



“USES OF STEVIA - A REVIEW”

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ABSTRACT

The small perennial shrub *Stevia rebaudiana* Bertoni is a natural non-caloric sweetener, with more sweetness than sucrose. Stevia also known as sweet leaf or sugar leaf or honeyleaf or honey yerba. It is a folk medicine used throughout the world since ancient times for various purposes like a bio-sweetener and a medicine. The use of stevia can be recommended by professionals in their clinical setting as an important adjunct to reduce dental caries risk in individual.

KEYWORDS: Stevia, sweetener, anticariogenic.

INTRODUCTION

Stevia is a 100% natural, zero caloric sweetener with zero glycemic index and zero carbohydrates and majority of health benefits. It is 300 times sweeter than sucrose.^[1] It not only has effects on oral cavity but also has vast range of beneficial systemic effects too. Stevia is safe and non toxic. Present article gives the idea that Stevia can bring a revolution in changing trends in anti-cariogenic efficacy of sugar substitute.

HISTORY

Native to Paraguay and Brazil and used widely today in Asia and South America, Stevia has gained recent attention by numerous food and beverage multinational enterprises. In 1931,

French chemist isolated glycosides which gives Stevia a sweet taste. Japan began marketing Stevioside as a sweetener in the 1977. Brazil approved Stevia products in 1980.

CHIEF INGREDIENT

Stevia contains two important glycosides namely, Stevioside and Rebaudioside A; which are responsible for sweetening effects of Stevia.^[2]

USES OF STEVIA

Dental effects: Stevia not only has anticariogenic effects but also has antiperiodontopathic properties too.^[3] Stevia has antibacterial active against *S.mutans*, *L.acidophilus*, and *S.sorbinus*. Stevia has antifungal activity towards *C.albicans*. It has anti-plaque effect by reducing biofilm formation. Stevia is a healing agent at periodontium level.

Systemic effects: Stevia is cardiogenic and antihypertensive effects.^[4] Stevia has antihyperglycemic effect and is glucostatic, that shows Stevia is safe for diabetics.^[5] Stevia is used to treat inflammatory bowel disease. Stevia has cicatrizing effects. Stevia has anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory activities.^[6] Stevia has anti-oxidant effects.^[6] Stevia has anti-obesity effects. Stevia has anticancer effects too. Hence Stevia is regarded as universal tonic.

CONCLUSION

Stevia rebaudiana Bertoni, an accepted sugar substitute, is herb of family Asteraceae which possess natural sweetening and pharmaceutical properties. It has wide range of dental effects and systemic effects. Still studies are awaited to prove its efficacy in pediatric population.

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