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# HERBAL MEDICINES IN THE TREATMENT OF MOUTH ULCER: A REVIEW

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#### ABSTRACT

Apthous ulcer heals but it frequently causes pain and discomfort and may change the eating preferences. The two most frequent causes of oral ulceration are apthous stomatitis and local trauma. This review focuses on the mouth ulcers causes and contributing factors. Unless linked to some underlying systemic condition, this ulcer resolves in a week to 10days with the potential for a quick recurrence Analgesics, antibiotics, and topical steroid application are the only medications used to treat symptoms in most cases. The medications used to cure mouth ulcers Aloe vera, Guava, capsicumannum, turmeric. Botanical components with antiulcer activity include favonoids(e.g. quercetin, naringin, silymarin, anthocyanosides, soforadin derivatives) were used so far. The aim of the study is to investigate the effects of herbal medicines in oral ulcer treaments.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

A mouth ulcer also known as oral ulcer or mucosal ulcer occurs in the mucosal membrane of the oral cavity which are present mainly on the inside of cheeks or lips. The mechanism of ulcer and its association with many diseases varies for different types of ulcers.<sup>[1,2,3]</sup> It is the most common oral disease with a prevalence of 25%.<sup>[4]</sup> There is no definitive cure for ulcers and the treatment plan depends on the frequency and severity of the disease symptoms.<sup>[5]</sup> The conventional treatment is to reduce the pain and lessen lesion duration.<sup>[9]</sup> Current treatment for ulcer includes topical analgesic and analgesic agents, antibiotics, multivitamins, systemic corticosteroids and varieties of combined therapies.<sup>[5-8]</sup> Medicinal plants are used as an alternative for chemical medicines nowadays for the treatment of ulcers as they have anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant activities.<sup>[8,10]</sup> Recent reports also suggest that medicinal plants can be used as an alternative for treatment of lesions and some of the reports have proved the efficacy of these medicinal plants.<sup>[11]</sup>

#### II. TYPES OF MOUTH ULCERS

Mouth ulcers are classified into 3 types based on their size and number as minor.major and herpetiform mouth ulcer.<sup>[12,13]</sup>

#### MINOR ULCERS

Size : Small, 2 to 8 mm in diameter Healing : 10 to 14 days

#### MAJOR ULCERS

Size : Big, 1 cm or more Healing : Weeks to months May leave a scar in the mouth

#### **HERPETIFORM ULCERS**

Size : Small, pinhead Found in small clusters

# III. FACTORS RESPONSIBE FOR MOUTH ULCER

#### **GENETIC FACTOR**

Upto 30 to 40% of people have a hereditary history of mouth ulcers.  $^{\left[ 14\right] }$ 

#### PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

In a survey it has been said that 50 to 60% of students and military personnel were affected by daily stressful tasks like exams.<sup>[15]</sup>

#### NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCY

Unbalance in the intake of essential nutrients like iron, folic acid or vitamin B12 might result in mouth ulcers and can be prevented by taking a balanced diet.<sup>[16]</sup>

# TRAUMA

Trauma caused due to a sharp tooth or over hanging restoration, aggressive tooth brushing, local application of aspirin, self biting and dental treatments will lead to the formation of mouth ulcers.<sup>[17]</sup>

#### FOOD ALLERGENS

There are several foods which will cause ulcers some of them are coffee, chocolate, peanuts, cereals, almonds, cheese, strawberries, tomatoes, wheat flour and gluten containing meals.<sup>[18]</sup>

#### DRUGS

Some of the medications such as Nicorandil, NSAIDS, Ibuprofen and nicotine replacement therapy may induce mouth ulcers.<sup>[19]</sup>

#### OTHERS

- Toothpastes and mouthwashes containing sodium lauryl sulfate
- Hormonal changes
- Viral infections
- Infectious agents
- Medical conditions.<sup>[20,21]</sup>

#### **IV. IMPORTANCE OF HERBAL MEDICINE**

Herbal medicines are easy to use, needs no processing and has very minimal side effects compared to chemical medications.<sup>[22]</sup> Most of the under developed countries still use herbal medicine as their primary health care. Traditional medicine has been in use around hundred years before the modern medicine was developed. Traditional medicine is considered as the most expensive form of indigenous medicine practiced by the doctors. Traditional medicine has also been mentioned in the literature of various countries and is made up of organic material, minerals and medicinal plants.<sup>[23]</sup> Herbs are biosynthetic chemical factories that create a variety of chemical substances. They are made from fragments of plants or unpurified plant extracts which adds more synergistic value.<sup>[24]</sup> People prefer herbal treatments over the allopathic medication because of their low adverse effects and because of this people also rely more on the traditional treatments to cure a variety of illnesses.As the traditional medicines bio-degradable are and environmentally friendly plant based products to treat various ailments they are practiced in majority of the world populations.<sup>[25]</sup> Phytogenic agents are used for the prevention and treatment of ulcer. This article gives a detailed review on the anti-ulcer properties of certain herbs and their identified active constituents.<sup>[26,27]</sup>

#### V. ADVANTAGES OF HERBAL MEDICINE

- Cost efficient
- Easily available
- Used for a long time
- Eco-friendly
- Prolonged use is also safe and efficient
- Some herbal plants have also shown anti-ulcer activity.<sup>[28]</sup>

# VI. HERBAL PLANTS USED IN THE TREATMENT OF MOUTH ULCER

1. PSIDIUM GUAJAVA

Other names : Peru, Guava, Ambrud

**Components:** Flavonoids, triterpenoids, steroids, carbohydrates, oils, lipids, glycosides, alkaloids, tannins and saponins.

**Properties:** Anti-oxidant, anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatoryand anti-cancer.

**Used for:** Mouth ulcers, rheumatism, diarrhea, diabetesmellitus, sore throat and coughs.<sup>[29]</sup>

Partused : Leaves, roots, fruits

Form : Gel, mouthwash

**Dosage :** Mucoadhesive gel – QID for 5 days.<sup>[37-47]</sup>

#### 2. CURCUMIN

Other name : Turmeric

**Components :** Diarylheptanoids, desomethoxycurcumin, bisdemethoxycurcumin

**Properties:** Analgesic, anti-oxidant, anti-septic, anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory

**Used for :** Mouth ulcers

Partused : Dried rhizome and stem.<sup>[29]</sup>

Form : Mouthwash, oil, gel

**Dosage :** Topical application of gel TDS for 10 days.<sup>[37-47]</sup>

### 3. LICORICE

**Other names :** Glycyrrhizaglabra

**Components:** Triterpenesaponins, flavonoids, polysaccharides, pectin, simplesugars, aminoacids, mineral salts.

**Properties:** Expectorant, demulcent, anti-oxidant, antiulcer, estrogen like, anti-asthmatic, anti-diuretic, antihepatotoxic

**Used for :** Mouth ulcers.<sup>[30]</sup>

**Partused :** Root extract

Form : Disc pathches, Mucoadhesive gel

**Dosage :** Gel TDS for 7 days.<sup>[37-47]</sup>

### 4. ALOE VERA

**Other names:** Aloe barbedensis

**Components:** Aminoacids, anthraquinones, enzymes, hormones, lignin,

minerls, salicylicacid, saponins, sterols, sugars, vitamins.

**Properties:** Anti-oxidant, anti-inflamatory, mucussecreting, cyto-protective, immunomodulatory, antifungal, hepatoprotective

**Used for:** Mouthulcers, skincare, woundhealing, hypoglycemic, hypolipidemic.<sup>[31]</sup>

**Partused:** Leaves, flowers, stems, roots, fruits, seed. **Form:** Gel

**Dosage:** 0.5% Acemannan in carbopol TDS for 7 days.<sup>[37-47]</sup>

#### 5. MINT

Other name : Menth

**Components :** Vitamin A,C, iron, calcium, magnesium **Properties :** Anti-bacterial, anti-microbial, cooling effect **Used for :** Mouth ulcers, Provide fresh breaths.<sup>[32]</sup> **Part used :** Leaves **Form :** Oil, Gel, Mouthwash

#### 6. TULSI

Other names :Ocimum sanctum linn, Holy basil

**Components :** Essentialoils, eugenol, methyl, betacaryophyllene, methyl chavical, linalool and 1,8-cineole **Properties :** Anti-helminthic, anti-pyretic, immune stimulant, anti-ulcer, anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, anti-ulcer

**Used for :** Peptic ulcer, mouth ulcer.<sup>[33]</sup>

Part used : Leaves

**Form :** Honey and tulsi ice chips

**Dosage :** Swish honey tulsi ice chips 5 mins before each dose of methotrexate, Replenish chips before previous ice has melted x 30 mins.<sup>[37-47]</sup>

#### 7. GINGER

**Other names :** Zingiberoffcinalis **Components :** Gingerol, shogaol, zingerone **Properties :** Anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant **Used for :** Mouth ulcer<sup>[33]</sup> **Part used :**Ginger's alcoholic extract **Form :**Mucoadhesive base **Dosage :** Topical application TDS 7 days<sup>[37-47]</sup>

#### 8. JASMINE

**Other names :** Jasmine grandiflorum **Components :** Ascorbic acid, salicylicacid, glucoside **Properties :** Anti-oxidant, anti-ulcer **Used for :** Mouth ulcers, Wound healing **Part used :** Leaves.<sup>[34]</sup>

#### 9. AMLA

**Other names :** Emblica, Indiangooseberry, emblica officinalis

**Components:** Vitamin C, tannins, alkaloids, phenolicsubstance, aminoacids, carbohydrates, gallicacid, elagicacid, chebulinicacid, quercetin **Properties :** Anti-oxidant, boosts immunity **Used for :** Mouth ulcer **Part used :** Fruits.<sup>[35]</sup>

#### 10. GREEN TEA

**Other names:** Camellia sinensis **Components:** polyphenols, flavonoids, catechins, enzymes, aminoacids, phytochemicals, sterols, minerals **Properties:** Anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory, ant-viral, anti-allergic, anti-cancer

**Used for:** Mouth ulcer, oral cancer **Part used:** Leaves **Form:** Dried leaves.<sup>[36]</sup>

### VII.DISCUSSION

Mouth ulcers, medically referred to as aphthous ulcers or canker sores, are a common oral condition that can cause significant discomfort and interfere with daily activities such as eating, speaking, and even smiling. While conventional treatments are available, herbal medicines have been utilized for centuries as alternative remedies for managing mouth ulcers. This discussion delves into the diverse array of herbal medicines employed to alleviate the symptoms and promote the healing of these pesky ulcers.  $\ensuremath{^{[41]}}$ 

Aloe vera, a succulent plant with a long history of medicinal use, offers a natural remedy for mouth ulcers. The inner gel of the aloe leaf contains bioactive compounds, including polysaccharides and glycoproteins, that possess anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and wound-healing properties. When applied topically, aloe vera gel forms a protective barrier over the ulcer, soothing irritation and facilitating tissue repair. Its anti-inflammatory effects reduce redness, swelling, and pain, contributing to overall relief.<sup>[42]</sup>

Licorice root, derived from the Glycyrrhiza species, has been utilized in traditional medicine systems across cultures. Its active compound, glycyrrhizin, exhibits antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties. When used as a mouthwash or gel, licorice root can help combat microbial infections, reduce inflammation, and accelerate the healing process. The demulcent nature of licorice provides a soothing coating over the ulcer, easing discomfort and supporting the body's natural healing mechanisms.<sup>[43]</sup>

Chamomile, renowned for its calming and antiinflammatory effects, has been employed as a herbal remedy for mouth ulcers. The essential oil extracted from chamomile flowers contains bisabolol and chamazulene, compounds known for their analgesic and wound-healing properties. Chamomile's anti-inflammatory actions reduce pain and swelling, while its calming nature promotes relaxation. Using chamomile tea as a mouthwash or applying chamomile oil directly to the ulcers can offer relief and accelerate healing.<sup>[44]</sup>

Sage, a fragrant herb often used in culinary dishes, has a rich history as a medicinal plant. Its potent antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties make it a valuable herbal medicine for managing mouth ulcers. Sage mouthwashes or gargles can help control bacterial growth, reduce inflammation, and alleviate pain. The active compounds in sage, such as thujone and rosmarinic acid, work synergistically to combat infections and promote a healing environment.<sup>[45]</sup>

Myrrh, a resin obtained from the Commiphoramyrrha tree, has been utilized in traditional healing practices for centuries. Its antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and astringent properties make myrrh an attractive option for treating mouth ulcers. A paste created by mixing myrrh powder with water can be applied directly to the ulcers, aiding in pain relief and accelerating the healing process. Myrrh's ability to promote tissue repair and reduce inflammation contributes to its efficacy in managing ulcers.<sup>[46]</sup>

Honey, a natural sweetener and antimicrobial agent, has been employed for its wound-healing properties. Raw honey contains enzymes that produce hydrogen peroxide, which helps combat bacterial infections. Additionally, honey's viscosity creates a protective barrier over the ulcer, shielding it from further irritation and promoting healing. Applying a small amount of honey directly to the ulcer can provide relief, reduce pain, and expedite the recovery process.<sup>[47]</sup>

Coconut oil, revered for its versatile health benefits, has gained attention as a potential remedy for mouth ulcers. The oil's anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties contribute to its effectiveness in managing oral conditions. Oil pulling, a practice involving swishing coconut oil in the mouth, can help alleviate discomfort, reduce inflammation, and promote healing. Coconut oil's soothing nature provides relief and supports the body's natural healing mechanisms.<sup>[41]</sup>

While herbal medicines offer promising benefits for managing mouth ulcers, several precautions and considerations should be noted. First and foremost, it is important to consult a healthcare professional before using herbal remedies, especially if you have underlying medical conditions, allergies, or are taking medications. While herbal treatments are generally considered safe, individual reactions can vary. Secondly, the quality and source of the herbal products matter. Choosing highquality, standardized herbal preparations ensures consistency in dosage and potency. Always follow recommended dosages and application methods to prevent adverse effects. Lastly, if mouth ulcers persist, worsen, or are accompanied by other concerning symptoms, seeking medical attention is crucial. Persistent ulcers may indicate underlying health issues that require proper diagnosis and treatment.<sup>[43]</sup>

In the realm of herbal medicines, a rich tapestry of natural remedies offers a complementary approach to managing mouth ulcers. From aloe vera's soothing embrace to licorice root's antimicrobial prowess, these herbs exemplify the intricate synergy between traditional wisdom and modern science. While conventional treatments remain essential, herbal medicines provide an alternative avenue for relief and healing. As we continue to explore the intricate nuances of nature's pharmacopoeia, the utilization of herbal medicines for mouth ulcers underscores the timeless quest for holistic well-being.<sup>[45]</sup>

Incorporating herbal remedies into a comprehensive oral care routine can enhance comfort and promote the healing of mouth ulcers. However, informed decisions, professional guidance, and an understanding of each herb's mechanisms of action are imperative for a safe and effective experience. As we journey forward, the fusion of traditional knowledge and contemporary research will undoubtedly shed further light on the potential of herbal medicines in oral health management.<sup>[46]</sup>

#### VIII. CONCLUSION

From this review article we can understand the anti-ulcer properties of some herbal medicines which can be used as an alternative for allopathic medicine as they are cost efficient, easily available and does not have much of adverse effects. Some of the herbal medicines not only can be used for ulcer treatment for also various other health conditions like diabetes mellitus, rheumatoid arthritis or even cancer therapies. In the near future herbal medicines can be used in combination with allopathic medicine for synergistic effects with greater treatment success rates.

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