

Efficacy and Usefulness of Visha dravyas in Rasaushadhis (HMPs)

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Abstract

Ayurveda is oldest medical science known to mankind and mainly aims at healthy living and long life unlike other medical science which simply focus on the treatment of ailments and diseases. There is evidence that using some Ayurvedic medicine, especially those involving herbs, metals, minerals, or other materials involves potentially serious risks, including toxicity. This article discusses about plants (visha-upavisha dravyas) commonly used to improve health and their role in the preparation of making medicines or to treat illness as herbs in single or in a compound formulations.

Keywords: Visha Dravyas; Rasaushadhis; Visha gunas

Introduction

The Pharmacology of Ayurvedic system is divided into three major parts namely

Herbs (Sthavara) Metals & Minerals (Khanija) Animal kingdom (Jangama).

It is important to have an awareness regarding the Poisonous drugs, when used in the proper form & prescribed dose they acts as a potent therapeutic agents. It is a fact that virtually any substance can be harmful at high enough concentrations as rightly quoted that “All substances are poisons; there is none which is not a poison. The right dose differentiates a poison from a remedy.” **Paracelsus (1493-1541)**.

In many Classical literatures we are able to recognize the explanation regarding the use, importance, and therapeutic consideration of visha dravyas (poisonous substances). In Ayurvedic Science-origin, properties, purification, uses, toxic symptoms etc detail descriptions are available, especially in Rasashastra the use of Visha-Upavisha dravyas (poisonous & semi-poisonous substances) in the Rasa karma as well Rasa bhandhan has got prime importance. They included and classified visha dravyas on the basis of its usefulness in Rasa karma [1].

Visha-Upavisha dravyas from therapeutic point of view are considered highly valuable on accordance of their quick effectiveness even in smaller doses. But at the same time are very dangerous also as these may prove fatal to human beings if used without proper care & in higher doses. Therefore, understanding the visha dravyas its important uses, medicinal applications, benefits, toxic symptoms and its management. Especially its consideration in the field of Rasashastra is very much important [1,2].

Visha dravyas-Ancient Time (Brief History)

The history of visha (poison) and its treatment ways back to centuries. The mythological concept regarding origin of visha states that it was created at the time of creation of universe by lord Bramha [3] and some opine that it was obtained during samudra manthana. References regarding visha or poison and poisoning can also be traced in Vedas [4].

Ayurved dedicated as one of its branches as Danshtrachikitsa, Agadatantra or Vishatantra, Vishagara vairodhika prashamana which is dedicated solely to the concept and treatment of

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Visha Guna

Acharya Charaka and Sushruta have enumerated ten similar gunas of visha with an exception of apaaki (Sushruta) being replaced by anirdeshya rasa (Charaka). Acharya Vagbhata has attributed eleven gunas to a visha dravya by including apaki and Avyaktarasa (instead of anirdeshya rasa). Sharngadhara has stated certain extra gunas of visha dravya like chhedi, madavaha, jivitahara and yogavahi. The gunas of visha, as described by different authorities is mentioned below (Table 1) [14-17].

Importance of Purification of Poison

could be made suitable for internal use. Drugs of Visha-Upavisha groups may also be subjected to some of these processes for reducing their toxicity and making their frequent use possible in therapeutics.

Therefore before using vishas in therapeutics steps basic involved are [22-24]:

- Proper identification
- Collection of the therapeutically beneficial part
- Collection in the correct season
- Purification
- Proper storage
- Accurate dosage
- Anupana (Vehicle)
- Diet and regimen

Examples of Usefulness & Efficacy of Visha-upvisha dravya in Rasaushadhis

I. Navajivana Rasa

Ingredients: - **Kupilu-** 2 parts
Loha Bhasma- 2 parts
Rasa Sindura- 2 parts
Trayushna- ½ part each
(Bhavana with Ardraka Swarasa)

- Action: - Deepan, Pachana, Balasanjanan param, Naadi Balaprajanan, Ratishakti vivardhana, Shulapaham [25].

Probable Action of Kupilu (Strychnine) in the Formulation

It contains Strychnine, Brucin, Loganin, Vomycin etc. Among these Strychnine is the most toxic ingredient.

- Nuxvomica is one of the drugs used for the diseases of Nervous system
- Strychnine has tonic, stimulant, Relaxant and Aphrodisiac action.
- The absorption of strychnine is rapid from stomach and intestine and elimination through urine, bile, sweat and saliva [26,27].

II. Tribhvanakirti Rasa

Ingredients: - Pippali- 1 Part
Hingula Suddha- 1 Part
Visha- 1 Part (Jala Q. S. for mardana)

- Action: -Vatajwara nivritti and Amavatahara [28].

Probable Action of Vatsanabha (Aconite) in the Formulation

Aconite mainly contains alkaloids namely Aconitine, Pseudoaconitine, Bikhaconitine etc.

- Pseudoaconitine is highly toxic and biologically more active than Aconitine.

- The antipyretic action is the result of its influence on the circulation and respiration and of its diaphoretic action
- Aconite further depresses the activity of all nerve-terminals, the sensory being affected before the motor, it therefore tends to relieve pain also it acts as stimulant [29].

III. Shwasakuthar Rasa

Ingredients: - Shuddha Rasa- 4 parts
Shuddha Gandhaka- 4 parts
Shuddha Vatsanabha- 4 parts
Shuddha Tankana- 4 parts
Shuddha Manahashila- 4 parts
Maricha- 36 parts
Sunthi- 4 parts
Pippali- 4 parts

- Action: - Kasa, Shwasa, Mandagni, Vataleshmaayeshu, Sannipata Murcha and Apasmara nashana [30].

Probable Action of Manahshila (Arsenic) in the Formulation

Red Arsenic or Realgar is very hot in potency. It acts as Appetiser, Expectorant and Rejuvenator

- It helps in the opening of the (viscous or thicker) mucus present within the bronchial lumen.
- It removes the spasm of the Bronchial smooth muscles [31].

Discussion

Whole review reveals that the Vishas and Upavishas are very useful as a part of use in the herbo-mineral preparations though needs to detoxified and purified. The Ayurved classical purification and detoxification classical method makes it suitable to use on human body for the treatment of various ailments.

Classical text of Ayurveda attributed ten common gunas to both Madya and visha, where the intensity of the Guna of visha is more than that of madya. As stated earlier, study of visha gunas is necessary for its treatment. Since the basis of treatment is samanya- visheshasiddhanta a drug or diet which is opposite in the properties as that of the disease should be used for its treatment.

Ayurved has advocated using toxic substances in minute quantity for treating various ailments like udara. In the latter period various texts of Ayurved had been using toxic substances by classifying them into visha and upavisha categories, amongst which upavishas are considered to be having less toxicity than that of vishas. For using these substances in the treatment they were treated with various media, the process being called as shodhana. This shodhana procedure was carried out in order to detoxify the toxic substance along with the incorporation of certain other properties to it. It may be considered that the ten gunas which are attributed to these visha dravyas may be getting reduced due to these procedures which allow the toxic substance to be used internally without many complications.

The Ayurvedic multi ingredient compounds are formulated in a way that the ingredients are capable of counterbalancing toxic effects, if any, present in the herbs or metals used which are said to be poisonous.

Besides this, the use of these Rasaushadhis preparations is discontinued after a certain period or gap, so that the body can neutralize the effect of the medicine given. The period after which the use of Rasaushadhis should be discontinued may differ from metal to minerals and kind of visha-upavisha dravyas used. Even in classics the intake details has been highlighted as; in some of Rasaushadhis like; Vishamushti Vati- for a period of 15 days-Gap-than start again and Rasakarpura- till the