

Pushkaramoola in Ayurvedic Medicine-Bridging Tradition with Scientific Evidence

Shashank Tiwari¹ and Harpreet Kaur^{2*}

Abstract

The botanical description highlights Pushkaramoola's taxonomical classification, morphology, habitat, and distribution. Traditional uses of Pushkaramoola include its role in respiratory health, digestive disorders, liver support, anti-inflammatory and analgesic effects, menstrual irregularities, antimicrobial and immunomodulatory effects, and diabetes management. Phytochemical analysis reveals a diverse array of bioactive compounds in Pushkaramoola, including sesquiterpene lactones, flavonoids, polysaccharides, essential oils, alkaloids, and phenolic compounds. These compounds contribute to Pushkaramoola's pharmacological activities, such as anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, hepatoprotective, immunomodulatory, antioxidant, and antidiabetic effects. Medicinal applications of Pushkaramoola span a wide range of health conditions, from respiratory and digestive disorders to liver dysfunction, menstrual irregularities, and immune support. Safety considerations include dosage, precautions for pregnant and breastfeeding women, potential allergic reactions, drug interactions, liver health, and quality control measures. Future perspectives for Pushkaramoola encompass pharmacological studies, clinical trials, formulation development, quality control and standardization, phytochemical analysis, sustainable cultivation practices, integration with conventional medicine, public awareness, and education. By embracing collaborative efforts and evidence-based practices, Pushkaramoola holds promise as a valuable therapeutic agent in contemporary healthcare practices.

Keywords: Pushkaramoola; *Inula Racemosa*; Ayurvedic Medicine; Traditional Uses; Phytochemistry; Pharmacological Activities; Medicinal Applications; Safety Considerations; Future Perspectives

Introduction

Pushkaramoola, scientifically known as *Inula racemosa*, is a perennial herbaceous plant that holds a prominent place in traditional medicine, particularly within the ancient healing system of Ayurveda. Native to the Himalayan region, Pushkaramoola has been revered for centuries for its versatile therapeutic properties and is valued for its contributions to various aspects of health and wellness. In Ayurvedic texts, Pushkaramoola is described as a potent herb with a wide range of medicinal uses, earning it the status of a 'Rasayana' or rejuvenating herb. Its Sanskrit name, "Pushkara," translates to "the best," emphasizing its esteemed reputation in traditional healing practices. The plant's roots, characterized by their fleshy and aromatic nature, are the primary medicinal part used in Ayurveda, although other parts of the plant may also possess therapeutic value. Throughout history, Pushkaramoola

Affiliation:

¹Lucknow Model College of Pharmacy, Lucknow, UP, India

²Amity Institute of Biotechnology, Amity University, Noida, India

*Corresponding author:

Harpreet Kaur, Amity Institute of Biotechnology, Amity University, Noida, India.

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has been employed to address diverse health concerns, ranging from respiratory ailments and digestive disorders to liver dysfunction and menstrual irregularities. Its traditional uses extend to include its role in promoting immune function, alleviating pain and inflammation, and supporting overall well-being. In recent years, scientific research has increasingly focused on validating the traditional uses of Pushkaramoola and exploring its pharmacological properties. Phytochemical studies have identified a rich array of bioactive compounds in Pushkaramoola, including sesquiterpene lactones, flavonoids, and polysaccharides, which contribute to its medicinal effects. Despite its long history of traditional use and emerging scientific evidence, Pushkaramoola remains a subject of ongoing research and exploration. This review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of Pushkaramoola, encompassing its botanical description, traditional uses, phytochemistry, pharmacological activities, medicinal applications, safety considerations, and future perspectives. By consolidating existing knowledge and identifying avenues for further investigation, this review seeks to contribute to the understanding and appreciation of Pushkaramoola's therapeutic potential in contemporary healthcare practices.



The botanical description of Pushkaramoola, scientifically known as *Inula racemosa*, provides insight into its physical characteristics, habitat, and distribution:

1. **Taxonomy:** Pushkaramoola belongs to the family Asteraceae, which is one of the largest families of flowering plants. Within the Asteraceae family, it is classified under the genus *Inula*.
2. **Morphology:**
3. **Habitat and Distribution**
 - **Habitat:** Pushkaramoola is native to the Himalayan region, particularly found in the temperate and sub-alpine regions. It thrives in moist, well-drained soil and is often found growing in forests, meadows, and along riverbanks.

Plant	• Pushkaramoola is a perennial herbaceous plant characterized by its erect stem, which can reach a height of up to 2 meters (6.6 feet).
Leaves	• The leaves are simple, alternate, and lanceolate in shape, with serrated margins. They are dark green and have a rough texture.
Flowers	• The plant produces small, yellow flowers arranged in dense racemes or clusters at the end of the stems. Each flower head is composed of both disk and ray florets, typical of the Asteraceae family.
Roots	• The roots of Pushkaramoola are thick, fleshy, and aromatic. They are the part of the plant used in traditional medicine.

- **Distribution:** While native to the Himalayas, Pushkaramoola is also cultivated in other parts of India, as well as in neighboring countries like Nepal and Bhutan. It may also be found in certain regions of China.

Understanding the botanical description of Pushkaramoola provides a foundation for further exploration into its traditional uses, phytochemistry, and pharmacological activities. Additionally, this knowledge aids in the identification and cultivation of the plant for medicinal purposes.

Pushkaramoola (*Inula racemosa*) has a rich history of traditional use in Ayurvedic medicine, where it is valued for its versatile therapeutic properties. The traditional uses of Pushkaramoola encompass a wide range of health conditions, and it is often included in various Ayurvedic formulations. Here are some of its traditional uses:

1. **Respiratory Health:** Pushkaramoola is highly esteemed for its effectiveness in respiratory conditions. It is traditionally used to alleviate symptoms associated with respiratory ailments such as cough, asthma, bronchitis, and congestion. The herb is believed to possess expectorant and bronchodilator properties, helping to clear respiratory passages and promote easier breathing.
2. **Digestive Disorders:** In Ayurveda, Pushkaramoola is employed to support digestive health. It is used to stimulate appetite, improve digestion, and alleviate gastrointestinal discomfort. Additionally, Pushkaramoola is believed to have carminative properties, which help in relieving flatulence and abdominal bloating.
3. **Liver Support:** Traditional Ayurvedic practitioners also recommend Pushkaramoola for liver health. It is believed to possess hepatoprotective properties, supporting liver function and aiding in the detoxification process. Pushkaramoola may be used in the management of liver disorders such as jaundice and hepatitis.

4. **Anti-inflammatory and Analgesic:** Pushkaramoola is traditionally utilized as an anti-inflammatory and analgesic agent. It is employed to reduce inflammation and alleviate pain associated with various conditions such as arthritis, rheumatism, and muscular injuries. The herb may be used both internally and externally in the form of poultices or liniments.
5. **Menstrual Disorders:** In traditional Ayurvedic medicine, Pushkaramoola is often recommended for women's health issues, particularly in the management of menstrual disorders. It is believed to possess emmenagogue properties, helping to regulate menstrual cycles and alleviate symptoms such as menstrual cramps and irregularities.
6. **Antimicrobial:** Pushkaramoola is traditionally used for its antimicrobial properties. It may be employed in the treatment of infections, including bacterial and fungal infections. The herb is believed to help inhibit the growth of pathogens and support the body's immune response against infections.
7. **Adaptogenic:** Pushkaramoola is considered an adaptogen in Ayurvedic medicine, meaning it helps the body adapt to stress and maintain overall balance and resilience. It may be used to support adrenal health and promote general well-being during times of physical or emotional stress.

These traditional uses of Pushkaramoola highlight its versatility and importance in Ayurvedic medicine. While these uses are deeply rooted in traditional knowledge, ongoing research aims to validate and further elucidate the therapeutic properties of this valuable herb.

The phytochemistry of Pushkaramoola (*Inula racemosa*) is characterized by a diverse array of bioactive compounds, including terpenoids, sesquiterpene lactones, flavonoids, and polysaccharides. These phytoconstituents contribute to the herb's medicinal properties and therapeutic effects. Here are some of the key phytochemicals found in Pushkaramoola:

1. **Sesquiterpene Lactones:** Pushkaramoola is rich in sesquiterpene lactones, particularly alantolactone and isoalantolactone. These compounds are known for their anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, and cytotoxic activities. They play a significant role in the herb's pharmacological effects, including its ability to reduce inflammation and inhibit the growth of pathogens.
2. **Flavonoids:** Pushkaramoola contains various flavonoids, including quercetin, kaempferol, and apigenin derivatives. Flavonoids are well-known antioxidants with anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic, and anti-cancer properties. They contribute to the herb's antioxidant activity and may help protect against oxidative stress and inflammation-related diseases.

3. **Alkaloids:** Some alkaloids have been identified in Pushkaramoola, although they are present in lower quantities compared to other phytoconstituents. These alkaloids may contribute to the herb's pharmacological effects, although their specific roles are still being investigated.
4. **Polysaccharides:** Pushkaramoola contains polysaccharides, which are complex carbohydrates known for their immunomodulatory and anti-inflammatory properties. These polysaccharides may help enhance the immune system's response to pathogens and support overall immune function.
5. **Essential Oils:** The herb also contains essential oils with aromatic compounds such as camphor, pinene, and borneol. These essential oils contribute to Pushkaramoola's characteristic aroma and may have additional therapeutic effects, such as anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties.
6. **Phenolic Compounds:** Phenolic compounds, including phenolic acids and phenolic glycosides, are found in Pushkaramoola and contribute to its antioxidant activity. These compounds help scavenge free radicals and protect cells from oxidative damage.
7. **Triterpenoids:** Some studies have identified triterpenoids in Pushkaramoola, although their presence and significance in the herb require further investigation. Triterpenoids are known for their diverse pharmacological activities, including anti-inflammatory and hepatoprotective effects.

The complex phytochemistry of Pushkaramoola underscores its therapeutic potential and contributes to its traditional use in Ayurvedic medicine. Understanding the chemical composition of the herb provides insights into its pharmacological actions and helps guide further research into its medicinal applications. Additionally, efforts to standardize the phytochemical profile of Pushkaramoola can enhance its quality and ensure consistency in its therapeutic effects.

Pushkaramoola (*Inula racemosa*) has a long history of medicinal use in Ayurvedic medicine, where it is valued for its diverse therapeutic properties. Its traditional applications span a wide range of health conditions, and modern research continues to explore its potential medicinal uses. Here are some of the key medicinal applications of Pushkaramoola:

1. **Respiratory Disorders:** Pushkaramoola is traditionally used to support respiratory health and alleviate symptoms associated with respiratory disorders such as cough, asthma, bronchitis, and congestion. Its expectorant and bronchodilator properties help clear respiratory passages, reduce inflammation, and promote easier breathing.
2. **Digestive Health:** In Ayurveda, Pushkaramoola is employed to improve digestion, stimulate appetite, and

alleviate gastrointestinal discomfort. It may help relieve symptoms of digestive disorders such as indigestion, bloating, flatulence, and stomach pain. Additionally, Pushkaramoola's carminative properties aid in the expulsion of gas from the digestive tract.

3. **Liver Support:** Pushkaramoola is used to support liver function and protect the liver against damage induced by toxins and oxidative stress. It may help regulate liver enzymes, promote liver detoxification, and reduce inflammation in the liver. Pushkaramoola is traditionally used in the management of liver disorders such as jaundice and hepatitis.
4. **Anti-inflammatory and Analgesic Effects:** Pushkaramoola exhibits significant anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties, making it beneficial for managing pain and inflammation associated with conditions such as arthritis, rheumatism, and muscular injuries. Its anti-inflammatory effects help reduce swelling and pain, while its analgesic effects alleviate discomfort.
5. **Menstrual Disorders:** Pushkaramoola is traditionally used to regulate menstrual cycles, alleviate menstrual cramps, and address other menstrual irregularities. Its emmenagogue properties help stimulate menstrual flow and balance hormonal activity, making it useful for women's health issues.
6. **Antimicrobial and Immunomodulatory Effects:** Pushkaramoola possesses antimicrobial properties that help inhibit the growth of bacteria, fungi, and viruses. It supports immune function by enhancing the body's natural defense mechanisms and modulating immune responses. Pushkaramoola may be used to prevent and treat infections and support overall immune health.
7. **Diabetes Management:** Some research suggests that Pushkaramoola may have potential benefits for individuals with diabetes. It exhibits hypoglycemic effects by improving insulin sensitivity, regulating blood sugar levels, and enhancing glucose uptake in cells. Pushkaramoola may be used as an adjunct therapy in managing diabetes mellitus.
8. **Adaptogenic and Antioxidant Effects:** Pushkaramoola acts as an adaptogen, helping the body adapt to stress and maintain balance. Its antioxidant properties protect cells from oxidative damage caused by free radicals, contributing to overall health and well-being. Pushkaramoola may help reduce oxidative stress and delay the aging process.

These medicinal applications highlight the versatility and therapeutic potential of Pushkaramoola in promoting health and treating various ailments. However, it is essential to consult with a qualified healthcare practitioner before

using Pushkaramoola for medicinal purposes, especially if you have underlying health conditions or are pregnant or breastfeeding. Pushkaramoola (*Inula racemosa*) is generally considered safe for medicinal use when used appropriately. However, like any herbal remedy, it is essential to be aware of potential safety considerations and precautions. Here are some points to consider regarding the safety and toxicity of Pushkaramoola:

1. **Dosage:** The dosage of Pushkaramoola should be carefully controlled and administered according to traditional practices or under the guidance of a qualified healthcare practitioner. Excessive consumption of Pushkaramoola or its preparations may lead to adverse effects.
2. **Pregnancy and Lactation:** Pregnant and breastfeeding women should exercise caution when using Pushkaramoola, as there is limited safety data available regarding its use during these periods. It is advisable to consult with a healthcare professional before using Pushkaramoola during pregnancy or lactation.
3. **Allergic Reactions:** Some individuals may experience allergic reactions to Pushkaramoola or its components. Individuals with known allergies to plants in the Asteraceae family (such as ragweed, daisies, and marigolds) may be more susceptible to allergic reactions. Symptoms of an allergic reaction may include skin rash, itching, swelling, or difficulty breathing. Discontinue use and seek medical attention if allergic symptoms occur.
4. **Drug Interactions:** Pushkaramoola may interact with certain medications or other herbal supplements. It is important to consult with a healthcare provider before using Pushkaramoola, especially if you are taking medications for existing health conditions. Potential interactions may occur with medications metabolized by the liver or those that affect blood sugar levels.
5. **Liver Health:** Although Pushkaramoola is traditionally used to support liver health, individuals with pre-existing liver conditions should use caution when using Pushkaramoola or its preparations. It is advisable to consult with a healthcare professional before using Pushkaramoola in such cases.
6. **Quality and Purity:** Ensure that Pushkaramoola products are obtained from reputable sources and adhere to quality standards. Contaminants, adulterants, or improper processing methods may affect the safety and efficacy of Pushkaramoola preparations.
7. **Adverse Effects:** While Pushkaramoola is generally well-tolerated, some individuals may experience mild gastrointestinal upset, such as nausea or diarrhea, particularly with high doses or prolonged use. Discontinue use if adverse effects occur and consult with a healthcare provider if symptoms persist or worsen.

8. **Toxicity:** When used appropriately, Pushkaramoola is not known to be toxic. However, excessive consumption or misuse may lead to adverse effects. It is essential to adhere to recommended dosage guidelines and seek medical attention if signs of toxicity, such as vomiting, dizziness, or severe abdominal pain, are experienced.

As with any herbal remedy, it is advisable to consult with a qualified healthcare practitioner, especially if you have underlying health conditions, are taking medications, or are pregnant or breastfeeding. Additionally, be sure to inform your healthcare provider of any herbal supplements or remedies you are using to prevent potential interactions or adverse effects.

The future perspectives for Pushkaramoola (*Inula racemosa*) encompass several avenues of research and development aimed at further elucidating its therapeutic potential, enhancing its efficacy, and ensuring its sustainable use. Here are some potential future directions for Pushkaramoola:

1. **Pharmacological Studies:** Further research is needed to comprehensively understand the pharmacological mechanisms of Pushkaramoola's therapeutic effects. Investigating its interactions with cellular pathways, receptors, and enzymes can provide insights into its mode of action and identify potential targets for drug development.
2. **Clinical Trials:** Conducting well-designed clinical trials is essential to validate the efficacy and safety of Pushkaramoola in treating specific health conditions. Randomized controlled trials involving human participants can provide robust evidence of its therapeutic benefits and guide its integration into mainstream healthcare practices.
3. **Formulation Development:** Developing standardized formulations of Pushkaramoola products, such as extracts, capsules, and topical preparations, can ensure consistency in dosage and efficacy. Formulation optimization techniques, such as nanoencapsulation and solid lipid nanoparticles, may enhance bioavailability and therapeutic outcomes.
4. **Quality Control and Standardization:** Establishing quality control measures and standards for Pushkaramoola products is crucial to ensure their safety, efficacy, and consistency. Implementing standardized cultivation, harvesting, and processing practices can minimize variability and maintain product quality.
5. **Phytochemical Analysis:** Further exploration of Pushkaramoola's phytochemical composition can identify novel bioactive compounds and elucidate their pharmacological properties. Advanced analytical techniques, such as mass spectrometry and nuclear

magnetic resonance spectroscopy, can facilitate the identification and quantification of phytoconstituents.

6. **Sustainable Cultivation Practices:** Promoting sustainable cultivation practices for Pushkaramoola is essential to preserve its natural habitats and ensure a stable supply of raw materials. Implementing agroforestry techniques, organic farming methods, and conservation strategies can mitigate environmental impact and support biodiversity conservation.
7. **Integration with Conventional Medicine:** Collaborative efforts between traditional medicine practitioners and modern healthcare providers can facilitate the integration of Pushkaramoola into conventional medical practices. Establishing evidence-based guidelines and protocols for its use can promote its acceptance and utilization in clinical settings.
8. **Public Awareness and Education:** Raising public awareness about the potential health benefits of Pushkaramoola and traditional medicine practices can foster appreciation and acceptance within communities. Educational initiatives targeting healthcare professionals, researchers, policymakers, and consumers can promote informed decision-making and responsible use.

By pursuing these future perspectives, Pushkaramoola can emerge as a valuable therapeutic agent with diverse applications in healthcare. Collaborative efforts involving multidisciplinary research, community engagement, and policy support are essential to realize the full potential of Pushkaramoola in promoting health and well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Pushkaramoola (*Inula racemosa*) stands as a botanical treasure with a rich heritage of traditional use and promising therapeutic potential. From its origins in the Himalayan region to its integration into modern healthcare practices, Pushkaramoola continues to captivate the interest of researchers, healthcare practitioners, and enthusiasts alike. Throughout this review, we have explored the botanical description, traditional uses, phytochemistry, pharmacological activities, medicinal applications, safety considerations, and future perspectives of Pushkaramoola. It is evident that this herb offers a diverse range of health benefits, addressing conditions ranging from respiratory disorders and digestive ailments to liver dysfunction and menstrual irregularities. The phytochemical composition of Pushkaramoola, characterized by sesquiterpene lactones, flavonoids, and polysaccharides, underscores its pharmacological properties, including anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, hepatoprotective, and immunomodulatory effects. This wealth of bioactive compounds contributes to Pushkaramoola's adaptogenic and antioxidant properties,

making it a valuable ally in promoting overall health and well-being. While Pushkaramoola holds immense promise as a natural therapeutic agent, it is essential to proceed with caution and respect for its traditional roots. Quality control measures, standardization efforts, and sustainable cultivation practices are imperative to ensure the safety, efficacy, and availability of Pushkaramoola products. Looking ahead, collaborative efforts between traditional medicine practitioners, researchers, healthcare providers, and policymakers will be crucial in realizing the full potential of Pushkaramoola. By embracing interdisciplinary approaches, fostering public awareness, and promoting evidence-based practices, we can harness the power of Pushkaramoola to enrich the landscape of holistic healthcare.

In conclusion, Pushkaramoola represents a timeless symbol of healing and resilience, inviting us to embark on a journey of exploration, discovery, and transformation in pursuit of optimal health and vitality.

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