

## Scientific validation of method of manufacture of Raughan-e-Banafsha: A potent herbal formulation

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### ABSTRACT

Raughan-e-Banafsha, a sesame oil extract of *Viola odorata* flowers is effectively used in Unani system of medicine to treat cephalagia and insomnia. The Raughan (extract in oil) was prepared separately by soxhlet extraction method and the conventional method as described in National Formulary of Unani Medicine, Vol 1. The two Raughans were analyzed for their physicochemical properties and serotonin content. It was found that they were not significantly different in their appearance, solubility in petroleum ether, saponification value, iodine value, acid value, density and the number of spots developed on TLC plates and their R<sub>f</sub> values. However the color, peroxide value, the amount of unsaponifiable matter and serotonin present in the two Raughans were different (more as compared to other method) indicating thereby that the soxhlet extraction method extracted the components in increased quantity as compared to conventional method as described in National formulary of Unani Medicine.

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The Unani system of medicine has a long history dating back 460-377 BC. Since then Unani physicians have been treating the ailing masses with their precious medicine prepared according to their own recipes. The age old recipes have been compiled in the form of National Formulary of Unani medicine. The drugs thus prepared and prescribed to the patients were most of the time large in quantity and inconvenient to take. Thus with the advent of time and availability of scientific procedures need to modify the methods of preparation/form without compromising on the efficacy of medicine was felt. One such potent Unani formulation is Raughan-e- Banafsha which is an extract of *Viola odorata* (Banafsha) flowers in sesame oil.

Banafsha (*Viola odorata*) is a species of genus *Viola*, native to Europe and Asia but has also been introduced in North America (Chiej, 1984). In India it is easily cultivated in hilly areas of North India. In Kashmir Himalayas the plant grows well in cool and moist climate above 5000ft. It is in leaf all the year long, in flower from February to April and the seeds ripen from April to June. (Annonymous, 2001).

*Viola odorata* has long and proven history of folk use especially in the treatment of cancer of the breast, lungs or digestive tract and whooping cough (Grieve, 1984; Duke and Ayensu, 1985). The whole plant is anti-inflammatory, diaphoretic, diuretic, emollient, expectorant, and laxative (Lust, 1983; Uphoj, 1959). The flowers are demulcent and emollient (Chopra *et al.*, 1986). They are used in the treatment of biliousness and lung disorders. The petals are made into syrup and used in the treatment

of infantile disorders. An essential oil from the flowers is used in aroma therapy in the treatment of bronchial complaints, exhaustion and skin complaints (Brown, 1995).

The plant is well known in India for its medicinal virtues. It is used for several diseases in Unani system of medicines in treating cephalagia, induration of joints and insomnia (NFUM, 1981)

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### *Preparation of Raughan-e-banafsha:*

Two samples of the raughan were prepared in the lab. Raughan I was prepared according to the conventional method as prescribed in Unani text while the raughan II by solvent extraction method.

#### *Raughan I:*

The raughan was prepared using the conventional method as described in National Formulary of Unani Medicine. 20gm. of dried flowers were immersed in 100 ml water for 24 h and filtered. The filtrate was mixed with 100 gm raughan-e-kunjad (sesame oil) and boiled till the water got evaporated, cooled, filtered through muslin cloth again and used subsequently.

#### *Raughan II:*

500gm of fresh flowers were extracted with ethanol in soxhlet for 24 h. The extract was dried under vacuum. The dried extract (20 gm) was dissolved in 100 gm raughan-e-kunjad and used subsequently.