

## PHYTOTHERAPEUTIC APPROACH TO BENIGN PROSTATIC HYPERPLASIA TREATMENT BY PUMPKIN SEED (*CUCURBITA PEPO L.*, CUCURBITACEAE)

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Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) is a noncancerous enlargement of the prostate gland caused by proliferation of both stromal and epithelial cells. BPH develops after the age of 40 and has high morbidity and low mortality rate. Male lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) are mostly associated with BPH and they are very common in the ageing population. Herbal medicines have been used for the treatment of numerous chronic and severe diseases. The main aim of phytotherapy in benign prostatic hyperplasia is to relieve symptoms and to improve patient's quality of life (QoL). Pumpkin (*Cucurbita pepo L.*), a member of Cucurbitaceae family, is a herbaceous, monoecious, annual plant. Pumpkin extracts, from different parts of the plant, have shown various therapeutic effects due to their biologically active components. Pumpkin seeds are valued for high proportions of proteins, essential amino acids, fatty acids and microelements. In the therapy of small urinary disorders, prostate gland and the urinary bladder diseases, pumpkin seeds have shown positive results. Synthetic drug therapy and surgical procedures show many side effects and complications, so herbal medicines are promising in mild to moderate BPH. *Acta Medica Medianae 2016;55(3):76-84.*

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