugs, a new concept for complementary medicine.

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### **Astronomy and its sub-disciplines**

Astronomy is a natural science that studies celestial objects and phenomena. It uses mathematics, physics, and chemistry in order to explain their origin and evolution. Objects of interest include planets, moons, stars, nebulae, galaxies, and comets (Wikipedia). It focuses on various sub-disciplines namely Astrobiology, Astrobiotechnology, Astrobotany, Astroecology, Astrogeology, Astrochemistry, Astrophysics, Astroseismology, Astrometry, Astrometerology, Astromicrobiology, Astropathology, Astropathy, Astropharmacy and Astrozoology. The Table 1 shows the definition of various astronomy related sub-disciplines.

**Table 1 - Sub-disciplines associated with Astronomy**

Sub-disciplines of Astronomy	Definitions
Astrobiology	Astrobiology formerly known as exobiology is an interdisciplinary scientific field that studies the origins, early evolution, distribution and future of life in the universe (Wikipedia)
Astrobiotechnology	Astrobiotechnology is focused on identifying technology gaps for longer missions and transition methodologies and technologies from earth-based experiments to other planets, highlighting instrument technologies and sample handling (Fernandez C, 2019).
Astrobotany	Astrobotany is an applied sub-discipline of botany that is the study of plants in space environments. It is a branch of astrobiology and botany (Wikipedia).
Astroecology	Astroecology concerns the interactions of biota with space environments. It studies resources for life on planets, asteroids and comets, around various stars, in galaxies, and in the universe (Wikipedia).
Astrogeology	Astrogeology is concerned with the geology of the solid bodies in the solar system, such as the asteroids and the planets and their moons. Research in this field helps scientists to better understand the evolution of the Earth in comparison with that of its neighbours in the solar system (Wikipedia).
Astrochemistry	Astrochemistry is the study of the abundance and reactions of molecules in the Universe, and their interaction with radiation. The discipline is an overlap of astronomy and chemistry (Wikipedia).
Astrophysics	Astrophysics is a science that employs the methods and principles of physics and chemistry in the study of astronomical objects and phenomena (Wikipedia).
Astroseismology	Astroseismology is the study of oscillations in stars. Because a star's different oscillation modes are sensitive to different parts of the star, they inform astronomers about the internal structure of the star, which is otherwise not directly possible from overall properties like brightness and surface temperature (Wikipedia).
Astrometry	Astrometry is a branch of astronomy that involves precise measurements of the positions and movements of stars and other celestial bodies. It provides the kinematics and physical origin of the Solar System and our galaxy, the Milky Way (Wikipedia).
Astrometeorology	Astrometeorology or meteorological astrology is a pseudoscience that attempts to forecast the weather using astrology. It is the belief that the position and motion of celestial objects can be used to predict both seasonal climate and weather (Wikipedia).
Astromicrobiology	Astro microbiology, or exo microbiology, is the study of microorganisms in outer space. It stems from an interdisciplinary approach, which incorporates both microbiology and astrobiology. Astrobiology's efforts are aimed at understanding the origins of life and the search for life other than on Earth (Wikipedia).
Astropathy	Astropathy is a new Emerging Science in the field of Medical Sciences. Astropathy claims to cure any known and unknown Ailments without the help of any existing modes of Therapies including conventional methods, without giving any medicine internally, only by tying Astral Medicine in the hands of the patient, medicines such as Pearls, Corals, Ruby, and Topaz, Emerald, Diamond, Sapphire, Aquamarine, Tourmaline etc., (Janaki, 1995).
Astropharmacy	Astropharmacy focus on medication management, medication research and regulation/licensing of medications for space. This on-demand approach removes concerns about pharmaceutical degradation due to time or radiation during space travel, and minimizes the resources needed to provide safe effective pharmaceuticals needed to keep crew members healthy (NASA, 2020).
Astrozoology	The branch of xenology deals with extraterrestrial animals (wiktionary).

## Astrology and its sub-disciplines

Astrology gained momentum recent days and spread its tentacles to various disciplines such as astrological biochemistry of vitamins (Dimri and Kush, 2020a), astrological of macro and micronutrients (Pawar et al., 2020b), astro pathology (Singh et al., 2016a) astro pharmacology (Singh et al., 2016b) and astro ethnobotany (Joshi and Gupta, 2011). It has generated a voluminous amount of information that has spawned the creation of disciplines that include botany, medicine and pharmacology. Recently, interdisciplinary approach of astrological studies has developed specialists in Astrology, Astromedicine, Astrotherapy and Astrotheology. Similarly astrology can be extended to other sub branches of botany like taxonomy, ecology and phytomedicine. The Table 2 lists out various sub-disciplines of Astrology.

**Table 2 Sub-disciplines associated with Astrology**

Sub-disciplines	of	Definitions
<b>Astrology</b>		
Astrological biochemistry		Study about the interaction between astrology and biochemistry of vitamins (Dimri and Kush, 2020).
Astrological botany		Correlate plants with astrology (Wikipedia).
Astro diagnosis		Deals with the diagnosis of diseases based on astrology (Modi, 2019)
Astro ethnobiology		Study the interaction between the biological world and planetary system with modern scientific views (Padhy et al. 2005 a, b).
Astro ethnobotany		Study about ethnobotany of astrological plants (Joshi and Gupta, 2011)
Astrolatry		It is the worship of the heavenly bodies also called as Astrotheology (Wikipedia).
Astromedicine		Also known as astrological diagnosis, this is the use of astrology to aid the diagnosis and treatment of illness ( <a href="https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Astromedicine">https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Astromedicine</a> ). Correlate medicine with astrology (Modi, 2019)
Astro nutrients		Correlate macro and micronutrients with astrology (Pawar et al., 2020b).
Astrological pathology		Correlate pathogens with astrology (Singh et al., 2016a)
Astrological pharmacology		Correlate pharmacology with astrology (Singh et al., 2016b)
Astrotherapy		Astrotherapy, also called clinical astrology, is a practice which integrates astrology and clinical psychotherapy. astrotherapy "includes any form of treatment utilizing astrological precepts to treat emotional and behavioral problems, remove or modify existing symptoms, and promote positive personality growth and fulfillment." (Encyclopedia.com)
Astrotheology		Astrotheology, astral mysticism, astral religion, astral or stellar theology is the worship of the stars, the planets, and other heavenly bodies as deities, or the association of deities with heavenly bodies. In anthropological literature, these systems of practice may be referred to as astral cults (Wikipedia).

## Reason for introducing Astrophytomedicine

Astrobiology, an interdisciplinary of Astronomy and biology was initially developed. It concerned with the origin, early evolution, distribution and futures of life in the universe. It leads to the subsequent development of an applied sub-discipline of botany known as Astrobotany, a branch of astrobiology and botany that deals with the study of plants in space environments. Astroethnobotany, another interdisciplinary of astrology and ethnobotany emphasis on the role of plants and plant parts in astrology, plant conservation, knowledge exploration of human society on various use of plants related to food, medicine, culture, music and life style with a wider sense. Astrological botany, an interdisciplinary of astrology and botany that based on the notion, if plants or seeds are to be used for medicinal purposes then their planting and collection must be carried out with regard to the

positions of the celestial bodies which are at the heart of the disease process. Astromedicine deals with the astrological diagnosis and treatment of illness. Astrotherapy, a clinical astrology practice which integrates astrology and clinical psychotherapy. However, these interdisciplinary does not emphasize the celestial plants metaphysical link, doctrine of signatures, scientific validation of astrological plants, therapeutic connectivity of drugs as astrological principle is applied for selection of place and plant, its collection, drug preparation, administration by healers in Indian traditional medicine system of Ayurveda and siddha, pharmacology aspects of drug action and toxicology. Therefore, the subfield of astroethnobotany and astrological botany needs integration with astromedicine and astrotherapy. The subfields integration leads to specialization in order to improve quality, to achieve time reduction in research and to partition the vast quantities of knowledge into more manageable units. In addition, there is no alternative to integration and specialization of astroethnobotany, astrological botany, astromedicine and astrotherapy as the scientific knowledge in the discipline increases. Hence, specialization becomes inevitable and leads to the emergence of astrophytomedicine with an emphasis on scientific validation concerned with the planting, collection, preparation and administration of medicinal or astrological plants in general with relation to the positions of the celestial heavenly bodies and pharmacology cum toxicology of medicinal botanical aspects in particular. The advantages of further integration and specialization of astroethnobotany, astrological botany, astromedicine and astrotherapy as astrophytomedicine includes scientific validation, efficiency, the establishment of normative standards, and the potential for greater rigor in pharmaceutical research, to overcome significant barriers and to increase productiveness in this field. Thus an integration and specialization is viewed as a sign of success.

### **What is Astrophytomedicine?**

Astrophytomedicine, a sub-discipline of botany that deals with the traditional Indian system (Ayurveda and Siddha) principles of plants along with plant taxonomy, pharmacology, toxicology and medicinal aspects of plants associated with celestial bodies in Astrology. Here, Astro refers to astrological plants mentioned in astrology. Phyto refers to study of celestial plants mentioned for human use with respect to botany and medicine refers to all the medicinal, toxicological and pharmacological aspects of celestial plants along with the astrological, Ayurveda and Siddha principles.

### **Purpose of introducing a sub-discipline Astrophytomedicine**

Astrophytomedicine is a very fascinating and vital field of research related to drug development or assessment process in Ayurveda and Siddha system of traditional Indian medicine as it lack standardization, drug regulation and scientific validation for several drugs in use. Beside, this sub-discipline is new to the world of ethnobotany, medicinal botany and astrology. The widely accepted and practiced traditional Indian medicine in India and elsewhere was Ayurveda and Siddha among the other recognized systems of Indian medicine (Unani, Homeopathy, Yoga and Folk). Both the system has close affinity and maintains a distinctive identity of its own. The fundamental and applied principles of Ayurveda and Siddha originated approximately around 1500 BCE and 10000 BCE respectively. Traditional medicine systems acceptance by scientific community is debatable irrespective of its long history and survival as they have no explanatory power for describing the systems theoretical doctrines, correspondences with celestial bodies, differences and similarities among the diagnosing principles and treatment between the two systems. Hence, the main purpose of introducing the sub discipline astrophytomedicine is to nullify the lacunae present in traditional Indian medicine system of Ayurveda and Siddha and to prove their clinical efficacy by co-ordinated multi-disciplinary studies. It also explore the knowledge about the plant taxonomy, ecology and healing properties of astrological plants with respect to celestial bodies and validate scientifically the pharmacological and medicinal aspects of astrological plants along with the astrological, Ayurveda and Siddha principles. The sub-disciplines mentioned earlier namely astrobiology and astrobotany are very much distinguished from astroethnobotany, astrological botany and astrophytomedicine whereas, astroethnobotany, astrological botany, astrotherapy, astro medicine and astrophytomedicine does not very much distinguished one from another superficially with respect to

data source but the objective and methodology differ for each sub discipline (Jain, 1987). Astrophytomedicine has broader scope of research from scientific and social point of view, has expanded tentacles to interact with any system of research, and focused in a multidimensional perspective to get a deeper scientific insight on the subject.

### **Importance of Astrophytomedicine**

The introduction of astrophytomedicine as a new sub-discipline throw light on unknown key aspects there by increasing the scope in understanding celestial bodies – plant - human relationship along with the practical knowledge of Astrology. In addition, it opens new vistas in the area system of traditional Indian medicine (Ayurvedic and Siddha), pharmacology, agriculture, health, industry, environment, conservation and exploited for developing effective medicinal plant products. The opinion of the scientists regarding this may either positive or negative since many believe astrology as pseudoscience. Harvesting the fruitfulness of this sub-discipline was achieved only by means of integrative approach cum cognitive analysis and application in traditional Indian system of medicine, the time of medicinal plant collection, drug preparation and administration is linked with specific time that is determined by the observations, movements and calculations of the astral positions of celestial planets. Thus, the study primarily includes through literature search about astrological plants of different culture and field study (Dash, 1998) regarding information collection from astrologers, cultural and material practice of people. Secondly, it focuses on astrological plants metaphysical link and doctrine of signatures, unraveling the scientific correspondence. Thirdly, to explore the core astrological principle underlying in Indian traditional medicinal system treatment and its role in drug efficacy, preparation and treatment. Fourthly, it studies about drug standardization, drug action in human system and the toxicological aspects. The scientific insight of ancient astrological predictions along with the botanical aspects of collecting methods and dispensing medicinal herbs for use in various ailments can be corroborated with the astrological prospective. Exploration of this feature brings out the hidden biological science there by increasing the efficacy of medicinal plants bioactivity for the treatment of various diseases and promotion of human health without any ambiguity.

### **Application of Astrophytomedicine**

Astrophytomedicine is a branch of astrology, botany and tradition Indian medicine system that would open a new vista in literature research to re-study the astrological aspects in relation to traditional Indian medicine system treatment, qualitative and quantitative medicinal botany pharmaceutical research and phytomedicine approach that is lacking as on date. It helps to understand the systems theoretical doctrines, differences and similarities between the two systems. Ensure the consistent quality assuring reproducible pharmacological activity of herbal preparations. Helps to overcome the major hurdle towards their convergence apart from the other impediments in the discovery of plant based medicines. The co-ordinated multi-disciplinary studies provide scientific evidence and clear the doubt about their clinical efficacy. The types of activities undertaken for scientific validation are clinical research- involving planned clinical trial of single and compound ayurveda or siddha preparations and drug research which includes astrology - medico-botanical surveys, cultivation of medicinal plants, pharmacognostical studies, phytochemical studies, drug standardization, pharmacological and toxicological studies. This aspect should be the main focus of future research endeavors.

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### **Conclusion**

The aim of launching a sub-discipline astrophytomedicine is to explore the phytomedicine aspects of Astrology and bring forth the various scientifically unanalyzed aspects on experimental basis. The multifarious approach in this regard would be forthcoming in a series in continuation to this communication.

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