

GENERAL INTRODUCTION OF SHANKHPUSHPI ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA

Dr. Vinod Ranga*¹ and Dr. Sneha Ranga²

¹Principal & Professor Dept. of Dravyaguna,

²Professor Dept. of Rachana Sharir,

Mai Bhago Ayurvedic Medical College, Ferozepur Road, Shri Muktsar Sahib- Punjab.

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Vinod Ranga

Principal & Professor Dept.
of Dravyaguna, Mai Bhago
Ayurvedic Medical College,
Ferozepur Road, Shri
Muktsar Sahib- Punjab.

ABSTRACT

Convolvulus prostratus (Convolvulus Pluricaulis) is an herb found in India and Burma that is used in Ayurveda. The Ayurveda preparation shankhpushpi is, according to most sources, identical with Convolvulus prostratus, but some say shankhpushpi is instead Clitoria ternatea. Shankhpushpi has been used traditionally as a brain tonic and is believed to help a wide range of issues. It is believed to have demonstrated potential for anxiolytic, relaxant, and anti-obsessive effects, as well as nootropic effects. Shankhpushpi has been found to help significantly with memory retention. In cholesterol-fed gerbils shankhpushpi was observed to have significantly helped reduce serum cholesterol, low density lipoprotein cholesterol, and

triglycerides after ninety days. Shankhpushpi also demonstrated a thyroid suppressing effect when administered (at 0.4 mg/kg) to mice with hyperthyroidism. It has been studied for use as anticonvulsant with mixed results.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Shankhpushpi, Anxiolytic, Nootropic effects, Anticonvulsant.

INTRODUCTION

The plant has been found to be effective in reducing different types of stress including psychological, chemical and traumatic. The ethanolic and methanolic extracts of the whole plant reduced spontaneous motor activity, potentiated pentobarbitone hypnosis and morphine analgesia, reduced fighting response, abolished the conditioned avoidance response, antagonized convulsive seizures and tremorine induced tremors in mice. The juice of whole plant prevents excessive menstruation. The fine paste made by grinding the plant is helpful to

cure abscess. Ethanolic extract of whole plant when administered to cholesterol fed gerbils, reduced serum cholesterol, Low density lipoprotein cholesterol, triglycerides and phospholipids significantly after 90 d. The root extract of this plant regulated hyperthyroidism in female mice. The juice of fresh whole plant of *C. pluricaulis* possessed anti-ulcerogenic effect and is comparable to sucralfate. Ethanolic extract of the entire plant exerted a negative inotropic action on amphibian and mammalian myocardium. It also exerted spasmolytic activity on smooth muscles.^[1]

Scientific classification

The scientific classification of *C. pluricaulis* is demonstrated as follows.^[2]

Kingdom:	Plantae
Sub-kingdom:	Tracheobionta
Super-division:	Spermatophyta
Division:	Magnoliophyta
Class:	Magnoliopsida
Sub-class:	Asteridae
Order:	Solanales
Family:	Convolvulaceae
Genus:	Convolvulus
Species:	pluricaulis

Vernacular names

The vernacular names of *C. pluricaulis* is described as follows:

Sanskrit:	Sankhapuspa
Bengal:	Sankhapuspi
Gujarathi:	Shankhawali
Hindi:	Shankhapushpi, Aparajit
Kannada:	Bilikanthisoppu
Marathi:	Shankhavela
Punjabi:	Shankhapuspi
Tamil:	Sanghupushpam, kakkurattai
Telugu:	Shankhapushpi

C. pluricaulis is a perennial herb that seems like morning glory. Its branches are spread on the ground and can be more than 30 cm long. The flowers are blue in color (5 mm) and the leaves, which are elliptic in shape (2 mm), are located at alternate positions with branches or

flowers. Known as Aloe weed in English, the herb is commonly found in India, especially in the state of Bihar.^[3]

Medicinal importance of *C. pluricaulis*

C. pluricaulis is of various medicinal uses. It is used for treatment of hypertension, neurodegenerative diseases, ulcers, high blood pressure, epilepsy, vomiting, diabetes, sun stroke and bleeding. In addition, it can also be used to improve memory and decrease cholesterol.^[4]

Traditional uses

Many previous studies have reported the traditional uses of *C. pluricaulis*. This plant is reported to be a prominent memory improving drug, a psychostimulant and tranquilize, and reduce mental tension. There is a pertinent reference in Ayurvedic literature about the use of the drug as brain tonic in hypotensive syndromes. The pharmacological studies of the herb have shown varying degree of its hypotensive and tranquilizing effects. Clinical studies have exhibited demonstrable beneficial effects of *C. pluricaulis* on the patients of anxiety neurosis. The herb induces a feeling of calm and peace, good sleep and a relief in anxiety, stresses, mental fatigue, producing a significant reduction in the level of anxiety, neuroticism arising due to various levels of stresses. The herb appears to produce its action by modulation of neurochemistry of the brain. The plant improves the balance and vitiation in kapha-vata-pitta doshas, and the herb is astringent and bitter.^[5]

Preliminary macroscopical characters of ethanolic extracts of *C. pluricaulis* (leaves).

<i>C. pluricaulis</i>		Characters
Stem structures	Length	Several prostrate stems (10-30 cm)
	Surface	Clothed with silky hairs
	Internodes	10-12 mm
	Taste	Tasteless
Leaf structures	Dimension	Length=1.12 cm; breadth=0.1 cm
	Attachment	Leaf stalk absent
	Lamina	Thin
	Stipules	Exstipulated
	Leaf lamina shape	Linear
	Leaf margin	Entire
	Leaf apex	Acute

C. pluricaulis		Characters
	Leaf base	Decurrent
	Leaf texture	Whole (brittle)
	Venation	Parallel
	Phyllotaxy	Alternate

Other benefits of Shankpushpi

Shankpushpi helps to calm down the brain and relieve stress as well as anxiety. It also improves memory by acting as a brain tonic due to its Medhya (improves intelligence) property. You can take Shankpushpi powder along with warm milk or water to help boost memory and concentration. Shankpushpi tablets and capsules can also be used to improve brain functions.

Shankpushpi might help to manage wrinkles and prevent ageing due to its Rasayana (rejuvenating) property. Applying Shankpushpi powder on skin helps in acne and wound healing due to its Ropan (healing) property. Applying Shankpushpi oil on the scalp and hair help control hair fall and also promotes hair growth due to its Rasayana (rejuvenating) property.

HOW TO USE SHANKHPUSHPI

1. Shankpushpi Powder with Milk

- Take ½-1 teaspoon of Shankpushpi powder with lukewarm milk.
- Take it preferably in the morning.
- Use this remedy on a daily basis to improve memory and concentration.

2. Shankpushpi Juice with Water

- Take 3-4 teaspoons of Shankpushpi juice.
- Mix it with one glass of water and drink it twice a day.
- Use this remedy on a daily basis to lower the risk of epilepsy.

3. Shankpushpi Capsule

- Take 1-2 capsules of Shankpushpi.
- Swallow it with milk or water preferably after meals.

4. Shankpushpi Tablet

- a. Take 1-2 tablets of Shankpushpi.
- b. Swallow it with milk or water preferably after meals.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Shankpushpi helps to balance the tristambha of body i.e. vitiated kapha-vaat-pitta. There are so many varieties are suggested on this plant and studies done on different varieties of shankpushpi have proved healing treatment in central nervous system disorders, antianxiety, antiemetic. The various chemical constituents studied present in herb like alkaloids, flavonoids etc may be responsible for its biological actions in the managing the disorders. It contains carbohydrate-D-glucose, maltose, rhamnose, sucrose, starch, proteins, amino acids and the alkaloids-convolvine, convolvamine, phyllabine, convolidine, confoline, convoline, subhirsine, convosine, and convolidine along with scopolin and Flavon Coumarin, Beta-sitosterol, fatty acid and wax constituents, hydrocarbons, aliphatic and sterol.

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