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**PHYTOTHERAPY OF RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS IN  
TURKMENISTAN: TRADITIONAL MEDICAL EXPERIENCE**

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Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a destructive joint disease that is caused by autoimmune inflammation in the tissue that normally produces lubrication fluid for joints. Rheumatoid arthritis being as systemic disorder, also can affect organs and other parts of the body. However, RA is typically a progressive illness that has the potential to cause significant joint destruction and functional disability. Due to chronic state, RA can lead to destruction of the cartilage, bone, and ligaments, causing full deformity of the joints.

The cause of RA is unknown. Even though infectious agents such as viruses, bacteria, and fungi have long been suspected, none has been proven as the cause. The cause of RA is a very active area of worldwide research. It is believed that the tendency to develop rheumatoid arthritis may be genetically inherited (hereditary). Certain genes have been identified that increase the risk for RA. It is also suspected that certain infections or factors in the environment might trigger the activation of the immune system in susceptible individuals. This misdirected immune system then attacks the body's own tissues. This leads to inflammation in the joints and sometimes in various organs of the body, such as the lungs or eyes. Regardless of the exact trigger, the result is an immune system that is geared up to promote inflammation in the joints and occasionally other tissues of the body. Immune cells, called lymphocytes, are activated and chemical messengers (cytokines, such as tumor necrosis factor/TNF, interleukin-1/IL-1, and interleukin-6/IL-6) are expressed in the inflamed areas.

RA is quite common in Eastern regions of Turkmenistan, especially in Turkmenabad and Mary regions. By statistics around 1,5 % of women above the age of 50 and 0,25 % of men, who smoke cigarettes, suffer from the complications and disabilities caused by RA. Half of the risk for RA is believed to be genetic. It is strongly associated with the inherited tissue type major histocompatibility complex (MHC) antigen HLA-DRB1 (most specifically the shared epitope alleles, including \*0401 and \*0404, although this difference based in race and ethnicity), and the genes PTPN22 and PADI4—hence family history is an important risk factor. Inheriting the PTPN22 gene has been shown to double a person's susceptibility to RA. PADI4, the gene encoding one of the human citrullinating enzymes, has been identified as a major risk factor in people of Asian descent, but not in those of European descent. First-degree relatives prevalence rate is 2–3% and

disease genetic concordance in monozygotic twins is approximately 15–20%.

Sona Ananyazova, reported and constricted the case of 47-year-old Turkmen woman from Turkmenabad who has been presented with fatigue, paleness, developed shortness of breath and rapid heart rate, required laboratory diagnostics and in patient care. After sedimentation rate blood test in was revealed she had anemia, due to inflammation rate of C-reactive protein; also patient had RA preferably in finger of her hand and severe pain in lower extremities, especially in knee and ankle joints. Genetic disorders were present in this patient.

Professor B. Aydogdyev (1995) also reported the case of epidemiological data in Mary region of Turkmenistan. In 1994 due to cigarettes availability (lowest price in Turkmenistan) for everyone, was approved to be major cause of outbreak of heart attacks in patients with RA. After a year, mostly men were reporting to regional polyclinics and hospitals with complaints to tachycardia and finger disfigurements, laboratory diagnostics and X-ray were conducted to RA.

Currently, its commonly easy to diagnose RA, however treatment is still undergoing different procedures. The most common treatment in Turkmenistan is the Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs and anti-inflammatory therapy, but we use traditional herbal medicine by method of Russian scientist and doctor Bolotov. Swam Sabelnik (also known Comarum palustre) is the most effective herbal drug against arthritis know till now. For example, Bolotov's balls at exchange polyarthritis make cakes of a black radish mixed with 1 tablespoon of powder of dry roots of sabelnik to daily portion of kvas (fermentation). His advice was to reduce the level of protein food, more physical activity and some methods of medicine.

Thus, smoking is a factor contributing to the aggravation of the disease. We believe it is possible to use herbal medicine in addition to the basic and anti-inflammatory therapy in patients with RA.