

Herbal Therapy for Psoriasis

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Editorial

The term “Psoriasis” has been derived from greek language meaning roughly itching condition and is a complex skin disease involving various factors in its pathogenesis such as T cells, Antigen Presenting Cells (APC’s), keratinocytes, macrophages, natural killer cell’s and growth factors such as vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) [1]. Psoriatic lesions involve polymorphonuclear leukocytes that lead to higher levels of reactive oxygen species, causing peroxidative damage to the skin membrane and also stimulate production of higher levels of PGE2 that leads to psoriasis [2].

Psoriasis can be further classified into five types viz. plaque psoriasis, guttate psoriasis, flexural or inverse psoriasis, pustular psoriasis and erythrodermic psoriasis. Of the several factors leading to psoriasis, the common causes are the genetic factors, microbes, alcohol consumption, food related triggers, cold or dry weather, stress, excessive exposure to sunlight, smoking, obesity, scratches, bites and as side effects related to use of certain medications such as steroids and β -blockers. Herbal remedies have always been a mainstay for therapies due to safety and lesser side effects and several plants have been reported till date for the treatment of psoriasis such as *Capsicum annum*, *Aloe barbadensis*, *Silybum marianum*, *Angelica sinensis*, *Curcuma longa*, *Mahania aquifolium*, *Nigella sativa* etc.

Capsaicin which is a chief component of *Capsicum annum* reduces itching, redness and other inflammatory reactions during psoriasis by inhibiting substance P which is known to activate the inflammatory process [3]. Anthraquinones from *Aloe vera* are known to possess antimicrobial efficacy which may act as a rationale for their therapeutic efficacies in the treatment of psoriasis. Silymarin from *Silybum*

marianum have proven efficacy for the treatment of psoriasis which may be due to its ability to improve endotoxin removal by the liver and inhibition of leukotriene synthesis. Psoralen, a potent furocoumarin from *Angelica sinensis* acts as a photosensitizer in the presence of UV-A. Exposure to UV-A causes ingestion of epidermal DNA and thus decreases the rate of epidermal DNA synthesis. Similarly, curcuminoids from *Curcuma longa* have also been used for the treatment of psoriasis as the levels of phosphorylase kinase are high during psoriasis and curcuminoids act by inhibiting phosphorylase kinase and thereby get rid of dermatitis infection. Berberine, barbamine and oxycanthine from *Mahania aquifolium* have also shown efficacy in the treatment of psoriasis via inhibition of keratinocytes. Tazarotene from *Nigella sativa* have shown to produce significant epidermal differentiation during orthokeratosis thereby showing effectiveness in the treatment of psoriasis [3].

Thus medicinal plants offer alternative therapy for the treatment of psoriasis as they are more safer to used relatively in terms of the side effects produced. Psoriasis is an autoimmune disease which is not having a permanent cure but various treatment options can be implemented for controlling the severity of symptoms produced by it and thus herbal drugs provide a mainstay for the therapy of psoriasis.

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