Traditional medicinal uses of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

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**ABSTRACT**

Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAP) are the ingredients of herbal drugs, herbal preparations, and medicinal products, besides traditional/ complementary medicines, house hold remedies and nutraceuticals. Over 100 million women worldwide are currently using hormonal contraceptives. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* with these drugs, fertility can be suppressed at will, for as long as desired, with almost 100% confidence and complete return of fertility on discontinuation. The efficacy, convenience, low cost and overall safety of oral contraceptives (OC) has allowed women to decide if and when they will become pregnant and to plan their activities. This article highlights some of the traditional medicinal uses, chemical composition, therapeutic evaluation of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*.

**Keywords:** Traditional medicinal uses, chemical composition, therapeutic evaluation, therapeutic claims of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

**INTRODUCTION**

The herb *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* Linn (Malvaceae) is a glabrous shrub widely cultivated in the tropics as an ornamental plant and has several forms with varying colours of flowers. In medicine, however, the red flowered variety is preferred.

The leaves and flowers are observed to be promoters of hair growth and aid in healing of ulcers. Flowers have been found to be effective in the treatment of arterial hypertension and to have significant antifertility effect.

According to traditional texts it is well accepted that the leaves and flowers of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* have hair growth promoting and antigreying properties. Moreover, in India the herbal products in the market intended for hair growth include the extract of various parts of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*.

**TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL USES:**

Table shows that traditional medicinal uses of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Decoction of flowers</td>
<td>Regulation of menstrual cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Hot water extract of flowers &amp; bark</td>
<td>Emmenagogue, Gonorrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>East Indies</td>
<td>Hot water extract of flowers.</td>
<td>I. Regulate menstration produce abortion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Leaf Juice</td>
<td>II. To stimulate expulsion of afterbirth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>French Guiana</td>
<td>Hot extract of flowers</td>
<td>Digestion, Diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Peeled Twig</td>
<td>Grippe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Guadeloupe</td>
<td>Hot extract of flowers</td>
<td>Chawick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td>Sodoric, Antitussive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Decoction of flowers &amp; leaves</td>
<td>To Promote draining of abscesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>Flu &amp; cough, stomach pain, Eye problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Hot water extract of stems &amp; flowers</td>
<td>Lactation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Juice of leaves &amp; flowers</td>
<td>Menstruation, Abortion, Emmenagogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Decoction of leaves</td>
<td>Anti diarrheal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>Aphrodisiac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Hot water extract of roots &amp; flowers</td>
<td>Fever, Expectorant, Emmenagogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Infusion of Barks &amp; leaves</td>
<td>Dysentery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Hot water extract of roots</td>
<td>Cough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>New Britain</td>
<td>Hot extract of flowers</td>
<td>Menstruation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>Decoction of flowers</td>
<td>Abortifacient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Water extract of flowers</td>
<td>To induce labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Hot Water extract of flowers</td>
<td>Contraceptive, Emmenagogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Hot water extract of flowers</td>
<td>Bronchial Catarrh, Emmolients, Cancerous, Swellings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>Decoction of flowers</td>
<td>Amenorrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>Decoction of stems &amp; barks</td>
<td>Menorrhagia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Infusion of flowers</td>
<td>Dysmenorrhea, Abortive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CHEMICAL COMPOSITION

1. Major
   Anthocyanins & flavonoids; cyanidin-3,5-diglucoside, cyanidin-3-sophoroside-5-glucoside, quercetin-3,7-diglucoside, quercetin-3-diglucoside.

2. Other
   A cyclopeptide alkaloid, cyanidin chloride, quercetin, hentriacontane and vitamins: riboflavin, ascorbic acid & thiamine.

THERAPEUTIC EVALUATION

An uncontrolled clinical trial using the ethanolic extract of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* flowers was carried out on 21 women in the reproductive age group by administering 750 mg/day in 3 divided doses from the 7th to 22nd day of menstrual cycle (Total of 229 cycles). Fourteen women did not have pregnancy for 4 years, whereas 7 women dropped out of the trial.

A clinical study on 30 patients suffering from hypertension and hypercholesterolemia with a Siddha drug, *Anna Pavala Sindhooram*, containing Japa (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) has one of the ingredients, indicated that the drug is efficacious in reducing the cholesterol, phospholipids and triglycerides. On withdrawal of the drug there was slow increase in lipids.

Clinical trials were conducted with *Vidangadi yoga* (a herbal preparation containing *Embelia ribes* seeds. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* flowers and *Ferula foetida* oleo-gum resin) for its antifertility activity. The drug was found to be quite effective with no toxic effects.

MAJOR THERAPEUTIC CLAIMS: Oral contraceptive

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