

The Most Frequent Herbs Proposed by Iranian Traditional Medicine for Alopecia Areata

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Abstract

Background: Alopecia areata (AA) is a common immune-mediated hair loss disorder. AA has a reported incidence of 0.1-0.2% with a lifetime risk of 1.7%. Histologically, AA is characterized by the accumulation of mononuclear cells around the bulb of the affected hair follicles. Corticosteroids are the most popular drugs for the treatment of this disease. Despite its high prevalence, currently available treatments are mostly unsatisfactory and inefficient for the more chronic and severe types of the AA. Alopecia areata is a well-known disorder in Iranian traditional medicine (ITM). “Da oth-tha’lab” was the term used by ITM scholars to indicate AA. Traditional Iranian physicians believed that the presence of morbid matter in the scalps is the main cause of the disease, which blocks nutrients and causes hair roots to deteriorate. Herbal medicines in the form of topical preparations were applied by ITM scholars for the treatment of AA. This study was performed to determine the most frequent useful herbs for AA as mentioned in ITM.

Methods: Seven ITM references such as 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-aghhdhiya (Ibn al-Baitar) were studied for anti-AA medicines. Subsequent to our study, the herbal medicines were listed and scored based on the frequency of their prescriptibility. Moreover, we took the effort to provide the best scientific name for each plant.

Results: This study showed that *Allium cepa* L., *Artemisia abrotonon* L., *Allium sativum* L., and *Asphodelus ramosus* L. were the most frequent herbs mentioned in ITM references for the recovery of AA.

Conclusion: These herbs can be introduced as new herbal medicines for clinical research in the field of alopecia areata treatment.

Keywords • Alopecia areata • Medicine • Traditional • Plants • Medicinal