

Embracing nature's wisdom: Herbal treatments for psoriasis

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INTRODUCTION

Psoriasis is a chronic autoimmune skin condition that affects millions of people worldwide. Characterized by red, inflamed patches covered with silvery scales, psoriasis can cause discomfort, embarrassment, and a significant impact on the quality of life for those who suffer from it. While conventional medical treatments are available, an increasing number of individuals are turning to herbal remedies to manage their psoriasis symptoms. In this article, we will explore the world of herbal treatments for psoriasis, examining the potential benefits and considerations associated with incorporating these natural remedies into a holistic approach to managing the condition.

DESCRIPTION

Understanding psoriasis

Before delving into herbal treatments, it is essential to understand the underlying causes and triggers of psoriasis. The condition occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy skin cells, leading to the rapid production of new skin cells. This accelerated cell turnover results in the characteristic red, scaly patches associated with psoriasis. Genetic factors, environmental triggers, and immune system dysfunction all play roles in the development and exacerbation of psoriasis.

Herbal treatments for psoriasis

Aloe vera: *Aloe vera*, known for its soothing properties, has been used for centuries to treat various skin conditions, including psoriasis. Its anti-inflammatory effects may help reduce redness and scaling associated with psoriatic lesions. Applying *Aloe vera* gel directly to affected areas can provide relief, and some individuals find success in using creams or ointments containing *Aloe vera*.

Turmeric: Curcumin, the active compound in turmeric, possesses potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Studies suggest that turmeric may help manage psoriasis symptoms by reducing inflammation and slowing down the excessive growth of skin cells. While it can be consumed as a dietary supplement, applying a turmeric paste topically may also provide relief.

Oregon grape: Oregon grape, a plant native to North America, contains berberine, a compound with antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties. Some herbal practitioners

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Word count: 770 Tables: 00 Figures: 00 References: 00

Received: 01.11.2023, Manuscript No. ijddr-23-14318;

Editor assigned: 03.11.2023, PreQC No. P-14318;

Reviewed: 17.11.2023, QC No. Q-14318;

Revised: 24.11.2023, Manuscript No. R-14318;

Published: 04.12.2023, Invoice No. J-14318

recommend creams or ointments containing oregon grape extract for topical use on psoriatic lesions. However, it's important to consult with a healthcare professional before using herbal remedies to ensure safety and effectiveness.

Tea tree oil: Tea tree oil, derived from the leaves of the tea tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*), is known for its antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties. While research on its efficacy for psoriasis is limited, some individuals report relief from symptoms when applying diluted tea tree oil topically. It's crucial to be cautious with concentration, as undiluted tea tree oil may cause skin irritation.

***Mahonia aquifolium* (Oregon grape holly):** The extract from the bark of *Mahonia aquifolium*, also known as Oregon grape holly, has shown promise in managing psoriasis symptoms. Studies suggest that it may help reduce inflammation and slow down the excessive growth of skin cells. Creams containing *Mahonia aquifolium* extract are available, and some individuals find relief from regular application.

Considerations and precautions

While herbal treatments offer a more natural approach to managing psoriasis, it's important to approach them with caution and under the guidance of a healthcare professional. Here are some considerations and precautions.

Consultation with healthcare provider

Before incorporating herbal remedies into a psoriasis treatment plan, individuals should consult with their healthcare providers. This is especially crucial if they are already using prescription medications to manage their condition, as herbal remedies may interact with conventional treatments.

Patch testing

Patch testing is essential when using herbal remedies

topically to ensure that individuals do not have adverse reactions or allergies. Applying a small amount of the herbal preparation to a small area of skin and monitoring for any adverse effects can help prevent exacerbation of psoriasis symptoms.

Quality of herbal products

The quality of herbal products can vary significantly. It is advisable to purchase herbal supplements and topical preparations from reputable sources to ensure potency, purity, and safety. Certification from regulatory bodies can be an indicator of product quality.

Potential interactions

Some herbs may interact with medications or other medical conditions. For example, turmeric may have blood-thinning properties, and individuals taking anticoagulant medications should exercise caution. It is essential to disclose all herbal treatments to healthcare providers to prevent potential adverse interactions.

CONCLUSION

Herbal treatments for psoriasis offer a holistic and natural approach to managing symptoms, providing an alternative or complementary option to conventional medical treatments. While some individuals report success with herbal remedies, it's crucial to approach them with caution, under the guidance of healthcare professionals. The diverse array of herbs discussed in this article highlights the potential richness of nature's pharmacy in addressing the complexities of psoriasis. As research in this field continues, a better understanding of the efficacy and safety of herbal treatments for psoriasis may emerge, offering hope to those seeking holistic approaches to managing this chronic skin condition.