Phytotherapy in Prostatitis: a Review on the Most Important Medicinal Plants Affecting Prostatitis in Iranian Ethnobotanical Documents

Shaima Rabeea Banoon¹, Mohammad Narimani-Rad², Alireza Lotfi³, Samira Shokri⁴, Saber Abbaszadeh⁵, Sedef Özliman⁶*

¹Department of Biology, College of Science, University of Misan, Maysan, Iraq
²Department of Biomedical Engineering, Central Tehran branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
³Department of Animal Physiology, Islamic Azad University, Iran
⁴Department of Pathobiology, School of Public Health, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran
⁵Department of Biochemistry and Genetics, School of Medicine, Lorestan University of Medical Sciences, Khorramabad, Iran
⁶Department of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Atatürk Health Care Vocational School, Afyonkarahisar Health Sciences University, Afyonkarahisar, Turkey

Abstract
Prostatitis can occur at any age, after its enlargement, it puts pressure on the urinary tracts and causes urinary symptoms. Factors influencing the prevalence of prostatitis include age, genetic, diet, cancer, hormonal factors, and environmental factors. A microbial infection often causes prostatitis. In this systematic review, we tried to report the most important herbal medicines that have been mentioned for prostate treatment in Iranian ethnobotanical documents. Some keywords have been used, such as prostate, prostate inflammation, medicinal plants, ethnobotany, identification of medicinal plants. Also some Iranian Databases have been used, such as ISI Web Science, PubMed, Scopus, ISC, SID, and Google Scholar to review articles and resources. Ethnobotanical knowledge has a solution for treating this disease. Based on the results obtained in Iranian ethnobotanical documents, Lamium album L., Origanum vulgare, Silybum marianum (L.) Gaerth., Sorghum halepense (L.) Pers., Polygonum aviculare L., Urtica dioica L., Alhagi persarum...
Boiss. & Buhse., Eremurus persicus (Jaub. & Spach) Boiss., Gundelia tournefortii, Myrtus communis L., Tribulus Terrestris L., and Physalis divaricata D. Don are the most important herbal medicines used in Iranian ethnobotanical sources for prostate treatment. Aim of this systematic review, was to report the most important medicinal plants for prostatitis treatment mentioned in Iranian ethnobotanical documents.

How to cite this paper

Introduction
Anatomically, the prostate is located in the abdomen, in front of the rectum, and between the penis and the bladder. The prostate is involved in regulating sperm count in men. Sperm are excreted through the urethra through the prostate like urine, through the penis [1]. Diseases that affect this organ include inflammation of the prostate, benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), and cancer [2]. Gradual enlargement of this organ can put pressure on the urinary tract and cause signs and symptoms such as Urinary frequency, Urinary agency, Hesitancy, Straining, decreased force of stream, dribbling, nocturia, Dysuria, difficulty urinating, hematuria, etc [3]. Factors influencing the prevalence of this issue include age, genetics, diet, cancer, hormonal factors, and environmental factors [4,5]. Complaints of these symptoms are widespread in men aged between 50 to 70 years [6].

The inflammatory prostate disease has been identified and defined by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) since 1999, affecting half of all men in their lifetime [3]. This disease includes four syndromes: acute bacterial prostatitis, chronic bacterial prostatitis, chronic prostatitis and chronic pelvic pain syndrome (CPPS), and asymptomatic inflammatory prostatitis [7]. One of the most common factors that cause an increase in prostate inflammation is sexually transmitted diseases [8,9]. Usually, 25% of patients refer to urology clinics with symptoms of genitourinary and urinary tract problems. A doctor makes a differential diagnosis of prostatitis based on the person’s history, physical examination and increases Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) factor’s level in the prostate fluid in the test because, in some cases, the PSA factor indicates cancer or BPH [10-12]. In chronic prostatitis, systemic symptoms are less common, and the pain persists for at least three months. Benign prostatic hyperplasia, chronic pain syndrome, bladder inflammation, erectile dysfunction, urinary tract stones, prostate, and testicular cancer are other observed symptoms [13].

Due to the side effects observed from chemical drugs, people are more inclined to use herbal medicines [14-19]. Herbal medicines are used in various diseases such as diabetes [20], hypertension [21], menstruation [22], gastrointestinal [23], hormonal problems, prostate cancer [14], etc. They have active ingredients such as flavonoids, glucosides, saponins, alkaloids, etc. In some cases, the structure them have been used for the design and marketing of chemical drugs [24]. The herbal medicine effect’s therapeutics is due to their active ingredient with antioxidant properties, etc [25-28].

In this systematic review study, we tried to report the most important and most widely used herbal medicines for prostatitis treatment in Iranian ethnobotanical documents.
Materials and Methods

In this systematic review study, available articles in Iranian ethnobotanical sources were used. Keywords have been used such as prostate, prostatitis, herbal medicine, ethnobotany, identification of herbal medicine, and Iran. Databases were used such as ISI Web Science, PubMed, Scopus, ISC, SID, and Google Scholar to review articles and resources. In this study, 44 articles were searched and found. Two of them also lacked full text. Finally, 42 papers were reviewed for this review article. Out of 42 articles, only seven articles contained ethnobotanical information for prostate treatment.

Results

A review of Iranian ethnobotanical sources showed that herbal medicine such as Lamium album

Figure 1. The criteria and the number of entry and exit articles

- Records identified through database searching by combination of keywords (n = 44)
- Records screened after duplicates removed (n = 2)
- Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n = 42)
- Studies included in systematic review (n = 7)
- Full-text articles excluded, with reasons (n = 35)

L., Origanum vulgare. Silybum marianum (L.) Gaerth., Sorghum halepense (L.) Pers., Polygonum aviculare L., Urtica dioica L., Alhagi persarum Boiss. & Buhse., Eremurus persicus (Jaub. & Spach) Boiss., Gundelia tournefortii, Myrtus communis L., Tribulus Terrestris L., and Physalis divaricata D. Don are the most important herbal medicine used in Iranian ethnobotanical sources to treat prostate. The list of plants, families, organs used, and the province in question is given in Table 1. The flowchart of the search strategy and the criteria for entering and leaving the articles are specified in Figure 1.

Table 1. Medicinal plants affecting prostatitis and additional information about the organ used, Persian name, region used

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### Discussion

Today, natural products from living microorganisms, including plants and secondary metabolites, are used as one of the most widely used sources of prevention and treatment in the prostate.

Chemical drugs used for prostatitis treatment: Antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals for infection, [9,29] NSAIDs for reducing pain and inflammation, and alpha-blockers for reducing the obstructive symptoms of the urinary bladder [30]. Lifestyle changes are one of the critical, influential factors in preventing and controlling this disease [31].

Due to the side effects observed from chemical drugs, people are more inclined to use herbal medicines. For example, alpha-blocker drugs show many side effects such as dizziness, headache, weakness, tachycardia, palpitations, hypotension.

The herbs used in prostatitis are diverse, and it is predicted that their active ingredients affect this...
disease with a mechanism like chemical drug’s mechanisms.

*Pygeum africanum*, *Serenoa repens*, and *Cucurbita pepo* are showed anti-adrenergic properties similar to alpha-blockers. They are acted on androgen receptors in humans to prevent the growth prostate [32].

*Origanum Vulgare* L. is probably effective in this disease with its anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties [33].

*Silybum marianum* with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties can efface prostate cancer cells [34].

*Urtica dioica* is one of the well-known plants in prostate problems, used with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties in cases such as the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and the elimination of prostate cancer cells. It inhibits the 5-alpha reductase to prevent the conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone. This action is caused to reduce dihydrotestosterone in the blood and subsequently in the prostate tissue [35,36].

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Polyextract of *Orthosiphon stamineus*, *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, *Polygonum aviculare*, *Calendula officinalis*, and *Glycyrrhiza uralensis* extracts are contained flavonoids (quercetin, rutin, luteolin-7-glycoside, myricetin), phenolic carboxylic acids (Gallic and chlorogenic), and arbutin. It affects chronic prostatitis with anti-inflammatory properties and causes normalization of prostate functioning and the FSH level in laboratory animals [37].

**Authors’ contribution**

All authors contributed equally to the manuscript.

**Conflicts of interest**

The authors declared no competing interests.

**Ethical considerations**

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