

# HERBS FOR EYE HEALTH-IS THERE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE?

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Since the beginning of human existence, herbs in traditional medicine, played an important role in the treatment of multiple human diseases in many parts of the world. The problem of harmful effects of modern drugs led to the increased application of plant-derived drugs.

Herbs such as **eyebright** (fig.1.) and **goldenseal** (fig.2.) are used for a long time in the form of eye drops and are also used for rinsing the eyes suffering from conjunctivitis and blepharitis.



Fig.1. *Hydrastis canadensis* (Goldenseal)



Fig.2. *Euphrasia rostkoviana* (Eyebright)

**Ginkgo** has neuroprotective effect against the retinal ganglion cells suffering from increased eye pressure, preventive and therapeutic effect against the eye diseases related to aging such as cataract, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and macular degeneration.

**Marichuana** and **coleus** help decrease eye pressure and **green tea** showed positive effects in alleviating the symptoms of dry eye. **Saffron** and **goji berries (*Lycium barbarum*)** have neuroprotective effect against retinal ganglion cell death caused by increased eye pressure (fig.3.).

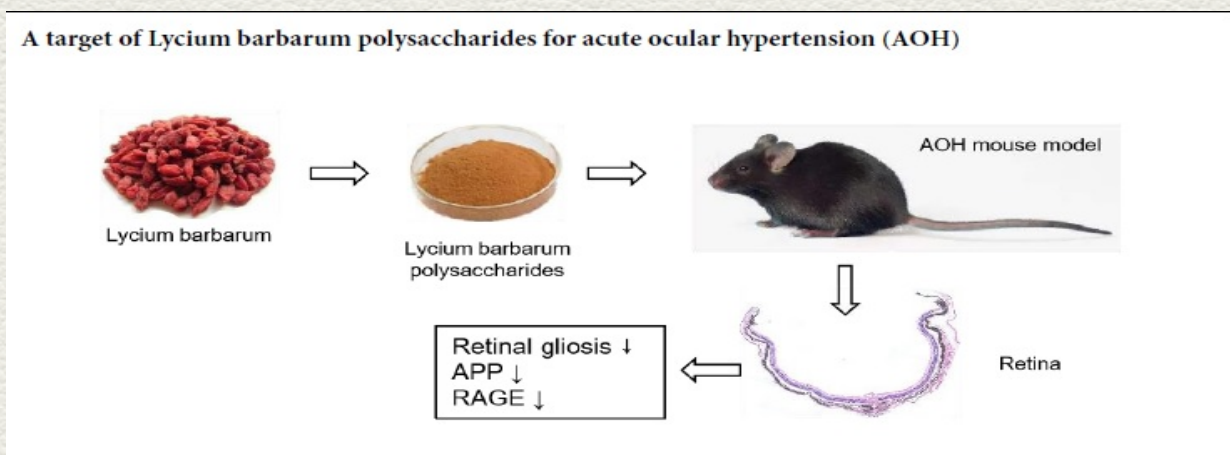


Fig.3. Neuroprotective effect of goji berries

## Conclusion:

Plants play an important role in the prevention and treatment of eye diseases. They can be used topically like eye drops or eye wash bath and systemically, most often orally. However, it is not justified to use only herbal therapy in serious eye diseases.

It is recommended to use herbal preparations as adjunct to pharmacological therapy prescribed by an ophthalmologist.