

Examining of Nutritional and Remedial Properties of Olive in Quran, Hadiths, Traditional and Modern Medicine

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Olive (*Olea europaea*), a species in the family of Oleaceae, is one of the fruits that grows in the Mediterranean region, central Asia and some parts of Africa. Annual production of this fruit is about 17.4 million tons in the world. With scientific development in various fields in recent years, new medical and nutritional properties of olive have been discovered. It was found that many of demonstrated properties of this fruit in modern science have already been pointed out in the Quran, narrations and hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (S) and Imams (AS). Olive generally is effective in the treatment of stomach ulcers and other gastrointestinal diseases, hypertension, asthma, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, bone fractures and osteoporosis, cutaneous diseases, stimulation of urination, prevention of hair loss and reduction of inflammation and fever.

Method: In this study, medical properties of olive were investigated in the Quran, hadiths, traditional medicine as well as recent scientific researches (2000 - 2016). All ethical issues were observed. Moreover, the authors did not report conflict of interest.

Results: Along with the recommendations of the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (s), Imams and traditional medicine about the consumption of olive, findings of recent studies also indicate that this fruit is effective in the prevention of cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease, cancers of colon, skin, prostate, breast, uterine and ovarian, diabetes, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis and neurodegenerative diseases such as Down syndrome. Anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and antioxidant properties also reported for olive.

Conclusion: The findings of this research can be an effective step confirming the scientific aspects of the Quran and narratives of the Prophet Muhammad (S) and Imams (AS), especially in the case of fruits like olive.

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Summary

Background and Objectives: Olive (*Olea europaea*), which belongs to Oleaceae species, is cultivated in the Mediterranean region, central Asia, and some parts of Africa (1). Epidemiologic and laboratory studies conducted worldwide have shown that olive oil plays an important role in the prevention of cardiovascular

diseases, Alzheimer's, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, autoimmune, inflammatory, and neurological diseases (2). In the present research, the recommendations of Islamic and traditional medicinal resources as well as remedial properties of olive highlighted in the Quran, hadiths, and traditional medicine have been investigated. Besides, the veracity of these assertions has been evaluated in the light of the latest scientific findings.

Method: This study is a review study in nature and its required data were obtained through the search in national and international scientific databases using the keywords of olive, Quran, *Olea europaea*, hadith, medicine, disease, properties and effects from 2000 to 2016.

Results: Olive has been referred to in Surahs of Al-Mu'minun, An-Nur, At-Tin, Abasa, An-Nahl, and Al-An'am of holy Quran. According to commentators, the medicinal and nutritional properties of olive have been mentioned directly in three Surahs of At-Tin, An-Nahl and Abasa.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has talked about this fruit: Olive gives the mouth a pleasant smell and cleans dental plaques. This fruit treats seventy diseases including leprosy (3). Also, Imam Jafar Sadeh (PBUH) stated that olive strengthens bones, thins the skin and improves sexual performance (4).

In traditional medicine, Olive is used for the treatment of stomach ulcers and other gastrointestinal diseases; hypertension, asthma, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases; diabetes, hair loss, bone fractures, and cutaneous diseases. It is also used as a laxative, anti-inflammatory, urination stimulant and fever reducer compound (5).

Olive and its oil are a rich source of unsaturated fatty acids and phenolic compounds (2). It also has improving effects on the endothelial system, indicators of body fat, insulin sensitivity, glycemic index and blood pressure (6). This fruit prevents the colon, breast, uterine, ovarian and prostate cancers (7).

Olive and its oil prevent from the activity of the most important food-borne pathogens. It also has antiviral properties (8). Hydroxytyrosol, tyrosol, vitamin E, carotene, squalene, chlorophyll and oleuropein available in olive not only prevent osteoporosis but also increase the density of bone minerals (9). Olive compounds such as oleic acid, sterols, alcohols and antioxidants boost the human immune system (10). Healthy effects of this oil on diabetes are related to monounsaturated fatty acids especially oleic acid that influences the sensitivity to insulin and incidence of type 2 diabetes through various mechanisms (11).

Conclusion: Despite numerous advancements in science over recent years, the modern medicine has come up with findings that centuries ago were stated simply and in details in Iranian and Islamic books of traditional medicine. This indicates the necessity of thinking about the recommendations in the resources of Islamic and traditional medicine. Results of this study support the scientific aspects of the Quran and the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Imams (PBUT) especially about the properties of fruits like olive.

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