



The Role of Diet and Medicinal Herbs for Management of Sjögren's Syndrome in Traditional Persian Medicine

*Bagher Minaei¹, *Aniseh SaffarShahroodi², Majid Dadmehr^{3,4}, Majid Nimrouzi²*

1. Department of Histology, School of Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

2. Department of Traditional Persian Medicine, School of Medicine, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran

3. Research Institute for Islamic and Complementary Medicine, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

4. Department of Traditional Medicine, School of Persian Medicine, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

*Corresponding Author: Email: anisehsaffar@yahoo.com

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

Sjögren's syndrome (SS) is a chronic systemic autoimmune disease characterized by extensive dryness throughout the body, especially in the mouth (xerostomia) and the eyes (keratoconjunctivitis), profound fatigue and chronic pain. The complications of SS, including major organs involvement and lymphoma caused by lymphocytic infiltration of exocrine glands (1). SS is mentioned as the most common rheumatic autoimmune disease after rheumatoid arthritis, which its prevalence rate is about 0.03- 2.7% around the world (2). Most of the current therapeutic approaches are mainly focused on improving the patient's quality of life that have limited efficacy and some common side effects; these have resulted in growing trend towards using of interdisciplinary treatments in these patients (1,2). The traditional medicine treatments due to its long history can be suggested along with current therapeutic approaches.

According to the traditional Persian medicine (TPM) textbooks, although the term that is carefully the same as SS is not declared as a distinct

disease, regarding symptoms and signs of SS in current literature, it seems that some clinical manifestations are comparable with conditions, which have been described under the topic of dry dystemperament (DD) in the TPM sources (3). In DD, the patient may experience a degree of real dryness in various parts of the body, including in the eye, mouth, vagina, gastrointestinal tract and even throughout the body.

Based on TPM sources, whenever dryness prevails over the body or dominates on an organ, it should be moisturized via dietary recommendations and also topical or systemic administrations of those medications, which have wet temperament (4, 5). There are several nutritional advice and medicinal herbs for the treatment of DD, which also can be used to reduce some complications and dryness symptoms of the SS. This study suggest some appropriate dietary programs and medicinal plants for these patients (Tables 1,2), however, more clinical studies are required to evaluate their effectiveness.



Table 1: Some useful moisturizing herbal medicines for management of Sjögren’s syndrome in TPM (4-6)

Family	Scientific name	Common name	Traditional name	Temperament	Traditional medicinal products
Violaceae	<i>Viola odorata</i> L.	Sweet violet	<i>Banafsaj</i>	Cold & moist	
Nymphaeaceae	<i>Nymphaea alba</i> L.	White water-lily	<i>Niloofar</i>	Cold & moist	Oily drop (nasal/topical) Syrup, beverage
Asteraceae	<i>Lactuca sativa</i> L.	Lettuce	<i>Khass</i>	Cold & moist	
Gramineae	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> L.	Barley	<i>Shaeer</i>	Cold & dry	Barley water (Mā ol-shaeer)
Leguminosae	<i>Astragalus gummifer</i>	Gum traga-canth	<i>Kathira</i>	Moderate & moist	Syrup/beverage Topical ointment Emollient, softener, moisturizing
Malvaceae	<i>Malva sylvestris</i> L.	Common mallow	<i>Khobbazji</i>	Moderate & moist	Wet compress, salve Ointment
Malvaceae	<i>Althaea officinalis</i> L.	Altheae	<i>Khatmi</i>	Cold & moist	Sitz bath of leaf or flower Syrup, beverage
Rosaceae	<i>Prunus dulcis</i> (Mill.) D.A.Webb	Sweet Almond	<i>Lawz</i>	Moderate & moist	Cooked fruit Beverage Ointment
Cucurbitaceae	<i>Cucurbita pepo</i> L.	Pumpkin	<i>Qar'</i>	Cold & moist	Emollient, softener, moisturizing Oily drop (nasal/topical)
Plantaginaceae	<i>Plantago ovate</i> Forssk.	Blond plantago	<i>Bazr-e qatuna</i>	Cold & moist	Mucilage, mouthwash, gargling, laxative
Portulacaceae	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i> L.	Purslane	<i>Baqlat ol-hamqa</i>	Cold & moist	Leaf, seed, flower Extract, juice Wet compress & salve Fresh/cooked leaves
Brassicaceae	<i>Descurainia Sophia</i> (L.) Webb ex Prantl	Fixweed	<i>Khobbab</i>	Warm & moist	Beverage/cooked seed
Caesalpinaceae	<i>Cassia fistula</i> L.	Purging cassia	<i>Khiarshanbar</i>	Moderate & moist	Mouthwash Gargling
Rosaceae	<i>Prunus domestica</i> L.	Plum	<i>Ejjas</i>	Cold & moist	Laxative

Table 2: Therapeutic recommendations for management of Sjögren’s syndrome in TPM (4-6)

Complaints	General recommendations	Food products recommendations (Useful for all complaints)
Eye dryness	-Avoiding long-term sleeplessness, avoiding exposure to the wind, dust, hot or sunny weather	
Nose dryness	- Using nasal drop of moisturizing oils e.g., almond oil, violet-almond oil, white water-lily oil, and pumpkin oil - Using nasal ointments	1- Moisturizing foods and beverages: -Cooked rice with milk and sugar -Porridge of milk, starch and almond oil -Pottage/ stew -Chicken soup
Dryness in mouth and gastrointestinal tract	-Avoiding whatever aggravates the dryness like spicy condiment - Using herbal mouthwash (caries prevention) e.g., <i>Mentha spicata</i> (spearmint) -Gargling with mucilage herbs as a saliva substitute, such as blond plantago, quince seed, and tragacanth -Chewing or sucking lozenge/troche	-Whey protein (Mā ol-jobon) -Barley water (Mā ol-shaeer) -Goat milk -Plum soup
Vaginal dryness/dyspareunia	- Using sialogogue like sipping plum/lemon apple oxymel - Using moisturizing oils - Using herbal vaginal douching/suppository - Using sitz bath with medicinal plants, such as altheae and common mallow	2- Eating and gargling the following mixture: composition of cucumber and pumpkin seeds, soaked in goat’s milk, after extraction, mixed with quince seeds and sebestan plums boiled in water
Fatigue/chronic pain	-Aerobic endurance training - Using anointment throughout the body surface with herbal oils e.g., almond oil after bathe -Gentle body massage with moisturizing oils	3- Tonic and moisturizing foods or beverages: -Whey protein (Mā ol-jobon) -Yolk of soft boiled eggs -Nutritious broth

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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