Abstract

Traditional uses, chemistry and pharmacology of *Ruscus* genus (“*Murd esfarm*” in traditional Persian medicine); a review

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**Background and objectives:** *Ruscus* genus from Asparagaceae (popularly called Butcher’s broom) are perennial rhizomatous evergreen herbs and grows in Europe and south western Asia. They are generally used as anti-inflammatory, diaphoretic, diuretic, mildly laxative, and vasoconstrictive agents in many countries. *Ruscus hyrcanus* Woronov is widely distributed in north of Iran. It is known as “*Murd esfarm*” in Persian traditional medicine (TPM). Based on TPM, Iranian physicians applied “*Murd esfarm*” for various disorders such as epilepsy, diarrhea, expulsion of intestinal worms and for increasing milk secretion. This study aimed to identify “*Murd esfarm*” a drug used in TPM and develop its therapeutic aspects and introduce a novel species for treatment of chronic vein disease. **Methods:** This study was conducted using the electronic databases (e.g., Pubmed, Web of science) and important Iranian traditional medicine books such as the Canon of medicine, Makhzan-ol advie, Tuhfat al-Mu’minin. **Results:** Extracts of these plants were effective in increasing venous tone because of their anti-inflammatory and astringent properties, which is attributed to saponin glycosides. Ruscogenin and neoruscogenin are compounds that constrict and strengthen veins and promote circulation from the lower extremities in both species. **Conclusion:** *R. hyrcanus* is a unique species of *Ruscus* in Iran. Due to the similarity of the Butcher’s broom with the plant mentioned in TPM books, this species can be used for the treatment of many diseases related to vascular insufficiency, including varicose veins and hemorrhoids.

**Keywords:** chronic vein disease, Persian traditional medicine, *Ruscus*, saponin