

Some Medicinally Important Spices Used in Unani System of Medicine

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Abstract--Spices are an essential component of human life. Treatment is done by herbal drugs in Unani medicine. 25% people of the world are using herbal medicine. Spices have very importance in USM. Base of Unani medicine is on the concept of four humors: blood, phlegm, bile and black bile, which are believed to be in balance in a healthy individual. Spices are often used to restore the balance of these humors and treat imbalances that can lead to illness. They are not only used for flavouring food but also possess various medicinal properties. They protect from acute and chronic diseases. Some spices like turmeric, ginger, coriander, garlic and black cumin etc. are particularly known for their medicinal properties.

Objective--Objective of this study is to highlight the potential health benefits of some important spices in USM.

Material and Methods-- Relevant literature was collected from classical Unani literature and famous search engine viz, Scopus, PubMed, Google Scholar and Science Direct, using the relevant medical subheadings, Spices in USM, Importance of spices, Spices.

Discussion-- Researches show that a variety of bioactive constituents including sulphur containing compounds, tannins, alkaloids, glycosides, flavonoids, terpenoids and many more are found in spices. These compounds possess diverse range of health benefits.

Conclusion-- According to study result, it can be concluded that the spices possess many health benefits. There are many compound formulations having spices in Unani Medicine that are indicated in a number of diseases. Traditional uses of spices and its different property like hypoglycaemic property, resolvent property, anti-microbial property and many more activities make them more important drugs.

Keywords-- Spices in USM, Importance of spices, Spices, Spices as drugs, Spices as Medicine.

I. INTRODUCTION

Spices are used for many purposes like colouring, preserving and flavouring the food and also as a medicine since long time. They protect from acute, chronic and non-communicable diseases.^[1] Spices are storehouse of many chemical constituents. These chemical constituents possess medicinal properties.^[2,3] Spicy food consumption reduced the risk of mortality of cancer, IHD and respiratory diseases. According to a study, spicy foods are consumed to maintain and improve the health.^[4] In a study, it was found that the people who consumed spicy food daily was on a lower risk of death compared with those who did not consumed it daily.^[5] Spices are supposed to reduce the preference and intake of salt, hence they decrease blood pressure.^[6] It has been proved that clove has anti-cancerous property.^[7] China has approved 'Elemene' (a chemical constituent of turmeric) for the cancer treatment.^[8] In Covid 19, studies were done on common spices for their antiviral property. According to this study, spices were used by many people for the treatment of deadly coronavirus and also to enhance the immunity.^[9]

II. STUDIES OF SPICES

Haldi/Turmeric (Curcuma longa).

Traditional uses: Haldi is a very important medicinal plant, it comes under the family of Zingiberaceae.^[10] Nigerian people use its rhizome as an herbal infusion and to preserve and flavour the food.^[11] Its paste is applied locally to ease pain by Jhalda tribes of West Bengal and in Assam to cure skin diseases and for beauty.^[12] Curcumin is used in many countries. It is available in multiple forms, including capsules, energy drinks, soaps, tablets, ointments and cosmetics.^[13] In Nepal the paste is applied on wounds and injuries.^[14] In Philippines the powder juice is used in arthritis.^[15] It is used in diabetes, obesity, indigestion and thrombosis in Colombia.^[16]

Pharmacological Studies:

Anti-inflammatory activity: In a study, a cream prepared with Haldi and Sandal Surkh was found to have resolvent property against carrageenan induced hind paw oedema in rats.^[17]

Antifertility activity: 50% ethanolic extract of turmeric possess antifertility effects via affecting leydig cell function.^[18]

Antihyperlipidemic activity: In a study, haldi was found to have antihyperlipidemic property. It reduces the cholesterol uptake from the gut and prevents coronary problems and heart disease.^[19]

Renoprotective activity: Curcumin prevents several mechanisms leading to renal injury. It is a renoprotective molecule.^[20]

Anti-ulcer activity: Rhizome 95% ethanolic extract shows antiulcer activity.^[21]

Hepatoprotective activity: Turmeric ethanolic extract showed significant hepatoprotective effect against CCL4 induced hepatotoxicity.^[17]

Hypoglycaemic activity: In a study, ethanolic extract of turmeric rhizome was found to have hypoglycaemic property against alloxan-induced diabetic rats.^[17]

Bactericidal activity: In a study, oil obtained from haldi was found to have antibacterial property against salmonella, staphylococcus and klebsiella species.^[17]

Anti-fungal activity: In a study, oil obtained from turmeric was found to have anti-fungal property against aspergillus, penicillium, microsporum and trichophyton etc.^[17]

Gastroprotective activity: In a study, haldi was found to have gastroprotective property against gastric ulcer induced by indomethacin, stress and alcohol.^[22]

Respiratory disorders: In a study, curcumin was found to have antiasthmatic property in guinea pigs against OVA-induced asthma.^[23]

Antiviral and Antiparasitic activity: In a study, curcumin was found to have antiviral and antiparasitic properties against P. falciparum, Leishmania, Epstein-Barr virus and HIV. It is also effective against Covid-19 and modulate cytokine storm in Covid 19 patients.^[24]

Antidepressant activity: It has antidepressant property because it hinders monoamine oxidase accumulation in the CNS. Its ethanolic extract increases serotonin, noradrenaline, dopamine and serum corticotrophin-releasing factor levels.^[25]

Neuroprotective activity: In a study, curcumin was found to be effective in Parkinson disease. It is also effective in Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.^[26]

Adrak/Ginger (Zingiber officinale Rose)

Traditional uses: Adrak is commonly known as ginger, it comes under the family of Zingiberaceae.^[27] Sudanese and Acehnese people use it for postpartum recovery to avoid infection and inflammation and reproductive organ convalescence.^[28] It is combined with *Citrus aurantifolia* and applied to the abdomen to induce uterus contraction and streamline the belly in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.^[29] Local people of Central Kalimantan consume ginger to heat their body and also to increase the lactation in lactating mothers.^[30] Traditional Chinese medicine also claimed this medicinal plant's function for warming and restoring the body after losing blood, especially postnatal care.^[31]

Pharmacological Studies:

Anti-parasitic activity: In a study, Adrak was found to have anti-parasitic property against Limnatis nilotica leech.^[32]

Hepatoprotective activity: In a study, Adrak was found to have hepatoprotective property against adriamycin induced hepatotoxicity in albino rats.^[33]

Gastroprotective activity: In a study, extract of ginger was found to have gastroprotective property. It increased the gastrointestinal motility in 12 healthy volunteers.^[34]

Anti-motion sickness activity: In a study, ginger was found to have anti-motion sickness property. It reduced the vomiting tendency.^[34]

Anti-inflammatory and antinociceptive activities: In a study, essential oil of ginger was found to have anti-inflammatory and antinociceptive property in male Swiss mice and male Wistar rats.^[35]

Antioxidant activity: In a study, dried ginger extract showed protective effects against H₂O₂ induced oxidative stress in male rats.^[36]

Antibacterial activity: In a study, ginger ethanolic extract gave the widest zone of inhibition against one out of two test organisms at the concentration of 20 mg/ml.^[37]

Larvicidal activity: In a study, essential oil of ginger was found to have larvicidal property in *C. quinquefasciatus* and *A. aegypti*.^[38]

Gastroprotective activity: In a study, aqueous extract of ginger was found to have gastroprotective property against stress-induced mucosal lesions.^[39]



Cardioprotective activity: In a study, ethanolic extract of ginger was found to have antioxidant property in rats against isoproterenol induced oxidative myocardial injury.^[40]

Hypolipidemic activity: In a study, ginger was found to have hypolipidemic property.^[41]

Anti-diabetic activity: In a study, raw ginger was found to have anti-diabetic property in STZ-induced diabetic rats.^[42]

Kishneez/Coriander (Coriandrum sativum)

Traditional uses: In Iran, leaves of coriander and juice of fruit are consumed for the treatment of anxiety and insomnia.^[43] In Germany and Turkey, leaves and fruits are consumed for the problems of indigestion.^[44] Its fruit is used as a lactogauge and strengthening agent in Palestine.^[45] It is used for the menstrual cycle related problem in Srilanka.^[46]

Pharmacological Studies:

Sedative and Hypnotic activity: In a study, coriander aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract was found to have sedative and hypnotic property. It increased pentobarbital-induced sleeping time.^[47]

Hepatoprotective activity: In a study, coriander extract was found to have hepatoprotective property.^[48]

Insecticidal activity: In a study, coriander oil was found to have insecticidal property against bruchid *Callosobruchus maculatus*.^[49]

Aflatoxin control: In a study, it was found that coriander oil can control *S. cerevisiae*, *L. acidophilus*, *A. Niger* and *Bacillus cereus* etc.^[50]

Anti-diabetic activity: Seed ethanolic extract possesses anti-diabetic property.^[51]

Diuretic activity: Chemical constituents of coriander seeds were analysed for the diuretic effect in anesthetized rats, the outcome indicated an increased infiltration rate with a mechanism similar to the standard drug.^[52]

Anti-hypertensive activity: In a study, coriander was found to have anti-hypertensive property in anesthetized rats.^[53]

Anti-fungal activity: In a study, essential oil of coriander leaves was found to have anti-fungal property.^[53]

Kalonji/Black Cumin (Nigella sativa L.)

Traditional uses: Kalonji is a very important herb. It comes in the family of Ranunculaceae. In Southeast Asian and Middle East countries, it is used in respiratory and other inflammatory disorders. Asian and African use seed oil in eczema and boils.^[54]

It is used as an anthelmintic and antiparasitic agent.^[55] To preserve the woollen fabrics from insect its oil is scattered in fabrics.^[56]

Pharmacological Studies:

Antidyslipidemic activity: In a study, kalonji was found to have antidyslipidemic property when given 1gm in powder form twice a day for 60 days.^[57]

Hypoglycaemic activity: In a study, kalonji aqueous extract was found to have hypoglycaemic property in Wistar rat following 14 days of therapy.^[57]

Anti-fungal activity: In a study, kalonji aqueous extract was found to have anti-fungal property against candidiasis in mice.^[58]

Hepato-protective activity: In a study, result shows that an aqueous extract of kalonji seeds has hepatoprotective activity.^[58]

Gastro-protective activity: In a study, aqueous suspension of kalonji was found to have anti-ulcer property.^[58]

Antioxidant and Antiarthritic activity: In a study, thymoquinone (a chemical constituent of kalonji) was found to have antioxidant and antiarthritic property in Wistar rat.^[58]

Antibacterial activity: In a study, kalonji was found to have antibacterial property against *Staphylococcus aureus*.^[59]

Anti-inflammatory activity: In a study, aqueous extract of kalonji was found to have anti-inflammatory property in animal models.^[60]

Toxicological studies: Many toxicological studies have been carried out on kalonji. No toxic effects were reported when kalonji fixed oil was given to mice via the stomach in an acute and chronic toxicity studies.^[61]

Lahsan/Garlic (Allium sativum L.)

Traditional uses: It is used for the treatment of cough and fever, also it is locally applied in skin diseases in India.^[62] Garlic tea is used for the treatment of fever, headache and diarrhoea in China.^[63]

Pharmacological Studies:

Antioxidant activity: In a study, garlic and its derivative compound was found to have antioxidant property.^[64]

Antiplatelet and fibrinolytic activity: In a study, garlic was found to have antiplatelet and fibrinolytic property.^[65]

Anti-diabetic activity: In a study, garlic extract was found to have anti-diabetic property.^[66]

Anti-inflammatory activity: In a study, garlic extract was found to have anti-inflammatory property.^[67]

Antifungal Activity: A variety of fungus species were successfully eradicated by garlic extracts.^[68]

Antiviral activity: In a study, garlic was found to have antiviral property.^[69]

Antiprotozoal activity: In a study, garlic extract was found to have antiprotozoal property.^[70]

Antihypertensive activity: Garlic powder and its extract are used in hypertension. They significantly reduce systolic and diastolic blood pressure.^[71]

Diuretic activity: In a study, garlic was found to have diuretic property.^[72]

Anti-Alzheimer's activity: AChE enzyme converts ACh to acetate and choline. ACh depletion in the CNS has been involved in the pathophysiology of AD; garlic bulb oil suppressed AChE activity and exhibit antioxidant properties.^[73]

Summary of single drugs is given in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1.
Summary of Single Drugs

Drug Name	Botanical description and Geographical distribution	Chemical Constituents	Temperament
<i>Curcuma longa</i>	A perennial rhizomatous herb, found in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia etc. ^[74,75]	Fiber, Protein, Curcumin, Minerals, Volatile oil etc. ^[76]	Hot & Dry 3°. ^[77]
<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	A perennial, rhizomatous, tuberous herb, found in India, Africa, Australia, Japan, China, Nigeria etc. ^[78]	Gingerol, Zingiberol, Myrcene, Isogingerenone, etc. ^[89]	Hot 3° & Dry 2°. ^[27]
<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	An annual plant with white flowers, green leaves, ovate globular seed, found in India, France, Spain, Italy, Pakistan, Turkey. ^[80]	Alkaloid, Flavonoid, Tannin, Glycoside etc. ^[81]	Cold & Dry 2°. ^[82]
<i>Nigella sativa L</i>	An annual herb with black and triangular seed, found in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Syria etc. ^[83]	Volatile oil, Fixed oil, Saponin, Tannins, Nigellicine etc. ^[84]	Hot & Dry 2°. ^[85]
<i>Allium sativum L</i>	An annual, bulbous herb with long and flat leaves. It is cultivated around the world. ^[19,86]	Sulphur compounds, Vitamins, Minerals etc. ^[87]	Hot & Dry 3°. ^[27]

Table 2.
Summary of Single Drugs

Drug Name	Pharmacological action	Therapeutic uses	Doses
<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Resolvent, Analgesic, Deobstruent, Detergent, Desiccant, Eye tonic, Carminative, Anthelmintic, Antispasmodic, Blood Purifier Stomachic etc. ^[27,74,88]	Rheumatoid arthritis, Pruritus, Purulent conjunctivitis, Common cold, Bronchitis, Troublesome diarrhoea, Snake bite. ^[27,74,77]	Powder: 1-3 gm. ^[77]
<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Rosc.	Liver and Stomach tonic, Laxative, Aromatic, Sialagogue, Rubefacient, Aphrodisiac, Eye Tonic, Nervine Tonic, Desiccant, Expectorant, Antiemetic, Anthelmintic. ^[27,79, 89]	Dyspepsia, Rheumatism, Dropsy, Asthma, Headache, Migraine, Hoarseness of voice, Colds, Alopecia, Diabetes, Facial palsy etc. ^[27,79,90]	1-1½ gm. ^[79]
<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	Hypnotic, Sedative, Refrigerant, Carminative, Styptic, Resolvent, Exhilarant, Diuretic, Appetizer, Astringent, Tonic to Heart and Stomach etc. ^[91,82,92,93]	Insomnia, Headache, Vertigo, Weakness of Stomach and Brain, Flatulence, Diarrhoea, Palpitation, Stomatitis, Throat pain, Asthma etc. ^[82,93,94]	5-7 gm. ^[82]
<i>Nigella sativa</i> L	Galactagogue, Diuretic, Stomachic, Deobstruent, Abortifacient, Resolvent, Laxative, Anti-diabetic, Antipyretic, Antitussive, Analgesic, Lithotriptic etc. ^[95,79,96,97]	Ascites, Jaundice, Gastric upset, Colic, Piles, Tertian fever, Arthritis, Backache, Paralysis, Headache, Asthma, Kidney stone etc. ^[98,99,100]	1-2 gm. ^[27]
<i>Allium sativum</i> L.	Tonic for Innate heat, Stomachic, Aphrodisiac, Anti-inflammatory, Ulcerative, Detergent, Expectorant, Analgesic, Diuretic etc. ^[101,102,103]	Flatulence, Dropsy, Whooping coughs, Retention of urine, Dysentery, Cholera, Hypertension, Gastritis etc. ^[84,85,104]	2-3 gm. ^[85]

III. DISCUSSION

Researches show that a variety of chemical constituents including sulphur containing compounds, tannins, alkaloids, glycosides, flavonoids, terpenoids and many more are found in spices. These compounds possess diverse range of health benefits. Spices are storehouse of many chemical constituents. These chemical constituents possess medicinal properties. Spicy food consumption reduced the risk of mortality of cancer, IHD and respiratory diseases.

IV. CONCLUSION

According to study result, it can be concluded that the spices possess many health benefits. There are many compound formulations having spices in Unani Medicines that are indicated in a number of diseases. Beside traditional therapeutic utilization in USM its new indications such as anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-carcinogenic, glucose and cholesterol lowering activities, anti-microbial activity etc. make them more important drugs.

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