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ISSN 2321 - 6328

Review Article

ZANJABEEL (GINGER): A REVIEW

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Article Received on: 21/06/16 Accepted on: 04/10/16

DOI: 10.7897/2321-6328.04543

ABSTRACT

Ginger is a tuber that is consumed whole as delicacy, medicine, or a spice. Ginger cultivation began in Asia and has since spread to West Africa and the Caribbean. Ginger is cultivated in many parts of India; on a large scale in the warm, moist regions, chiefly in Madras, Cochin and Travancore, and to a somewhat less extent in Bengal and Punjab. Medicinal properties of the ginger mentioned in classical Unani text have been explored in this paper and chemical constituents of the drug have also been cited.

Keywords: Zanjabeel, Ginger, Anti-allergic

INTRODUCTION

Ginger is a tuber that is consumed whole as delicacy, medicine, or a spice. It is the rhizome of the plant *Zingiber officinale*. It lends its name to its genus and family. Other notable members of this plant family are turmeric, cardamom, and galangal. Ginger cultivation began in Asia and has since spread to West Africa and the Caribbean. It is sometimes called root ginger to distinguish it from other things that share the name ginger^{1,2}.

NOMENCLATURE

Botanical Name: *Zingiber officinale* Rosc.²⁻⁹

Vernaculars: ^{2, 5, 6, 7, 10-14}

The fresh rhizome:

English: Ginger

Arabic: Zanjabeel

Persian: Zangabeel

Hindi: Adarak

Sanskrit: Ardrakam

The dry rhizome:

English: Dry ginger

Arabic: Zanjabeel Yabis

Persian: Zangabeel Khushk

Hindi: Sonth

DESCRIPTION

The plant is a slender, perennial rhizomatous herb; leaves linear, sessile and glabrous; flowers yellowish green in oblong, cylindrical spikes, ensheated in a few scarious, glabrous bracts; fruits oblong capsules. The rhizomes are white to yellowish brown in colour, irregularly branched, somewhat annulated and laterally flattened. The growing tips are covered over by a few scales. The surface of the rhizomes is smooth and if broken a few fibrous elements of the vascular bundles project out from the cut ends^{2, 8, 9}. Stems are leafy and 1.8 m tall. Leaves are 30

cm long and 7.5 cm broad. Flowers are white or yellowish in colour, with pale yellow lip³. Fresh rhizomes jointed, 1-2 inches in diameter and compressed. It resembles amba halada in other peculiarities¹⁰.

DISTRIBUTION

Ginger is cultivated in many parts of India; on a large scale in the warm, moist regions, chiefly in Madras, Cochin and Travancore, and to a somewhat less extent in Bengal and Punjab^{7, 9}. It is cultivated throughout India,^{2, 3, 10} run wild in some places in the Western Ghats². It is propagated by root cutting³.

PARTS USED^{2, 7, 9, 10, 15}

Rhizome (raw as well as dry)

TEMPERAMENT

Hot 2⁰ and Dry 1⁰ ^{13, 15}

Hot 3⁰ and Dry 1⁰ (fresh), Hot 3⁰ and Dry 2⁰ (dry) ^{11, 14}

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Raw ginger^{2, 17}

Thermogenic, Carminative, Laxative, Digestive

Dry ginger^{2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 16}

Aromatic, Thermogenic, Emollient, Appetizer, Laxative, Stomachic, Stimulant, Rubefacient, Anodyne, Aphrodisiac, Expectorant, Antihelminthic, Carminative

Anti-allergenic activity, anti-amoebic, anti-atherosclerotic, anti-bacterial, anti-crustaceous, anti-diarrheal, anti-emetic, Anti-tussive and Anti-oxidant

The following actions have been mentioned in Unani literature

- Mulayyan (Laxative)- Dry^{11-13,18}
- Mushil (Purgative)- Raw¹⁸
- Dafe Qai (Anti-emetic)¹⁸
- Dafe Sual (Anti-tussive)¹⁸
- Qatile Kirm Shikam (Vermicidal)^{11, 13,18}
- Kasire Riyah (Carminative)^{11, 13-15,19}
- Hazim (Digestive)^{11, 13, 15}
- Muqawwi-e-Bah (Aphrodisiac)^{11,13}
- Munaffis-e-Balgham (Expectorant)¹¹⁻¹³
- Jali (Detergent)^{11,13}
- Muqawwi-e-Hafiza (Brain Tonic)^{11,19}
- Mushtahi (Appetizer)¹⁵

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS

Indian Ginger contains an aromatic volatile oil 1-5% of light yellow colour having a characteristic odour and containing camphene, phellandrene, zingiberine, cineol and borheol; gingirol a yellow pungent; an oleoresin-'gingerin' the active principal, other resins and starch; K-oxalate. The essential oil and resin, to which ginger owes its pungent flavour, occurred just beneath the skin or epidermis. The pungent principles of Ginger are not volatile in steam to any appreciable extent and are, therefore, not found in the volatile oil. It has, however, been isolated and been named gingerol, but its true chemical nature has not yet been finally settled⁷. Gingerols I, II and III isolated from rhizomes; aspartic acid, threonine, serine, glycine, cystine, valine, isoleucine, leucine and arginine isolated from aerial parts and tuber⁴. Gigerol an active principle extracted from ginger is soluble in alcohol, ether, and volatile oil and fat, slightly soluble in benzene; it contains all the virtues of the root. The volatile oil constitutes chavicol, citral, and acetates etc¹⁰.

DOSAGE

2 gm,¹¹ 1-2 gm¹³ and 7 gm¹⁵

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Cite this article as:

Mursaleen Naseer. Zanjabeel (Ginger): A review. *J Biol Sci Opin* 2016;4(5):184-185 <http://dx.doi.org/10.7897/2321-6328.04543>

Source of support: Nil; Conflict of interest: None Declared

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