

Traditional Herbs Used in Modern Medicine

By: Julianna DeGaetano

jdegaetano@usf.edu

Faculty Sponsor: Holly Donhaue Singh



Abstract

Within global health it is important to look at how culture and religion plays a role in healthcare and how patients may be treated. Taking a closer look at Ayurveda medicine in India, helps to analyze how religion and culture influence the medication and treatment given. Ayurvedic medicine puts more emphasis on the treatment of the body and soul as a unit rather than treating a single body part. Followers of Ayurveda medicine prefer to use herbal medicines to treat illness. Many of these herbs are native to Southeast Asia and have been used in Indian culture for many years. Herbs such as Ajwain and Brahmi are very common in Ayurvedic medicine and have many different properties that affect the body. Ajwain is commonly used to treat hypertension and high blood pressure, while Brahmi is a neuroprotector that has benefits to help the brain. Some of the more common herbs such as Brahmi and Ajwain have been used in clinical studies for modern medicine to test the affectivity of these herbs over pharmaceutical drugs. There are still many other herbs that are used in ayurvedic medicine that have not be clinically tested but have been in use for centuries. This poses a problem as the side effects from these herbs may be unknown and scientists worry that they will not be able to regulate access to them.

Safety/Concerns

- Many of these traditional herbs have been found to contain large amounts of heavy metals
- Out of 6,000 medicines listed in an Aryuvedic journal, 30-40% of them contained heavy metals (Gogtay et al., 2002)
- Scientist are concerned with the use of herbs as medicine as they can't be controlled like many over the counter drugs

Introduction

- **In Southeast Asia, medicine has been mixed with culture and tradition**
- **An important practice of medicine found in India, is called Ayurveda medicine**
- **Ayurveda medicine emphasizes the importance of the body and soul as one**
- **This practice of medicine incorporates spiritual healing and herbal medicines to treat patients**
- **Some of the most common types of herbal medicines found in Aryuvedic medicine, include Ajwain, Brahmi, Cardamom, Cumin, and Neem (Which are the most Used Ayurvedic Herbs).**
- **Some of these herbs, such as Ajwain and Brahmi are being tested in a clinical setting to determine their medicinal purposes**

Ajwain

- Ajwain is a plant that originated in Persia and spread to India (The Spruce Eats)
- It can be found in Indian markets and spice shops and is best when found in the seed form
- Ajwain has pharmaceutical properties such as analgesic effects, insecticidal effects, and bronchodilatory effects (Zarshenas et al., 2013).



Brahmi

- The Brahmi plant also known as *Bacopa monnieri*, originated in India and has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for centuries (History of Bacopa, 2020).
- Brahmi has been found to contain neurodegenerative properties
- The herb is now being clinically tested on the effects of one of the most common neurodegenerative disease, Alzheimer's (Dubey, 2019).



Conclusions

- When trying to understand the impacts that these herbs have on the body, many researchers struggle in finding every herb used, as many of these herbs are part of tradition and culture and will not be shared with outsiders
- Overall, many of the common Ayurvedic herbs do have medicinal applications, however clinical studies are still being tested in order to prove significant effects on clinical health of patients.

References

1. Dubey, Tushar, and Subashchandraboese Chinnathambi. "Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*): An ayurvedic herb against the Alzheimer's disease." *Archives of biochemistry and biophysics* 676 (2019): 108153.
2. Gogtay, N. J., et al. "The use and safety of non-allopathic Indian medicines." *Drug safety* 25.14 (2002): 1005-1019.
3. "History of Bacopa Monnieri." Entity Health, Entity Health, 16 June 2020, <https://entity-health.com/history-of-bacopa-monnieri/>.
4. Mathur, Mahima, et al. "Ajwain: Benefits, Precautions and Dosage." 1mg, 9 July 2019, <https://www.1mg.com/ayurveda/ajwain-20>.
5. "Which Are the Most Used Ayurvedic Herbs and Their Benefits?" Ayurvedic Products: Buy Ayurvedic Medicine Online, Kerala Ayurveda, 24 Jan. 2020, <https://www.keralaayurveda.biz/blog/guide-to-the-most-used-ayurvedic-herbs-and-their-benefits>.
6. Zarshenas, Mohammad M., et al. "An overview on ajwain (*Trachyspermum ammi*) pharmacological effects; modern and traditional." *Journal of natural Remedies* 14.1(2013): 98-105.

