ANTIOXIDANT AND ANTIMICROBIAL ACTIVITY OF HERBAL TEAS

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Teas made from 18 Hungarian medicinal plants were investigated for their total phenolic content and antioxidant effect estimated as radical scavenging activity using the Folin-Ciocaltau and DPPH assays. Antimicrobial effect of the herbal teas was measured by agar diffusion method. In total, the results showed that the smallflower hairy willowherb (*Epilobium parviflorum*) had the highest antioxidant effect among the plants studied. Teas made from fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) and bean pods (*Phaseoli lengumen*) have the lowest activity. Only four herbal teas showed some antimicrobial activity: the smallflower hairy willowherb, common agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), spearmint (*Mentha crispa*) and bean pods. At smaller concentrations, the relationship found between total phenolic content and radical scavenging activity was linear but with increasing phenolic content the antioxidant activity showed saturation.