



Dandelion herb in medicine

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Taraxacum officinale, dandelion, is a member of the *Compositae* family. Its Iranian name is "gole ghased" or "khabar-avar". This perennial plant can reach 20 inches in height. It grows wild in most parts of the world. All parts of this plant have been used in medicine. Dandelion herb contains sesquiterpene lactones, triterpenes, carotenoids, fatty acids, flavonoids, minerals (potassium), phenolic acids, phytosterols, inulin, some sugars and vitamins. In the *Avecina's* Ghanoon of medicine, this plant has many names such as "Her-gholous", and "Khassol-Hemarr. It has been used in wound healing specially burning, jaundice, gout, loss of appetite and etc. In herbal medicine, the most important applications of dandelion are due to its choleric, liver support, antirheumatic and diuretic properties. So, in hepatobiliary problems such as hepatitis, jaundice, cholecystitis and gallstone, it has been used. In gastrointestinal complaints such as constipation, stomach pain, loss of appetite, flatulence and dyspepsia, dandelion has important applications. Dandelion can prevent cancer. Dandelion stimulates cytotoxicity through secretion of some cytokines. Also, the herb induced differentiation of human leukemia cells. The extracts of dandelion root caused cell differentiation of the melanoma cell line into mature melanocytes and also inhibited cell growth and induced melanogenesis. In addition, dandelion extract could be used to improve the lipid metabolism and prevent diabetic complications. However, as reported frequently, this herb is an important allergen in human. In this review, we discuss about the most important effects of dandelion, antitumor, antidiabetic and liver protection effects.