Medicinal properties of pomegranate in Quran and Islamic Traditions (Hadith)

Morteza Darabinia
Department of Islamic Thought, Faculty of Medicine, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran

Nourollah Sadeghzadeh
Department of nuclear medicine, Faculty of Pharmacy, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran
Corresponding author: mail:nourollahsadeghzadeh@yahoo.com

Ali Morad Heidari Gorji
Medical Education Development Center, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran

Arona Chabra
Faculty of Pharmacy, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran

Abstract

The creation of the universe and creation system is purposeful and based on negation of falsehood. The emergence of this rule is true in all creatures of the universe. Islam emphasizes on herbal therapy and strictly orders the use of some specific fruits such as pomegranate. One of the inherent subtleties on the medical benefits of pomegranate, emphasized in Quran and Hadith, related to this issue that not only the juice of this fruit is useful but also its seeds and peel have numerous properties for body treatment and soul’s recovery.

Aim: The aim of this study is to investigate the medicinal importance of pomegranate, as it emphasized in the Quran and Hadith.

Materials and Methods: In this study, an analytical-conceptual method was used. Related verses of Quran and Hadith of Imams were used to data collection, then, using the key words such pgranatum, L.varpleniflora, Punicacea, Varnana Pracillisima and searching in valid scientific references such as Springer, Google Scholar, Science direct, Magiran, Noormags and SID with, the required data were extracted and then, the data was analyzed in accordance with the objectives of this research.

Results: in Quran, God order to eat pomegranate and Imams dubbed it as the superior fruit on the importance of it. Now, in traditional medicine, pomegranate is known as a fruit of paradise and in scientific research, including clinical trials, in vivo studies and chemical analysis of plant, medicinal properties of its fruit, peel and stem particularly myocardial infarction prophylactic
properties, anti-cancerous, antioxidant, anti-microbial properties and on the other hand, strengthening properties of the immune system, digestion, etc., have been approved.

**Discussion and conclusion:** contemplation of verses and Hadith guarantee the access to the secrets of creation in excellent system that not made in vain. Afflatus and the statements of Imams are full of principles and rules that guide the thinker well to know God's blessings and use them. Therefore, it is worthy that the thinkers bring new scientific achievements to humanity by thinking on wisdom hidden in Quran and Hadith as new research is still ongoing on other medicinal benefits of pomegranates.

**Keywords:** Quran, Pomegranate, Medicinal properties, Islamic medicine, Hadith.
**Introduction**

Islam is a comprehensive religion that invites people to think (Khosropanah 2003). God introduces the universality of this divine Book in the Quran as follows: "And we have revealed to you the Book that represents everything and is a source of guidance, mercy and annunciation for Muslims" (Quran, Sura: Nahl, verse 89) and in the book of “Tafsir Nemooneh”, it was meant as " Everything is expressed in Quran" (MakaremShirazi 1980). Afflatus is a supplement of wisdom and sense, the object and purpose of afflatus and this religion is to lead men to real and comprehensive perfection and it is involved in material and spiritual fate of man in accordance with the aim and mission (YoosefiTazehKendi 2012). On the other hand, numerous hadith refers to the sense that God did not hesitate to express something in order to development of human. It has been quoted from Imam Sadiq: "which Almighty God has represented everything in Quran. By Allah, he did not even drop a little thing that man would have needed as far as no one can say: I wish that God would have stated that in Quran (Koleini, 1983). According to the holistic nature of Islam and the verses and Hadith, which emphasized on the value of pomegranate, in this paper, the medicinal properties of this fruit, which is referred as the miraculous fruit, are studied.

**Materials and Methods**

An analytical-conceptual method was used in this study. Using the reliable sources of interpretation and narrative from reliable sources, incoming texts were extracted from Quran and Hadith of Imams according to the goal of this study and then, using the achievements of scientific research, the concept and implications of verses and Hadith on the medicinal properties of pomegranate were studied. In addition to available interpretation and narrative books, databases such as Springer, Google Scholar, Sciedirect, Magiran, Noormags and SID with the key words like pgranatum, L.varpleniflora, Punicacea, Var.nanaPracillisima, were used.

**4-Results**

Pomegranate with scientific name of punicagranatum L which named as al-Rumman in Quran, and is of Lythracea herbal family. In Quran and Hadith, Pomegranate had been mentioned as beneficial fruit and traditional medicine and modern scientific findings have investigated its properties, particularly in the pharmaceutical field.

**4-1- Emphasis on properties of pomegranate in Quran and Hadith**

**4-1-1-Quran’s unequivocally Statements**

In Quran, the pomegranate mentioned and recommended in three places. Allah, in Quran, says: “It is He who sends down water from the skies, and brings out of it everything that grows, the green foliage, the grain lying close, the date palm trees with clusters of dates, and the gardens of grapes, and of olives and pomegranates, so similar yet so unlike. Look at the fruits, how they appear on the trees, and they ripen. In all these are signs for those who believe.” (Quran, Sura Anam, verse 99). Allamah Tabatabai interprets this verse in his book entitled “Tafsir Al-mizan”, as follows: “in this verse, Almighty God has mentioned to the items like splitting plant
seeds and tree cores that he created by himself so that ones, who are wisdom and have insight, think about them” (Tabatabaei 1924). Once again, in the same surah of the Holy Quran, it is expressed: “It is He who grew the gardens, trellised and bowered, and palm trees and land sown with corn and many other seeds, and olives and pomegranates, alike and yet unlike. So eat of their fruit when they are in fruit, and give on the day of harvesting His due, and do not be extravagant, for God does not love those who are prodigal” (Quran, Sura Anam, verse 141). According to some commentators, the reason of separately noting palm and pomegranate is they are food and medicine in addition to fruit (Ansari Qortabi 1984). The third place in which God named pomegranate in Quran is surah Al-Rahman: “With fruits in them, and dates and pomegranates (Quran, Sura: Al rahman verse 68). According to some commentators, such as Fakhr Razi: "referring to these two types of fruits in the midst of the fruits of Paradise in the Quran is due to their diversity in terms of nature (Cold and warm) and growing location" (FakhreRazi, 2004).

4-1-2-Imams’ traditions (Hadith)
In the words of Imams comprehensive benefits of pomegranate were listed, the benefits that both prevent and may treat diseases. These recommendations indicate the medicinal properties of pomegranate in the elimination of mental illness, particularly psychosis. It has been quoted from the Prophet Mohammad: “Upon you to eat sweet pomegranate, because any of its seeds which goes to the stomach, eliminates the pain and disease” (Majlesi, 1983). In another hadith, he said: “Eat pomegranate with its fat (by fat it refers to the whiteness peel which pomegranate seeds are inside it and to the yellow and thick peel which pomegranate seeds are on it), because it is cleaning the stomach” (Majlesi 1983). The Prophet Mohammad stated the effects of pomegranate in three lasting Hadith, First hadith: “Pomegranate is the best of fruits, and anyone who eats one pomegranate, will wrath its devil for forty days” (Barqi 1949). Second Hadith: “anyone who eats a complete pomegranate, the Lord would light up his heart for forty nights” (Tabarsi 1991). Third Hadith: “Eat pomegranate, because its seeds light up your heart and drive out the Satan” (Ebnababveih 1993). Imam Ali pointed out the subtle hints about the properties of pomegranate in his statements, including “Feed Pomegranates to your children, because it accelerates their power of speech” (Ebnababveih, 1983). In another hadith, according to the Prophet Mohammad about durable medicinal properties of pomegranate, Imam Ali said: “Eat pomegranate with its fat since it would tan the stomach. Each of Pomegranate’s seed which placed in stomach will revive the heart, light up the soul and make evil temptations inactive for forty nights” (Ebnababveih, 1983). In this hadith, in addition to referring to the impact of the Pomegranate on the stomach’s refining, also it is pointed to the life of heart which means the positive impact on the treatment of mental and psychological pain.” In the book of al-Kafi, Imam Sadiq states that “Whoever eat a pomegranate at the bedtime, his life would be safe until the morning” (Koleini 1986). The author of Rouzat Al-vaezyn quoted from Imam Sadiq: “Four things will moderate human’s nature: Sourani pomegranate, unripe dates (which been cooked by fire), Violet and Chicory” (FatalNeishaboori 1966). Imam Sadiq prescribed eating the pomegranate to both hungry and full people and stated: “Upon you eating the pomegranate, since no hungry person would eat it, unless it is satisfied him, and no Full stomach person would eat it, unless it is delicious the food on him” (Koleini 1986). About pomegranate’s properties for
repelling insects, Imam Kazem stated that: “pomegranate tree’s smoke would destroy insects” (Majlesi 1983). Imams approved the use of Pomegranate extract in terms of medicinal properties, that Imam Reza stated: “Sucking sweet and sour pomegranates would improve human power and cleanse the blood” (Qayuumi 2011). Words of the Imam Hassan Askari reveals the positive impact of pomegranate more than ever, he stated that “Eat sweet pomegranate after phlebotomy, because it will soothe and cleanse the blood” (Shobar 1821).

4-2- Gains resulting from experience and knowledge in the discovery of pomegranate’s properties

4-2-1- Properties of pomegranate from the perspective of traditional medicine

Numerous studies conducted on the properties of the pomegranate especially in traditional medicine in recent years (Lee and Watson 1998; Aviram and Dornfeld 2001; Kaplan, Hayek et al. 2001; Chidambara Murthy, Reddy et al. 2004; de Nigris, Williams-Ignarro et al. 2005). Pomegranate grows as a shrub or bush, it is considered as Mediterranean native fruit and its species are widely used in America and Europe traditional medicine (Ross, Selvasubramanian et al. 2001; Kim, Mehta et al. 2002). In traditional medicine, pomegranate is a fruit of paradise that may taste sour, sweet or sour-sweet. Sweet types are beneficial for breast and lung but sour types would dry breast and it is not good for patients with coughing. For those who have warm liver, there is no fruit better than the sour one. There is a little nutrition in pomegranate, but, it is full of A-B-C-E Vitamins and it has iron and other beneficial metals that would make it hard to digest and it is slightly flatulent. But, its flatulence is not like other fruits and will outspread soon. The core of pomegranate’s seed is slightly laxative and cleans the intestines with their hard peels. Pomegranate’s juice includes Tatenn sugar and it has beneficial substance for liver called Maneteen that cleans it, so the face becomes bright. It helps the growth of kids because of Vitamin A and it strengthens the nerves because of Vitamin B. The best time to eat pomegranate is breakfast with empty stomach. It can be used with Golpar (Heracleum persicum) which may help digest in addition to the spicy flavor. All parts of Pomegranate are useful and usable. Its peel, seeds, stem peel and root peel have industrial and medical applications. Pomegranate’s peel had been used in dyeing and leather industries in the past times that the best Iranian carpets would be dyed with its peel. Keeping the pomegranate juice in the mouth helps to reduce or even cure the pimples there and strengthens the gums. Sour pomegranate is harmful for patients with gastrointestinal ulceration and phlegmatic people and reduces liver’s attraction. Contrarily, sweet and sweet-sour pomegranates strength the liver; they have significant impact on treating Bilious fevers and jaundice (Jazayeri 1998). Pomegranate is useful in curing jaundice, spleen, heart choking and intense cough. It smooths the voice and makes the face clean (Khalili 1996). About pomegranate’s medical benefits, Abu-Ali Sina states: “Pomegranate flower cuts the bleeding and strengthens the gums, Pomegranate powder treats the old wounds, Pomegranate bark is useful for treating inflammation, liver, cough and sore (AbouAliSina 2011).

4-2-2- Properties of pomegranate from the perspective of modern science

In 1807, doctor Buchanan, English physician living in India, could accidentally treat the patients with a tapeworm by the use of pomegranate extract and saved many patients from death, but he
could never find the scientific evidence despite trying more (Wolf 2nd 1969). In 1822, doctor Gómez treated 14 patients suffering from tapeworm; he was able to record his findings and published those in France(Quattrocchi 1999).

Pomegranate plant was first recorded in 1830 in the pharmacopoeia America and in the years of 1830, 1880 and 1890, in the editions of Pharmacopoeia, the medicinal properties of its fruit, bark and roots were separately incorporated in it (DeBoer 1975). Researchers have found that the pomegranate fruit has a large impact on reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases in this area. The results were evaluated by clinical phase studies in humans and animals and in vitro experiments on tumor cells and macrophages (Borochov-Neori, Judeinstein et al. 2009). Its usefulness in improving health is attributed to high capacity of specific antioxidants in pomegranate extract, which is a result of high levels of phenolic compounds (Zahin, Aqil et al.).

In-vitro studies have shown that anthocyanin is the reason of pomegranate’s red color. It was found that the methanol extract of pomegranate is because of phenolic extract that has more Lazhynancontent. It has highly antioxidant and anti-mutagenic activities and also its anti-mutation depends on the dose and this effect is observed at concentrations of 10-80 g/ml (Kaur, Jabbar et al. 2006).

Pomegranate is a plant that is rich in flavonoids and phenolic composition and has anti-cancer properties due to its antioxidant activity, because natural antioxidants reduce the potential of mutagenicity and carcinogenicity and suppress them in some cases (early stages of disease). This achievement is due to the chemical protective effects of pomegranate extract on the factors causing cancer ((Rekha, Kuttan et al. 2001; Tiwari 2001).

In the clinical trial, it has been proven that pomegranate peel has antibacterial activity against pathogenic microorganisms resistant to chemical drugs. In this case, pomegranate tannin extract is active against genital herpes virus (Zhang, Zhan et al. 1995).

Equal to vivo studies, pomegranate extract with a dose of 50-150 mg per kg of body weight can prevent oxidative stress in the liver for 10 days and protect the liver against lipid peroxidation. In a laboratory study, it has been proven that pomegranate juice is effective for the treatment of colitis, leucorrhrea, dysmenorrhea, Oxyuris worm, Rectocele, mumps and headache (Boulos 1983; Maron and Ames 1983; Halliwell 1994).

The extract of different parts of pomegranate is a source of useful biological anti-tumor, anti-cancerous, anti-microbial, anti-diarrhea and anti-ulcer activities. Pomegranate flowers is astringent in addition to the anti-diabetic and its herbal tea stops bleeding. The pomegranate is used in the treatment of Acidizes, dysentery diarrhea, infections, intestinal worms, bleeding and reproductive system diseases. Clinical studies have shown that some species of pomegranate has antiviral activity, and hydro alcoholic extract of this fruit has the property of activity against influenza virus. Using the extract of pomegranate fruit as a nasal spray for medical treatment is another achievement of scientists in their in-vitro studies in the field of pharmacological properties of pomegranate in recent decades (Braga, Shupp et al. 2005).

Table 1 and 2 shows the changes in Gag reflex in soft palate and tonsils after taking lozenges of pomegranate peel and its effect (Hekmatian, Shadmehr et al.).
Table 1: Changes in Gag reflex in soft palate and tonsils after taking lozenges of pomegranate peel and placebo (Hekmatian, Shadmehr et al.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in gag reflex</th>
<th>Pomegranate peels (%)</th>
<th>Placebo (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>88/5</td>
<td>23/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>77/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Changes in Gag reflex in soft palate and tonsils after taking lozenges of pomegranate peel and placebo (Hekmatian, Shadmehr et al.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in gag reflex</th>
<th>Pomegranate peels (%)</th>
<th>Placebo (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>92/5</td>
<td>14/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>7/5</td>
<td>86/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data analysis indicates that the frequencies of control and studied groups have significant statistical differences in both cases and the lozenges of pomegranate peel reduce the gag reflex significantly (Hekmatian, Shadmehr et al.).

Data analysis suggests that herbal tea of pomegranate is resolver of diarrhea and herbal tea of its root treats acute dysentery diarrhea (bloody). Pomegranate juice also has antimicrobial activity against Staphylococcus aurosus and E-Coli opportunistic infections (Voravuthikunchai and Limsuwan 2006). In another experiment, the powder of its peel is diagnosed as immune modulatory, astringent, antispasmodic, diuretic, carminative and diaphoretic (Arseculeratne, Gunatilaka et al. 1985; Voravuthikunchai and Limsuwan 2006).

5- Discussion and Conclusions
In addition to the Quran, the Prophet Mohammad and the Imams also had comprehensiveness. As Prophet Mohammad said to Imam Ali: "Allah gave me comprehensive words, and also taught comprehensive words to you” (Ebnebabveih 1983; Majlesi 1983). Noting health benefits of herbs and Pharmaceuticals is one of the manifestations of comprehensiveness in the Word because the compassion and wisdom of God demands him to create a treatment on pains. As the Quran quotes from the prophet Abraham: “And heals me when I am sick” (Quran, Sura Shoara, verse 80) and this statement means that healing is God's work and he is a real healer. God is the one who put health benefits in medicines and created for any pain a medication. He has given the talent and knowledge of pain, medicines and how to treat it to man. In describing the Prophet Mohammad, Imam Ali said:” he was the healer who treated sick ones and put heal where exactly needed”(ShrifeRazi 2002). For a man, to be able to play a mediating role in knowing the medicinal properties of plants and using them in the treatment of diseases, the Lord declared the
secrets of creation with afflatus or his noble religious leaders. Pomegranate is a fruit that Quran and Imams emphasized on its medicinal properties and, with the experiences and scientific experiments, the truth of afflatus and the words of Imams on the therapeutic and pharmacological effects of pomegranate has become more apparent day by day. Now it can be understood that all the properties of pomegranate such as myocardial infarction prophylactic properties, anti-cancerous, antioxidant, antimicrobial properties and on the other hand, strengthening properties of the immune system, digestion, etc. are the evidence of its superiority. It also plays the role of supplier of about twenty nutrients for the body. That is why Imams wisely said: "No hungry person eats it, unless it’ll be enough for him".
References


