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Reviewing the therapeutic value of Joanesia asoca: Ashoka

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Abstract

For long years asoca is used by humans in different ways. It is an Indian plant found in religious places and is also grown for its medicinal properties and therapeutic uses. It is also used in homoeopathy for the treatment of female and respiratory complaints. According to a few doctors, it is useful in managing cases of arthritis, neurological disorders, skin problems, etc.

This study aims to review different materia medica and repertories for a better understanding of Joanesia asoca along with its clinical indication in Homoeopathy.

Objectives: To study the therapeutic value of asoca, related to Homoeopathy as well as other systems of medicine.

To evaluate the study of joanesia asoca through Homoeopathic Materia Medica and Repertory.

Keywords: Ashoka, asoka, joanesia asoca, homeopathy, *Saraca indica*, asthopalva

Introduction

Common name

Saraca indica, Asthopalva, Asoka.

Joanesia asoca is an Indian homeopathic drug prepared from the bark of a tree that is 7-10 meters in height and has 15-20 cm. long leaves. It is an important tree in the cultural traditions of the Indian subcontinent. The flower of asoca tree is the state flower of the Indian state of Odisha.

Mythology

The Ashoka tree is related to yakshi mythology. Often found in Buddhist and Hindu temples, it is the sculpture of yakshini holding the branches of asoca tree. In Hinduism, it is worshiped in Chaitra month. It is also mentioned in Ramayana. Hindu God Kama deva included asoca among the five flowers which represents seductive hypnosis^[1].

Classification

Botanical name: *Saraca Indica* linn^[2].

Natural order: Caesalpiniaceae^[3].

Family: Leguminosae^[2].

Area of distribution: Himalaya, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Bangladesh^[2].

Time of flowering: April^[2].

Conservative status: Critically endangered^[2].

Description of the plant: Asoka is treated as a sacred plant of Hindus and it is native to India. It is an evergreen plant that has helicoid, uniporous branches^[3].



Fig 1: Asoka tree ^[1].

Parts of the plant used

Bark

Bark is externally yellowish to greenish smooth with circular lenticels and internally reddish-brown. It acts on the endometrium and ovarian tissue. It is used in cases of infertility, irregular menstrual cycles, and bleeding from the uterus ^[2].



Fig 2: Asoka bark ^[2].

Leaves

Leaves are 15-20 cm. long, rachis glabrous and are used to treat skin disease, and gastralgia, and also have blood-purifying properties ^[2].

Flowers

Asoka is known for its beautiful foliage and fragrant flowers. The flower is a uterine tonic and is also used in dysentery, inflammatory conditions, and diabetes ^[2].



Fig 3: Asoka flower ^[3].

Seeds

Seeds are ellipsoid-oblong, 4 cm. Long compressed, and are

used in the treatment of rheumatic arthritis and in strengthening bones. It has shown effects in cancer cells but doesn't affect normal lymphocytes ^[2].

Physiochemical action

- It has anthelmintic action, an astringent and strengthening agent ^[3].
- It has phytochemicals namely ketosteril, 11-deoxyprocyanidin, epicatechin, procyanidin, and saponin. Ketosteril is a glycoside whereas saponin is an organic calcium compound found in the whole plant. A phenolic glycoside showed specific oxytocic activity in the myometrium and Fallopian tubes. Crude glycosides showed action on the uterus ^[4].



Fig 4: Chemical structure of Saponin ^[4].

Therapeutic use of the plant in different systems of medicine

In ancient medicine, it was used for menstrual and uterine disorders. It was used for amenorrhoea and scanty menses and as a uterine tonic that could strengthen the uterus, weakened by chronic ailments ^[2].

Ayurveda

It is used in the Ayurvedic system of medicine for the treatment of female disorders. Bark obtained from the stem contains tannins (0.57%-7.85%) and ash (2.43%-6.69%), which is a uterine sedative and uterine tonic and it also shows effects on the endometrium and ovarian tissue ^[2]. Chakradatta had advised asoka in the treatment of bloody leucorrhoea and suppressions. The therapeutic properties of asoka in treating leucorrhoea were not mentioned in Charaka and Sushruta. Bark and fruit are mainly used as medicine in the ayurvedic system ^[5].

Allopathy

Tannin and catechin are constituents. Hooper said that it contains tannin. Abbott said it contains hematoxylin. No marked action was produced when the extracts were proved on the isolated uterus and uterus in situ. It is an astringent used in conditions like menorrhagia. Mainly used in uterine affections ^[5].

Homoeopathy

Dr. D.N. Ray of Calcutta proved the drug.

Preparation according to HPI: Mother Tincture – Drug

Strength 1/10

Joanesia asoca in dried moderately coarse powder 100gm to be mixed with 900 ml of strong alcohol and 125ml of purified water.

Sphere of action

According to the Homoeopathic system of medicine it mainly acts on the female reproductive system ^[2], musculoskeletal, respiratory system, and GIT ^[3].

Indications of Joanesia Asoka through various materia medicas.

Dr. D. N. Ray successfully used asoca for uterine troubles. ^[5]

Mind: Weeping tendency, restless and hysterical ^[9].

Head: Congestive headache and periodic headache which is ameliorated by bathing ^[2]. Unilateral headache ^[6]. Headache disappears after eating ^[7].

Eye: Photophobia, pain in the supraorbital region, and eyeballs ^[6]. Blurred vision, swelling over upper eyelids. Burning and itching of eyes with redness ^[2]. Inflammation of eyes with tears ^[3].

Ear: Pain in the ear ^[3]. The hardness of hearing after cold exposure ^[2].

Nose: Bleeding from the nose and loss of smell, nose obstructed ^[2]. Running nose with sneezing ^[3].

Tongue: Excessive thirst with white or brown coated tongue ^[2]. Dry tongue ⁽³⁾.

Aversion: milk. Desires sour food, and sweets. Biliary vomiting ^[3]. Constipation. Colicky type of pain in the stomach ^[6].

Female: Suppression of menses causes headache. Blackish, foul-smelling, scanty, and pale menstrual discharge, better by flow ^[2].

Menses irregular and delayed, Painful ovaries before flow ^[6].

Lochia is long-lasting and black with a fetid smell ^[8]. It is found that it is great medicine when the menstrual flow has stopped for any cause and for which colicky abdominal pains supervene ^[10].

Sleep: Disturbed sleep ^[6].

Back: Pain in the back which is radiating to Abdomen, especially at night ^[2].

Clinical Conditions

Delayed and irregular menses, Metrorrhagia, Congestive headache ^[2], Dysmenorrhea, Bloody leucorrhoea, infantile leucorrhoea, reflex headaches due to uterine pathology Constipation ^[7].

Emaciation.

Hysteria, Dreams of traveling.

Fibroids and haemorrhoids ^[10].

Thickened and irritable bladder

Pain along the spine radiating to the abdomen and thighs is associated with uterine pathology.

Gastric complaints such as the desire for sweets, also acid things. Thirsty, excessive nausea

Photophobia - supraorbital and orbital pains with nasal catarrh and watery discharge.

References were found regarding the successful use of this medicine by R. Gupta in cases of one-sided headache due to uterine troubles with backache in tincture form - 5-10 drops 6- hourly.

He also cured a case with complaints of leucorrhoea, amenorrhoea, and painful menses and pain in ovaries with asoca in tincture form - 5 drops three times a day ^[12].

Remedy relationships

It is used as an intercurrent remedy. It is used as a complementary to Abroma Augusta, Viburnum opulus, Pulsatilla, and Sepia ^[8].

Discussion and Conclusion

During the literature review, various materia medica and repertories were studied and it was observed that only a few materia medica which are referred to during the clinical practices like, Boericke's MM, Lotus materia medica, etc. contains information about this medicine. However, no repertory has included this medicine under any rubric. Hence there is a need to upgrade our materia medica and repertories with such remedies with high therapeutic value. More proving and reproving is the need of an hour for enhancing our system.

Joanesia asoca has a wide therapeutic value in homeopathy as well as other streams of medicine. This medicine can be extensively used in treating feminine complaints and in maintaining good reproductive health if proven properly

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