

Spices and Medicine Symposium (hybrid) with the Peter Bradley Lecture 2026

Wednesday 3rd June, 13:30 – 18:00

Registration will open on the 3rd of May

In Person: UCL School of Pharmacy, JHLT Lecture Theatre

29-39 Brunswick Square, London, WC1N 1AX

1330- 1400 Arrival and Registrations

1400 – 1430

- **Dr Shelini Surendran** (University of Surrey, Guildford, United Kingdom): “Lion's Mane (*Hericium erinaceus*): Is it worth the hype?”
- **Dr Anthony Booker and Dr Prama Khondkar** (Westminster University, London, United Kingdom): “A wolf in sheep's clothing? The hidden risks of aflatoxins in food supplements”

1430 – 1445 Short Break

1445 – 1530

- **Peter Bradley Lecture by Dr Stefan Gafner** (American Botanical Council, Austin, TX 78723, USA): “Fight the Fakes - Adulterated Herbal Medicines and Botanical Ingredients: Fifteen Years of the ABC-AHP-NCNPR Botanical Adulterants Prevention Program”

Initiated in 2011, the Botanical Adulterants Prevention Program (BAPP) was created as a partnership between the American Botanical Council, the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia (AHP), and the National Centre for Natural Products Research (NCNPR) at the University of Mississippi to educate the herbal dietary supplement industry, regulators, and scientists in academia about adulteration of botanical ingredients. The ultimate goal of the Program is to improve the authenticity and quality of herbal dietary supplements for the consumer. Since its inception, the Program has published over 100 peer-reviewed documents. Despite herbal ingredient suppliers' and dietary supplement manufacturers' implementation of changes to quality control specifications, processes, and supply chains based on BAPP publications, adulteration of botanical ingredients has persisted. While many industry members have implemented robust quality control systems to root out adulteration, published data show that some manufacturers lack even the most basic quality control tests. However, a few case studies from Asian countries also show that a combination of education, testing, and strict regulatory enforcement

can successfully reduce the number of adulterated ingredients available on the market. The presentation will provide a review of the accomplishments of BAPP over the past 15 years and the authenticity challenges that remain to be solved (Gafner et al. 2023, Orhan et al 2024, 2025):

- Gafner S, Blumenthal M, Foster S, Cardellina JH 2nd, Khan IA, Upton R. (2023) Botanical Ingredient Forensics: Detection of Attempts to Deceive Commonly Used Analytical Methods for Authenticating Herbal Dietary and Food Ingredients and Supplements. **J Nat Prod**. 2023 Feb 24;86(2):460-472. doi: 10.1021/acs.jnatprod.2c00929.
- Orhan N, Gafner S, Blumenthal M. (2024) Estimating the extent of adulteration of the popular herbs black cohosh, echinacea, elderberry, ginkgo, and turmeric - its challenges and limitations. **Nat Prod Rep**. 41(10):1604-1621. doi: 10.1039/d4np00014e.
- Orhan N, Gafner S, Blumenthal M. (2025) Ginseng Adulteration Across Global Markets and Evaluation of Commercial Product Authenticity. *Nat.l Prod. Com* 20(12). doi:[10.1177/1934578X251405982](https://doi.org/10.1177/1934578X251405982).

Stefan Gafner, PhD, is currently Chief Science Officer of the American Botanical Council, an independent, nonprofit research and education organisation. He is also Director of the ABC-AHP-NCNPR Botanical Adulterants Prevention Program, a large-scale collaborative program to educate members of the herbal and dietary supplement industry about ingredient and product adulteration. Prior to working for ABC, Gafner served as a Director of Analytical Chemistry in the R&D department of natural personal care products company Tom's of Maine.

1530 – 1545 Short Break

1545 – 1700

- Round table: “Truth in the Roots' or Fighting the Fakes: Overcoming Adulteration and Quality Challenges for Herbal Medical Products” (including questions to the speakers)

Confirmed panellists include Dr Stefan Gafner, Dr Chris Etheridge, Dr Shelini Surendran, Dr Anthony Booker, Dr Vivienne Rolfe and Oksana Pyzik.

Event Chairs: Prof Michael Heinrich and Dr Banaz Jalil.

1700 - 1800 reception at the Junior Common Room of the School (basement)

Some background to the programme

This event is co-organised by the team at the UCL School of Pharmacy and the British Herbal Medicine Association and co-chaired by Prof Michael Heinrich and Dr Banaz Jalil. The visit of Dr St. Gafner is part-sponsored by Davines SpA, Parma. The event is part of the MSc in Clinical Pharmacy International Practice and Policy. It is co-badged by the focus group ‘Drugs from Natural Sources’ of the Association of Pharmaceutical Sciences (APSGB) and the Society for Medicinal Plant and Natural Product Research (GA).

Peter Bradley (1937–2021) was a dedicated figure in the field of herbal medicine. Peter developed a passion for the science of herbal medicines in the 1980s and joined the BHMA Board. Peter served as Chairman between 2010 and 2013 and never retired from the Board. His most significant legacy was authoring and producing the two volumes of the *British Herbal Compendium* (1992, 2006), which remains a cornerstone of BHMA's scientific work. Beyond this, he contributed to every BHMA publication since 1983, personally overseeing their development, marketing and distribution. His dedication ensured that these publications have become essential references in the field and continue to be used worldwide. A chemist by training, Peter earned a master's degree in carbohydrate chemistry in Canada before returning to the UK. He worked for major global companies, leading teams to develop over-the-counter herbal medicines and managing commercial health-food manufacturing operations in India and Puerto Rico. His expertise in both scientific research and industry operations made him a key figure in the development and supply of high-quality herbal medicines. Peter was also a leading contributor to the European Scientific Cooperative on Phytotherapy (ESCOP), co-chairing scientific committees and acting as editor-in-chief for over 60 monographs. This meticulous research and writing underpinned many of the accepted claims of efficacy for herbal medicines across Europe. His passion, scientific rigour, and commitment to the highest standards have left an enduring impact on herbal medicine.

UCL Spices and Medicine: UCL Spices and Medicine is an interdisciplinary initiative that aims to showcase research at the interface of food, medicine, and culture to the present day, highlight its relevance across different academic fields, and foster collaborations with institutions and communities interested in exploring botanical traditions. We are based at the UCL School of Pharmacy in Brunswick Square, London ((see: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/life-sciences/ucl-spices-and-medicine>))

British Herbal Medicine Association: The British Herbal Medicine Association was founded in 1964 to advance the science and practice of herbal medicine in the United Kingdom. It promotes the use of herbal medicinal products manufactured to pharmaceutical standards to ensure consistently high quality and effectiveness for the consumer.

For over 60 years, the BHMA has been committed to:

- Defending the public's right to choose herbal medicines and access them freely.
- Promoting high standards of quality and safety in herbal medicines.
- Advancing the science and practice of herbal medicine using modern techniques.
- Encouraging broader knowledge and recognition of the value of herbal medicine.
- Fostering research in phytomedicine to explore the potential of medicinal plants.

The Association has developed authoritative resources, including the British Herbal Pharmacopoeia 1983 and 1996 and the British Herbal Compendium Volumes 1 and 2 (1992 & 2006), which are trusted worldwide. The BHMA continues to support the herbal community, from manufacturers to pharmacists, in ensuring the quality and safety of herbal products.

The membership has always encompassed a wide spectrum of interests in the herbal field: manufacturers and suppliers of herbal medicines, pharmacists, academics, and students. herbal

practitioners, companies involved in supplying herbal raw materials and extracts, retailers, and others with an interest in phytotherapy. The BHMA has also developed an accreditation process for the Herbal Practitioners Suppliers Section (HPSS) of the industry. Companies that successfully complete this process are granted the BHMA HerbMark, demonstrating their full compliance with Good Herbal and Manufacturing Standards. As part of its ongoing commitment, the BHMA works closely with regulatory authorities, industry forums, academic institutions, and the media. It provides guidance on EU and UK legislation and supports companies in meeting stringent safety and quality standards for Traditional Herbal Registrations (THR) (see: <https://bhma.info/>)

The Society for Medicinal Plant and Natural Product Research (www.ga-online-org) with over 1700 members globally is dedicated to:

- Work towards a healthier life for humans and animals through developing a more evidence-based use of medicinal natural products
- Promote research and development in the broad field of natural products (see research areas below) *The GA awards and travel grants could be mentioned here, to evidence also the special attention for your researchers and scientists from developing areas*
- Provide a platform for exchange of knowledge and ideas related to medicinal natural products (including our annual conferences, e-symposia, workshops, podcasts etc.)