Review Article

THERAPEUTIC USES OF ASPAGHOL (PLANTAGO OVATA) MENTIONED IN GREECO ARAB MEDICINE AND MODERN ERA: A REVIEW


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ABSTRACT
The seeds/husk of Plantago ovata Forsk. from family Plantaginaceae commonly known as Aspaghol Musallam or Suboos-e-Aspaghol are used in Greece-Arab medicine, other traditional medicine and even modern advanced medicine as herbal drugs. The seeds/husk of Plantago ovata contain hemicelluloses, carbohydrates, protein, tannin, glycosides, fixed oil, linoleic acid, palmetic acids etc. Therapeutic uses of seeds/husk of Aspaghol are mentioned in Greeco-Arab medicine are Qabz (Constipation), Warm-e-Balghani, Zaheer (Dysentry), Aanton ki kharash (Intestinal ulcers) Qurooh-e-Meda wa Isna Ashari, (Peptic ulcers), Diabetes Mellitus, Hyperlipidemia etc. This article reviews the main reports of the therapeutic uses of Aspaghol and its constituents based on the available literature.

Keywords: Aspaghol, Plantago ovata, therapeutic uses, Greeco-Arab medicine.

INTRODUCTION
Aspaghol is derived from Persian word Aspa = means ‘horse’ ghol = means ‘ear’. It resembles like the ear of horse, so called Aspaghol. Scientific name is Plantago ovata Forsk. from the family Plantaginaceae. Greeco-Arab Medicine is named because Unani system of medicine was originated in Greece and developed by Arabs into an elaborated medical science based on the framework of teachings of great Greek Philosopher and Physician Buqrat (Hippocrates) and Jalinoos (Galen). Unani medicine got enriched in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Persia, India, China and other Middle East countries. It was the Greek founder who freel medicine from superstition and magic, and gave it the scientific evaluation. Unani System of Medicine was introduced in India by Arabs in 13th Century. Due to its efficacy and scientific base, it was accepted by masses and this system took firm roots in India. Now it comes under AYUSH department and progressing as organized way.

Alternative Names
Bazre-Quutana (Arabic) Aspiyoos, Shikamdarida, Asphghol (Persian and Urdu) Asbghol (Hindi) Spogel Seed husk (English)

Plant Description
Aspaghol is an important medicinal crop of India which is found in North-West India and mostly cultivated in Gujrat, Karnataka, Haryana. It is a stem less, softly hairy or woody annual herb. Leaves are 7.5-23 cm long, broad, narrowly linear or filiform, entirely or distantly toothed, attenuated at the base usually 3 nerved. Flowers in ovoid or cylindrical spikes 1.3-3.8 cm long, bracts 4 mm long, calyx 3 mm long usually glabrous, sepal elliptic obtuse concave, corolla lobes rounded 3 mm long concave. The husk is the rosy white membranous covering of the seed.

Parts used
Whole Seeds or Husk of the Seeds.

Chemical Constituents
Psyllium husk contains a high proportion of hemicelluloses, composed of a xylan backbone linked with arabinose rhamnose and galacturonic acid units (arabinoxylans). Carbohydrates, Protein, Tannin, Glycosides, Fixed oil, Linoleic acid, Palmetic acids, Iron, Zinc, Potassium and Sodium.

Temperament
Cold and Wet Cold 2° and Wet or Dry (Moatadi) Jalinoos Cold 2° and Wet 2° (Shaikh) Cold (Discoroids) Cold 3° and Wet 2° and Cold 3° and Wet (Little) Cold 3° and Between Wet and Dry

Therapeutic Dosage
4.5 – 10.5 Masha (g) 4.5 – 7 g

Pharmacological Actions
Daf-e-Humna (Antipyretic), Mulayyin (Laxative), Mudirr-e-Baul (Diuretic), Muqavvi-e-Medah (Stomachic) Naf-e-Quroode Meda wa Isna Ashari (Antipeptic ulcer) Mugharri wa Muzlique (Glutinous and Demulcent), Daf-e-Zaheer (Antidyssentric), Qabiz (Astringent),
Mudammil Sahaj wa Qurooh-e-Ama (Cicatrigenf)\textsuperscript{12}, Musakkin-e-Atash\textsuperscript{1,6,9,12}, Musakkin-e-Hararat (Hypothermic)\textsuperscript{2,5,9}, Hypcholestrolaemen Agent\textsuperscript{7}

**Therapeutic Uses**
Asphalgh are used since long time in Greeco-Arab medicine in the following:
- Qabz (Constipation)\textsuperscript{1-2,4,9}, Warm-e- Balgham\textsuperscript{6,12,15}, Zaheer (Dysentry)\textsuperscript{7,9}, Sut'ale yabis (Dry Cough)\textsuperscript{7,4,8,9}, Zatu-I- Janb (Pleural Effusion)\textsuperscript{4}, Qulanj\textsuperscript{4}, Warme Luhat, Wajau-l- masafis (Arthraglia)\textsuperscript{4,12,15}, Asath or peyas (Thirst)\textsuperscript{7,3,9,12}, Hummiyat (Fever)\textsuperscript{8,9,12,15}, Aanton ki kharash (Intestinal ulcers)\textsuperscript{9,8,9,15}
- Qurooh-e-Meda wa Isa Ashari (Peptic ulcers)\textsuperscript{10}, Amraz-e-Kulliya wa Masana (Kidney and Bladder disease)\textsuperscript{10}, Ishal wa Pechish (Diarrhoea)\textsuperscript{1,7,9}, Maror and Anton ke zakhm (Intestinal cramps and wounds)\textsuperscript{10}

**Therapeutic Effect of Husk**
Effect on plasma lipids and lipoprotein,\textsuperscript{18-25} Effect on cholesterol metabolism,\textsuperscript{26} Effect on constipation,\textsuperscript{1,17} Effect on Diabetes mellitus.\textsuperscript{28,29}

**Muzir Asraat (Adverse Effects)**
Adverse effects on nerves and appetite.\textsuperscript{1,7,9}

**Musleh (Corrective)**
Use of some drugs has been recommended along with Asphalgh to avoid its adverse effects. Shahad (Honey) and Sikanjabeen Asli.\textsuperscript{1,7,9}

**Badal (Substitute)**
Following drugs are mentioned as substitute of Asphalgh in Unani text book: Behdana (Talaeen) and Tukhm-e-Khurfa (Tabred)\textsuperscript{6,9}

**Murakkabat (Formulations)**
- Sufoof-e-Teen\textsuperscript{4,10}, Sufoof-e-Moya\textsuperscript{10}, Qurs-e-Tabasheer Kafoor\textsuperscript{8,10}, Qurs-e-Ziyabets Khas and Laoaq-e-Behdana.\textsuperscript{4}

**CONCLUSION**
Asphalgh is very beneficial for human being due to its pharmacological actions of the seeds in different ailments like constipation, peptic ulcer, diarrhea, dysentery, intestinal cramps, arthalgia, hyperlipidemia, hypertension and diabetes mellitus. This drug is used in traditional medicine since long time in some diseases. But it is proved that it can be used in a number of disease because research are going on. So, this paper may be helpful to know the pharmacological actions and uses of Asphalgh.

**REFERENCES**


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