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PHYSICOCHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL PROPERTIES OF *ADIANTUM CAPILLUS-VENERIS* LINN: AN IMPORTANT DRUG OF UNANI SYSTEM OF MEDICINE

Ajj Ahmed¹, Nasreen Jahan¹, Abdul Wadud¹, Hashmat Imam²,
Syeda Hajera³, Alia Bilal¹

¹Dept. of Ilmu Advia, National Institute of Unani Medicine, Kottigepalya, Magadi
Main Road, Bangalore, K.A., India

²Dept. of Tahaffuji Wa Samaji Tib, National Institute of Unani medicine,
Kottigepalya, Magadi Main Road, Bangalore, K.A., India

³Dept. of Obs. and Gynaecology, Govt. Nizamia Tibbi College, Charminar,
Hyderabad, K.A., India

E-mail of Corresponding Author: aziznum@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present paper is to provide information regarding the therapeutic uses and scientific studies carried out on *Adiantum capillus-veneris* Linn. The key words used for the literature search were *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, Parsioshan, physico chemical, phytochemical and pharmacological study. The search was carried out through Unani classical books, ethno botanical literature and Google scholar. The drug is popularly known as “Parsiaoshan” in Unani and used to treat a number of diseases. It is traditionally used as a diuretic, resolvent, antipyretic, demulcent, emmenagogue, expectorant and deobstruent. It is also useful in the treatment of hair fall and skin diseases. Chemical analysis of Parsioshan shows that it contains triterpenoids, flavonoids and various other constituents. Research studies have shown that it possesses anti fungal, anti inflammatory, anti bacterial, hypoglycemic and lithotriptic activities. An extensive review of ancient literature of Unani medicine revealed that the drug having numerous therapeutic actions, several of which have been established scientifically which may help the researchers to set their minds for approaching the utility, efficacy and potency of *Adiantum capillus-veneris*.

Key Words: *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, Parsioshan, Physico Chemical, Phytochemical and Pharmacological study

INTRODUCTION

As folk medicine, the pteridophytes which constitute ferns and fern allies have been known to man for more than 2000 years and also have been mentioned in ancient literature. It has been observed that pteridophytes are not infected by microbial pathogens, which may be one of the important factors for the evolutionary success of pteridophytes and the fact that they survived for more than 350 million years¹.

Fern and fern allies, also known as botanical snakes or plant reptiles, have always been in the center stage of attraction to botanist, horticulturists and nature lovers since ancient times. This

fascinating group of pteridophytes is distributed in the Himalaya, Western Ghats, and Vindhya, hilly areas of Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh as well as in the Aravalli, particularly in Mount Abu in Rajasthan². *Adiantum capillus-veneris* Linn is a graceful delicate fern of damp places, found chiefly in the western Himalayas, ascending to an altitude of 2,400 m, and extending into Manipur. It is common in Punjab, Bihar, Maharashtra, and south India. It grows among rocks and on walls^{3,4}. Theophrastus (327-287B.C.) and Dioscorides (100A.D.) have referred to medicinal attributes of certain ferns. *Adiantum capillus-veneris* Linn is