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### Biological activity of bee propolis in health and disease.

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Propolis is a natural product derived from plant resins collected by honeybees. It is used by bees as glue, a general-purpose sealer, and as draught-extruder for beehives. Propolis has been used in folk medicine for centuries. It is known that propolis possesses anti-microbial, antioxidative, anti-ulcer and anti-tumor activities. Therefore, propolis has attracted much attention in recent years as a useful or potential substance used in medicine and cosmetics products. Furthermore, it is now extensively used in foods and beverages with the claim that it can maintain or improve human health. The chemical composition of propolis is quite complicated. More than 300 compounds such as polyphenols, phenolic aldehydes, sesquiterpene quinines, coumarins, amino acids, steroids and inorganic compounds have been identified in propolis samples. The contents depend on the collecting location, time and plant source. Consequently, biological activities of propolis gathered from different phytogeographical areas and time periods vary greatly. In this review, the activity of bee propolis will be presented with special emphasis on the antitumor activity.

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