IJCRT.ORG

ISSN: 2320-2882



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

NATURAL ANTIFUNGAL PLANT ESSENTIAL OILS: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT:-

One possible source of naturally occurring antimicrobials is plant essential oils. Recently, there has been a significant increase in interest from scientists on essential oils and extracts derived from a variety of plants. While the safety of chemical additives has been questioned, consumer desire for natural preservatives has surged. There have been reports of antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, antiparasitic, and antidermatophytic qualities in the plant oil. It is today regarded as a valuable source of natural ingredients for the creation of industrial products as well as medications to treat a variety of illnesses. Updated data on plant essential oils possessing antifungal qualities is compiled in this review.

Keywords: Plant, Essential oils, Antifungal activity

INTRODUCTION:-

Mammals are known for having hair, which serves a variety of purposes including providing protection from the elements (heat, cold, etc.). The scalp is the skin covering the top of the head, housing hair follicles and sebaceous glands[1]. Various types of infections can occur on the scalp, often caused by bacteria, fungi, or viruses. There are different types of fungal infections which occur on the scalp i.e. tinea capitis, seborrheic dermatitis, folliculitis, etc[2]. Plant-based substances with antifungal, antibacterial, and nourishing qualities are combined to create antifungal herbal hair oils. Herbs that are specifically chosen for their medicinal effects on the scalp and hair, such as neem, tea tree oil, rosemary, basil, and amla, are frequently used in these ingredients. There are a number of reasons why antifungal herbal hair oils are becoming more and more popular[3]. First of all, a lot of people look for alternatives to traditional hair care treatments that could include harsh chemicals or artificial components. Herbal hair oils provide a kinder, more organic way to support hair development and preserve the health of the scalp[4]. In addition, typical problems that can cause symptoms

like itching, flaking, and hair loss are fungal infections of the scalp, such as tinea capitis and seborrheic dermatitis. Even while over-the-counter antifungal shampoos and prescription drugs are readily available, some people like the all-encompassing treatment provided by herbal medicines[5].

The several herbs and natural components that are frequently included in antifungal herbal hair oils, their modes of action against fungal infections, and the possible advantages they provide for fostering healthy hair and scalp will all be covered in this introduction. We'll also talk about the rising demand for natural hair care products and how antifungal herbal hair oils fit into this trend[6].

MERITS OF ANTIFUNGAL HERBAL HAIR OIL:-

- **1. Natural Ingredients:** These products, which are usually composed of natural oils and herbs, avoid the harsh chemicals commonly included in commercial hair products, lowering the possibility of adverse effects or irritation of the scalp[7].
- **2. Antifungal Properties:** Compounds in herbal oils with antifungal qualities can aid in the **fight against fungal illnesses** like dermatitis or dandruff[8].
- **3. Moisturizing:** In order to maintain healthy hair, hydration and prevention of dryness are crucial, and several herbal oils offer moisture to the scalp and hair[9].
- **4. Strengthening:** Certain herbal oils are nutrient-rich, strengthening hair follicles and preventing breakage, which eventually results in stronger, healthier hair[10].
- **5. Stimulates Hair Growth:** A few components found in herbs increase blood flow to the scalp, which encourages hair development and inhibits hair loss[11].
- **6. Soothing and Calming:** Herbal oils frequently have a calming impact on the scalp, reducing irritation, inflammation, and itching brought on by fungus infections and other scalp disorders[12].
- **7. Aromatherapy Benefits:** When applied, many herbal hair oils offer a relaxing aromatherapy experience thanks to their pleasant, natural aromas made from herbs and essential oils[13].
- **8. Non-Greasy Formulas:** Premium herbal hair oils are designed to be non-greasy and light in order to avoid leaving a heavy residue or weighing down the hair[14].
- **9. Promotes Healthy Scalp:** Herbal hair oils help prevent issues like excessive oiliness or dryness by balancing oil production on the scalp and preserving its health, which in turn creates the ideal environment for hair growth[15].
- **10. Natural Shine:** Herbal oils have the ability to give hair a natural sheen that enhances its color and health without requiring artificial additions[16].

DEMERITS OF ANTIFUNGAL HERBAL HAIR OIL:-

- **1. Allergic Reactions:** Some people may experience skin irritation, redness, or itching due to allergies to specific herbs or components in the oil[17].
- **2. Scalp Sensitivity:** Certain users may experience sensitivity or discomfort on their scalps when using herbal oils, particularly ones with strong antifungal effects[18].
- **3. Greasiness:** Certain herbal oils can leave the hair feeling greasy or weighed down, especially if applied excessively or if the formula is not well-balanced[19].
- **4. Staining:** Certain herbal oils could leave stains on linens, clothes, or pillowcases if they aren't thoroughly removed from hair[20].

133

- **5. Strong Odor:** Some consumers may find the strong or unpleasant odor of the herbal constituents in these oils off-putting[21].
- **6. Limited Efficacy:** Even though herbal oils can help treat dandruff and fungal infections to some extent, especially in severe cases, they might not always offer full relief or a cure[22].
- **7. Cost:** Superior herbal hair oils can be more costly than traditional hair care products, therefore not everyone may be able to afford them[23].
- **8. Availability:** Certain users may find it more difficult to obtain herbal hair oils with antifungal characteristics because they are not always easily accessible in all areas[24].

Table 1: Role of some important herbs in scalp health

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Herb	Systemic position	Figure	Role	
Neem	Kingdom: Plantae Order: Sapindales Family: Meliaceae Genus: Azadirachta Species: A. indica		Antifungal, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory[25].	
Tea tree	Kingdom: Plantae Order: Myrtales Family: Myrtaceae Genus: Melaleuca Species: M. alternifolia		Combats dandruff and fungal infections on the scalp[26].	
Coconut	Kingdom: Plantae Order: Arecales Family: Arecaceae Genus: Cocos Species: C. nucifera		Moisturizing, antifungal properties that can help maintain scalp health[27].	
Rosemary	Kingdom: Plantae Order: Lamiales Family: Lamiaceae Genus: Salvia Species: S. rosmarinus		Antifungal properties and can also stimulate hair growth and improve blood circulation to the scalp[28].	
Lavender	Kingdom: Plantae Order: Lamiales Family: Lamiaceae Genus: Lavandula Species: L. spica		Antifungal properties that can help in treating scalp issues[29].	

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Peppermin t	Kingdom: Plantae Order: Lamiales Family: Lamiaceae Genus: Mentha Species: M. piperita		Peppermint oil has a cooling effect on the scalp and may help soothe itching and irritation caused by fungal infections[30].
Aloe vera	Kingdom: Plantae Order: Asparagales Family: Asphodelaceae Genus: Aloe Species: A. vera		Aloe vera gel or oil can provide relief from scalp itching and inflammation while also moisturizing the hair and scalp[31].
Garlic	Kingdom: Plantae Order: Asparagales Family: Amaryllidaceae Genus: Allium Species: A. sativum		Garlic is known for its antifungal and antimicrobial properties and can be included in herbal hair oils to combat scalp infections[32].
Jojoba	Kingdom: Plantae Order: Caryophyllales Family: Simmondsiaceae Genus: Simmondsia Species: S. chinensis		Jojoba oil helps regulate sebum production on the scalp, making it useful for balancing oily or dry scalp conditions that can contribute to fungal growth[33].
Bhringraj	Kingdom: Plantae Order: Asterales Family: Asteraceae Genus: Eclipta Species: Prostrata		Bhringraj is a traditional herb known for its hair-strengthening properties and is often included in herbal hair oils for its overall scalp health benefits[34].

GENERAL METHODS OF PREPARATION OF ANTIFUNGAL HERBAL HAIR OIL:-

Here are some methods to prepare antifungal herbal hair oil:

- **1. Neem Oil Infusion:** Infuse neem leaves or neem oil into a carrier oil like coconut or olive oil. Neem has potent antifungal properties that help in treating various scalp infections[35].
- **2. Tea Tree Oil Blend:** Mix tea tree oil with a carrier oil like jojoba or almond oil. Tea tree oil is well-known for its antifungal properties and can help in treating dandruff and fungal infections on the scalp[36].
- **3. Garlic and Onion Extract:** Crush garlic and onion and infuse them into a carrier oil. Both garlic and onion have antifungal properties that can help in combating scalp infections[37].
- **4. Rosemary and Lavender Oil Blend:** Mix rosemary and lavender essential oils with a carrier oil like argan or grapeseed oil. Both rosemary and lavender have antifungal properties and also promote hair growth[38].
- **5. Aloe Vera Gel Infusion:** Combine aloe vera gel with a carrier oil of your choice. Aloe vera has antifungal and soothing properties that can help in calming scalp irritation and treating fungal infections[39].
- **6. Fenugreek Seed Infusion:** Soak fenugreek seeds in a carrier oil and then strain the oil. Fenugreek seeds have antifungal properties and can also help in strengthening hair follicles[40].
- **7. Basil Leaf Infusion:** Crush basil leaves and infuse them into a carrier oil. Basil leaves have antifungal properties and can help in treating scalp infections like dandruff[41].
- **8. Turmeric and Coconut Oil Blend:** Mix turmeric powder with coconut oil. Turmeric has antifungal and anti-inflammatory properties that can help in treating scalp infections and soothing scalp irritation[42]. Remember to heat the carrier oil gently before infusing the herbs or essential oils, and strain the oil thoroughly before use to remove any solid particles. Additionally, perform a patch test before applying the oil to your scalp to ensure you don't have any allergic reactions.

EVALUATION OF ANTIFUNGAL HERBAL HAIR OIL:

When evaluating the effectiveness of antifungal herbal hair oil, several test methods can be employed:

- 1. **Microbiological Testing:** This entails evaluating the oil's capacity to prevent the growth of fungus like Malassezia spp. or Candida spp. that are frequently linked to scalp diseases. For microbiological testing, the minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) of the oil against fungal strains can be obtained by utilizing broth dilution techniques or agar diffusion assays[43].
- 2. **In vitro Antifungal Assays:** In these assays, the antifungal activity of the oil is examined under controlled laboratory conditions. Techniques could involve measuring the inhibition of fungal growth through the use of spectrophotometry or microscopy[44].
- 3. **Clinical Trials:** Investigating the effectiveness of herbal hair oil through clinical studies on people with fungal infections on the scalp can yield important information. It is possible to evaluate parameters like decreased microbial load, improved scalp health, and decreased symptoms (itchiness, flakiness)[45].
- 4. **Scalp Condition Assessment:** Analyze the effect of the oil on scalp condition by subjective participant evaluation and visual inspection. Reduction of dandruff, enhancement of scalp texture, and general health of hair are examples of parameters[46].

- 5. **Allergenicity Testing:** By using human volunteers for patch testing, determine whether the oil has the potential to trigger allergic responses or skin sensitization. To guarantee the product's safety for topical use, this is crucial[47].
- 6. **Stability Testing:** Examine the herbal hair oil's stability in different storage environments (temperature, light exposure, humidity) to ascertain how long it will last and how effective it will be over time[48].
- 7. **Comparison with Standard Treatments:** Through controlled research, compare the efficacy of the herbal hair oil with traditional antifungal therapies such medicated shampoos or pharmaceutical antifungal drugs[49]. By employing these evaluation test methods, researchers can gather comprehensive data on the antifungal efficacy, safety, and overall performance of herbal hair oil formulations for treating scalp fungal infections.

Table 2: Marketed products

Sl No.	Brand Name	Manufacturer
1	Sujal Herbal Antifungal Oil	Avantika Herbal Products
2	Urtiray	PCD Pharma
3	Fungi Nastak	Bikancure Pharmaceuticals
4	Care Cone	Wizard Venture
5	Kundaly Naturals	Kanan Devan Hills Plantations
6	Theraneem Naturals Neem Oil	Organix South
7	Organic Extra Virgin Coconut Oil	Viva Naturals
8	Leven Rose Organic Jojoba Oil	Leven Rose

RECENT ADVANCEMENT:-

Recent advancements in antifungal herbal hair oil have demonstrated promising results in combating various scalp issues caused by fungal infections. Khan et al. (2024) explored the efficacy of a formulation containing basil oil, peppermint oil, olive oil, among others, in providing relief from scalp itch induced by fungal growth. This study contributes to addressing the discomfort associated with fungal infections on the scalp[50].

In another study by Patel and Sharma (2023), a combination of amla oil, rosemary oil, lavender oil, and other herbal ingredients was investigated for its ability to prevent fungal growth in hair follicles. Their findings suggest potential preventive measures against fungal infections, offering insights into maintaining scalp health.[51].

Additionally, Smith et al. (2020-2022) delved into the treatment aspect, evaluating the effectiveness of neem oil, tea tree oil, coconut oil, and similar constituents in combating fungal infections on the scalp. Their research provides valuable insights into the therapeutic applications of herbal hair oil formulations for addressing fungal-related scalp issues[52].

In 2019, a study by Lee et al. investigated the antifungal properties of herbal extracts such as neem, tea tree, and lavender oils in combating scalp fungal infections. Their research provided insights into the efficacy of these natural ingredients in inhibiting fungal growth on the scalp[53].

In 2018, Patel et al. conducted a study focusing on the development of a herbal hair oil formulation enriched with coconut oil, jojoba oil, and eucalyptus oil for the treatment of fungal infections on the scalp. Their findings highlighted the potential of these herbal oils in providing relief from symptoms associated with scalp fungal infections[54].

In 2017, Khan et al. explored the use of herbal hair oils containing ingredients like basil, peppermint, and rosemary oils in relieving scalp itch caused by fungal growth. Their study contributed to understanding the therapeutic effects of herbal oils in alleviating discomfort associated with fungal infections on the scalp[55].

In 2016, Gupta and Sharma investigated the preventive properties of herbal hair oils formulated with a combination of amla, neem, and tea tree oils against fungal growth in hair follicles. Their research emphasized the importance of proactive measures in maintaining scalp health and preventing fungal infections[56].

In 2015, a study by Mishra et al. focused on the development of herbal hair oil formulations infused with neem, tea tree, and coconut oils for the treatment of scalp fungal infections. Their findings highlighted the potential of these herbal oils as natural remedies for combating fungal growth on the scalp[57].

Sr. No.	Author	Composition	Use	Years
1.	Khan et al.	Basil oil, peppermint oil, Olive oil, etc.	Relief from scalp itch caused by fungal growth	2024
2.	Patel and Sharma	Amla oil, Rosemary oil, Lavender oil, etc.	Prevention of fungal growth in hair follicles	2023
3.	Smith et al.	Neem oil, Tea tree oil, Coconut oil, etc.	Treatment of fungal infection on the scalp	2020-2022
4.	Lee et al	Neem oil, Tea tree oil, Lavender oil, etc.	Relief from fungal infection on the scalp	2019

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5.	Patel et al.	Coconut oil, Jojoba oil, eucalyptus oil, etc.	Providing relief from symptoms associated with scalp fungal infections.	2018
6.	Khan et al.	Basil oil, peppermint oil, Olive oil, etc.	Relief from scalp alleviating discomfort associated with fungal infections.	2017
7.	Gupta and Sharma	Amla oil, Neem oil, Tea tree oil, etc.	Prevention of fungal growth in hair follicles	2016
8.	Mishra et al.	Neem oil, Tea tree oil, Coconut oil, etc.	Treatment of fungal infection on the scalp	2015

CONCLUSION:-

Herbal hair oil with antifungal properties presents a viable way to treat fungal infections on the scalp and enhance general health of the scalp. Through the utilization of the inherent qualities of therapeutic herbs, like tea tree, neem, and coconut oils, these mixtures offer a mild yet potent substitute for traditional antifungal therapies. Antifungal herbal hair oils are a convenient and environmentally responsible way to fight fungal-related hair problems and maintain a healthy scalp as consumer tastes for sustainable and natural hair care products change. Nevertheless, more investigation and clinical validation are required to completely comprehend their safety, effectiveness, and long-term advantages. All things considered, antifungal herbal hair oils offer a comprehensive method of scalp care that combines age-old knowledge with cutting-edge research to support the healthiest possible hair and scalp.

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