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## Reviewing the therapeutic value of Bambusa Arundinacea: Bamboo

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### Abstract

Many major medications used today are derived from medicinal plants. Humans have traditionally employed bamboo in a variety of ecological and medical applications. Bamboo is one of the precious plant resources of the earth. A tall, thorny tree *Bambusa arundinacea*, is a highly reputed medicinal tree commonly referred to as bamboo, a member of Graminae family found throughout India, moist parts of India. Various parts of the plant such as the leaves, root, shoot and seeds possesses anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, anthelmintic, anti-ulcer, antioxidant, anti-aging, anti-carcinogenic, anti-atherosclerotic, anti-apoptosis, cardiovascular properties, astringent activity and activities that improve endothelial function, are well documented. It is also used in Homoeopathy for the management of symptoms related to rheumatic conditions like Ankylosing spondylitis, Cervical and Lumbar spondylosis and female hormone complaints. <sup>[1]</sup>

This study includes a review of different available homoeopathic literature for a better evaluation and understanding of the therapeutic values of the recently proven drug *Bambusa arundinacea*.

**Keywords:** Bamboo, *Bambusa arundinacea*, homoeopathy, Ankylosing spondylitis, cervical spondylosis, lumbar spondylosis

### Introduction

*Bambusa arundinacea* is a tall thorny tree widely distributed in South East Asia mainly India, Japan, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Ethiopia, and the Philippines. A common bamboo found distributed throughout the moist parts of India, up to an altitude of 1250 m particularly near river banks (Anonymous, 1988), in Central and South India ascending up to 1100 m on the Nilgiri (Nadkarni, 1976), also cultivated in many places in North-West India and Bengal. <sup>[2]</sup> It is a member of the Grass family, commonly referred to as Bamboo, Mulmunkil, Bams, and Kantabams etc. in regional languages. There are about 88 genera and 1400 recorded species of bamboo in the World. <sup>[3]</sup> More than a billion people's quality of life and daily living have been impacted by utilizing various types of bamboo for a variety of purposes due to its characteristic flexible & highly tensile nature. Bamboo wood also contains a considerable amount of Bio-energy. <sup>[4]</sup>

In folk medicine, the leaves have been used to treat blood diseases & inflammation. The hardened material inside bamboo has been used for tuberculosis, asthma & leprosy. The shoots are said to be an appetite stimulant and digestion aid. The root has been used for ringworm. The juice from the flowers has been used for earache and deafness. Some modern studies confirm its anti-inflammatory and anti-tumour effects and its action on the uterus. <sup>[5]</sup>

### Classification

**Botanical name:** *Bambusa arundinacea*

**N.O:** Graminae

**Family:** Poaceae

**Description of the plant:** Bamboo is a tall thorny tree widely distributed in India. Tall, woody bamboo with many, thorny stems that can grow up to 40 meters in length, tufted leaves, and internodes that are 30 to 45 cm long. It only blooms once in a lifetime, usually between the months of September and May, and its thin, linear leaves can grow up to 20 cm long <sup>[2, 3]</sup>. Bamboo requires humus soil that is well-aerated and permeable to water and grows rapidly <sup>[4]</sup> Plant needs heat to survive or it will die if the temperature falls less than 50 °C. It lives many years and commonly used as food, medicine and even as a building material.



Fig 1: Bamboo [6].

**Parts used:** roots, leaves, young shoots, seeds and juice. The whole plant contains high levels of silica and is used in Ayurvedic medicine. Medicinal properties are also shown by various parts of plants as following [6].

**Young shoots:** young shoots against nausea, indigestion and wound infections [6].



Fig 2: Bamboo young shoots [4].

**Leaves:** the leaves against menstrual pains and worms and strengthening the function of the stomach [6].



Fig 3: Bamboo leaves [4].

**Roots:** The roots are used for joint pain and general weakness, and the juice of the plant for osteoarthritis and osteoporosis. [6]

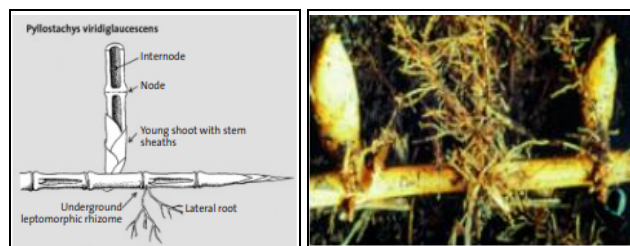


Fig 4: Bamboo roots [4].

**Physiochemical action of Bamboo [3].**

It has phytochemicals namely tannins that bind to proline rich protein and interfere with protein synthesis, phlobatannins used for its wound healing properties, these are anti-inflammatory and analgesic, flavonoids are hydroxylated phenolic substances known to be synthesized by plants in response to microbial infection, cardiac glycosides are used to treat ulcer and diabetic treatment, reducing sugar, phenols which are known to exhibit medicinal as well as ayurvedic property.

Table 1: Phytochemical constituent of Bambusa arundinacea seeds [3].

Chemical category	<i>Bambusa arundinacea (Retz.) Willd.</i> seed variety
Tannins	+
Phlobatannins	+
Saponins	-
Flavonoids	-
Alkaloids	-
Terpenoids	-
Phenols	+
Cardiac glycosides	+
Anthraquinones	-

**Bamboo and its proving in Homoeopathy**

*Bambusa arundinacea* is one of the homeopathic medicines recently discovered thanks to proving's, since it was tested in 1996 by the German Bernd Schuster and entered the French pharmacopoeia in 2014. Proving was done on 20 subjects. All participants in the proving made comments about "tension and relaxation": 18 out of 19 refer to tension and 10 out of 19 refer to relaxation. The general theme of stiffness and relaxation was recorded during its proving [7]. Bamboo is characterised by elasticity, endurance, persistence and powers of survival. One interpretation of bamboo is a lack of elasticity in terms of tension, tightness or stiffness, but also at the other extreme excessive looseness in the form of laziness, day-dreaming and hypermobility of the spine. This was seen in the study at all levels, from the psychological to the physical sphere by Schuster [7].

The bamboo stem is straight and cylindrical, having nodes between two internodes. It is strong, straight, and has the flexibility to bend all the sides likewise spine is made of 33 individual bones stacked one upon another. The vertebral column is the main support of the body and the theme of support, flexibility appears central to the bamboo remedy state. Similarly patient has a great desire for support from others. They feel responsible for everything and nobody

helps them. Desire freedom and change but feel helpless and stuck in their situation and become irritable, jealous, restless, and sad [7].

### Homoeopathic pathogenetic trial of Bambusa arundinacea [4].

In 1966, proving on smaller group was done by Guillaume with 23 subjects where Guillaume saw good results with Wala Disci preparations and arrived at Bambusa e nodo (3x, 4x, 6x, 12x) by WALA.

In 1996, German physician Bernd Schuster conducted proving on 20 healthy adult subjects and 12 single case records where he used a tincture of Bambusa arundinacea shoots in the 6x, 30c and Q and documented definite symptomatic improvement in half of the patients. He used this to treat patients with herniated nucleus pulposus, Scheuermann's disease, ankylosing spondylitis, cervicodorsal malformation, and lichen myxedematosus.

### Homoeopathy Literature

The proving's and symptoms of the drug Bambusa arundinacea has been mentioned in our literature books like Dr. Robin Murphy's "Lotus Materia Medica-III" and in few homoeopathic software's such as RadarOpus under the Synthesis & Murphy's Repertory & in Synergy Homoeopathic Software under the "Reliable Reverse Repertory" and "Sherr Q Reverse Repertory" in rubrics for the better understanding and application of Bambusa in to practice.

### Lotus Materia Medica-III [5].

#### Bambusa arundinacea

**Clinical indications:** Acne, Ankylosing spondylitis, Arthritis, Backache, Belching, Colds, Constipation, Cystitis, Depression, Diarrhoea, Dyspepsia, Gingivitis, Headaches, Heartburn, Indigestion, Influenza, Insomnia, Joint pains, Leucorrhoea, Motion sickness, Nausea, Neck pain, Neuralgic pains, Nightmares, Post-partum depression, Rheumatism, Ringworm, Sciatica, Spinal injuries, Stiffness, Tendonitis, Torticolis, Tuberculosis, Vertigo, Vomiting.

**Mind:** Dullness, sluggishness, difficulty thinking and comprehending. Concentration difficult while driving, studying, makes mistakes in writing, omitting letters. Absent-mindedness. Memory weakness, from mental exertion. Forgetful. Imagines he/she is deceived, deserted, forsaken. Delusions everything will fail. Imagines he has ruined his health.

**Abdomen:** Gas and bloating. Obstructed flatulence. Rumbling noises. Bilious complaints with tenderness in the gall bladder region.

**Back:** Backaches. Spinal injuries. Ankylosing spondylitis. Burning along the spine. Stiffness and tension. Cramping, aching and dragging pains. A knotted feeling in the back. Heat waves, flushes. Numbness and tingling. Sacroiliac pains. Coccyx pain, after injuries. stiffness. Stiffness, shoulders. Neuralgic and rheumatic pains, shoulders.

**Female:** Dysmenorrhea. Profuse menses. Suppressed menses. Offensive leucorrhoea. Post-partum depression, accompanied by a stiff neck, back pain or sciatica (Cimic.). Prolonged lochia. Menstrual problems after childbirth.

Excoriation of cervix. Tearing pain in ovaries.

**Fever:** Influenza (Rhus-t.).

**Limbs** - Rheumatic pains. Stiffness, worse from damp, cold weather. Sciatica, as if painful electric currents running down the sciatic nerve to the hollow of the knee. Sharp, stitching pains. Numbness and tingling. Twitching of limbs. Radiating pains. Wandering and wave-like pains. Icy cold hands and feet. Weakness and heaviness. Swelling of the ankles. Weak ankles. Burning in the soles of the feet and icy cold feet. Weakness of the hand, difficulty in writing with contractions and spasms.

**Modalities** - Pains are better from rest, heat, hot drinks. Worse in the morning on waking, from cold and damp.

**Neck**- Stiffness, worse from damp, cold weather. Tension in neck. Very difficult to turn the neck. Torticolis.

**Sleep:** Insomnia. Sleeplessness, from an overactive mind. Constantly turning ideas over in the mind. Wakes 3:30 a.m. to 4:30 a.m. Confused dreams. Nightmares. Dreams of accidents, misfortune, disease, deaths. Dreams of animals, water. Dreams children, old friends. Dreams of teeth falling out. Amorous dreams.

**Stomach:** Belching. Heartburn, worse from excitement, beer. Indigestion. Dyspepsia. Empty, weak, hungry feeling. Nausea from odors. Nausea with headaches. Motion sickness. Lump sensation. Vomiting after nuts and in the evening.

**Temperature:** Alternating fever and chills. Chilliness, worse at night. Shaking, shivering with chills.

### Reliable Reverse Repertory [10].

Bambusa arundinacea [BAMB-A] - Mind Rubrics

- Ailments from; anger, vexation; suppression, of
- Bed; desires to remain in
- Brooding
- Delusions, imaginations, hallucinations, illusions; deserted, forsaken
- Emotions; suppressed; ailments from
- Forsaken feeling
- Indifference, apathy; everything, to
- Responsibility; ailments, from

**Repertory of Mental Qualities [Q-Rep], 3<sup>rd</sup> edition compiled by Jeremy Sherr and Raphael Neu and updated in July 2018 into Materia medica format [10].**

### Bambusa arundinacea [BAMB-A] - General Rubrics

- Judgmental: judgmental quality. (332)
- Knives and points: knives and points quality. (163)
- Light: Light Quality. (429)
- Light and Dark: Light and Dark Quality. (188)
- Low self esteem: low self esteem quality. (281)
- Low self esteem: low self esteem primary remedies. (40)
- Money: money quality. (241)
- Money: money primary remedies. (37)
- Music: Music Quality. (285)
- Opinion of Others: Opinion Of Others Quality. (271)



- Perfectionist: perfectionist quality. (242)
- Perfectionist: perfectionist primary remedies. (46)
- Trapped: Trapped Quality. (256)
- Victim: victim quality. (377)
- Victim: victim primary remedies. (72)
- Water: Water Quality. (393)

### Discussion

Nowadays due to sedentary lifestyle habits, 80-90% of the population are seeking medical advice for common problems like low back pain and neck pain at some point during their lives. Such common problems majorly affect the quality of life of a person. In conventional treatment, NSAIDs or surgery is the only available option. Hence there is a necessity to explore the possibility of using Homoeopathic intervention in such cases. It is found in our literature that in Homoeopathy, *Bambusa arundinacea* has great action on the musculoskeletal system. The proving with this remedy was done in 1994 by Schuster on 20 subjects and 12 case studies only. Further reproving of this drug with a larger sample size is needed to include this medicine in our routine practices.

### Conclusion

*Bambusa arundinacea* has a wide therapeutic value in homoeopathy as well as other systems of medicine. This medicine can be extensively used in managing rheumatic and feminine complaints if proven properly. During the literature review, it was found that only a few books like Lotus Materia Medica-III and a few latest repertories like Synthesis and Reverse reliable repertories mentioned *Bambusa arundinacea* medicinal indications. More proving and reproving on animal models and preclinical and clinical trials are needed to enhance our practice with this drug. In the future prospective and experimental studies using a larger sample size are recommended to assess the potentiality of this drug even better.

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### Author's Contribution

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### Conflict of Interest

Not available

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