

Herbs Used in Dentistry

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ABSTRACT

The sole purpose of any branch of medicine is to strive to make human life happier and healthier with the available resources. Herbs are having a comeback and herbal 'renaissance' is happening all over the world. Herbal products symbolize safety when compared to synthetics which are unsafe to humans & environment. An herb is a plant part other than woody tissues, which serve as an effective source of treatment for various diseases. Herbal extracts have been used in dentistry as antimicrobial, antiseptics, antibacterial. Herbal extracts have been used in controlling plaque in case of gingivitis, periodontitis. The purpose of this article is to review the herbs which is readily available for curing dental diseases

Key words: Herbal extract, Dentistry, antimicrobial.

INTRODUCTION

The word ayurvedha is derived from 'ayu' meaning 'life' and 'vedha' meaning 'knowledge'. Ayurvedha literally means the science that imparts all the knowledge of life. Herbs are one of remedial agents which God has created for afflicted humans. Herbal extracts have been used in traditional medicine for several thousand years¹.

There are many medicinal systems such as ayurvedha, unani, siddha. In India, it has been reported that traditional healers use 2,500 plant species and that 100 species of plants serve as regular sources of medicine⁽²⁾. 80% of the population depends on herbs for routine health care needs. The development of indigenous medicines and the use of medicinal plants carry considerable economic benefits in the treatment of various diseases³.

DISCUSSION

In the developed countries, 25% of the medical drugs are based on herbs and their derivatives⁴. There has been clinical success in

treatment of variety of oral complaints like oral ulcers, xerostomia, leukoplakia & periodontitis. Traditional Chinese medicines (TCM) also gave successful outcomes in treating dental diseases. The natural phytochemicals could offer an effective alternative to antibiotics and represent a promising approach in prevention and therapeutic strategies for dental caries and other oral infections⁵.

Twig are used for tooth brushing, it contains volatile oils which stimulates blood circulation, & tannins which cleanses gums. Commonly used are neem twigs (*azadirachta indica*).

Triphala as the implicates it is equal combination of three important ayurvedic herbs, Amalaka (*Emblca officinalis*), haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*), bibheetaka (*Terminalia bellirica*). Saindhava salt is also used as tooth powders. These are made into a paste using honey. This herbal extract effectively inhibited bio-film formation and the better antioxidant activity which is exhibited by this extract could protect the gum cells effectively from free radicals than the commercial toothpastes. Thus, Triphala could be used as an effective antiplaque agent⁶. It inhibits aggregations of *S. mutans*, thus

acting as an anticarcinogenic, inhibiting increase in red blood cells and aiding in removal of undesirable fat. It can also be used in the treatment of cancers⁷.

This mouth rinse contains several naturally occurring, anti-inflammatory agents such as aloe vera and calendula and antimicrobial agents such as Golden Seal and grapefruit seeds. It was opined that when it was applied specifically against the broad spectrum of oral bacteria which are responsible for gingivitis, plaque and periodontal disease, this herbal mouth rinse could prove beneficial for maintaining oral health⁴.

Azadirachta indica mouth wash is reported to inhibit growth of *S. mutans* and carious lesions⁸. Antibacterial activity of some plant species like *Melia azadirachta*, *Calotropis gigantean*, *Leucas aspera*, *Vitex negundo*, and others have been tested⁹.

Aloe vera suggests to have anti bacterial, antifungal, antiviral properties. The aloe vera tooth

gel and the toothpastes were equally effective against *Candida albicans*, *Streptococcus mutans*, *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Enterococcus faecalis*, *Prevotella intermedia* and *Peptostreptococcus anaerobius*.

Aloe vera tooth gel also has an enhanced antibacterial effect against *S. mitis*¹⁰. The herbal extract, German chamomile used as an irrigant to disinfect the root canal. Jasper powder (Chinese herb) is used in treating oral ulcers

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this article is to explore and use the readily available resources in day today life, for healthier living. These provides considerable evidence that plant extracts, essential oils & purified phytochemicals have the potential to be developed into agents that can be used as preventive or curative agents for dental diseases

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