Aloe vera on skin

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INTRODUCTION

Aloe vera is a naturally occurring product that is nowadays frequently used in the field of cosmetology. There are various indications for its use.¹ A. vera is a tender plant that belongs to the species of the genus Aloe. It is a perennial plant and it arises from the Arabian Peninsula but mostly seen in tropical climates around the world and is cultivated for agricultural and medicinal uses. A. vera, sometimes described as a “wonder plant,” is a short-stemmed shrub. The leaves of A. vera are succulent, erect, and form a dense rosette. Many uses are made of the gel obtained from the plant’s leaves. This topic will review the classification and brief description of A. vera on skin and its therapeutic properties.

The skin also plays an important role in protection of the body internal environment and it is the largest organ in human’s body so damage to the skin of serious damage to this organ may cause several problems in the living system. Skin is composed of two layers of epidermis and dermis that they are placed over the subcutaneous adipose tissue. Epidermis mostly contains keratinocyte layers in which some other types of cells like melanocytes and Langerhans cells are also found. Epidermis has been separated from dermis by the basement membrane. Dermis contains papillary and reticular cells that comprise extracellular matrix or the basal substance and that contain collagen, fibrous meshwork, elastin, and glycosaminoglycans. Despite various modern skin cares and treatments using herbal products like A. vera play an important role in wound healing, especially in alternative medicine.²

The other names of A. vera include Cape aloe, Aloe curacao, Barbados aloe, Venezuela aloe, Indian alces, Ghirita, Lu hui, and Star. It is also known as miracle plant, burn plant, medicine plant, and first aid plant.³ A. vera grows up to a height of about 12–16 inches. It is composed of fibrous root system and it does not have stems. It has thick leaves with sharp points, which are up to 18 inches long and 2 inches wider at the base of the leaf. Its leaves are even long and it is seen in triangular in shape. The tissue is in the center of A. vera. Aloe leaf contains a gel which yields the aloe gel. The leaves of A. vera contain much amount of water content and that is the reason why the plant

ABSTRACT

The aim of the review is to give an insight into the role of Aloe vera on skin and its therapeutic properties. A. vera is a succulent plant species of the genus Aloe. An evergreen perennial, it originates from the Arabian Peninsula but grows wild in tropical climates around the world and is cultivated for agricultural and medicinal uses. A. vera, sometimes described as a “wonder plant,” is a short-stemmed shrub. The leaves of A. vera are succulent, erect, and form a dense rosette. Many uses are made of the gel obtained from the plant’s leaves. This topic will review the classification and brief description of A. vera on skin and its therapeutic properties.

KEY WORDS: Aloe vera, Medicinal, Shrub, Skin, Therapeutic

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survives for more years. Leaves have spiky margins and are blotched creams. It is the member of the Lilly family. The roots of the pant are thick and fibrous in nature. The fruit in the triangular capsule contains numerous seeds.

*A. vera* plant is composed of many groups of enzymes like anthracene hydroxyl derivatives including aloins A and B2 with total 25–40% of chromone compounds and derivatives such as aloe resins A, B2, and C. The other important compounds in *A. vera* plant that include several sugars compounds such as glucose, mannose, and cellulose and various enzymes like oxidase, amylase, and catalase and also vitamins consisting of B1, B2, B6, C, E, and folic acid, and minerals like calcium, sodium, magnesium, zinc, copper, and chrome.

*A. vera* is the plant that belongs to the Liliaceae family that grows mostly in hot and arid regions. The existing mucilage tissue at the center of leaves in this plant that is also called as aloe gel is used for various cosmetics and medical applications.[9] The peripheral leaf cells in this plant produce bitter and yellow color latex that is called aloes. *A. vera* is one of the plants, which can be noticed in this regard.

*A. vera* or yellow aloe is the herbaceous and perennial plant, which is thick, tender, and has long leaves. The margin of its leaves is a little curled with thistle. Its flowers are placed in beautiful clustered form at the end of fluorescent stem axis with green to yellow color. *A. vera* is endemic to African regions and it is also called desert lily.[10]

The Egyptians used *A. vera* plant for the treatment of wounds, burns, and infections and then after them, Greeks, Spanish, and African peoples used *A. vera* plant by various techniques for several purposes. According to classic medicine in Iran, *A. vera* has hot and dry humor and its extract is used for medicinal purpose in many ways.[11,12]

Active components with its properties: *A. vera* contains almost 75 types of potentially active constituents that include vitamins, enzymes, minerals, sugars, lignin, saponins, salicylic acids, and amino acids.

**Vitamins**

It contains Vitamins A, C, and E, which act as antioxidants. It also contains Vitamin B12, folic acid, and choline. Antioxidant helps to neutralize free radicals.[13]

**Enzymes**

It contains eight enzymes, which includes aliase, alkaline phosphatase, amylase, bradykinase, carboxypeptidase, catalase, cellulase, lipase, and peroxidase. Bradykinase that helps to reduce excessive inflammation when applied to the skin topically, while others help in the breakdown of sugars and fats.

**Minerals**

*A. vera* provides calcium, chromium, copper, selenium, magnesium, manganese, potassium, sodium, and zinc. They are needed for the proper functioning of various enzyme systems in different metabolic pathways and few are antioxidants.

**Sugars**

*A. vera* produce monosaccharide such as glucose and fructose and it also produces polysaccharides such as glucomannans/polymanose. These are obtained from the mucilage layer of the plant and are known as mucopolysaccharides. The most important monosaccharide is mannose-6-phosphate, and the most common polysaccharides are called glucomannans. Acemannan, a prominent glucomannan, has also been found. Recently, a glycoprotein with antiallergic properties, called alprenol and anti-inflammatory compound, C-glucosylechromone, has been isolated from *A. vera* gel.[14,17]

**Fatty Acids**

It produces four types of plant steroids that include cholesterol, campesterol, β-sitosterol, and lupeol. All these have anti-inflammatory action and lupeol also possesses antiseptic and analgesic properties.

**Hormones**

It produces auxins and gibberellins, which will help in wound healing and has anti-inflammatory action.

**MECHANISM OF ACTION**

**Healing Properties**

Glucomannan, a mannose-rich polysaccharide, and gibberellin, a growth hormone, interact with growth factor receptors on the fibroblast, thereby increasing its activity and proliferation, which, in turn, increases the collagen synthesis after topical and oral *A. vera*. Aloe gel not only increases the collagen content of the wound but also altered collagen composition (more Type III) and increased in the degree of collagen cross-linking. Due to this, it accelerates the wound contraction and increases the breaking strength of resulting scar tissue. Increased synthesis of hyaluronic acid and dermatan sulfate in the granulation tissue of a healing wound following oral or topical treatment has been reported.

**Anti-inflammatory Action**

*A. vera* inhibits the cyclooxygenase pathway and reduces prostaglandin E2 production from arachidonic acid. The anti-inflammatory compound in *A. vera*...
called C-glucosylchromone was isolated from gel extracts of *A. vera*.[18]

**Laxative Effects**

Anthraquinones present in latex is an important laxative. It increases intestinal water content, which stimulates mucus secretion and increases intestinal peristalsis. Mucopolysaccharides help in binding moisture into the skin. Aloe stimulates fibroblast, which produces the collagen and elastin fibers making the skin more elastic and less wrinkled and reduces shrinkage. It also has binding effects on the superficial epidermal cells by binding them together, which help to soften the skin. The amino acids also soften hardened skin cells and zinc acts as an astringent to tighten pores and reduces it. Its moisturizing effects have also been studied in the treatment of dry skin associated with occupational exposure where *A. vera* gel gloves improved the skin integrity, decreases the appearance of wrinkle, and decreases erythema. It also has anti-acne effect.[19]

**Antiseptic Effect**

*A. vera* contains six types of antiseptic agents that include lupeol, salicylic acid, urea nitrogen, cinnamic acid, phenols, and sulfur. They all have inhibitory action against fungi, bacteria, and viruses.[20]

*A. vera* plant is cultivated from the seed. It requires a well-drained sandy soil in sunny location. *A. vera* needs a temperature of about 40°C. They should be cultivated in the spring season and watered carefully until they are formed. It grows in the arid climate. They should be watered regularly in the summers. However, overwatering can cause damage to the plant. It also grows in partial shade. It reaches the maturity in 4 years when the leaves are harvested.[21]

*A. vera* is the herbal plant, used to heal burns marks. *A. vera* cures various skin diseases. It can also be applied over the scalp as it helps to remove dandruff from the hair. *A. vera* is administered internally for cures various skin diseases. It can also be.

People uses aloe gel to the skin for acne, an inflammatory skin condition called lichen planus, inflammation in the mouth, burning mouth, radiation-induced skin damage, dental plaque, diaper rash, frostbite, gingival disease, bedsores, scabies, dandruff, wound healing, hemorrhoids, and pain after surgery to remove internal hemorrhoids, osteoarthritis, inflammation, and as an antiseptic. Aloe extract and aloe gel are also applied to the skin for genital herpes, scaly and itchy skin, burns, sunburns, and dry skin as it reduces the inflammations. Aloe extract is also applied to the skin as an insect repellent. Aloe leaf juice is also applied to the skin for anal fissures. A chemical found in aloe called acemannan is applied to the skin for dry sockets in the mouth and canker sores. The most useful parts of aloe are the gel and latex. The gel is obtained from the cells in the center of the leaf, and the latex is obtained from the cells beneath the leaf skin.

Aloe gel can cause changes in the skin that might aggravate diseases like psoriasis.

Aloe helps to speed wound healing by increasing the blood circulation through the area and preventing cell death around the wound.

It also found that aloe gel has certain properties that are harmful to certain types of bacteria and fungi.

**SIDE EFFECTS**

Topical: It will lead to redness, burning, stinging sensation, and rarely dermatitis in sensitive individuals those who are allergic to plants. Allergic reactions are mostly due to anthraquinones that include aloin and barbaloin. It is safer to apply it on a small area first to test for possible allergic reaction.[14]

**Gastro Intestinal**

Intestinal problems like Abdominal cramps, diarrhea, red urine, hepatitis, dependency or lead to worsening of constipation. Prolonged use of *A. vera* has been reported to increase the risk of colorectal cancer. Laxative effect may cause electrolyte imbalances.

**Contraindication**

Contraindicated in people those who are known allergic to plants in the Liliaceae family. Pregnancy and breastfeeding: Oral aloe is not recommended during pregnancy as it leads to uterine contractions, and also in breastfeeding mothers, it will lead to gastrointestinal distress in the nursing infant.[23-25]

**Interactions**

Application of aloe to skin leads to increase in the absorption of steroid creams such as hydrocortisone. It reduces the effectiveness and may increase the adverse effects of digoxin and digitoxin, due to potassium-lowering effect. Combined use of *A.*
vera along with furosemide may increase the risk of potassium depletion. It decreases the blood sugar levels and it may interact with oral hypoglycemic drugs and insulin.

When A. vera gel is administered as a topical agent, it is generally considered as safe. Aloe gel enhances the ability of hydrocortisone to reduce swelling if applied topically over it. If it is ingested, it may lead to increased hypoglycemia in conjunction with oral antidiabetics or insulin. The American Pharmaceutical Association rates A. vera gel for external use in category 2, meaning that “according to a number of well-designed studies and common use, this substance appears to be relatively effective and safe when used in appropriate amounts.” A. vera inner gel may significantly increase the absorption of Vitamins C and E after oral application. A. vera gel for systemic application is not recommended in combination with antidiabetics, diuretic, or laxative drugs; sevoflurane; or digoxin. In general, a 2-h time period is needed between oral drug application and A. vera ingestion due to increased intestinal motility and reduced drug absorption. If A. vera gel is used with any other prescription drug, the patient should inform the physician and pharmacist.

CONCLUSION

Even though A. vera has wide spectrum of the properties and uses, some of them could be myths and some of them could be real. In future, controlled studies are required to prove the effectiveness of A. vera under various conditions.

REFERENCES


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