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Herbal treatment of ulcerative colitis

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Statement of the Problem: Ulcerative Colitis (UC) is one of the clinical figures of inflammatory bowel disease which presented by clinical manifestations of abdominal pain, diarrhea, and blood in stool. This diseases has annual incidence of is 243 per 1,000,000 persons in Europe and is more common in Iran. Therefore, its prevention and treatment has high importance for clinician and also affected patients. In recent years, considerable efforts have been made to explore the possibility of using traditional plants to possess their therapeutic effects. I and my colleagues focused on the therapeutic and healing properties of some traditional plants and their derivatives in experimentally acetic acid induced UC in rat. This model is selected for our studies due to similar pathophysiological mechanism to those occurred in human UC. The beneficial properties of certain plant species such as *Hypericum perforatum* (St. John's wort), combination of grape seed and sesame oils, *Melilotus officinalis* (yellow sweet clover), and *Calendula officinalis* (marigold) in treatment and healing of UC lesions were reported by our team. Indeed, we found that these plants are richer from free radical scavenging agents include polyphenols (such as catechin and cinnamic acid) and other substances which decrease the oxidative stress and inflammation in the colon tissue, heal the pathological lesions and modulate the microbial population of the colon. On the other hand the anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial effects of these plants had clear role in treatment of UC lesions. Such properties can be summarized in the Figure 1. Based on this proposal that other plants which noted in traditional medicine as therapeutic agent for clone ulcers maybe have similar mechanism of action, therefore, performing animal model studies to confirm the reported effects scientifically using acetic acid and other models such as dextran sodium sulfate, 2,4,6-trinitrobenzene sulfonic acid, oxazolone, and indomethacin are highly recommended.

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