

MANAGEMENT OF CHOLELITHIASIS (*PITTASHAMARI*) WITH AYURVEDA AND
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ABSTRACT

Cholelithiasis, commonly known as gallstones, is a prevalent condition that involves the formation of solid particles within the gallbladder, leading to various symptoms such as pain, nausea, and digestive disturbances. From an Ayurvedic perspective, cholelithiasis is considered a disorder primarily arising due to the imbalance of *Pitta dosha*, specifically the *Agnimandya* (weak digestive fire) and improper dietary habits, which lead to the accumulation of *Ama* (toxins). This case study aims to explore the Ayurvedic understanding, management, and treatment of cholelithiasis, focusing on holistic approaches that restore balance to the body's doshas. Through the integration of herbal formulations, Panchakarma therapies, dietary modifications, and lifestyle changes, Ayurvedic medicine offers a personalized and effective approach to manage and potentially prevent the recurrence of gallstones. This case study outlines the treatment protocol used in a patient diagnosed with cholelithiasis, highlighting the role of *Bile-stimulating herbs*, detoxification procedures, and the restoration of digestive health. The study demonstrates the efficacy of Ayurvedic interventions in alleviating symptoms and promoting long-term wellness, offering an alternative to conventional surgical treatments in suitable cases.

KEYWORDS: Cholelithiasis, *Pittashamari*, Ayurveda treatment, *Pitta dosha*, Yoga intervention.

INTRODUCTION

In the field of hepato-biliary sciences, cholelithiasis (gall stones) associated with cholecystitis is one of the most frequently occurring diseases nowadays. The term “cholelithiasis” basically means the precipitation of bile components resulting in hard stone like formation and the term “cholecystitis” implies inflammation of the gall bladder. Gall Stones have been found during autopsies on mummies dating back to 1000 BC.^[1] With increase in unhealthy dietary habits and faulty lifestyle and daily routine, this disease has continuously been on the rise. Epidemiological reports show that the worldwide incidence rate of cholelithiasis is about 10% to 35%, while gallstone patients account for 75% to 80% of cholelithiasis, of which more than 15% are combined with common bile duct stones.^[2] Ayurveda has no direct textual reference of gall stones but *Bastigata Ashmari*^[3] has been extensively explained correlating to urinary calculi. However, the gall bladder is termed as *Pittashaya* in Ayurveda and the bile secreted from gall bladder has been mentioned under the name of *Accha Pitta*, thus its solidification can be inferred as *Pittashmari*.

In Ayurveda, health is described as a state of harmony between the three fundamental *doshas*—*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*—which govern the body's physiological functions. When these doshas are out of balance, disease arises. Cholelithiasis, according to Ayurvedic principles, is predominantly linked to an imbalance in *Pitta dosha*, specifically in the *Ranjaka Pitta*, which governs the liver and bile production, leading to impaired digestion and the formation of toxins or *Ama*. The presence of excessive *Pitta* in the digestive system can cause the bile to become thick, concentrated, and eventually form stones.

The Ayurvedic texts, particularly the *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*, provide deep insights into the pathophysiology of digestive disorders like cholelithiasis. The *Charaka Samhita* explains that disturbances in *Agnisthana* (digestive fire) lead to the accumulation of *Ama*, which can block the flow of bile and lead to the formation of gallstones (*Cholelithiasis*).^[4] In *Sushruta Samhita*, there is a detailed account of *Pitta* disturbances manifesting in conditions related to the liver and gallbladder, emphasizing the importance of

regulating *Agnisthana* and digestion to prevent such disorders.

According to the *Charaka Samhita* (Sutra Sthana, Chapter 19), *Pitta* is responsible for digestion, transformation, and metabolism. Imbalance in *Pitta* can lead to the development of diseases such as cholelithiasis, as it causes improper digestion and stagnation of bile. The role of *Agnimandya* (weak digestive fire) and *Ama* (toxins) in the formation of gallstones. In this context, Ayurvedic management involves restoring the digestive fire, detoxifying the body, and balancing the *Pitta dosha* through various therapies.

Ayurveda recommends a multifaceted treatment approach for cholelithiasis, focusing on strengthening digestion, removing accumulated toxins, and purging the body of excess *Pitta*. These interventions include dietary modifications, the use of *Pitta*-pacifying herbs, and therapies like *Panchakarma* (a detoxification process involving practices such as *Virechana* and *Basti*), all aimed at promoting balance and restoring normal physiological functions.

This case study aims to examine the Ayurvedic approach to managing cholelithiasis, incorporating the principles and treatments found in classical texts like the *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*. By evaluating a patient's condition from an Ayurvedic perspective, this study underscores the importance of individualized care, focusing not just on symptom relief but on restoring holistic balance and long-term health. Through these treatments, Ayurveda offers a unique and effective approach to cholelithiasis that can be used alongside or in place of conventional medical treatments.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Ayurvedic oral medicines used along with yoga and pranayama intervention, appropriate diet (pathya-apathya), Quantity, duration and *aushadhi sevankaal* is shown in detail in table number 1 and 2.

CASE REPORT

A male patient of aged 63 years came with the complaints of *Udarshul* (pain in the right hypochondriac region and back) which was moderate in nature, associated with *Chardi* (vomiting) in the past 10 days with *Asamyak malpravruti* (irregular bowel moment), no

difficulty in micturition and moderate appetite. Patient had positive history of hypertension and diabetes taking medicine on regular basis.

General Examination

- PR-74bpm
- BP-120/70 mm of Hg
- Pallor - Absent
- Icterus- Absent
- RR-20cpm
- Edema -Absent
- Cyanosis - Absent
- Clubbing - Absent
- Lymphadenopathy - Absent

Systemic Examination

- Central nervous examination -conscious, well oriented to time, place and person
- Cardiovascular examination -S1 and S2 heard clearly
- Respiratory examination- Air entry bilaterally equal
- Abdominal examination -slight tenderness at right hypochondriac region and back

Local Examination

Inspection - No distension, no discoloration
Palpation- Slight tenderness at right hypochondriac region and back, Boas sign absent

Astha Vidya Pariksha

- *Nadi*-74 bpm
- *Mala* – *Asamyak mal pravruti*
- *Mutra* - *Prakruta*
- *Jihva* - *Alpasamata*
- *Shabda*-*Prakruta*
- *Sparsha* - *Anushnasheeta*
- *Drika* - *Prakruta*
- *Akriti* - *Madhyama*

Investigations

USG (Abdomen and pelvis) -25/05/2024

Gall bladder – Partially distended – shows multiple GB calculi 3mm to 4.7mm in diameter about 4 to 5 in number seen in GB lumen showing distal shadowing and some movement with large sludge in GB lumen.

Liver – Mild hepatomegaly – suggestive of grade 1 Fatty changes.

Treatment

Table no.- 01.

Sr no	Aushadhi	Matra	Anupan	SevanKaal
1	Suvarna suthshekhar ras	2-0-2	With <i>koshna jaal</i>	<i>pragabhakta</i>
2	Gokshuradi guggul	2-0-2	With <i>koshna jaal</i>	<i>Paschatbhakta</i>
2	Aampachak yoga (ativisha, musta, shunthi, haritaki each churna 500mg)	2gm – 2gm	With <i>koshna jaal</i>	<i>Paschatbhakta</i>
3	Hingvastak churna 500mg + lavanbhaskhar churna 500mg+ shankhavati tablet powder 1gm	2gm -2gm	With <i>ghruta</i>	<i>Madhyabhakta</i>
4	Gandhav haritaki	2gm	With <i>koshna jaal</i>	<i>Nishakali</i>

Yoga Intervention

Type of practice Practices

Table No: 02.

Loosening practices	Finger, wrist, elbow, shoulder loosening Neck movements, Drill walking, Toes, ankle, knee loosening
Yoga poses	<i>Trikonasana, bhujangasana, pashimottanasana, ardha matsyendrasana, setu bandhasana</i>
Pranayama	<i>Anuloma vilom, Bhramari pranayama, Meditation Om meditate, kapalbhati</i>

Pathya-Apathya

1. Patient should drink at least 2-3 litres of water per day.
2. Barley water, tender coconut water is useful here.
3. Consuming Kulattha, green gram, old rice, wheat, Gogriha, Dadima, Yavakshara, juice of Kushmanda, vegetables prepared from leaves of Varuna, Shigru.
4. Avoid black Gram, Amla, Lavana, Katu, brinjal, tomato, spinach.

These ayurvedic medications + yoga module + pathya apathya were continued for 1 month and follow up visits, symptoms were assessed. The patient has been advised to continue same medications for another 2 months.

Total duration : 3 months

RESULTS

After completing three months of medicine course, the patient was called to discuss the further line of treatment. The patient was advised to undergo USG abdomen to check the prognosis.

Subjective Assessment of Symptoms

Sr no	Symptoms	Grading	BT	AT
1	Pain	0- No pain 1- Mild pain 2- Moderate pain 3- Severe pain	2	0
2	Nausea	0- No nausea 1- Mild nausea not requesting pharmacological rescue 2- Moderate nausea requesting pharmacological rescue 3- Severe resistant to pharmacological rescue	2	0
3	Heaviness of the abdomen	0- No heaviness after taking food 1- Mild heaviness after taking food 2- Moderate after taking food 3- Severe after taking Food	1	0

Before Treatment (25/5/2024)	After treatment (13/ 9/2024)
Gall bladder – Partially distended – shows multiple GB calculi 3mm to 4.7mm in diameter about 4 to 5 in number seen in GB lumen showing distal shadowing and some movement with large sludge in GB lumen. Liver – Mild hepatomegaly – suggestive of grade 1 Fatty changes	Gall bladder – partially distended -few very small GB calculi -1.5 to 2 mm in diameter about 1 to 2 in number with sludge seen in GB lumen shadowing and minimal movement Liver – normal in size normal reflectivity

DISCUSSION

Cholelithiasis, or gallstones, is a condition in which solid particles, often made up of cholesterol, bile pigments, and calcium salts, form in the gallbladder, leading to symptoms such as pain, indigestion, and nausea. Ayurvedic medicine approaches this condition primarily through the lens of *Pitta dosha* imbalance, as *Pitta* governs digestion, metabolism, and bile production. Gallstones are thought to form when *Pitta* becomes aggravated, leading to improper digestion and the accumulation of toxins (*Ama*), which eventually crystallize into stones. Thus, Ayurvedic treatment for *Pittaashmari* (cholelithiasis) focuses on pacifying *Pitta*, promoting bile flow, improving liver function, and enhancing digestion. The combination of Ayurvedic

formulations, specific yoga poses, and pranayama (breathing exercises) provides a comprehensive, multidimensional approach to the management and prevention of gallstones.

1. Suvarna Sutshekhar Ras

Suvarna Sutshekhar Ras is a potent Ayurvedic formulation known for its ability to balance *Pitta dosha*, regulate digestive fire (*Agni*), and improve liver function. The inclusion of *Suvarna Bhasma* (gold ash) in this formulation has rejuvenating and detoxifying effects, promoting the purification of the body. *Sutshekhar* is a key component that helps in pacifying aggravated *Pitta*, which plays a central role in gallstone formation. In *Pittaashmari*, *Suvarna Sutshekhar Ras* works to

harmonize the digestive system, reduce acidity, and improve bile secretion, thus preventing the formation of cholesterol-based gallstones and supporting the liver in its detoxification processes.

2. *Aampachak Yoga*^[5]

Aampachak Yoga is a formulation specifically designed to enhance *Agni* (digestive fire) and facilitate the elimination of *Ama* (toxins). Given that cholelithiasis is often associated with poor digestion and the accumulation of toxins, *Aampachak Yoga* improves digestive function, helps in the proper breakdown of bile, and enhances bile production. The formulation's key ingredients, such as *Amla* (*Embllica officinalis*), which is known for its digestive and liver-supporting properties, play a crucial role in preventing the formation of gallstones. By enhancing *Agni* and promoting a healthy flow of bile, *Aampachak Yoga* supports the body in dissolving existing stones and preventing new ones from forming.

3. *Goshukradi Guggul*

Goshukradi Guggul is a traditional Ayurvedic remedy known for its detoxifying and anti-inflammatory properties. The formulation contains *Guggul* (*Commiphora wightii*), which is widely used in Ayurveda for its ability to promote liver health, enhance bile secretion, and improve digestion. *Goshukradi Guggul* works on multiple levels to treat *Pittaashmari*, by reducing the inflammation of the gallbladder, promoting bile flow, and aiding in the breakdown of cholesterol-based stones. Additionally, the anti-inflammatory properties of *Guggul* help reduce discomfort caused by the stones, while its detoxifying effect promotes the elimination of *Ama* and supports overall metabolic health.

4. *Hingawastak Churna* + *Lavanabhaskhar Churna* + *shankha vati*

The combination of *Hingawastak Churna* and *Lavanabhaskhar Churna* provides significant relief from digestive issues commonly associated with cholelithiasis. *Hingawastak Churna*, which contains *Asafoetida* (*hing*), is known for its ability to relieve bloating, gas, and indigestion symptoms frequently observed in gallstone sufferers. By improving digestion and enhancing bile secretion, *Hingawastak Churna* supports the gallbladder in its function and helps to reduce the formation of new stones.

Lavanabhaskhar Churna^[6] on the other hand, is composed of a mix of salts and herbs that help balance digestive acids, alleviate acidity, and facilitate the smooth passage of bile. The combination of these two formulations improves overall digestion, reduces acidity, and enhances bile production, all of which help prevent gallstone formation. They also provide relief from symptoms such as nausea, indigestion, and discomfort associated with cholelithiasis.

Shankh Vati^[7] Known for its anti-acidic and cooling properties, *Shankh Vati* is particularly beneficial for calming the excess *Pitta* in the body. It helps in reducing inflammation in the gallbladder and liver while promoting a proper flow of bile and improving digestion. This, in turn, supports the breakdown of gallstones.

Together, these formulations help to regulate bile production, prevent the formation of stones, and address the digestive issues that exacerbate cholelithiasis.

5. *Gandhav Haritaki*

Gandhav Haritaki is an Ayurvedic formulation containing *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*), which is known for its powerful detoxifying, antioxidant, and digestive properties. *Haritaki* improves *Agni*, purges *Ama*, and supports the healthy flow of bile. By promoting digestion and supporting liver function, *Gandhav Haritaki* plays a key role in reducing the accumulation of toxins and preventing the formation of new gallstones. The antioxidant properties of *Haritaki* also help reduce inflammation in the gallbladder and liver, providing additional support for the body in its healing process.

6. Yoga Poses

Incorporating yoga poses into the treatment plan can have a profound impact on the digestive system and the overall health of the gallbladder and liver. The following poses are particularly beneficial in managing *Pittaashmari*.

- *Trikonasana* (Triangle Pose): This pose stretches and stimulates the abdominal region, improves digestion, and stimulates the liver and gallbladder, promoting better bile flow.
- *Bhujangasana* (Cobra Pose): This pose enhances the function of the liver and gallbladder, helps improve bile secretion, and reduces stress on the digestive system, promoting a smoother flow of bile.
- *Paschimottanasana* (Bend Seated Forward): This pose massages the abdominal organs, stimulates digestion, and helps in the elimination of waste products from the body, including bile.
- *Ardha Matsyendrasana* (Half Lord of the Fishes Pose): A twisting pose that enhances digestion, stimulates the liver, and improves the function of the gallbladder, thereby aiding in the prevention of gallstone formation.
- *Setu Bandhasana* (Bridge Pose): This pose opens the chest and stimulates the abdominal organs, improving blood flow to the liver and gallbladder, supporting better bile secretion and digestion.

These yoga poses not only promote better digestion but also help in reducing stress and tension, which can contribute to the imbalance of *Pitta* dosha. They enhance the detoxification process and facilitate the elimination of excess bile, preventing the stagnation that leads to gallstone formation.

7. Pranayama (Breathing Exercises)

Pranayama or controlled breathing exercises play a crucial role in balancing the body's energy and reducing the impact of stress, which is a common factor that aggravates *Pitta dosha*. The following *pranayama* techniques are beneficial in managing *Pittaashmari*.

- *Anulom Vilom* (Nadi Shodhana): This alternate nostril breathing technique helps in calming the mind, reducing stress, and balancing the *Pitta dosha*. By enhancing mental clarity and promoting relaxation, *Anulom Vilom* can help alleviate the stress-induced factors that contribute to digestive disorders and gallstone formation.
- *Bhramari Pranayama* (Bee Breath): This technique involves producing a humming sound while exhaling, which calms the nervous system and reduces stress and inflammation. It also helps in balancing the *Pitta dosha*, which is key to preventing the recurrence of gallstones.
- *Kapalbhati Pranayama* (Skull Shining Breath): A cleansing and energizing technique, *Kapalbhati* helps in stimulating the digestive system, improving *Agni*, and promoting the detoxification of the body. It aids in clearing *Ama* and encourages the smooth flow of bile, which is essential for preventing the formation of gallstones.

Mechanisms of Action and Efficacy

- These formulations work on multiple levels to address cholelithiasis. From the Ayurvedic perspective, the root cause of gallstone formation lies in an imbalance in the *Pitta dosha*, particularly in its fiery and acidic components. Ayurvedic formulations such as *Suvarna Sutshekhar Ras* and *Aampachak Yoga* primarily aim to balance and pacify *Pitta*. This is achieved through ingredients that improve digestion, enhance liver function, and reduce inflammation, thus preventing the formation of stones and assisting in their dissolution.
- Furthermore, formulations like *Goshukradi Guggul* and *Hingawastak Churna* act on a deeper level by improving bile secretion, promoting detoxification, and supporting the smooth passage of bile through the ducts. By doing so, they help alleviate the congestion that contributes to the formation of gallstones.
- In addition, the use of *Gandhav Haritaki* helps in purging the body of toxins and promoting overall metabolic harmony, which is essential for maintaining a healthy digestive system and preventing the recurrence of stones.
- Yoga and *Pranayama* techniques are complementary to Ayurvedic treatment in the management of *Pittaashmari*.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the treatment of *Pittaashmari* (cholelithiasis) through Ayurveda offers a multifaceted approach that targets the root causes of gallstone formation — primarily an imbalance in *Pitta dosha*, poor

digestion, and the accumulation of toxins. The combination of *Suvarna Sutshekhar Ras*, *Aampachak Yoga*, *Goshukradi Guggul*, *Hingawastak Churna*, *Lavanabhaskhar Churna*, *shankh vati*, *Gandhav Haritaki*, along with yoga poses and *pranayama*, offers a holistic treatment plan.

These Ayurvedic formulations work synergistically to balance *Pitta*, support liver and gallbladder function, improve digestion, reduce acidity, and promote detoxification. The addition of yoga poses and *pranayama* provides additional support in managing stress, improving the digestive process, and promoting overall health. Together, these treatments help in dissolving existing gallstones, preventing new stone formation, and ensuring the long-term well-being of individuals with *Pittaashmari*. This integrated approach not only addresses the symptoms but also promotes the body's natural healing mechanisms, providing a comprehensive solution for gallstone management.

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