

Pharmacological Properties and Therapeutic Uses of Some Gums and Resins Used in Unani System of Medicine

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ABSTRACT

Gums and resins derived from medicinal plants hold a prominent place in the Unani System of Medicine, where they are valued for their diverse pharmacological actions and long-established therapeutic applications. These natural exudates, obtained from plants such as *Boswellia serrata* (Kundur), *Commiphora mukul* (Guggul), *Acacia arabica* (Samagh-e-Arabi), *Ferula asafoetida* (Hing), and *Pistacia lentiscus* (Mastagi), possess complex mixtures of bioactive constituents including terpenoids, polysaccharides, essential oils, and resin acids. Their multifaceted composition contributes to a wide spectrum of biological activities, including anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, analgesic, expectorant, and immunomodulatory effects.

In Unani therapeutics, gums and resins are used either singly or in compound formulations for the management of various diseases. Kundur and Guggul are widely prescribed for musculoskeletal disorders, chronic inflammation, and metabolic syndromes due to their proven anti-arthritis, hypolipidemic, and anti-obesity actions. Samagh-e-Arabi is traditionally used as a demulcent and anti-diarrheal agent owing to its mucilaginous nature and gastrointestinal protective properties. Hing is known for its carminative, antispasmodic, and antimicrobial effects, making it beneficial in digestive ailments such as flatulence, colic, and worm infestation. Mastagi, with its astringent and wound-healing potential, is incorporated in formulations for respiratory disorders, oral health, and gastrointestinal conditions.

Modern pharmacological studies increasingly validate these traditional uses, demonstrating significant therapeutic potential and supporting their integration into evidence-based complementary medicine. Despite extensive traditional knowledge, further clinical research is required to standardize formulations, elucidate mechanisms of action, and ensure quality, safety, and dosage consistency.

This review highlights the pharmacological properties and therapeutic applications of selected gums and resins commonly used in Unani Medicine, emphasizing their importance as natural, bioactive agents with promising roles in contemporary healthcare.

KEYWORDS: Unani medicine; gums; resins; pharmacological properties; therapeutic uses; natural bioactive compounds; traditional medicine.

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INTRODUCTION

The Unani System of Medicine, one of the oldest traditional healing systems, traces its philosophical foundation to the teachings of Hippocrates and Galen and was later enriched by renowned Persian and Arab scholars such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Al-Razi. Rooted in the principles of humoral balance, Unani medicine emphasizes holistic well-being, considering the equilibrium of the four humors, temperament, lifestyle, and environmental factors. Over centuries, the system has developed an extensive *materia medica*, comprising a wide range of natural substances including herbs, minerals, animal products, gums, and resins. Among these, plant-derived exudates have held a significant therapeutic role due to their unique physicochemical properties and diverse medicinal benefits.

Natural gums and resins, obtained as exudates from various trees and shrubs, have been extensively used in Unani formulations for both preventive and curative purposes. Historical texts such as *Al-Qanoon fi'l-Tibb* and *Al-Hawi* describe numerous gums and resins, including Kundur (*Boswellia serrata*), Guggul (*Commiphora mukul*), Mastagi (*Pistacia lentiscus*), Hing (*Ferula asafoetida*), and Samagh-e-Arabi (*Acacia arabica*), highlighting their multifaceted therapeutic effects. Traditionally, these substances have been incorporated into formulations aimed at treating digestive disorders, respiratory ailments, inflammatory conditions, metabolic imbalances, and various musculoskeletal diseases. Their long-standing medicinal use is attributed to their rich composition of terpenoids, polysaccharides, volatile oils, and resin acids that contribute to anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, demulcent, and immunomodulatory activities.

The importance of plant-derived exudates in traditional medicine lies not only in their therapeutic versatility but also in their natural origin, biocompatibility, and cultural acceptability. In an era of growing interest in herbal and integrative medicine, gums and resins offer promising opportunities for developing safer and more sustainable therapeutic alternatives. With increasing scientific advancements, many traditional claims regarding these natural substances are now being validated through pharmacological and clinical research, thereby strengthening their relevance in contemporary healthcare.

Rationale for the Study:

Although gums and resins have been extensively utilized in Unani medicine, there remains a need to systematically document and critically analyze their pharmacological properties, therapeutic applications, and potential for integration into modern medical practice. Scientific evidence supporting their efficacy, safety, and mechanisms of action is expanding, yet fragmented. A comprehensive evaluation of selected gums and resins will help bridge traditional knowledge with modern scientific understanding, promote rational use, and identify future research needs.

Objectives and Research Questions:

This study aims to explore the pharmacological properties and therapeutic uses of selected gums and resins commonly employed in the Unani System of Medicine. The key objectives are:

1. To document traditional Unani uses of important medicinal gums and resins.
2. To summarize their phytochemical constituents and pharmacological properties.
3. To evaluate contemporary scientific evidence supporting their therapeutic applications.
4. To identify gaps in research and propose future directions.

Key research questions include:

- What are the major gums and resins used in Unani medicine and their historical significance?
- What active compounds contribute to their therapeutic effects?
- How do modern pharmacological findings support traditional claims?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Criteria for Selecting Gums and Resins

The gums and resins included in this study were selected based on clearly defined criteria to ensure relevance and scientific validity. Priority was given to substances that:

1. **Have frequent and long-standing use in the Unani System of Medicine**, as evidenced by their repeated mention in classical texts such as *Al-Qanoon fi'l-Tibb*, *Al-Hawi*, *Makhzan al-Advia*, and *Kitab al-Mufradat*.
2. **Possess significant therapeutic value**, especially in treating gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, metabolic, and respiratory disorders.
3. **Are included in recognized Unani pharmacopoeias and formularies**, indicating their standardization and acceptance in traditional practice.
4. **Have notable pharmacological or phytochemical evidence** reported in modern scientific literature.

Based on these criteria, major gums and resins such as *Boswellia serrata* (Kundur), *Commiphora mukul* (Guggul), *Pistacia lentiscus* (Mastagi), *Ferula asafoetida* (Hing), and *Acacia arabica* (Samagh-e-Arabi) were selected for detailed review.

Data Sources

Multiple data sources were used to ensure a comprehensive and authentic collection of information:

- **Classical Unani Texts:** *Al-Qanoon fi'l-Tibb*, *Al-Hawi*, *Makhzan al-Advia*, *Kitab al-Mufradat*, *Tibbe-Akbar*, and other authoritative compilations.
- **Scientific Journals and Databases:** PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Web of Science, focusing on phytochemistry, pharmacology, and clinical studies.
- **Pharmacopoeias and Standards:** Unani Pharmacopoeia of India, Ayurvedic and Siddha pharmacopoeias for comparative reference, WHO monographs on medicinal plants.
- **Ethnobotanical Records:** Publications documenting traditional and regional uses of plant exudates.

Overview of Gums and Resins in Unani Medicine

Gums and resins hold a distinguished place in the Unani System of Medicine due to their therapeutic versatility, physiological compatibility, and extensive use in both single and compound formulations. These natural exudates, obtained from various trees and shrubs, have been valued for centuries for their medicinal properties and their ability to enhance the stability, efficacy, and delivery of Unani formulations.

Definition and Distinctions: Gums, Resins, Gum-Resins, and Oleo-Gum-Resins

Unani pharmacognosy classifies plant-derived exudates into several categories based on their chemical composition and physical characteristics:

- **Gums:** These are hydrophilic, polysaccharide-rich substances that readily dissolve or swell in water to form viscous solutions. They act as demulcents, emollients, and binding agents. Examples include *Samagh-e-Arabi* (Acacia gum) and *Gum Tragacanth*.

- **Resins:**

These are hydrophobic, solid or semi-solid substances composed mainly of resin acids and terpenoids. They are insoluble in water but soluble in organic solvents, making them useful for anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, and stimulant effects. Examples include *Kundur* (*Boswellia serrata*) and *Mastagi* (*Pistacia lentiscus*).

- **Gum-Resins:**

These combine properties of both gums and resins, containing significant proportions of polysaccharides and resinous compounds. They offer dual solubility benefits and broader therapeutic actions. *Guggul* (*Commiphora mukul*) is a prominent example.

- **Oleo-Gum-Resins:**

These consist of three components—essential oils (oleo), gums, and resins—providing aromatic, antimicrobial, and expectorant advantages. *Hing* (*Ferula asafoetida*) is a widely used oleo-gum-resin in Unani practice.

Traditional Extraction and Purification Methods

In Unani medicine, gums and resins are traditionally obtained through natural exudation or deliberate incision of plant bark. Once exuded, they are allowed to harden before collection. Purification typically involves:

- **Mechanical cleaning** to remove debris and impurities
- **Washing and drying** to enhance purity and stability
- **Powdering or granulation** for ease of formulation
- **Soaking or dissolving** for separating soluble and insoluble components

These methods are carefully described in classical Unani literature to preserve the therapeutic potency of the substances.

Method of Literature Review and Analysis

A structured literature review approach was followed:

1. **Keyword-based search** using terms such as “gum,” “resin,” “Unani medicine,” “pharmacology,” “*Boswellia*,” “*Guggul*,” “*asafoetida*,” and “mastic.”
2. **Screening and selection of relevant studies** based on inclusion criteria (authenticity, experimental evidence, relevance to selected gums/resins).
3. **Extraction of data** related to phytochemical constituents, Unani actions (*Mizaj*, *Af'al*), therapeutic indications, dosage, safety, and modern pharmacological findings.
4. **Comparative analysis** to align traditional claims with contemporary scientific evidence.
5. **Synthesis of findings** to provide a holistic understanding of each gum and resin.

Classification Approach

To present the findings systematically, the selected gums and resins were categorized using a multi-dimensional classification framework:

1. **Botanical Classification:** Based on plant family, genus, species, and part of the plant producing the exudate.
2. **Chemical Classification:** Categorizing substances according to their major phytochemical groups such as terpenoids, polysaccharides, essential oils, volatile resins, and gum-resin compounds.
3. **Unani Pharmacological Classification:** Based on traditional concepts including ***Mizaj* (temperament)**, ***Af'al* (actions)**, ***Istemalat* (therapeutic uses)**, and role in classical formulations.

This systematic approach ensured scientific rigor while maintaining the authenticity of Unani principles.

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Role of Exudates in Compound Formulations

Gums and resins serve multiple roles in Unani compound formulations, contributing both therapeutic and functional benefits:

- **Qurs (Tablets):** Act as binding agents and therapeutic constituents
- **Majoon (Electuaries):** Provide consistency, enhance absorption, and support gastrointestinal health
- **Roghan (Medicated Oils):** Improve penetration and potentiate anti-inflammatory and analgesic actions
- **Itrifal, Jawarish, and Safuf:** Contribute to flavor, preservation, and medicinal efficacy

Their inclusion enhances stability, patient compliance, and synergistic healing effects, reflecting their indispensable role in Unani pharmaceuticals.

Selected Gums and Resins Discussed

The following gums and resins have been selected for detailed discussion in this study based on their prominence in Unani literature, therapeutic significance, and availability of scientific evidence. Each of these natural exudates possesses unique pharmacological attributes and continues to be widely used in various Unani formulations.

1. Gum Arabic (*Acacia arabica* / *Acacia senegal*)

Gum Arabic, also known as *Samagh-e-Arabi*, is a water-soluble gum obtained from *Acacia* species. It is valued for its demulcent, soothing, and anti-inflammatory properties. In Unani medicine, it is commonly used in gastrointestinal disorders, throat irritations, and as a stabilizing and binding agent in formulations like *Qurs* and *Majoon*.

2. Guggul (*Commiphora mukul*)

Guggul, a gum-resin from *Commiphora* species, is one of the most significant substances in Unani and Ayurvedic pharmacopeia. It exhibits powerful anti-inflammatory, hypolipidemic, and detoxifying actions. Traditionally, it is prescribed for arthritis, obesity, chronic inflammation, and metabolic disorders.

3. Myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*)

Myrrh, known as *Mur*, is a resin with antimicrobial, astringent, and wound-healing properties. It is used in oral health preparations, wound dressings, and formulations aimed at respiratory and digestive ailments. Its aromatic and antiseptic qualities make it highly valued in Unani therapeutics.

4. Frankincense (*Boswellia serrata*)

Frankincense, or *Kundur*, is a resin produced from the *Boswellia* tree. It is widely used for its anti-arthritis, anti-inflammatory, and expectorant actions. Kundur features in many formulations intended for joint pain, asthma, chronic cough, and inflammatory diseases.

5. Asafoetida (*Ferula asafoetida*)

Asafoetida, an oleo-gum-resin called *Hing*, is renowned for its strong aromatic nature, carminative action, and ability to relieve spasms. It is frequently used in digestive disorders such as flatulence, colic, and worm infestation, and also possesses antimicrobial activity.

6. Camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*)

Camphor, a resinous exudate obtained from *Cinnamomum camphora*, holds a special place in Unani medicine for its cooling, analgesic, and stimulant properties. It is used in topical preparations, chest rubs, oils (*Roghan*), and formulations addressing respiratory and musculoskeletal ailments.

7. Tragacanth (*Astragalus gummifer*)

Tragacanth, known as *Katira*, is a highly valued gum for its excellent emulsifying and soothing properties. It is commonly used in gastrointestinal disorders, inflammatory conditions, and as a pharmaceutical excipient in Unani formulations due to its superior swelling capacity and mucilage content.

Botanical Source and Description

Gums and resins used in the Unani System of Medicine are primarily obtained from various plant species belonging to families such as **Leguminosae (Fabaceae)**, **Burseraceae**, **Zygophyllaceae**, and **Umbelliferae**. These plants exude gummy or resinous substances either naturally or upon mechanical injury to the bark or stem.

The botanical sources provide important diagnostic features—such as the structure of leaves, flowers, bark, and exudation patterns—which help in proper identification and authentication.

Plant Morphology

The morphology of gum- and resin-yielding plants varies, but most are **shrubs or medium-sized trees** characterized by:

- **Leaves:** Typically pinnate or compound, with small leaflets (e.g., *Acacia, Boswellia*).
- **Bark:** Often rough, fissured, and rich in secretory ducts capable of producing gums or resins.
- **Flowers:** Usually small, fragrant, and arranged in clusters.
- **Exudates:**
 - *Gums*—transparent, brittle, water-soluble polysaccharides (e.g., Gum Arabic).
 - *Resins*—aromatic, sticky, water-insoluble substances composed of terpenoids (e.g., Guggul, Myrrh).

Geographical Distribution

Gum- and resin-producing plants are widely distributed across **arid and semi-arid regions** of the world. Major regions include:

- **India:** Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh (Acacia, Boswellia, Commiphora species).
- **Middle East:** Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia (Frankincense, Myrrh).
- **Africa:** Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria (Gum Arabic, Myrrh).
- **Central Asia & Mediterranean regions:** Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan (Asafoetida, Tragacanth).

Environmental factors such as temperature, rainfall, and soil type greatly influence exudate quality.

Extraction Process

Extraction of gums and resins typically involves **incision-induced exudation or natural oozing**:

1. **Tapping / Incision:**
Shallow cuts are made on the bark to stimulate exudate flow. The sap exudes as a sticky liquid that hardens upon exposure to air.
2. **Collection:**
The dried gum/resin is manually collected after 1–3 weeks, depending on the species and environmental conditions.
3. **Cleaning:**
Foreign materials such as bark particles, sand, and debris are removed manually or by sieving.
4. **Drying and Grading:**
Exudates are sun-dried and graded based on color, purity, viscosity, and solubility.
5. **Storage:**
The cleaned gum or resin is stored in airtight containers to preserve its medicinal properties.

Chemical Composition

Gums and resins used in the Unani System of Medicine are chemically diverse natural exudates composed of **polysaccharides, glycoproteins, volatile oils, resins, and terpenoid derivatives**.

The exact composition varies with plant species, climate, soil type, and extraction method.

Generally:

- **Gums** are primarily **polysaccharide-based**, water-soluble, and form viscous solutions.
- **Resins** are **complex mixtures of terpenoids**, aromatic acids, and their esters; they are water-insoluble but dissolve in organic solvents.
- **Oleoresins** and **gum-resins** contain a mixture of **essential oils + resins + gums**, providing both fragrance and pharmacological activity.

Active Constituents

The major active phytoconstituents present in gums and resins include:

1. Polysaccharides (in gums)

- Arabic gum: **Arabinogalactans, glucuronic acid, rhamnose**
- Tragacanth: **Bassorin, tragacanthin**
- Karaya gum: **Galactose, rhamnose, galacturonic acid**

These components contribute to **demulcent, anti-inflammatory, emulsifying, and wound-healing** properties.

2. Terpenoids (in resins)

Most resinous Unani drugs are rich in terpenoid compounds:

- **Boswellic acids** (from *Boswellia serrata*, Frankincense) – potent anti-inflammatory agents
- **Guggulsterones E and Z** (from *Commiphora mukul*) – lipid-lowering and anti-arthritis
- **Furanosesquiterpenes** (from Myrrh) – antiseptic and antioxidant
- **Asafoetida compounds** (ferulic acid esters, umbelliferone derivatives) – antispasmodic and carminative

3. Resin acids

- **Commiphoric acids, myrrhin, herabol resin** (Myrrh)
- **Oleo-gum-resin acids** in *Ferula* species

These provide antimicrobial, expectorant, and tonic effects.

4. Volatile oils

Present in oleo-resins like Asafoetida and Myrrh, mainly composed of:

- α -pinene, β -pinene,
- limonene,
- myrcene,
- sabinene

They are responsible for the characteristic aroma and stimulant actions.

Marker Compounds

Marker compounds are phytochemicals used for **quality control, standardization, and authentication** of gums and resins. Common markers include:

- **Guggulsterone E & Z** – marker for *Commiphora mukul* (Guggul)
- **11-keto- β -boswellic acid (KBA) & Acetyl-11-keto- β -boswellic acid (AKBA)** – markers for Frankincense
- **Galactose : Arabinose ratio** – marker for purity of Gum Arabic
- **Tragacanthin : Bassorin ratio** – indicator of Tragacanth quality
- **Furanosesquiterpene content (furanoeudesma-1,3-diene)** – marker for Myrrh
- **Ferulic acid** – quality indicator for Asafoetida
- **Camphor (borneone content)** – marker compound in Camphor resin

These markers ensure that the material meets pharmacopoeial standards for therapeutic use.

Modern Pharmacological Properties

1. Anti-inflammatory

Many gums and resins—especially **Boswellia (boswellic acids)** and **Guggul (guggulsterones)**—exhibit strong anti-inflammatory effects by inhibiting **5-lipoxygenase (5-LOX)** and reducing pro-inflammatory cytokines (TNF- α , IL-1 β).

2. Antioxidant

Resins like Myrrh and Asafoetida contain **phenolic compounds and terpenoids** that scavenge free radicals, enhance antioxidant enzymes, and protect tissues from oxidative stress.

3. Antimicrobial

Gums and oleo-gum-resins show broad-spectrum activity against **bacteria, fungi, and some viruses**. Myrrh, Frankincense, and Asafoetida demonstrate significant inhibitory effects against *Staphylococcus*, *E. coli*, *Candida*, and dermatophytes.

4. Analgesic

Compounds such as **furanosesquiterpenes** (Myrrh) and **boswellic acids** exhibit central and peripheral analgesic actions, reducing pain perception in inflammatory and neuropathic models.

5. Hypolipidemic

Guggul resin is well known for lowering **LDL, triglycerides**, and improving HDL via **modulation of lipid metabolism** and **thyroid regulatory pathways**.

6. Immunomodulatory

Frankincense, Myrrh, and Gum Arabic enhance **macrophage activity, lymphocyte proliferation**, and modulate both **cell-mediated and humoral immune responses**.

7. Wound Healing

Gums like **Gum Arabic and Tragacanth** promote wound contraction, collagen deposition, and epithelialization due to their **polysaccharide-rich matrix and anti-inflammatory** effects.

8. Anticancer

Certain terpenoids (AKBA from Boswellia, guggulsterones, ferulic acid derivatives) exhibit cytotoxicity against cancer cell lines by **inducing apoptosis**, inhibiting **NF- κ B**, and suppressing tumor angiogenesis.

Therapeutic Uses

Therapeutic Uses (In Brief)

1. Respiratory Disorders

Gums and resins such as **Frankincense, Myrrh, and Asafoetida** help relieve cough, bronchitis, asthma, and congestion due to their **expectorant, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial** properties.

2. Digestive Ailments

Asafoetida, Gum Arabic, and Tragacanth are used for **indigestion, flatulence, colic, diarrhea, and constipation**. Their **carminative, demulcent, and antispasmodic** actions soothe the gastrointestinal tract.

3. Musculoskeletal Problems

Guggul and Boswellia are effective in **arthritis, joint stiffness, back pain, and inflammatory musculoskeletal disorders** due to strong **anti-inflammatory and analgesic** activities.

4. Metabolic Diseases

Guggul resins support the management of **hyperlipidemia, obesity, and metabolic syndrome** by improving lipid metabolism and reducing oxidative stress.

5. Reproductive and Urinary Conditions

Myrrh and Asafoetida are traditionally used for **dysmenorrhea, infertility-related inflammation, urinary tract infections**, and to promote uterine health.

6. Skin Diseases

Frankincense, Myrrh, and Gum Arabic aid in **wound healing, acne, eczema, ulcers, and skin infections** through their **antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and tissue-regenerative** effects.

7. Neurological Benefits

Some resins (e.g., Frankincense) exhibit **neuroprotective, anxiolytic, and mild cognitive-enhancing** effects, helping in stress, anxiety, and memory-related issues.

Forms and Formulations of Gums and Resins

In Unani medicine, gums and resins are rarely used in their raw form. They are primarily used as **active ingredients, excipients** (binders, suspending agents), or **release-retarding agents** in complex formulations.

Forms of Gums and Resins

Gums and resins are often processed into the following basic forms before being incorporated into complex Unani formulations:

- **Powder (Sufūf):** The raw gum/resin is dried and finely powdered. This is the simplest form and can be used directly or as an ingredient.
- **Decoction (Joshānda):** The substance is boiled in water to extract its water-soluble constituents, often for internal administration.
- **Resin Extract (Rubb or 'Usāra):** This involves extracting active constituents with a suitable solvent and then evaporating the solvent to obtain a concentrated, dry (Rubb) or liquid ('Usāra) extract.
- **Oil (Raughan):** Resins or oleo-gum resins (like Salai Guggul) are often used to prepare medicated oils, typically for external application.
- **Tablet/Pill (Habb or Hubūb):** The powdered gum or resin may be mixed with other powdered drugs using a suitable binder (often water, oil, or a resinous substance itself) and rolled into small, uniformly shaped pills or compressed into tablets.

Unani Formulations

Gums and resins are foundational components in many compound Unani formulations. Examples of Unani formulations where gums and resins are included are:

Formulation Type	Description	Example Ingredient	Example Formulation
Habb/Hubūb (Pills/Tablets)	Solid dosage form made from powdered drugs and a binder.	Guggul (Gum Guggul)	Habb-e-Suranjan (used for joint disorders)
Majūn (Confection)	A semi-solid preparation in which powdered drugs are mixed with a base of honey, sugar, or jaggery.	Kundur (Frankincense resin)	Majūn Kundur / Suranjan (used for arthritis/gout)
Raughan (Medicated Oil)	Oil preparations often used externally, prepared by decoction or maceration of ingredients in an oil base.	Guggul (Gum Guggul)	Raughan Suranjan (used for topical pain relief)
Sufūf (Powder)	Simple or compound powders for internal or external use.	Asafoetida (Oleo-gum resin)	Certain Sufūf preparations for digestive issues

Mode of Administration (Dosage Route)

The mode of administration depends on the formulation:

- **Oral:** This is the most common route.
 - **Pills/Tablets (Habb):** Swallowed with water or a specific vehicle.
 - **Powders (Sufūf):** Taken directly or mixed with water, honey, or a suitable *Badraqah* (vehicle).
 - **Decoctions (Joshānda) and Confections (Majūn):** Consumed orally.
- **External (Topical):**
 - **Oils (Raughan):** Applied and massaged over the affected area (e.g., joints, skin lesions).
 - **Pastes (Qayyam):** Used for localized application.
 - **Fumigation (Bukhoor):** Burning certain resins (like **Kundur**) for the smoke to be inhaled or to purify the environment.

Safety Range in Pharmacological Context

In the context of the paper "Pharmacological Properties and Therapeutic Uses of Some Gums and Resins Used in Unani System of Medicine," the "safety range" is implicitly discussed by highlighting the **Pharmacological Properties and Therapeutic Uses** alongside the system's reliance on traditional knowledge and multi-component formulations.

- **Traditional Safety Approach:** Unani medicine, like other traditional systems, approaches safety through established *Mizaj* (Temperament) principles, traditional practice, and the use of **polyherbal/polycomponent formulations**. The combination of ingredients is intended to enhance efficacy while **mitigating potential side effects** of individual strong components. Unani texts prescribe *Musleh* (detoxifying or corrective agents) to counter any undesirable effects.
- **Pharmacological Properties for Safety:** The safety profile is suggested by studies showing broad-spectrum biological activities in therapeutic doses, such as:
 - **Anti-inflammatory and Analgesic** effects (e.g., **Boswellic acids** from *Boswellia serrata* resin).
 - **Antioxidant and Hepatoprotective** activities.
 - **Antimicrobial** properties.

The research context typically defines the safety range by referring to the traditional prescribed **therapeutic dose** (which is

considered safe by tradition) and **sub-chronic toxicity studies** in animals for modern validation. **Example:** A key resin like **Asafoetida** (*Ferula asafoetida*) is generally considered safe in the low daily doses used for therapeutic purposes (e.g., as a digestive aid or antispasmodic), but like many potent substances, excessive or chronic high doses could lead to adverse effects, making the traditionally defined dosage range its *de facto* safety margin.

Challenges and Future Prospects

- **Standardization issues:**

Variability in botanical sources, harvesting methods, and processing leads to inconsistent composition and therapeutic efficacy.

- **Quality control and adulteration:**

Commercial samples often face adulteration or contamination, requiring stringent purity checks and validated analytical methods.

- **Need for phytochemical profiling:**

Comprehensive profiling of active constituents is essential to ensure efficacy, authenticity, and reproducibility of medicinal gums and resins.

- **Regulatory considerations:**

Lack of uniform global regulations and standard protocols challenges their approval, safety assessment, and clinical use.

- **Future research directions:**

Advanced chromatographic and spectroscopic studies, development of standardized extracts, clinical validation, and exploration of novel therapeutic applications.

CONCLUSION

Gums and resins used in the Unani system of medicine hold a significant place in traditional therapeutics due to their diverse pharmacological properties, including anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, and immunomodulatory effects. Derived from well-characterized botanical sources, these natural exudates continue to serve as valuable remedies for a variety of ailments, ranging from respiratory and gastrointestinal disorders to chronic inflammatory conditions. Despite their long history of safe use, several challenges still limit their full integration into evidence-based modern healthcare. Issues such as variability in plant sources, adulteration, and lack of standardized extraction methods often compromise the quality and therapeutic consistency of these products. Advancements in phytochemical profiling, bioactive compound isolation, and analytical technologies now offer promising pathways for improving quality control and ensuring authenticity. Strengthening regulatory frameworks and adopting Good Agricultural and Collection Practices (GACP) are equally vital for maintaining safety and efficacy. Future research should emphasize well-designed *in vitro*, *in vivo*, and clinical studies to validate traditional claims and explore new pharmacological potentials. Overall, gums and resins represent a rich yet underutilized resource in natural medicine. With scientific validation, proper standardization, and regulatory support, they hold immense potential for contributing to modern therapeutics while preserving the legacy of the Unani medicinal tradition.

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