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Ethnopharmacological Note

***Aloe vera* (L.) Burm.f. (Liliaceae)- a plant with multipurpose uses by a Bangladeshi folk medicinal practitioner**

*Syeda Seraj**, *Md. Ezazul Haque*

Department of Pharmacy, University of Development Alternative, Lalmatia, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh

Syeda Seraj: syedaseraj@hotmail.com

Aloe vera (L.) Burm.f. is a succulent and popular plant both cultivated and found in the wild in Bangladesh. In Bengali it is known as “Ghritokumari”. The plant belongs to the Asphodelaceae family but is also considered as a Liliaceae family plant. A number of ethnomedicinal uses of the plant have been reported. Oil prepared from leaf pulp of the plant is used against dandruff by the Mullu kuruma tribe of Wayanad district, Kerala (Silja et al., 2008). Leaf pulp is applied to expel thorns from feet by the Hakki-pikkies tribe of Karnataka, India (Kshirsagar & Singh, 2001). Fresh sap of leaf is applied topically for rheumatism by various ethnic groups of Godavri district of Andhra Pradesh, India (Raju et al., 2014). A review of the pharmacological properties of the plant shows that the plant has emollient, purgative, antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anthelmintic, aphrodisiac, and antifungal effects (Sahu et al., 2013). In one of our ethno-medicinal study, which was conducted in Ramnagar village, Noakhali district, we found some interesting medicinal uses of the plant. A folk medicinal practitioner, named Kaviraj Bijoy Govinda Chakraborty (*Kaviraj* is a title used by folk medicinal practitioners), male, 62 years old and practicing for the last 40 years gave these interesting information about this plant. We collected the specimen of this plant and identified the plant at the Bangladesh National Herbarium, Mirpur, Dhaka, where this specimen was identified as *Aloe vera*, and the accession number of this specimen was given as 43413. According to the *Kaviraj*, this plant was used for the treatment of arthritis, swelling, diabetes and piles. In arthritis, 2 tea-spoons of *A. vera* leaf pulp juice along with water was taken orally twice a day for 15 days. In swelling, 1 tea-spoon of *A. vera* gel (soft pulp within the leaf) was mixed with 1 cup of hot water and then this mixture was applied on the affected area, once a day until cure. In case of diabetes, 1 tea-spoon of *A. vera* gel was taken with water, twice a day at every meal. And in piles, equal amount of *A. vera* gel was mixed with sulphur to make a paste, which was applied externally on the affected area once a day. Some side-effects were also reported by the *Kaviraj* following us of this plant. This plant may damage kidney and cause passing of blood cells in the urine. Moreover, this plant was forbidden in pregnancy because it created uterine contraction which can result in miscarriage. So this study gives a new aspect of multiple uses of this plant, which merits further scientific attention.

References

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Figure 1. *Aloe vera* (L.) Burm.f.