

SOCIETY FOR NEW AGE HERBALS

VIEWS & REVIEWS

Vol 2, No.4

OCTOBER

2009

HERBAL COMPOUNDS FOR PROMOTING FERTILITY

Author(s):- *C.P Khare*

Introduction

In Indian medicine, fertility-promoting herbal formulae remained a closely-guarded secret for ages. An effort has been made to organize the data available through direct and indirect sources and some experimental and clinical studies over a span of 6-7 years. The overall response was, however, very encouraging. More than 80% subjects conceived within three months and delivered normal babies.

Kaviraj Nandamal Sharma disclosed in a personal communication that during 1935-1936 Vaidya Devendra Bishwas, Vaidya Nivan Chandra Bhattacharya and Vaidya Chandrashekharanand had treated many cases of female infertility with a composition containing the root of wild *Kareli* and the parasitic stem growing on the *Kikar* tree. Vaidya Kashi Ram Bhave used to give *Bhave vati*, which contained seeds of *Shivlingi* as the main ingredient.

Kaviraj Nandamal Sharma prescribes a composition containing aerial roots of *Ficus religiosa* (2 parts) and *Shivlingi* (one part) for the treatment of infertility which is administered to the woman immediately after menstruation, twice daily for one week. The male partner is kept on an aphrodisiac and spermatic compound for forty days.

Acharya Pushparaj prescribed 45 seeds of *Shivlingi*, powdered and mixed with old jaggery, once a day immediately after menstruation for 4 days. The male partner is given 65 mg tablet of *Nux-vomica* (*Vishtinduk vati*) along with a dry date boiled in milk, one week prior to the menstruation period of the female, and continued for another 15 days.

Dr Maya Ram Uniyal, Director, Indian Institute of Kayachikitsa, Patiala, who provided valuable material for this study, identified *Shivlingi* as *Bryonopsis laciniosa*.

Though the root of wild *Kareli* was procured from Haryana, it could not be identified properly. It appeared different from *Karela* (*Momordica charantia*). According to the Wealth of India, *Karela* and *Kareli* are synonyms. The rainy season variety is called *Kareli* and summer variety *Karela*. But here the root of *kareli* was found to be as big as a pumpkin and the fruits were at least one-fourth in size and bitter principles were also much less.

Several fertility promoting compositions / formulations being used by other physicians are listed below. Therapeutic notes on the herbs used in these formulations have been included to facilitate further work in this field. Besides, contradictory to many claims, there is no scientific basis to claim that fertility-promoting herbal compounds can also determine the sex of the new born. In case they do, how *Bryonopsis laciniosa*, Nux-vomica or the herbs of Spermatic Compound influence X or Y chromosomes is not yet known.

Formulations

For female (any one formulation; composition of single dose):

A	<i>Bryonopsis laciniosa</i> (Shivlingi seeds)	45 seeds
	Jaggery	QS
B	<i>Bryonopsis laciniosa</i> (Shivlingi seeds)	2.00 gm
	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> (aerial roots of Pipal) :	1.00 gm
C	<i>Acacia nilotica</i> 's parasitic stem (Kikar ka binda)	1.00 gm
	<i>Bryonopsis laciniosa</i> (Shivlingi seeds)	1.00 gm
	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> (aerial roots of Pipal)	1.00 gm
	Wild Kareli root	1.00 gm
D	<i>Bryonopsis laciniosa</i> (Shivlingi seeds)	2.00 gm
	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> (aerial roots of Pipal)	2.00 gm
	Mukta bhasma or pishti, as prescribed by the physician.	
E	<i>Bryonopsis laciniosa</i> (Shivlingi seeds)	2.00 gm
	<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i> (Shankhpushpi)	4.00 gm
F	<i>Solanum surattense</i> dried berry (Lakshmana)	1 no.
	with 10 gm Phalghrit	
G	<i>Bryonopsis laciniosa</i> (Shivlingi seeds)	1.00 gm
	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> (aerial roots of Pipal)	1.00 gm
	<i>Mesua ferrea</i> (Nagkesar)	2.00 gm

H	<i>Bryonopsis laciniosa</i> (Shivlingi seeds)	1.50gm
	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> (Aparajita root)	1.25 gm
	<i>Putranjiva roxburghii</i> (Putranjiva)	1.25gm
I.	<i>Bryonopsis laciniosa</i> (Shivlingi seeds)	2.00gm
	<i>Cuminum cyminum</i> (Jeera)	1.00gm
	<i>Thespesia populnea</i> (Paras Pipal fruits)	2.00gm
J.	<i>Barleria prionitis</i> (Katsareya)	500mg
	<i>Bryonopsis laciniosa</i> (Shivlingi seeds)	750mg
	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i> (aerial roots of Vat)	750mg
	<i>Nymphaea lotus</i> (Nilotpala, Nilofar)	500mg
	<i>Symplocos racemosa</i> (Lodhra)	500mg
	<i>Withania somnifera</i> (Ashwagandha)	500mg
	<i>Woodfordia fruticosa</i> (Dhataki)	500mg
K.	<i>Agropyron repens</i> (Safed hariyali)	1.00gm
	<i>Bryonopsis laciniosa</i> (Shivlingi seeds)	1.00gm
	<i>Solanum surattense</i> (Kateri) root	1.00gm
	<i>Withania somnifera</i> (Ashwagandha)	1.00gm
L.	<i>Grewia populifolia</i> (Gangeran)	1.00gm
	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> (Yashti-madhu)	1.00gm
	<i>Mesua ferrea</i> (Nagkesar)	1.00gm
	<i>Rhus succedanea</i> (Kakrasingi)	1.00gm
	<i>Sida cordifolia</i> (Bala) root Sugar	1.00gm
	candy (Misri)	5.00gm

Dosage:

Immediately after menstruation, the female should take one dose of any one composition (A to I) on 4 consecutive days. Composition B is generally given twice daily for seven days or on alternate days twice daily (total 6 to 8 doses). Composition J, K, L (any one) is given twice daily for 7 days. If conception does not take place, the physician repeats the composition of his choice after the next menstruation.

For male (any one composition) :

A. Boil dry date (*Khajoor* after removing the seed) with milk. Put one 65 mg tablet of purified Nux-vomica (*Vishtinduk vati*) inside the date and chew it, followed by milk in which the date was boiled. To be taken once a day before going to bed. Start one week prior to female's menstruation and continue for 3 weeks. Safe dose of Nux-vomica should be decided by the physician.

B. Spermatic Compound. Two capsules 3 times a day for forty days. Prophylactic dose: One capsule twice daily for 3 months. Herbs included are:

Blepharis edulis

Curculigo arundinaceum

Hygrophila auriculata

Mucuna prurita seeds

Myristica fragrans

Orchis latifolia

Salmalia malabarica gum

Sida cordifolia seeds

Piper betle juice (for processing)

Therapeutic Notes on fertility promoting and related properties reported in the plants used in the above formulations

Acacia nilotica (Kikar): The plant's parasitic stem biologically carries the basic properties of the stem, leaves and pods. Pods of the plant are used in impotency and in uri-nogenital disorders. The gum of the plant stops bleeding, urinary and vaginal discharges.

Agropyron repens (Safed hariyali): A drink prepared from the plant is administered as a demulcent in diseases of genito-urinary tract, such as irritable conditions of the bladder, cystitis, nephritis. *Cynodon dactylon* (Hariyali, Durva) rhizomes and roots are used as adulterants and substitutes for *A.repens*. Found effective in menorrhagia.

Barleria prionitis (Katsareya): White flower bearing variety should be used. Juice of the leaves mixed with *Cuminum cyminum* (Jeera) is given in spermatorrhoea.

Bryonopsis laciniosa (Shivlingi seeds): syn: *Diplocylos palmatus* (Cucurbitaceae). Seeds are powdered and given to help conception in women. Roots are also used for the same purpose. Women of Lakha tribe of Porbandar, Gujarat, use it for promoting fertility. They take 10-12 seeds of *Shivlingi* with ripe banana immediately after menstruation. This attracted practitioners of Indian medicine and they added the seeds of *Shivlingi* to other herbs meant for treating vaginal affections and sexual inadequacies. Bryonia is used in homoeopathy extensively for treating vaginal problems: painful menstruation, dysmenorrhoea, pain in ovaries during menstrual period, inflammation of uterus, burning pain in the fundus of the uterus. It is also indicated in threatened abortion.

Clitoria ternatea (Aparajita): Infusion of the root bark is given in the irritation of the bladder and urethra.

Ficus bengalensis (Vat): All parts of the plant possess fertility-enhancing properties. The prop roots of the plant have been found to be useful in checking external as well as internal bleeding in cases of menorrhagia. Infusion of the bark cures vaginal disorders. An infusion of the bark (1 to 10) is used in seminal weakness. Concentrated juice of young buds in combination with the fruit is used in spermatorrhoea.

Tender roots of the tree are considered beneficial in the treatment of female sterility. The roots should be dried in the shade and finely powdered. This powder should be taken with milk at night for 3 consecutive nights after menstruation cycle every month till the conception takes place. Dose: 5 gm to 10 gm. (Herbs that Heal, Bakhru HK, 1993, 38.)

Ficus religiosa (Pipal tree): Milk boiled with dried bark is a good aphrodisiac. The fruit, dried and powdered, and taken for 14 days is believed to promote fertility in women. Pulverised bark is used in vaginal diseases, including leucorrhoea and menorrhagia.

Glycyrrhiza glabra (Yashti-madhu): A mixture containing extracted juice of the herb is used as an adjunct in leucorrhoea and other uterine complaints. The herb also possesses spermatogenetic properties

Mesua ferrea (Nagakesar): World Health Organisation, South-East Asia Reg Office, recommends Mesua ferrea (5g) powder 3 times a day with honey for treating leucorrhoea and also for checking excessive menstrual bleeding; it acted very well in combination with *Symplocos racemosa (Lodhra)* The herb is one of the ingredients in *Pushyanug churna*, *Suparipak* and *Pradaranashak churna*, which are being used extensively for treating vaginal affections.

Nymphaea lotus (Nilotpala, Nilofar): Checks haemorrhage in menorrhagia during gestation. Checks vaginal discharges.

Putranjiva roxburghii (Putranjiva): Due to its synonyms (*Garbh kara*, *Jiyaapotaa*, *Putrajan*) the herb is “believed” to be the promoter of conception. Medicinal properties attributed to it in folk medicine could not yet be substantiated by scientific research. A clinical trial of the herb on 25 women, suffering from leucorrhoea, menorrhagia and habitual abortion, 20 women conceived after 2-3 months, one woman, who used to have stillborn babies, was also treated successfully. The physician also quoted a formulation, which contained not only *Putranjiva*, but also *Shivlingi* seeds, *Paras pipal* seeds, *Nagkesar*, *Ashwagandha* and ten other herbs and called it *Putrada Vati*. The active principles of the herb need to be reviewed.

Rhus succedanea (Kakrasingi): The galls are prescribed in leucorrhoea.

Sida cordifolia (Bala): The root is reported useful in leucorrhoea and uterine disorders.

Strychnos nux-vomica (Vishmushti): The seeds are aphrodisiac; also useful in impotence, spermatorrhoea and emaciation.

Symplocos racemosa (Lodhra): Considered to be a specific remedy for vaginal diseases and menstrual disorders. Recommended in cases of menorrhagia and leucorrhoea

Thespesia populnea (Paras pipal): According to Ayurvedic physicians, the herb helps generate semen.

Withania somnifera (Ashwagandha): It is prescribed in all cases of general debility.

Woodfordia fruticosa (Dhataki): Used in internal haemorrhages, leucorrhoea and menorrhagia. The herb averts abortion and cures uterine diseases. Dried flowers are also used in seminal weakness.

Some ingredients of confused botanical identity that are frequently included in the above formulations are discussed below.

Kareli, wild: The botanical identity this ingredient has not yet been established. Kerala physicians recognize three varieties of *Karela*, viz. *Karvella*, *Karvalli* and *Vanyakaravalli*. The former two have been equated with *Momordica charantia* and *Vanyakaravalli* with *M. tuberosa*, which is a rather rare wild variety with tuberous roots and small, 6 angled fruits (as described by Kaviraj Nandamal Sharma). *M. muricata* also bears small fruits and should be examined while indentifying wild *Kareli*. It should be kept in mind that *M.charantia* is reported to calm down the sexual urge and is also considered abortifacient, while the wild variety of *Kareli* is administered for treating female infertility.

Lakshmana: In 12th century, *Lakshmana* the *Putra-janan* herb was identified by Dalhana for the first time. Vaidya Veraiya and Dube recommend the use of *Ipomoea sepiaria* as *Lakshmana*. Sivarajan and Indira Balachandran have also equated *Lakshmana* with *Ipomoea sepiaria* (syn.: *Ipomoea marginata*, *Ipomoea obscura*, *Convolvulus marginatus* locally known as *Bankalmi*, *Hanumanvel*). The leaves of the plant are spotted with purple dots and leave behind a goat-like smell when macerated. This matches with the description given by Dalhana.

In Ayurvedic practice, *Lakshmana* is a reputed single herb *Ipomoea sepiaria*, used to cure sterility in women. The synonyms like *putrada*, *putra-janani* also indicate that the drug is believed to bestow a male (?) child. The herb is considered spermatogenetic and a uterine tonic

: Uniyal suggests that **Solanum surattense** (*Kantakari*) should also be recognized as a substitute for original *Lakshmana* as fertility-promoting properties have been attributed to it. The herb is popularly known as *Kateri*, *Kanderi* and *Katai Khurd*. Acharya Pushpraj has been reported to prescribe dried berry of the plant with 10 gm *Phalghrit* for promoting fertility in women. Uniyal recommends its root. A decoction of the plant is reported to promote conception in the female. Seeds are uterine tonic and aphrodisiac

Mandragora officinalum has been equated with *Lakshmana* by Chopra RN. The plant is narcotic, anaesthetic and poisonous. It resembles a distorted human body and has been associated with a lot of superstition and magical powers. In the Middle East its fruit is called *ruhr*, the giver of life, and is thought to be useful in pregnancy.

Uniyal MR recommends that *Mandragora officinarum*, *M.autumnalis*, *M.vernalis*, *Atropa acuminata*, *Atropa mandragora*, all known as *Lakshmana* or substitutes for *Lakshmana*, should be discarded. It may prove dangerous if these herbs are used for the sake of sexual excitement.

Smithia conferta has also been mentioned as *Lakshmana* by Chopra RN in Glossary of Indian Medical Plants (page 228). According to him, the plant is used in biliousness, rheumatism, ulcers and sterility in women. Uniyal does not accept this herb as a substitute for *Lakshmana*.

Phalghrit (*Asparagus racemosus*, *Acorus calamus*, *Curcuma longa*, *Emblica officinalis*, *Ferula foetida*, *Madhuca indica*, *Picrorrhiza kurroa*, *Rubia cordifolia*, *Saussurea lappa*, *Terminalia belerica*, *Terminalia chebula*, *Trachyspermum ammi*, *Valeriana wallichii* are the ingredients of the medicated *ghee*. *Phalghrit* prescribed in female infertility and vaginal diseases.

Some animal products are also listed including the shell of the pearl oyster **Mytilus margaritiferus** (*Mukta*). It is used in leucorrhoea, spermatorrhoea, impotence; also given to prevent abortion. Dose : *Mukta bhasma* 30 mg to 120 mg, *Mukta pishti* 50 mg to 125 mg twice daily, or as directed by the physician.

The above data are the results of a clinical survey conducted by the author and his team.

References

- Ayurvedic Formulary of India, Part I, 6: 30.
Bull RRL, Jammu, 1963, **1**, 126.
Chandraraj Bhandari, in *Vanoshadhi Chandrodaya*, 1993, Vol IV, cited from Vaidya Shamaldas Gor's Gujarati book "*Jangalani Jari-booti*",
Chopra RN, Glossary of Indian Medicinal Plants, 1956, 2; Second Supplement, 1992, 10.
Devsarmah GC *et al*, *Nagarjun*, 1986, **29**, 1-4;10-12.

Econ Bot, 1965, **19**, 242; 1971, **25**, 422.

Glossary of Indian Medicinal Plants, 1956, 161.

Hakim Daljit Singh, *Unani Dravya Gun Vigyan*, 1974, Vol II, w131;1977, Vol 3, 131.

James Tyler Kent, *Lectures on Homoeopathic Materia Medica*, 1938, 271.

Nadkarni KM, *Indian Materia Medica*, 209, 355, 522, 544, 582, 630, 859-860, 1062-1063, 1157, 1295.

Pal MN, Ayurvedic way to have a son or a daughter at will, *Ancient Science of Life*, 1983, 32, 98-100.

Ram Sushil Singh, in *Vanoshadhi Nidarshika*, 1969, 263, 311.

Sandigdha Vanoshadhi Darshika, 31 (quoted by Uniyal MR). SERO Health Paper 19, 1990, 53, 64, 65, 118.

Sharma PV, Dalhana and his Comments on Drugs, 1982, 169, 264. Sivarajan VV & Indira Balachandran, *Ayurvedic Drugs and their Plant Sources*, 1994, 63, 65, 71,130, 279, 333, 352.

Uniyal MR, *Prayogatmak Abhinav Dravyagun Vigyan*, 1991, 300.

Wealth of India, Vol II, 421; Vol X, 587; *Rev Ser Vol 1*, 38-39;112-113.