

A REVIEW ON MEDICINAL PLANT USED IN TREATMENT OF RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

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ABSTRACT

Rheumatoid arthritis is a kind of autoimmune disorder that occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissues in the body. Although the exact trigger is still unknown, the immune system typically produces antibodies that seek and destroy viruses and bacteria to protect against infections. Rheumatoid arthritis is an inflammatory condition characterized by swollen joints, which can affect various areas of the body, such as the hands, feet, and sometimes internal organs. It occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissues, particularly the joints. Natural plant extracts and compounds (NPECs) have been utilized from plants and herbs as a clinical therapy to treat rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in order to relieve such symptoms.

Research into the potential use of NPECs as a novel treatment option for rheumatoid arthritis is a promising development.

KEYWORDS: Herbal plant, Rheumatoid arthritis, Traditional medicine, Medicinal plant.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rheumatoid arthritis is a joint disease that results from an autoimmune response causing chronic inflammation, which affects several aspects of the body.^[1] Autoimmune diseases like Rheumatoid arthritis can have systemic impact on the body, affecting multiple organs beyond the joints such as the heart, kidneys, salivary glands, bone marrow, lungs, blood vessels, nerve tissue, and skin.^[2] Despite attacking the joints primarily, Rheumatoid arthritis can potentially impact the health and overall quality of life of those affected. Epidemiological statistics suggest that Rheumatoid arthritis affects around 1% of the world's population, equating to approximately 700 million individuals, with over 80% of patients being women.^[3] Although Rheumatoid arthritis stems from inflammation that affects small to medium-sized joints, it's also characterized by systemic inflammation. Different autoimmune and inflammatory processes can be active in Rheumatoid arthritis, contributing to a clinically and pathologically heterogeneous disease entity.^[4] Certain herbs and plants have anti-inflammatory properties that can help relieve joint pain. Thyme, Cinnamon, and Ashwagandha are examples of medicinal herbs that have been used to treat rheumatoid arthritis.^[5] Ethnobotany relies on knowledge about plants from indigenous people and their perceived effectiveness in different ethnic groups. Some researchers are exploring the use of stem cells to treat rheumatoid arthritis, which may offer new potential treatments.^[6,7]

1.1 PATHOGENESIS

Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic autoimmune disease that affects the joints and is characterized by inflammation of the synovial membrane, leading to joint pain, swelling, stiffness, and eventual joint damage. It is believed to be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors, although the exact cause is unknown.^[8]

1.2 SYMPTOM^[9,10,11]

1. Joint pain
2. Morning stiffness
3. More than one joint affected
4. Small joints affected first
5. Symmetrical joint pain
6. Joint tenderness
7. Joint swelling
8. Joint stiffness lasting for six weeks or longer

9. Fatigue
10. Weight loss
11. Fever
12. Numbness and tingling in the hands and feet

1.3 RISK FACTORS^[12]

1. Gender
2. Genetics
3. Environmental exposure
4. Age

2. Herbal Plants Uses As Rheumatoid Arthritis Treatment

2.1 Himalayan cedar^[14,15]

Biological name: *Deodar cedar*

Family: Pinaceae

Source: Afghanistan

Plant part: Wood of deodar cedar

Use: Reduce pain

Major constituents: The oil of cedar wood contains α -himachalene (12.5%) and β -himachalene (43%). It also contains sesquiterpene alcohols.



Fig. 1: Himalayan cedar.^[13]

2.2 Ginger^[17]

Biological Name: *Zingiber officinale*

Family: zingiberaceae

Source: India

Plant part: Root

Use: Reduce inflammation

Major constituents: phenolic compounds – shogaols, gingerols, zingiberone, zingerone, geraniol.



Fig. 2: Ginger.^[16]

2.3 WILLOW BARK^[19]

Biological name: *Salicis cortex*

Family: Salicaceae family

Source: India, China, Europe, Asia

Plant part: BARK

Use: Reduce pain

Major constituents: Willow contains Salicylates (Salicortin and Salicin) and Tannins. It is used for fever, rheumatism, and as an anti-inflammatory agent.



Fig. 3: Willow bark.^[18]

2.4 Turmeric^[21,22]

Biological name: *Curcuma longa*

Family: Zingiberaceae

Source: India, china, US

Plant part: Root

Use: Inflammation, pain, swelling

Major constituents: Curcumin



Fig 4: Turmeric.^[20]

2.5 Indian olibanum / dhup^[24]

Biological Name: *Boswellia serrata* Roxb

Family: Burseraceae

Source: India, Africa

Plant part: Resinous oils from trees

Use: Reduce inflammation

Major constituents: Boswellic acid



Fig. 5: Indian olibanum.^[23]

2.6 Dhania^[26,27,28]

Biological Name: *Coriander sativum*

Family: Apiaceae

Source: India, Canada, China, Turkey

Plant part: Leaf

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Essential oil, Alkaloids, Flavones, Resins, Tannins, Anthraquinones, Sterols.



Fig. 6: Dhania.^[25]

2.7 Dalchini^[30]

Biological Name: *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*

Family: Lauraceae

Source: Sri Lanka, India, Myanmar and South America

Plant part: BARK

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Cinnamaldehyde (65-80%)



Fig. 7: Dalchini.^[29]

2.8 Ashwagandha^[32,33]

Biological Name: *Withania somnifera* Linn

Family: Solanaceae

Source: India, Pakistan, Africa, Srilanka

Plant part: Root

Use: Joint pain, Swelling

Major constituents: The root of ashwagandha contains alkaloids like withanine, pseudo-withanine, tropine, pseudo-tropine, somniferine, and somnine.

It also has acyl glucoside called sitoindoside-7 and sitoindoside-8.

These compounds contribute to the pharmacological activity of the root.



Fig. 8: Ashwagandha.^[31]

2.9 Green Tea^[35,36]

Biological Name: *Camellia sinensis* Linn

Family: Theaceae

Source: China

Plant part: Dried leaves

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Epigallocatechin-3- gallate (EGCG) (50-80%)



Fig. 9: Green tea.^[34]

2.10 Ashoka tree^[38]

Biological Name: *Saraca asoca* Roxb.

Family: Caesalpiniaceae

Source: South India, Assam, Srilanka, Orissa

Plant part: seed

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Preliminary phytochemical methanolic and ethanolic extracts indicate the presence Carbohydrates, tannin, flavonoid, saponin, glycosides, proteins and steroids.



Fig. 10: Ashoka tree.^[37]

2.11 Buas buas^[40]

Biological Name: *Premna corymbosa* Rottl.

Family: Verbenaceae

Source: Singapore

Plant part: Root

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: alkaloids, glycosides, flavanoids, steroids and triterpenoids.



Fig. 11: Buas Buas.^[39]

2.12 Anantamul^[42,43]

Biological Name: *Hemidusmus indicus* Linn.

Family: Asclepiadaceae

Source: South Asia

Plant part: Root

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: coumarin, starch, tannic acid, Triterpenoid saponin.



Fig. 12: Anantamul.^[41]

2.13 Aloe vera^[45,46,47]**Biological Name:** *Aloe barbadensis***Family:** Liliaceae**Source:** Europe, Asia, America**Plant part:** Leaf**Use:** Anti-inflammatory**Major constituents:** anthraquinone, chromone.**Fig. 13: Aloevera.**^[44]**2.14 Ice vine, patha**^[49,50,51]**Biological Name:** *Cissampelos pareira* Linn.**Family:** Menispermaceae**Source:** Asia, Africa, South America**Plant part:** Root**Use:** Anti-inflammatory**Major constituents:** Ethanolic extract.**Fig. 14: Icevine, Patha.**^[48]

2.15 Black adusa^[53]

Biological Name: *Justicia gendarussa* Linn.

Family: Acanthaceae

Source: China

Plant part: Leaf

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Pyrroloquinazoline Alkaloids



Fig. 15: Black adusa.^[52]

2.16 Raat rani, night blooming^[55]

Biological Name: *Ncytanthes arbortristis* Linn.

Family: Oleaceae

Source: South Asia, West Indies

Plant part: Leaf

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Histamine



Fig. 16: Raat rani.^[54]

2.17 Banyan tree^[57]

Biological Name: *Ficus bengalensis* Linn.

Family: Moraceae

Source: Asia, China

Plant part: Bark

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: β -sitosterol



Fig. 17: Banyan tree.^[56]

2.18 Vasaka^[59]

Biological Name: *Justicia gendarussa* Linn.

Family: Acanthaceae

Source: India, srilanka

Plant part: Leaf

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Alkaloid.



Fig. 18: Vasaka.^[58]

2.19 Spanish lavender^[61]

Biological Name: *Lavandula stoechas*

Family: Lamiaceae

Source: France, Spain, Italy, Portugal

Plant part: Flower

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: linalool.



Fig. 19: Spanish lavender.^[60]

2.20 Bitter apple^[63,64]

Biological Name: *Citrullus colocynthis*

Family: cucurbitaceae

Source: Asia, Africa, Turkey

Plant part: Fruit

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Flavanoid.



Fig. 20: *Citrullus colocynthis*.^[62]

2.21 Rice^[66]

Biological Name: *Oryza sativa*

Family: Poaceae

Source: India

Plant part: Seed

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: γ -oryzanol.



Fig. 21: Rice.^[65]

2.22 Monachino^[68,69]

Biological Name: *Glyphaea brevis*

Family: Tiliaceae

Source: Africa

Plant part: Bark

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Flavanoid.



Fig. 22: Monachino.^[67]

2.23 *Syzygium cumini*^[71]

Biological Name: *Syzygium cumini*

Family: Myrtaceae

Source: India

Plant part: Leaf

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Quercetin



Fig. 23: *Syzygium cumini*.^[70]

2.24 Crepe ginger^[73,74]

Biological Name: *Costus speciosus*

Family: Costaceae

Source: Asia, Malaysia

Plant part: Rhizomes

Use: Anti-inflammatory

Major constituents: Methanolic extract



Fig. 24: Crepe ginger.^[72]

2.25 Pencil tree.^[76,77]**Biological Name:** *Euphorbia tirucalli***Family:** Euphorbiaceae**Source:** Africa**Plant part:** Latex**Use:** Antirhumatism**Major constituents:** Triterpenes euphol**Fig. 25: Pencil tree.**^[75]**3. CONCLUSION**

Herbal therapy is widely used by patients because herbal plants are a rich or primary source of extremely efficient conventional medications for the treatment of arthritis. Rheumatoid arthritis is a severe condition that typically shows up as many joints swollen. The condition can range in severity from mild pain to deformity of the joints. While several synthetic medications, such as DMARDs and NSAIDs, are the usual treatment for rheumatoid arthritis, their side effects may affect the efficacy of the therapeutic intervention. Several known ancient Indian Ayurvedic and Unani medicinal plants need to be screened and scientifically evaluated in order to develop better, safer treatment choices with the minimum avoidable adverse effects. An alternate and even successful approach of treating chronic illnesses with minimal or no adverse reactions is the use of herbal medications in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. It should be seen from the summary above that many different kinds of medicinal herbs have anti-arthritic properties. With regard to rheumatoid arthritis, this review aims to provide a scholarly overview of the usage of helpful medicinal plants.

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