

Traditional herbs used for diabetes in Rajasthan

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This review focuses on Indian herbal drugs and plants used in the treatment of diabetes, especially in India. Diabetes is an important human ailment afflicting many from various walks of life in different countries. In India it is proving to be a major health problem, especially in the urban areas. Though there are various approaches to reduce the ill effects of diabetes and its secondary complications, herbal formulations are preferred due to lesser side effects and low cost. A list of medicinal plants with proven antidiabetic and related beneficial effects and of herbal drugs used in treatment of diabetes is compiled. These include *Allium sativum*, *Eugenia jambolana*, *Momordica charantia*, *Trigonella foenum graecum*, *Acacia arabica* and *Capparis deciduas*. Herbal medicines, products and therapies are a subject of great public interest both nationally and worldwide. Use of herbal therapy is common among patients with diabetes.

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INTRODUCTION

Diabetes mellitus is a systemic metabolic disease characterized by hyperglycemia, hyper lipidemia, hyper aminoacidemia, and hypo insulinaemia it leads to decrease in both insulin secretion and insulin action (Altan *et al.*, 2003). It is frequently associated with the development of micro and macro vascular diseases which include neuropathy, nephropathy, cardiovascular and cerebro vascular diseases (Feldman *et al.*, 2000). The disease is associated with reduced quality of life and increased risk factors for mortality and morbidity. The long-term hyperglycemia is an important factor in the development and progression of micro- and macro vascular complications (Strojek *et al.*, 2003). The worldwide prevalence of diabetes for all age groups was estimated to be 2.8 per cent in 2000 and it is projected to be 5.4 per cent in 2025.

Currently available therapies for diabetes include insulin and various oral antidiabetic agents such as sulfonylureas, biguanides, α -glucosidase inhibitors and glinides. In developing countries as products are expensive and not easily accessible. Presently, there is growing interest in herbal remedies due to the side effects associated with the oral hypoglycemic agents (therapeutic agent) for the treatment of diabetes mellitus. So the traditional herbal medicines are mainly used which are obtained from plants, it plays important role in the management of diabetes mellitus (Patel and Srinivasay, 1997). Herbs for diabetes treatment are not new. Since ancient times, plants and plant extracts were used to combat diabetes. Many traditional medicines in use are derived from medicinal plants, minerals and organic matter. The World Health Organization (WHO) has listed 21,000 plants, which are used for medicinal purposes around the world. India is the largest producer of medicinal herbs and is called as botanical garden of the world. The current review focuses on herbal drug preparations and plants used in the treatment of diabetes mellitus, a major crippling disease in the World leading to huge economic losses. At last even the World Health Organization (WHO) expert committee on diabetes has recommended that traditional medicinal herbs be further investigated. Covered here are herbs that have been confirmed by scientific

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