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**Shah Murad**

Pharmacology Department at  
Akbar Niazi Teaching  
Hospital/IMDC, main Murree  
road, Islamabad-Pakistan

**Muhammad Ishaque**

Principal Research Officer at  
PARC, Islamabad, Pakistan

**Adnan Shafique**

Consultant Pharmacist at MCC  
Pharmacy, Bharakahu,  
Islamabad, Pakistan

**Ejaz Fatima**

AP Pharmacology at LMDC,  
Pakistan

## Single blind placebo-controlled research study on plant seeds

**Shah Murad, Muhammad Ishaque, Adnan Shafique and Ejaz Fatima**

### Abstract

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the single leading cause of death among American women, as it is among American men, even though CHD is less common and occurs later in life in women than men. In 2002, the prevalence of myocardial infarction (MI) in women was 3 million, and 3.3 million women had a history of angina pectoris; overall prevalence of CHD was 5.9 million. Every year, 345,000 women suffer a new or recurrent MI, and 241,600 women die of an MI. From 1970 to 2001, hospital discharges related to CHD for women increased 47%. Clearly, women, and particularly postmenopausal women, remain at high risk for coronary events—at least in part because women have been under-represented in clinical outcomes trials, tend to be undertreated in the clinical setting, and might be misdiagnosed when their presenting symptoms differ from those of men. This research work was single blind placebo-controlled, conducted at Jinnah Hospital, Lahore. It was conducted from January 2017 to June 2017. Seventy five already diagnosed primary and secondary hyperlipidemic patients were selected with age range from 17 to 65 years. Diabetes mellitus, cigarette smoking/alcohol addictive patients, peptic ulcer disease, hypothyroidism, kidney dysfunction, any heart disease and liver disease. All patients were divided in three groups (group-I, group-II, group-III), 25 in each group. All participant's baseline lipid profile data were taken and filed in specifically designed Performa, at start of taking medicine. Twenty five patients of group-I were advised to take 10 grams of Flaxseeds in three divided doses after meal. Twenty five patients of group-II were advised to take Ajwain seeds 10 grams in three divided doses after each meal for two months. Twenty five patients of group-III were provided placebo capsules, (containing grinded rice), taking one capsule after each meal. All participants were advised to take these medicines for eight weeks. Followup period: All participants were called fortnightly for their query and follow up. Their LDL-cholesterol, and HDL-cholesterol was determined at the hospital laboratory. In two months therapy by Flaxseeds decreased LDL-cholesterol from  $195.11 \pm 2.11$  mg/dl to  $190.22 \pm 3.11$  mg/dl, which is significant statistically. HDL was increased from  $34.53 \pm 1.65$  mg/dl to  $38.97 \pm 2.29$  mg/d, which is also significant change. In two months therapy by AJWAIN, LDL-c reduced from  $201.51 \pm 2.62$  mg/dl to  $197.11 \pm 2.66$  mg/dl, which is significant statistically. HDL-cholesterol increased by Ajwain from  $36.97 \pm 3.32$  mg/dl to  $37.45 \pm 1.87$  mg/dl, which is insignificant statistically. It was concluded from this study that Flaxseeds have more effect on HDL-c but Ajwain has lowest effect on this parameter.

**Keywords:** Single blind placebo, plant seeds, Diabetes mellitus

### Introduction

Atherosclerosis is a syndrome affecting arterial blood vessels due to a chronic inflammatory response of WBCs in the walls of arteries. This is promoted by low-density lipoproteins (LDL, plasma proteins that carry cholesterol and triglycerides) without adequate removal of fats and cholesterol from the macrophages by functional high-density lipoproteins (HDL). It is commonly referred to as a "hardening" or furring of the arteries. It is caused by the formation of multiple atheromatous plaques within the arteries <sup>[1]</sup>. Flaxseed inhibits the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines, eicosanoids, cytokines and platelet-activating factor derived from arachidonic acid (an omega-6 fatty acid) and thus reduces inflammatory responses. One way that Alpha Linolenic Acid helps the heart is by decreasing the ability of platelets to clump together, a reaction involved in the development of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), it acts as natural aspirin <sup>[2]</sup>. Flaxseed helps to lower high blood pressure, clears clogged coronaries like a sweeper, lowers high blood cholesterol, bad LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels and raises good HDL cholesterol. Intake of flaxseeds has also been shown to decrease the ratio of LDL to HDL cholesterol in several human studies and to increase the level of apolipoprotein A1, which is the major protein found in HDL cholesterol. Flaxseeds prevent clot formation in arteries, which may result in strokes, heart attacks and thrombosis.

### Correspondence

**Adnan Shafique**

Consultant Pharmacist at MCC  
Pharmacy, Bharakahu,  
Islamabad, Pakistan

Omega-3 Fatty acids present in Flaxseed appear to enhance the mechanical performance and electrical stability of the heart and to protect against fatal arrhythmias [3-7]. *Trachyspermum ammi* commonly known as 'Ajwain' is distributed throughout India and is mostly cultivated in Gujarat and Rajasthan. The fruit possesses stimulant, antispasmodic and carminative properties and is used traditionally as an important remedial agent for flatulence, atonic dyspepsia, diarrhea, abdominal tumors, abdominal pains, piles, and bronchial problems, lack of appetite, galactagogue, asthma and amenorrhoea. Medicinally, it has been proven to possess various pharmacological activities like antifungal, antioxidant, antimicrobial, antinociceptive, cytotoxic, hypolipidemic, antihypertensive, antispasmodic, broncho-dilating actions, antilithiasis, diuretic, abortifacient, antitussive, nematocidal, anthelmintic and antifilarial. Further, studies reveal the presence of various phytochemical constituents mainly carbohydrates, glycosides, saponins, phenolic compounds, volatile oil (thymol,  $\gamma$ -terpinene, paracymene, and  $\alpha$ - and  $\beta$ -pinene), protein, fat, fiber and mineral matter containing calcium, phosphorous, iron and nicotinic acid. These studies reveal that *T. ammi* is a source of medicinally active compounds and have various pharmacological effects; hence, it is encouraging to find its new therapeutic uses<sup>7-9</sup>. The constituents of the seed of Ajwain included carbohydrates (38.6%), fat (18.1%), protein (15.4%), fiber (11.9%), tannins, glycosides, moisture (8.9%), saponins, flavone, and mineral matter (7.1%) containing calcium, phosphorous, iron, cobalt, copper, iodine, manganese, thiamine, riboflavin, and nicotinic acid [10, 11]. Antiplatelet-aggregatory experiments *in vitro* with blood from human volunteers, it that a dried ethereal extract of Ajwain seeds, inhibited aggregation of platelets induced by arachidonic acid, collagen and epinephrine [12]. Antihyperlipidemic effect of Ajwain seed has been proved by researchers. It was assessed that Ajwain powder and its equivalent methanol extract were extensively effective in lipid lowering action by decreased total cholesterol, LDL-cholesterol, triglycerides and total lipids [13].

## Patients & Method

The research work was single blind placebo-controlled, conducted at Jinnah Hospital, Lahore from January 2017 to June 2017. Seventy five already diagnosed primary and secondary hyperlipidemic patients were selected with age range from 17 to 65 years. Exclusion criteria were, diabetes mellitus, cigarette smoking/alcohol addictive patients, peptic ulcer disease, hypothyroidism, kidney dysfunction, any heart disease and liver disease. All patients were divided in three groups (group-I, group-II, group-III), 25 in each group. Their baseline lipid profile data was taken and filed in specifically designed Performa, at start of taking medicine. Twenty five patients of group-I were advised to take 10 grams of Flaxseeds in three divided doses after meal. Twenty five patients of group-II were advised to take Ajwain seeds 10 grams in three divided doses after each meal for two months. Twenty five patients of group-III were provided placebo capsules, (containing grinded rice), taking one capsule after each meal. All participants were advised to take these medicines for eight weeks. All participants were called fortnightly for their query and follow up. Their LDL-cholesterol, and HDL-cholesterol was determined at the hospital laboratory. After two months therapy results were compared and data were expressed as the mean  $\pm$  Standard Deviation and 't' test was applied to determine statistical

significance as the difference. A probability value of  $<0.05$  was considered as non-significant and  $P<0.01$  was considered as significant change in the results when pre and post-treatment results were compared.

## Results

When results were compiled and statistically analyzed it was observed that Flaxseeds and Ajwain decreased LDL-cholesterol, and increased HDL-cholesterol significantly as compared to placebo therapy. Before treatment and after treatment values and results are shown in table 1, 2 and 3.

**Table 1:** Showing effects of Placebo therapy before and after treatment with its statistical significance in Group-III patients (n=25)

LDL-c	188.11 $\pm$ 1.06	187.77 $\pm$ 2.51	0.3	>0.05
HDL-c	30.78 $\pm$ 2.65	31.39 $\pm$ 1.66	0.6	>0.05

**Table 2:** Showing effects of Flaxseeds before and after treatment with its statistical significance in Group-I patients (n=22)

Parameter	At start	At end	Diff	p-value
LDL-c	195.11 $\pm$ 2.11	190.22 $\pm$ 3.11	4.9	<0.01
HDL-c	34.53 $\pm$ 1.65	38.97 $\pm$ 2.29	4.4	<0.01

**Table 3:** Showing effects of Ajwain before and after treatment with its statistical significance in Group-II patients (n=24)

LDL-c	201.51 $\pm$ 2.62	197.11 $\pm$ 2.66	4.4	<0.01
HDL-c	36.97 $\pm$ 3.32	37.45 $\pm$ 1.87	0.5	>0.05

**Key:** All values are measured in mg/dl. LDL-c= low density lipoprotein cholesterol, HDL-c= high density lipoprotein cholesterol. P-value  $<0.01$  stands for significant change, P-value  $<0.05$  stands for non-significant change. N stands for sample size.

## Discussion

Atherosclerosis is an inflammatory disease causing coronary artery disease and cardiac myopathies. Many herbal medicines can inhibit cascades of inflammatory responses in human body leading to development of atherosclerosis. Flaxseeds and Ajwain are thought to inhibit these pro-inflammatory effects in human body. In our results using 10 grams of Ajwain by 24 hyperlipidemic patients for the period of two months, LDL-c reduced from 201.51 $\pm$ 2.62 mg/dl to 197.11 $\pm$ 2.66 mg/dl. Difference in pre and post treatment values is 4.4 mg/dl. Increase in HDL was 0.5 mg/dl, which is non significant change in pre and post treatment values. In our study Flaxseeds decreased LDL-c from 195.11 $\pm$ 2.11 to 190.22 $\pm$ 3.11 mg/dl in two months therapy by 10 grams Flaxseeds used by 22 hyperlipidemic patients. Difference in pre and post treatment values is 4.9 mg/dl in this parameter. HDL was increased from 34.53 $\pm$ 1.65 to 38.97 $\pm$ 2.29 mg/dl. Difference in percentage when measured/calculated it was 4.4 mg/dl which is significant biostatistically with p-value  $<0.01$ . These results match with results of study conducted by Cho Y *et al.* [17] who proved almost same effects on two lipid profile parameters ie; LDL-cholesterol and HDL-cholesterol. Chaudhury S [18] proved same changes in LDL-cholesterol and HDL-cholesterol which also support our results biostatistically. Nagalakshmi S *et al.* [19] explained that all herbs with their therapeutically medicinal potential will work when used in high amount and for long period. Jenkins D *et al.* [20] described that Flaxseeds or its oil preparation have same effects on all parameters of lipid profile. On comparison between statins and herbal medicine having hypolipidemic effects. Kelley DS *et al.* [21] explained that there is too much difference in hypolipidemic effects of

allopathic medication and herbs, having less potent hypolipidemic features of herbal medications. Shahidi F and Miraliakba H<sup>[22]</sup> proved that all parameters of lipid profile including total, LDL-cholesterol, HDL-cholesterol, VLDL-cholesterol, IDL and triglycerides are affected by Flaxseeds oil preparations. They have focused on inhibition of enterohepatic circulation of bile acids and explained that due to lack of bile acid pool in gall bladder, hepatocytes start to synthesize bile acids instead of cholesterol synthesis. Many scientist proved that if used Flaxseeds with dietary restrictions and change in sedentary life style, HDL-cholesterol will increase surely. They explained that if only one parameter of lipid profile i.e; HDL-cholesterol is increased, all other parameters in ratio will obviously be reduced leading to lesser chances of development of CAD. According to some scientists anti-inflammatory effects of Flaxseeds play key role in prevention of atherosclerosis and CAD. If sedentary life style is changed by hyperlipidemic patients, very small but regular amount of Flaxseeds are required to stay at preventive step of coronary artery disease due to Hyperlipidemia. High LDL-cholesterol has close concern with pro-inflammatory responses leading to platelet aggregation<sup>[1, 8, 13]</sup>.

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