

HERBAL REMEDIES OF STREET VENDORS FOR SOME URINO-GENITAL DISEASES

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ABSTRACT: *The herbal vendors are the mobile tribal medicinemen seen on the busy streets of many Indian cities selling crude medicinal plants and their products. They prescribe herbal treatment for several diseases, a skill they inherited from their forefathers through several generations of experience. They claim to have specific herbal remedies for the complete cure of some urino – genital disorders such as dysuria, hematuria, syphilis and gonorrhoea. **Cocculus villosus, pedaliium murex, Tribulus terrestris, Tinospora cordifolia, Withania Somnifera, Asparagus racemosus and Curculigo orchoides** are the herbal drugs of choice used in the treatment.*

INTRODUCTION

Disorder of the Urino – genital system is a very common health problem in India especially among the people of the poor Socio economic strata. Treatment by modern synthetic medicine is a costly affair and beyond the reach of the common man. But the traditional herbal medicine has simple solution which is both easier and economical. Nature keeps ready in her vast green reservoir some of those herbal remedies which can cure all human ailments and diseases that arise on this earth. The need is only to locate those miraculous herbs through trained eyes which could alleviate the pains and sufferings of mankind.

The street herbal vendors have a long history and tradition of herbal treatment. They are often seen selling crude and dry medicinal plants and their produces on the busy streets of many Indian cities. They have inherited a wealth of knowledge about

the healing properties of indigenous medicinal plants through several generations of experience from their ancestors who were the nomadic tribal folkhealers wandering in the remote forest of Rajasthan and Gujarat. They claim to have specialized in the herbal treatment of sexual and Urino – genital disorders although they do give treatment for other human ailments too. In a survey made in Delhi some of those medicinal plants used by them in the treatment of some common Urino – genital disorders such as Dysuria, Hematuria, Syphilis and Gonorrhoea were recorded and is described in the paper.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Thousands of herbal vendors live in Delhi throughout the year in temporary hutments and put their stalls of crude medicinal plants and plant products on the roadside at several

places. Lajpat Nagar, Kalkaji, Chirag Dilli, R. K. Puram, Azmeri Gate, Lal Quilla and ISBT are some of their main areas of habitation and operation in Delhi. In a survey made in Delhi 1288 Herbal vendors were approached and 1049 responded well to the study. They were interviewed about the medicinal properties of herbal drugs they sold and the nature of diseases for which they gave treatment. In several cases the users of the herbal drugs were also interviewed for verification of the authenticity of the drugs given by the herbal vendors. A specially prepared questionnaire was used for the purpose of both the studies. The common names of the medicinal plants used were recorded and their botanical identification was done.

Ailments and Prescription

(i) **Dysuria** : It is a condition in which the amount of urine output is greatly produced and it causes acute irritation and pain while passing the urine. The patient though has the urge to urinate the amount expelled out every time is very little and that too with much difficulty. Modern medicine has only surgical solution to the problem, while the traditional medicine has certain herbs which can alleviate the problem quickly and permanently. The street healers use the following herbs as a drug of choice to prepare the final drug.

S. No.	Common Name	Botanical Name	Parts Used
1	Jal Jamni	<i>Cocculus villosus Linn</i>	Leaves & Stems
2	Dakhani Gokhru	<i>Pedaliium murex Linn</i>	Dried Fruits
3	Chota Gokhru	<i>Tribulus terrestris Linn</i>	Dried Fruits
4	Asvagandh	<i>Withania somnifera Linn Dunal</i>	Dried Roots
5	Salibmisri	<i>Eulphia campestris Wall. Lindl</i>	Dried Tuberos Roots
6	Salabmisri	<i>Orchis latifolia Linn</i>	Dried Tuberos Roots
7	Satavari	<i>Asparagus racemosus Willd</i>	Dried Tuberos Roots
8	Salparni	<i>Desmodium gangeticum (L) D.C</i>	Dried Leaves and Stems
9	Shayam Musli	<i>Curculigo orchoides Gaertn.</i>	Dried Roots
10	Nagakesar	<i>Messua ferrea Linn</i>	Dried Fruit and Seeds
11	Baraham Dandi	<i>Argemone Mexicana Linn</i>	Whole Plant
12	Makardhaj Buti	<i>Cucumis melo Linn</i>	Seeds

(a) Phytochemistry of Herbal Drugs used :

(1) Jal Jamni (*C. Villosus*)

The Chief chemical of biological action are the alkaloids Cocuslin and the Biscoclaurine base called Pendulin.

(2) Dakhani Gokhru (*P. Murex*)

The biologically active compounds are Urosolic acid, vanillin, phenolic acids, fatty oils and resins. Alkaloids and Steroids are also reported.

(3) Chota Gokhru (*T. terrestris*)

The biological active compounds are the alkaloid – Harman and Harmine; the Saponin – Sapogenin, Chlorogenin and Ruscogenin; the Glucosides – Tribuloside and Kaempferol. There are also plenty of resins, reducing sugars, tannins, pero-oxidase and diastase enzymes.

(4) Asvangandha (*W. somnifera*)

Rich in amino acids – Glycine, Aspartic acid, Glutamic acid, Cystine, Proline, Tryptophan Alanine and Tyrosine. Also contain reducing sugars.

(5) Salibmisri (*E. campestris*)

It contains large amount of gelatin, starch, mucilage, reducing sugars etc. It is also rich in amino acids, minerals and vitamins.

(6) Salabmisri (*O. letifolia*)

It also contain large amount of floury substance, starch, gelatin and mucilage. It is also rich in amino acids and volatile oils. There are traces of coumarin.

(7) Satavari (*A. racemosus*)

The biologically active chemicals reported are Saponins – Shatavarin I, II, III & IV and Sapogenins. There are some Glycosides and Steroids and rich amount of enzymes Amylase and lipase.

(8) Salparni (*D. Gangeticum*)

The chief biologically active compounds are the alkaloids – Hypaphorine, Hordenine, Candicine, and Typtamine. Other chemicals are Gangetin, Desmodin and Gangetinin.

(9) Shyam Musli (*C. orchoides*)

The biologically active compounds are alkaloids – Lycorine; Glycoside – Curculigoside; Saponin – Sapogenin; and Steroid – B. Sitosterol. There is plenty of tannins, mucilage, resins, sugars, fats & minerals.

(10) Nagakesar (*M. ferrea*)

The biologically active chemical compounds are Coumarin – Mesuferron, Mammeisin, Mesuanic acid; Triterpenoids – Guttiferol; Steroid – B – Sitosterol; and the antibiotic – Mesugin. There some essential oils and fatty acids like Palmitic, Stearic, Linoleic & Oleic acids.

(11) Braham Dandi (*A. Mexicana*)

The alkaloids Berberine and Protopine are the chief chemicals of biological action. There is also an essential oil called Agremone oil.

(12) Makardhaj buti (*C. melo*)

It contains some essential oils, vitamins and minerals.

(B) Dose and administration of drug

250 gms of item nos. 1 to 4 and 150 gms each of the rest is taken with 100 gms of Rose petals (*Rosa gallica Linn.*), Leaves and Punarnava (*Boerhaavia diffusa Linn*) and Saunf (*Foeniculam vulgare mill*) and made into powdered mixture. One teaspoonful of the mixture is to be taken with one glass of infusion of Chiraita (*Swertia Chirayata*) in water 3 to 4 times a day. Fresh juice of Carrot (*Daucus carota*) is also recommended. During the course of treatment hot and spicy foods are to be avoided.

(ii) Hematuria

(a) Dose and administration of the drug:

It is a condition in which blood is passed with urine. It also causes irritation and burning sensation. The herbal vendors have simple treatment for it. Jai Jamni (*C. villosus*), Asvangadh (*W. somnifera*)

and two gokhrus (*P. murex and T. terrestris*) are the drug of choice. 250 gms of each are taken with 100 gms of Sanuf (*F. vulgera*) and Rose petals (*R. gallica*). One teaspoonful of the powdered mixture are to be taken with one glass of fresh juice of white pumpkin (*Cucurbita maxima*). During the course of treatment hot spicy foods and intoxicating materials are to be avoided.

(iii) Syphilis and Gonorrhoea

These are venereal diseases acquired through sexual contact. Both are horribly painful conditions. While in the former ulcers develop on the genital organs, and the vital organs like heart, liver, brain and bones are also affected in the later case there is pain and swelling in the body joints accompanied by pus and fluid discharge with the urine. Urination is with much difficulty and cause burning sensation

The street healers claim to have specialized in the treatment. They use the following herb as a drugs of choice to prepare the final drug.

S. No.	Common Name	Botanical Name	Parts Used
1	Jal Jamni	<i>Cocculus villosus Linn</i>	Dried Leaves
2	Giloy	<i>Tinospora cordifolia wild (Miers)</i>	Dried stems
3	Shayam Musli	<i>Curculigo orchoides Gaertn.</i>	Dried roots
4	Talimakhana	<i>Hygrophila spinosa T. Anders</i>	Seeds
5	Mulethae	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra Linn.</i>	Dried roots
6	Kutki	<i>Picrorhiza kurroa anct. Non. Royle : Hook .F</i>	Dried rhizome

7	Kala Beej Bandh	<i>Sida acuta burm</i>	Seeds
8	Panir	<i>Solanum dulcamara Linn</i>	Dried flower buds and fruits
9	Braham Dandi	<i>Argemone Mexicana Linn</i>	Whole plant

(A) Phytochemistry of the herbal drugs used

(1) Jal Jamni (*C. Villosus*)

Described in Part II 3 I (A) Page 4

(2) Giloy (*T. Cordifolia*)

The chief biologically active chemicals are the alkaloids – Berberine and the glycoside – Giloin. The non-glycosidic bitter principle is (Giloinin. Other bitter compounds are Columbin, Palmarin, Tinosporol, Tinosporie acid and Chasmanthin. The Steroid is Gilo – Sterol.

(3) Shyam musli (*C. orchoides*)

Described in Part II 3 I (A) Page 5.

(4) Talimkhana (*H. Spinosa*)

The biologically active compounds are alkaloids – Asterol, Astracanthine and Astracanthicine; Steroid – phytosterol and Triterpenoids – Lupeol. There is also enzyme Lipase, Diastase & Protease. It has large amount of mucilage and potassium salts.

(5) Mulethae (*G. glabra*)

The chief chemical compound of biological action is Glycyrrhizin. There is an estrogen steroid – Estrial, plenty of sucrose, glucose, resins, asparigin and volatile oils.

(6) Kutki (*P. kurroa*)

The biologically active compounds are the Alkaloids – Kutkin, Kutikiol, Alkanol, Kurrin and Apocynin. The Glycosides are Picoside & Picrorhizin and the Steroids are B-Sitosterol and Kutkisteroll There is also Vanillic acid and Catharatic acid.

(7) Lal Beej Bandh (*S. grewioides*)

The major biologically active compound is the alkaloid Ephedrene. Besides it has large amount of mucilage, some oil and minerals.

(8) Panir (*S. dulcamara*)

The biologically active compounds are alkaloids – Soladulcine, Solanine and Solanidine. Other bitter principles are Dulcamarin, Dulcamarinic acid Lycopin.

(9) Braham Dandi (*A. Mexicana*)

Described in Part II 3 I (A) – Page 6.

(B) Dose and administration of the drug

250 gms of item nos. 1 & 2 and 100 gms each of the rest is taken with 50 gms of Rose petals (R. gallica) and

150 gms of roots of Bhindi (*Hubiscus esculentus*) and pounded. A decoction is prepared from this pounded mixture by boiling in water and is taken two teaspoonful twice daily. Patients has to avoid eating hot and spicy foods and desist from sexual contact during the course of treatment.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Study reveals that several herbs used in the treatment of urino – genital disorders are common, easily available and also cheaper. It has simple methods of preparation and convenient in administration. Jal Jamni (*Cocculus villosus*) which is regarded as a miraculous herbs by them for the treatment of all urino genital diseases grows wildly at several places.

A survey made with the users of herbal drug who took herbal treatment from these street healers for one or other urino-genital disorders gave very encouraging results. Most of the people expressed satisfaction over the treatment. Since the ingredients used are mostly cheaper except for a few one the treatment is less expensive and can be afforded to by the common man. But since venereal diseases has a social stigma and many people especially those who are affluent do not like to visit their family doctors, they usually go for treatment with these street herbalists and pay them handsomely.

Significantly several of those plant products which they were using for treatment of urino – genital disorders since centuries have now been found to be of great medicinal value and is finding application in others systems of medicines too.

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