

Ms Jessica Evans  
Director of Research and Innovation  
East Kent Hospitals University



Dear Ms Evans

21 January 2021

News items in the press yesterday about your current research trial in connection with the use of an elderberry preparation to support patients with COVID-19 have generated a lot of positive comment amongst our members, and I wanted to reach out to you and express the interest and support of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists in your work.

We welcome high quality studies such as this, feeling that alongside other sources of guidance, including traditional use and practitioner experience, these provide an important means of enriching the knowledge base and understanding of the use of plant medicines.

The Institute is the oldest and largest professional register for herbal practitioners in the UK. Members are trained to degree standard before entering practice, and study anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pathology, clinical history taking and physical examination, as well as other more specialised areas within herbal practice and phytotherapy.

During this pandemic, the herbal community has continued to work hard to support our patients through both COVID-19 itself and some of the emergent Post Covid Syndromes, offering herbal advice and interventions centred on both symptom management and other issues such as those related to poor immune optimisation and dysregulated inflammatory responses. The successful use of preparations containing *Sambucus nigra (fruct)* is certainly emerging in many of the case studies that are being shared amongst our herbal communities just now.

My own background is that of general practitioner for many years before retraining in herbal medicine, and I have a special interest in seeking dialogues with my medical colleagues who are also working to bring us a better understanding of plant-based medicines. If there is any information or resources that the herbal community might be able to share with you and your team, either with reference to your current work or future projects, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me to discuss this.

Thank you for highlighting this aspect of herbal medicine. I look forward with great interest to learning more about your work.

With very kindest regards,

Phil Deakin  
President