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Sandalwood: Aiming To Study Its Beneficial Effects for Skin

Siddhi Saste, Riddhi Saste, Tejas Sawalkar, Guided by Prof. Sushma T. Nakhate

Principal, Dr. Tushar T. Shelke

Genba Sopanrao Moze College of Pharmacy

ABSTRACT:

Sandalwood (Santalum album) has been traditionally used in various cultures for its aromatic and therapeutic properties. This study aims to investigate the beneficial effects of sandalwood on skin health, focusing on its anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and antioxidant properties. Through a review of existing literature and potential in vitro studies, we explore sandalwood's role in improving skin conditions such as acne, eczema, and aging-related changes. The findings could support the development of natural, plant-based skincare solutions harnessing the bioactive compounds in sandalwood.

KEYWORDS: Herbal, Cold Cream, Sandalwood Powder, Skin, Antioxidant, Phyto ingredients

INTRODUCTION:

Sandalwood (*Santalum album*), a small evergreen tree native to southern India and Southeast Asia, holds a revered place in traditional medicine, cultural rituals, and the cosmetic industry. For centuries, the heartwood and essential oil of sandalwood have been treasured not only for their distinctive, calming aroma but also for their wide-ranging medicinal and dermatological applications. In Ayurveda, Unani, and traditional Chinese medicine, sandalwood has been utilized to treat various skin ailments, including inflammation, infections, blemishes, and wounds. The growing global interest in natural and plant-based skincare ingredients has reignited scientific curiosity in understanding the pharmacological potential of sandalwood, especially in the realm of dermatology.

Sandalwood (*Santalum album*) is a highly valued plant known for its distinctive fragrance and long-standing use in traditional medicine, particularly in Ayurveda and Chinese healing systems. Its essential oil, extracted from the heartwood, is rich in bioactive compounds such as α-santalol and β-santalol, which are credited with various therapeutic properties. Historically, sandalwood has been applied topically for skin ailments ranging from acne and rashes to pigmentation disorders and premature aging.

Recent scientific interest has grown around its potential dermatological benefits, particularly its anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and antioxidant activities. These properties suggest sandalwood may play a supportive role in skin barrier function, wound healing, and the management of common skin disorders such as eczema, psoriasis, and acne vulgaris. Despite its traditional use, systematic studies evaluating the efficacy and mechanisms of sandalwood in dermatological applications remain limited.

This study aims to explore the beneficial effects of sandalwood on skin health, with an emphasis on its active constituents, mechanisms of action, and potential applications in modern skincare formulations. By bridging traditional knowledge with contemporary scientific inquiry, we seek to validate and potentially expand the therapeutic use of sandalwood in dermatology.

CHANGES IN SKIN APPEARANCE:

Dry skin

Elderly people frequently have skin that is dry and scaly. The degradation or loss of skin barrier function with increasing age is partly accountable for this manifestation. The recovery of damaged barrier function has been demonstrated to be slower in aged skin, resulting in greater susceptibility to developing dryness. A decrease in epidermal flagging and lower lipid levels in lamellar bodies are two factors that contribute to this multifactorial process. Increased trans-epidermal water loss (TEWL) is also exhibited by aged skin, leaving the stratum cornea more susceptible to becoming dry in low humidity environments. In addition to dryness, aged skin is often characterized by roughness, wrinkling, skin pallor, hyper- or hypopigmentation, laxity, fragility, easy bruising and benign neoplasms

Benign neoplasms in ageing skin

The development of acrochordons (skin tags), cherry angiomas, seborrheic keratoses, lentigos (sun spots), and sebaceous hyperplasia's, among other lesions and cutaneous alterations, is an example of how the appearance and surface texture of the skin can dramatically alter with age. Patients of dermatologists and plastic surgeons often request removal of these benign neoplasms. Various destructive treatment modalities are available, including hyfrecation and sundry laser options.

As skin ages, various benign neoplasms commonly develop as a result of intrinsic aging processes and long-term exposure to environmental factors, particularly ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

a) **Seborrheic keratosis:** Which appears as pigmented, wart-like, or waxy growths with a characteristic "stuck-on" appearance. Though benign, these lesions can resemble melanoma and may warrant further evaluation.
b) **Cherry angiomas:** Also known as senile angiomas, are small, red vascular papules that tend to increase in number with age and are typically found on the trunk.
c) **Solar lentigines:** or age spots, are flat, pigmented macules resulting from chronic sun exposure, most often seen on the face, hands, and other sun-exposed areas. These, too, are benign but can mimic more serious pigmented lesions.
d) **Skin tags:** (acrochordons) are soft, pedunculated outgrowths of skin commonly found in areas of friction such as the neck, axillae, and groin, often associated with metabolic conditions like insulin resistance.
e) **Sebaceous hyperplasia:** which presents as small, yellowish papules with a central indentation, most commonly on the forehead and cheeks. These lesions may resemble basal cell carcinoma but are non-cancerous.
f) **Lipomas:** benign tumours composed of adipose tissue, manifest as soft, mobile subcutaneous nodules and are generally asymptomatic unless large or tender.
g) **Epidermis cysts:** often misnamed "sebaceous cysts," are filled with keratin and can appear as firm, round nodules with a central punctum, usually on the face, neck, or trunk.

While all of these neoplasms are benign, their presence in aging skin highlights the importance of regular skin evaluations to distinguish them from malignant lesions and to manage any that become symptomatic or cosmetically concerning.

CHANGES IN SKIN APPEARANCE DUE TO SANDALWOOD:

1. **Improved Skin Tone and Radiance:** Sandalwood has mild exfoliating properties and helps remove dead skin cells. Brighter, more even skin tone and a natural glow.
2. **Reduction in Acne and Blemishes:** Its antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties combat acne-causing bacteria and soothe irritation. Fewer breakouts, diminished redness, and fading of acne scars.
3. **Smoother Skin Texture:** Sandalwood promotes mild astringency, which tightens pores and helps refine skin texture. Skin feels smoother, looks more refined with reduced pore visibility.
4. **Diminished Appearance of Wrinkles and Fine Lines:** The antioxidant action of compounds like α-santalol helps neutralize free radicals that contribute to premature aging. Softening of fine lines and delayed formation of new wrinkles with consistent use.
5. **Reduced Pigmentation and Dark Spots:** Sandalwood can help inhibit tyrosine, an enzyme involved in melanin production. Gradual fading of hyperpigmentation, age spots, and sun spots, leading to a more uniform complexion.
6. **Calmed Redness and Irritation:** It's soothing, cooling effect makes it effective for sensitive or inflamed skin conditions like rashes or eczema. Reduced redness, less visible irritation, and more balanced skin appearance.
7. **Hydrated and Soft Skin:** While not a direct moisturizer, sandalwood helps maintain the skin barrier and reduce Tran's epidermal water loss when used in formulations. Softer, supple skin with a healthy look.

SKIN ANTI-AGING APPROACHES:

Sandalwood (*Santalum album*), a revered botanical in traditional medicine systems, has emerged as a promising natural agent in modern skin anti-aging strategies. Its bioactive compounds, particularly **α-santalol** and **β-santalol**, exhibit multiple dermatological benefits that contribute to delaying or minimizing the visible signs of skin aging. Below are the key anti-aging approaches involving sandalwood:

Antioxidant Activity

- **Mechanism:** Sandalwood neutralizes reactive oxygen species (ROS), which are major contributors to cellular aging and collagen degradation.
- **Effect on Skin:** Reduces oxidative stress, prevents DNA damage, and preserves skin's structural proteins like collagen and elastin.
- **Outcome:** Diminished appearance of fine lines, improved skin resilience, and prevention of premature aging.

Anti-inflammatory Action

- **Mechanism:** The santalol compounds suppress pro-inflammatory mediators (e.g., COX-2, TNF-α), reducing chronic low-grade inflammation associated with aging (inflammation).
- **Effect on Skin:** Calms redness, swelling, and irritation, which can exacerbate aging signs.
- **Outcome:** Healthier, calmer skin with reduced tendency to develop age-related sensitivity or inflammatory skin conditions.

Collagen Preservation and Stimulation

- **Mechanism:** By preventing enzymatic breakdown of collagen (inhibiting MMPs – matrix metalloproteinase), sandalwood helps maintain dermal integrity.
- **Effect on Skin:** Preserves firmness and elasticity, delaying sagging and wrinkle formation.
- **Outcome:** Firmer, plumper skin with enhanced texture.

Skin Brightening and Pigmentation Control

- **Mechanism:** Sandalwood may inhibit tyrosine activity, which is responsible for melanin synthesis.
- **Effect on Skin:** Lightens age spots, evens skin tone, and reduces hyperpigmentation caused by sun damage.
- **Outcome:** Brighter, more even complexion with reduced visible signs of photo aging.

Hydration and Skin Barrier Support

- **Mechanism:** While not a direct humectant, sandalwood oil helps strengthen the skin's lipid barrier and prevent Tran's epidermal water loss (TEWL).
- **Effect on Skin:** Improves moisture retention and supports a healthy skin barrier.
- **Outcome:** Softer, suppler skin with fewer dry or rough patches.

Cell Turnover and Detoxification

- **Mechanism:** Mild exfoliating and astringent properties help in removing dead skin cells and unclogging pores.
- **Effect on Skin:** Stimulates renewal of the epidermis and detoxifies the skin surface.
- **Outcome:** Smoother skin texture and rejuvenated appearance.

FORMULATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

Sandalwood is used in a variety of anti-aging formulations, including:

- **Creams and serums:** For deep absorption and targeted effects.
- **Face masks and packs:** For detoxification and surface renewal.
- **Essential oil blends:** Often diluted in carrier oils for massage or night-time repair.
- **Cleansers and toners:** For daily maintenance and soothing care.

Sandalwood offers a multifaceted approach to anti-aging skincare, combining antioxidant protection, anti-inflammatory action, collagen preservation, and pigmentation control. With a long history of safe traditional use and emerging scientific validation, it holds significant potential as a natural, effective component in modern anti-aging regimens.

SANDALWOOD PLANT DESCRIPTION:

The sandalwood plant (Santalum album), commonly known as Indian sandalwood or white sandalwood, is a small, evergreen tree prized for its fragrant heartwood and essential oil. Belonging to the Santalaceae family, it typically grows between 4 to 9 meters tall and features a slender trunk with dark, rough bark that becomes deeply fissured with age. Its leaves are simple, opposite, and ovate with a smooth, bright green surface. The tree produces small, purplish to reddish-brown flowers and round, blackish-purple fruits containing a single seed. Notably, sandalwood is a hemi parasitic species—while it can photosynthesize, it also draws nutrients and water from the roots of nearby host plants through specialized root structures called haustoria. Native to India and parts of Southeast Asia, it thrives in tropical and subtropical climates with well-drained, loamy or rocky soils. The heartwood of mature sandalwood trees is highly valued for its rich, long-lasting aroma and is used in perfumes, cosmetics, religious rituals, and traditional medicines. Its essential oil, rich in α-santalol and β-santalol, possesses anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and antioxidant properties, making sandalwood a significant and culturally important plant in both traditional and modern therapeutic practices.

PHYTOCHEMICAL INVESTIGATION OF SANDALWOOD:

The phytochemical investigation of sandalwood (Santalum album) reveals a rich profile of biologically active compounds that contribute to its medicinal and cosmetic value. The most significant constituents are found in the essential oil extracted from the heartwood, which primarily contains sesquiterpenoids, notably α-santalol and β-santalol—these are responsible for sandalwood's characteristic fragrance and a wide range of pharmacological activities, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial effects. In addition to santalols, sandalwood contains other important phytochemicals such as terpenes, tannins, phenolic compounds, and flavonoids, which further enhance its therapeutic properties. Various analytical techniques, including GC-MS (Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry) and HPLC (High Performance Liquid Chromatography), have been used to

isolate and characterize these components. The phytochemical profile of sandalwood not only supports its traditional use in Ayurveda and other medicinal systems but also justifies its increasing application in modern skincare and pharmaceutical formulations. These compounds exhibit strong antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant activities, making sandalwood highly effective in treating various skin conditions. Additionally, sandalwood contains terpenoids, flavonoids, phenolic acids, and tannins, all of which support skin healing, reduce pigmentation, and promote a youthful, radiant complexion. This rich phytochemical profile underscores the traditional and scientific significance of sandalwood in natural skincare.

PHARMACOLOGY OF SANDALWOOD:

The pharmacology of sandalwood highlights its diverse therapeutic potential, primarily attributed to its key active compounds such as α-santalol and β-santalol. These constituents exhibit a wide range of pharmacological activities, including antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anticancer effects. Sandalwood oil has been shown to inhibit the growth of bacteria and fungi, making it effective in treating acne, skin infections, and inflammation. Its anti-inflammatory action helps soothe irritated skin and reduce redness, while its antioxidant properties protect skin cells from oxidative stress and premature aging. Additionally, studies have explored the potential of sandalwood compounds in inhibiting tumor growth and supporting wound healing. These pharmacological effects make sandalwood a valuable natural agent in both traditional medicine and modern dermatological applications.

ANTIOXIDANT PROPERTY OF SANDALWOOD:

Sandalwood (Santalum album) possesses notable antioxidant properties that contribute to its effectiveness in skin care and anti-aging applications. The phytochemical and pharmacological investigations proved the presence of antioxidant principles that justify their traditional medicinal values. The essential oil derived from its heartwood is rich in active compounds such as α-santalol and β-santalol, which help neutralize harmful free radicals and reduce oxidative stress in skin cells. This antioxidant action plays a crucial role in preventing premature aging by protecting against environmental damage, such as that caused by UV radiation and pollution. Additionally, sandalwood helps inhibit lipid peroxidation, thereby preserving the integrity of cell membranes and promoting healthier, more resilient skin. By supporting the body's natural defence systems and reducing oxidative damage, sandalwood contributes to smoother, more youthful-looking skin and aids in overall skin repair and rejuvenation. Nine in vitro antioxidant tests were used in a comparison study to demonstrate that in vitro grown callus cells and sandalwood oil had comparable antioxidant activities.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY PROPERTY OF SANDALWOOD:

Sandalwood (Santalum album) exhibits strong anti-inflammatory properties, making it a valuable ingredient in traditional and modern skin care. The key active components, particularly α-santalol, help reduce inflammation by inhibiting the production of pro-inflammatory mediators such as cytokines and enzymes like COX-2. This action helps calm irritated skin, alleviate redness, and reduce swelling caused by various skin conditions including acne, eczema, and rashes. Sandalwood also soothes the skin by providing a cooling effect, which further enhances its ability to relieve discomfort and promote healing. Its gentle yet effective anti-inflammatory nature makes it suitable for sensitive skin and helps maintain a balanced, calm complexion when used regularly in topical applications.

METABOLIC PROPERTY OF SANDALWOOD:

Sandalwood (Santalum album) demonstrates beneficial metabolic properties, primarily through its bioactive compounds like α-santalol, which influence various biochemical processes in the body. Research suggests that α-santalol may modulate metabolic pathways related to oxidative stress, lipid metabolism, and detoxification. By enhancing the activity of antioxidant enzymes and reducing lipid peroxidation, sandalwood helps maintain cellular homeostasis and protects tissues from metabolic damage caused by free radicals. Additionally, some studies indicate that sandalwood oil can support liver function, aiding in the metabolism and elimination of toxins. These properties contribute to its traditional use in promoting internal balance and overall wellness, while also supporting skin health by reducing inflammation and oxidative stress at a cellular level.

CELL REGULATORY PROPERTY OF SANDALWOOD:

Sandalwood (Santalum album) exhibits notable cell regulatory properties, primarily attributed to its key active compounds such as α-santalol. These compounds influence various cellular processes that are vital for maintaining skin health and homeostasis. Sandalwood is known to regulate cell proliferation, differentiation, and apoptosis (programmed cell death), which plays a crucial role in tissue repair, renewal, and the prevention of abnormal cell growth. For example, studies have shown that α-santalol can induce apoptosis in damaged or cancerous cells while supporting the regeneration of healthy skin cells.

Additionally, it helps modulate inflammatory signalling pathways within cells, reducing the expression of pro-inflammatory cytokines and enzymes. This regulatory effect not only aids in controlling inflammation and preventing cellular damage but also contributes to skin rejuvenation, healing, and protection against aging and environmental stressors. These properties make sandalwood a valuable natural agent in dermatological and therapeutic applications.

ANTI-TANNING PROPERTY OF SANDALWOOD:

Sandalwood possesses remarkable anti-tanning properties that make it a popular ingredient in natural skincare. It helps lighten the skin by reducing the effects of sun exposure and fading tans. The natural compounds in sandalwood inhibit the production of melanin, the pigment responsible for skin

darkening, thereby helping to restore the skin's original tone. Additionally, it's cooling and soothing nature calms sunburned or inflamed skin, while its mild exfoliating properties aid in removing dead cells and promoting skin renewal. With its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects, sandalwood not only helps in reversing tanning but also protects the skin from further sun damage, leaving it clear, even-toned, and refreshed.

ANTI-AGING PROPERTY OF SANDALWOOD:

Sandalwood is known for its powerful anti-aging properties, making it a valuable ingredient in natural and Ayurveda skincare. Rich in antioxidants, sandalwood helps combat the effects of free radicals that contribute to premature aging, such as fine lines, wrinkles, and sagging skin. Its ability to improve blood circulation and promote the regeneration of skin cells results in a firmer, more youthful appearance. Additionally, sandalwood soothes and hydrates the skin, reducing dryness and dullness often associated with aging. Its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties also help maintain healthy skin, preventing issues that can accelerate aging. Regular use of sandalwood in skincare can lead to smoother, more radiant, and younger-looking skin.

PIMPLE AND ACNE TREATMENT:

Sandalwood is highly effective in the treatment of pimples and acne due to its powerful antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, and cooling properties. It helps soothe irritated skin, reduce redness, and prevent the growth of acne-causing bacteria. The natural oils in sandalwood have a drying effect on pimples, helping to shrink them without leaving scars. Its ability to absorb excess oil from the skin also prevents clogged pores, a common cause of acne.
Additionally, sandalwood promotes healing and fades acne marks over time, giving the skin a clearer and more even complexion. Regular application of sandalwood paste or sandalwood-based masks can significantly reduce breakouts and improve overall skin health.

SANDALWOOD REMEDY FOR CLEAR COMPLEXION:

Sandalwood is highly valued for promoting a clear and radiant complexion due to its natural skin-brightening, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory properties. It helps remove impurities, fade blemishes, reduce pigmentation, and even out skin tone. Sandalwood also soothes skin irritation and combats acne, both of which can affect overall complexion. With regular use, it enhances skin clarity and gives a fresh, glowing appearance.

SANDALWOOD FOR SKIN SPOTS:

Sandalwood is a time-tested natural remedy for reducing skin spots, including dark spots, blemishes, and pigmentation. Its skin-lightening and anti-inflammatory properties help in fading discoloration and promoting an even skin tone.
Sandalwood works by gently exfoliating the skin, removing dead cells, and stimulating new cell growth. It also regulates melanin production, which plays a key role in the formation of dark spots. When combined with ingredients like rose water, lemon juice, or turmeric, sandalwood becomes even more effective in treating skin spots. Regular use of sandalwood paste can gradually lighten spots and leave the skin looking clear, radiant, and refreshed.

SANDALWOOD FOR OPEN PORES:

Sandalwood is an excellent natural remedy for minimizing open pores, thanks to its astringent, cooling, and skin-tightening properties. It helps tighten the skin, reducing the appearance of enlarged pores and giving the skin a smoother texture. Sandalwood also controls excess oil production, which is one of the main causes of open pores, especially in oily or acne-prone skin. Its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties help keep the pores clean and reduce the risk of breakouts that can stretch pores further.

SANDALWOOD FOR SOFT SKIN:

Sandalwood is a wonderful natural ingredient for achieving soft, smooth, and nourished skin. Its moisturizing and soothing properties help hydrate dry skin, calm irritation, and promote a supple texture. Sandalwood is rich in natural oils and antioxidants that support skin regeneration and improve elasticity, leaving the skin feeling soft and refreshed. It also gently exfoliates dead skin cells, revealing a smoother surface underneath. Regular use of sandalwood in face packs or body masks can greatly enhance skin softness and glow.

CONCLUSION:

Sandalwood has long been treasured in traditional skincare for its wide range of therapeutic properties. Aiming to study its beneficial effects on the skin reveals its potential as a natural remedy for various skin concerns, including tanning, aging, acne, pigmentation, enlarged pores, and dullness. Rich in antioxidants, anti-inflammatory agents, and natural oils, sandalwood promotes clear, soft, and radiant skin. Its soothing and healing properties not only enhance skin health but also support a more balanced and youthful complexion. Continued exploration and use of sandalwood in skincare can offer safe, effective, and holistic solutions for maintaining healthy and beautiful skin.

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