

Anti-Freckles Herbal Treatment in Iranian Traditional Medicine

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Abstract

Background: Freckles are numerous pigmented spots of the skin, mainly confined to the face, even arms and back. Although freckles are light-brown macules, most frequently observed in individuals with red or blond hair, they are common to Asian people too. Freckles increase in number, size, and depth of pigmentation during the summer months. Histologically, freckles show increased production of melanin pigment by a normal number of melanocytes. Freckles commonly stop spreading before adolescence and last for life, but could sometimes be subtle in adulthood. Treatments are often requested for cosmetic purposes. Before the advent of lasers, treatment modalities for pigmentary disorders included surgical excision, dermabrasion, chemical bleaching, and peeling. These treatments may lead to unwanted side effects of potential scarring or undesired pigmentation changes. In Iranian traditional medicine (ITM), freckles have been known as well. “Namash” was the term used by ITM scholars to indicate freckles. There is a wide range of plants, which were prescribed by Iranian physicians for the treatment of freckles. The purpose of this study is to find the most frequent useful herbs for freckles as mentioned in ITM references.

Methods: Seven ITM references were studied for anti-freckles medicines. The references were Canon of Medicine (Avicenna), Alhavi (Razes) Tuhfat ul-Momineen (Momen tonekaboni), Makhzan-ul-Adwiah (Aghili), Ikhtiyarat Badi'i (Ansari), Al-abnia An-Haghyegh el-advia (Heravi), and al-jāmi li-mufradāt al-adwiyawa al-aghdhiya (Ibn al-Baitar). Moreover, plants were ordered according to their repetition in the references. Afterwards, traditional names of the selected plants were matched with the scientific names using botanical text references.

Results: This study demonstrated that *Myristica fragrans* Houtt, *Cicer arietema* L., *Eruca sativa* Lam., *Lilium candidum* L., *Amygdalus communis* L., *Arum italicum* L. were the most frequent herbs mentioned in ITM references for the treatment of freckles.

Conclusion: Herbs mentioned in this article could be appropriate candidates for future studies in the field of freckles treatment.

Keywords • Pigmentation • Medicine • Traditional • Herbal Medicine

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