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Medicinal importance of prickly pear cactus**Aimon hasan**

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Opuntia ficus-indica is currently consumed for their nutritional properties. Since long time, fruits and stems of many *Opuntia* species have been used in medicine for burns, wounds, edema, bronchial asthma, hypertension, indigestion and type 2 diabetes. Extracts of *Opuntia* species have been reported to exhibit hypoglycemic, antiulcer, antioxidant, hepato-protective and neuro-protective activities. However, less is known regarding inflammatory response properties. Nowadays, the cactus is the focus of many studies because they contain bioactive (phytochemicals) compounds, well known for their health related properties. It has been revealing a positive correlation between a diet rich in prickly pear cactus and a reduced risk of diseases associated with oxidative stress, such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases. *Opuntia ficus-indica* commonly known as prickly pear cactus belongs to the family Cactaceae. This Cactaceae family is reported to contain about 130 genera and nearly 1500 all well adapted to arid lands and to a diversity of climates and are naturalized in several areas all over the world. Prickly pear cactus plant's parts are used as edible purpose in many countries and as a traditional medicine. In many countries it is used as a self-medication and folk medication. The purpose to study this plant is to find its phytochemical active constituents and its efficacy to fight against chronic diseases along with its safety. Reports suggest that *Opuntia ficus-indica* has a pharmacological effect in a variety of diseases. The improvement of bone mineral density and calciuria to prevent osteoporosis was reported, treating symptoms of alcohol hangover in humans was reported, it is also find effective in neuronal diseases, renal diseases, inflammatory diseases, neoplastic diseases, antioxidant activity etc. There are many modern day medicines available in the market which can treat chronic diseases but the point of studying this *Opuntia* specie is to avail the natural phytochemical constituents which can run the normal body process without any toxic aspects.

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