

ISOFLAVONES IN THE THERAPY OF MENOPAUSAL COMPLAINS AND OTHER DISORDERS

Summary

For many years plant extracts have been used for the treatment of various disorders, including menopausal symptoms. The beneficial and therapeutic effects of these mixtures are partly attributed to the presence of isoflavones – polyphenolic compounds, revealing the estrogenic activity. Phytoestrogens are defined as plant-derived substances with the structural and functional similarity to 17- β -estradiol. Isoflavones, classified as phytoestrogens, constitute an interesting group of polyphenolic compounds that has been shown to possess a wide range of physiological effects, such as estrogenic, antioxidative,

and anticancer activity. The scientific interest in the beneficial effects of phytoestrogens has significantly increased mainly due to the findings that hormone replacement therapy is not as safe as previously have been thought. Nowadays, a particular attention is being paid for the phytoestrogenic properties of isoflavones, as the useful alternative for the hormonal replacement therapy in menopausal complaints. The article briefly reviews the available data on the dietary sources, physiological activity and therapeutic use of isoflavones in the treatment of various menopause complaints and other disorders.