



Comparative Review Of Vishaghna Mahakashaya And Modern Anti-Toxic Drugs.

¹Dr. Aarti Sadashiv Jadhao. ²Dr Akshara Patil.

1.PG Scholer ,Agadtantra Evum Vidhi Vaidyak Department.

2. Guide & Associate professor, Agadtantra Evum Vidhi Vaidyak Department.

Yashwant Ayurvedic College And Research Centre, Kodoli.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a timeless science based on principles of prevention and healing. Although diseases are described in various forms in modern medicine, their fundamental imbalance often corresponds with Ayurvedic concepts. Ayurveda states that diseases and remedies are infinite, and treatment depends on proper understanding of principles rather than fixed formulations. Charaka Samhita describes fifty Mahakashaya groups, each containing ten herbs based on therapeutic action. Vishaghna Mahakashaya is one such group, consisting of herbs with anti-toxic properties that act primarily on Rakta and Pitta imbalances. These herbs help neutralize toxins and support detoxification.

Modern toxicology, on the other hand, uses specific antidotes, antivenoms, chelating agents, and receptor antagonists to manage poisoning cases.

This review compares Vishaghna Mahakashaya with modern anti-toxic drugs and highlights their similarities, differences, and potential for integration in toxicological practice.

Keywords: Vishaghna Mahakashaya, Anti-toxic drugs, Agadtantra, Ayurveda, Poisoning, Antidote, Toxicology.

INTRODUCTION

Agad Tantra is a branch of Ayurveda dealing with poisons and toxic substances. “Visha” refers to any substance that disturbs body equilibrium and leads to toxicity.

In Ayurveda, Visha possesses ten properties such as Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna, Vyavayi, and Ushna, which explain its rapid and harmful effects on the body. Charaka Samhita describes fifty Mahakashayas, each containing ten herbs selected based on therapeutic action. Vishaghna Mahakashaya includes herbs used

for detoxification and treatment of various poisons. Some herbs in this group have ambiguous identification, requiring interpretative understanding based on classical texts and clinical application.

Danshtra chikitsa, Agad tantra and Vishagarvairrodhik prashaman are synonym of each other. Danshtra chikitsa is the sixth branch of Ayurveda which mainly deals with agada i.e. The medicine with anti-poisonous effects. Visha means the dravya which causes vishaad (sorrow or depression) is known as visha. Laghu, Ruksha, Aashu, Vishad, Vyavayi, Tikshna, Vikaashi, Sookshma, Ushna, Anirdeshyarasa are the ten properties of poisonous drugs. Drugs which act against toxic effect of substances are called as vishghna. Acharya Charak has described vishaghna mahakashaya which includes ten vishghna drugs. It includes *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa*), *manjishtha* (*Rubia cordifolia*), *Suvaha* (*Pluchea lanceolata*), *Sukshama ela* (*Elettaria cardamomum*), *Paalindi* (*Operculina turpethum*), *Chandan* (*Santalum album*), *Kataka* (*Strychnos potatorum*), *Shirisha* (*Albizia lebbeck*), *Sindhuvara* (*Vitex negundo*), *Shleshmataka* (*Cordia dichotoma*).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

- Classical Ayurvedic Texts
- Modern Scientific Literature,
- Published Research Articles Related To Mahakashaya And Toxicology Were Reviewed.

VISHAGHNA MAHAKASHAYA – AYURVEDIC OVERVIEW

Vishaghna Mahakashaya is one of the ten major herbal groups described in Charaka Samhita. These herbs are used for managing poisoning conditions including snake bite, insect bite, and toxic accumulations.

Herbs Included:

- *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa*)
- *Manjishtha* (*Rubia cordifolia*)
- *Suvaha / Trivrit* (*Pluchea lanceolata*)
- *Ela* (*Elettaria cardamomum*)
- *Palindi / Sariva* (*Operculina turpethum*)
- *Chandan* (*Santalum album*)
- *Kataka* (*Strychnos potatorum*)
- *Shirish* (*Albizia lebbeck*)
- *Sindhuvar* (*Vitex negundo*)
- *Shleshmantaka* (*Cordia dichotoma*)

These herbs possess Tikta and Kashaya rasa, Sheeta veerya, and Katu vipaka, which help counteract toxic effects.

Uses of *Vishghana* drugs in poisoning

1. Haridra: Ghee cooked with *Haridra* is best to treat artificial poison. It is locally used in rat bite. Fresh turmeric rhizome, *Ankolam* root and *Nirgundi* paste applied locally on dog bite. Paste made of fresh turmeric rhizome and *Moringa oleifera* bark is applied on injured portion of dog bite. It is used for an external application with human milk in leech poisoning. Application of *Haridra* with *Gomutra* cures sea snake bite. Decoction of *Haridra* with milk cures all types of poisons. Intake of *Haridra* with *Gomutra* cures all animate and inanimate poisons. Turmeric mixed with *Saindhav*, honey and Ghee is useful for poisoning by root poison and also in person wounded by poisoned weapon.

2. Manjistha: *Rubia cordifolia* shows antioxidant activity against lead nitrate and radiation induced toxicity. Purpurin constituents of *Rubia cordifolia* shows antigenotoxic activity. According to *Bhavaprakash*, *Manjistha* is able to bind itself *Amavisha* and *Garavisha*.

3. Rasna: It is used in *Lepa* for poisoned hands. It is used in treatment of spider bite.

4. Ela: It is used in lead poisoning. The aqueous cardamom suspension can enhance detoxifying enzyme and decrease peroxidation of lipid.

5. Sariva: It is used in hepatotoxicity.

6. Chandan: Useful for an external application on cardiac region in poisoning by fumes. Consumption of *Chandan* and *Amalaki* mixed with honey in morning cures artificial poisoning.

7. Katak: It is used in *Lepa* for massage by poisoned oil. *Katak* is used as *Lepa* in *Vataj Loota Visha*. It is an antidote for hot honey.

8. Shirish: *Shirish* is the best drug of choice of poisoning. It is used in *Pradeha* for poisoning by poisoned ornaments. Three times macerated seeds of *Shirisha* in calotropis latex mixed with *Pippali* powder are useful in insect, spider, snake, scorpion and rat bite. It is useful in anointing the swollen gums due to poisoned tooth-brush.

9. Sinduvar: it is useful in *Darvikar Visha* for internal administration. *Sinduvaradi Kwath* useful in rat poisoning.

10. Shleshmantak: It is useful in all types of spider poisoning. It is present in *Pradeha* useful in poisoning by feet and seat. It reduces adverse effect of Adriamycin.

PHARMACODYNAMICS OF VISHAGHNA DRAVYAS

Vishaghna herbs act by:

- Neutralizing toxins
- Correcting doshic imbalance
- Supporting detoxification pathways
- Providing antioxidant, hepatoprotective, and immunomodulatory effects

Examples:

- Guduchi supports immune function
- Haridra shows anti-inflammatory and hepatoprotective activity
- Shirish exhibits anti-allergic properties

MODERN ANTI-TOXIC DRUGS – SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW

Modern toxicology uses specific agents depending on poison type:

1. Antivenoms – for snake bites
2. Chelating agents – EDTA, BAL, penicillamine
3. Activated charcoal – for poisoning adsorption
4. Naloxone – opioid overdose
5. Atropine + pralidoxime – organophosphate poisoning
6. N-acetylcysteine – paracetamol toxicity
7. Flumazenil – benzodiazepine reversal
8. Specific antidotes – methanol, cyanide, etc.

These act through precise biochemical and receptor-level mechanisms.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

1. Philosophical Approach

- Ayurveda: Holistic correction of dosha and dhatu imbalance
- Modern medicine: Target-specific neutralization of toxins

2. Nature of Treatment

- Ayurveda: Multi-functional herbal combinations
- Modern: Single-target chemical agents

3. Safety

- Ayurveda: Generally safe with proper use
- Modern: Effective but may have side effects

4. Examples

- Snake bite: Herbal formulations vs antivenom
- Heavy metal toxicity: Herbal detox support vs chelators
- Drug overdose: Liver-supportive herbs vs antidotes like naloxone

INTEGRATION OF AYURVEDA AND MODERN TOXICOLOGY

Integration is important due to:

- Increasing environmental toxins
- Drug-induced toxicity
- Chronic and subclinical poisoning conditions

Key Areas

- Detoxification support
- Immunomodulation
- Liver and kidney protection
- Metal detoxification support

LIMITATIONS

Ayurveda:

- Lack of large-scale clinical trials
- Identification issues of herbs
- Variable standardization

Modern medicine:

- Not effective in all unknown toxins
- Side effects and contraindications
- Requires emergency infrastructure

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

- Integrative toxicology clinics
- Collaborative research models
- Standardized herbal antidotal formulations
- Academic integration of both systems

DISCUSSION

Most drug of Vishaghna mahakashaya having property of vishaghna. Eg Haridra (Dhanwantari Nighantu), Manjishtha (Bhav prakash Nighantu, Dhanwantari Nighantu, Kaideva Nighantu, Raj Nighantu), Suvaha (Bhava praksh Nighantu), Chandan (Bhava praksh Nighantu), Katak (Dhanwantari Nighantu-Kaideva Nighantu), Shirisha (Charak Samhita-Bhava praksh Nighantu Kaideva Nighantu), Shleshmatak (Bhava praksh Nighantu). Vishaghna mahakashaya dravya shows the antitoxic effect by neutralizing toxin, denaturizing toxin and helps to release toxin outside from the body at the cellular level.

CONCLUSION

Vishaghna Mahakashaya and modern antidote therapies share a common goal: elimination of toxins and restoration of health. Ayurveda provides a holistic and preventive approach, while modern medicine offers rapid and targeted intervention.

Integration of both systems can enhance toxicological care, especially in chronic toxicity, post-exposure recovery, and complex poisoning cases.

A combined approach may lead to a more comprehensive and effective healthcare model.

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