

## Cuba starts trial of natural drug to fight cancer and AIDS

The effects of anamú tablets, a drug made from the leaves of the plant of the same name, will be tried from March in the eastern province of Santiago de Cuba.

Developed by East Pharmaceutical (LFO), the first natural Cuban stimulant that will help patients with cancer and AIDS, whose immunological system is depressed as a result of the disease and aggressive treatments they receive.

In statements published in Juventud Rebelde newspaper, Master Zoe Lemus, a specialist at the laboratory, explained that they have concluded the industrial scale production of some 160 000 tablets.

These pills will be introduced in specialized consultations at Conrado Benitez oncology hospital, and the HIV-Oriente Center, located in the Juan Bruno Zayas hospital, both institutions in Santiago de Cuba.

Anamu is an herbaceous perennial that grows up to 1 m in height. It is indigenous to the Amazon rainforest and tropical areas of Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Africa.

The plant has a long history in herbal medicine in all of the tropical countries where it grows. In Brazilian herbal medicine, it is considered an antispasmodic, diuretic, menstrual promoter, stimulant, and sweat promoter. In other countries is use to treat edema, arthritis, malaria, rheumatism, and poor memory, and as a topical analgesic and anti-inflammatory for skin afflictions.

Following successful animal testing and the registration of the new drug, the immediate initiation of studies in patients can be interpreted as an achievement of science in Santiago de Cuba.

This was the result of integration between specialists of the LFO, the Center for Toxicology and Biomedicine and the Regulatory Bureau for Health Protection in the province.