

IMPORTANCE OF KSHAR CHIKITSA: A REVIEW ARTICLE

Dr. Anurag Nagrath*¹, Dr. Amandeep Kaur², Dr. Subash Upadhyay³ and Dr. J. Manohar⁴¹PG Scholar Deptt. of Rachana Sharir.²PG Scholar Deptt. of Dravya Guna.³HOD & Professor Deptt. of Rachana Sharir.⁴Associate Professor Deptt. of Rachana Sharir Sriganganagar College of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Tantia University, Sriganganagar – 335001, India.

*Corresponding Author: Dr. Anurag Nagrath

PG Scholar Deptt. of Rachana Sharir.

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has a wide range of formulations and Kshara is one of them. *Kshara Chikitsa* is indicated effective over Surgery. The *Kshara* formulation was reviewed from *Bruhatrayi* with objectives to compile the functions of *Kshara* from *Bruhatrayi* and their commentaries and to collect and compile the references of *Kshara Chikitsa* in medicines from Charaka samhita chikitsa sthan to establish the importance of *Kshara chikitsa* by knowing cause effect relationship in management treatments of diseases. *Kshara*, its methods of preparations, types, Qualities, Functions, indications, contraindication, dose, adverse effects and cause effect relationship were studied. Study reveals that with 113 references, 105 formulations in 19 chapters of Charaka samhita chikitsa sthana, in few diseases like Unmada and Apasmara there are medicines which include gomootra in formulations which is kshareeya in nature. Apart from the general consideration of Kshara as part of surgical care, Kshara Chikitsa has wider scope in management of many diseases.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda chikitsa, applications of Kshara, Biosalts.

INTRODUCTION

Kshara is medicament obtained from ash of one or more plants. The process of preparation of *Kshara* involves the extraction of 'alkalies' from ash of dried plants, hence it can term as 'Biosalt'.

According to *Sushruta acharya* there are two types of *Kshara*:

- 1) Pratisarneeeya (External application).
- 2) Paaneeeya (internal medication).

The study is based on the following points:

1. Preparation procedures
2. Qualities of *Kshara*
3. Functions of *Kshara*
4. Indications of *Kshara*
5. Dose of *Kshara*
6. Adverse effects of *Kshara*
7. Compilation of *Kshara* from *Charaka Samhita Chikitsa sthana*

Pratisarneeeya Kshara/Pakya/Prativaapa

When one or more plants, from which the *Kshara* is to be obtained either dried or fresh are cut into the small pieces. Those are allowed to burn in environment along with Calcium compounds (*Sudha sharkara*) and *tila*

naala, till we get white ash. Then the calcium compounds i.e. *Sudha sharkara*, *Bhasma sharkara* (crystallized part of plant juice) and *Tila* (Sesame) *naala* separated from the other burnt residue of plants. This white ash has two components. One is water soluble and another is water insoluble. These two parts are separated by adding specific quantity of water in it. In *Sushruta Samhita* the quantity of water is 6 times to that of white ash. In place of water urine of animals like cow, goat can be used.

In *Ashtang Hrudaya*, ½ part water and ½ part urine of animals is mentioned. The iron vessel is used for the preparation of *Kshara*. Steps of preparation of *Kshara*:

1. The white ash of plant is then allowed to dissolve in liquid.
2. This solvent is then filtered 21 times and the remnants are separated.
3. The previously separated *Sudha sharkara*, *Bhasmasharkara* (crystalised part of plant juice), *Shankha nabhi* and *Kshira shukti* (quantity: 8 pala) is heated up to it become red and hot and dipped into *Ksharo-daka* (*Kshara* solution) many times.
4. Then mixture is allowed to evaporate at low temperature (below 60°C).

5. When all liquid is evaporated and only *Kshara* remains at the base of vessel.
6. Then it is separated.

This procedure is of preparing '*Mad-hyama pratisaraneeya Kshara*'. To prepare '*mrudu Kshara*' '*Sudhasharkaradi*' contents are not added into the *Kshara* solution and to prepare '*Tikshna Kshara*', add *danti*, *dra-vanti* etc *tikshana dravyas*, in addition to *Sudhasharkaradi* contents in it.

The procedure of preparation of *Pa-neeeya Kshar* (*savyuhim*) is similar to *Pratisaraneeya Kshara* up to *Ksharodaka*.

This *Ksharodaka* is then boiled till 1/3rd of it remains. This is called *Paneeya Kshara*.

In *Gulmapratishedha adhyaya* from *Su-shruta Samhita*, another method of preparation of *Paneeya Kshara* is mentioned, it is of *avaleha* type.

Qualities of *Kshara*

1. *Na ati tikshna*: Not excessively sharp
2. *Na ati mrudu*: Not excessively soft
3. *Na ati shukla*: Not excessively *saumya* or *ushna* i.e. it should be used in *Pittaja vikara* also
4. *Shlakshna*: Better to touch
5. *Pichhila*: Slimy
6. *Avishyandi*: Immovable
7. *Shiva or sama*: Not so tough or soft
8. *Shighra*: Having rapid action In addition to these, 2 extra qualities are mentioned in *Ashtanga hrudaya*.
9. *Shikhari*: Do not move when placed in pile.
10. *Sukhanirvavya*: (*kanjikadinam sheeti kriyate*).

The *Kshara*, which contains all the above qualities, can be used in treatment of patients otherwise rejected.

According to *Charaka Samhita* the Qualities Of *Kshara* Are

1. *Tikshna*: sharp penetrating action
2. *Ushna*: hot and ability to produce perspiration
3. *Laghu*: light

Functions and Importance of *Kshara*

1. *Chhedana*: cutting of *apaki*, *kathin* (hard), *sthir* (immobile), *snayukotha* (gangrenous part) etc conditions in *vrana* (wounds).
2. *Bhedana*: put opening by local application in cases of carbuncles, sinuses.
3. *Lekhana*: scratching of *utsanna mamsa* (excessive growth of body tissue at wound margin, *kathina* (hard margins), *sthal vrutta oshtha* (elevated, everted wound margins).
4. *Tridoshghnatva*: as during preparation of *Kshara* many plants are used in combination. It results into combination of *vinshati guna* in it. Hence results in *tridoshghnatva*.

5. *Vishesha kriya avcharana*: it can be used in *pitta dosh pradhan* conditions also though it is *ushna* and *tikshna*; but in *pittaj* condition *mrudu Kshara* is used
6. *Dahana*: cauterization of bleeders.
7. *Pachana*: in case of *Pratisaraneeya Kshara*: *vranshotha pachana* and in case of *paneeya Kshara*: *aama pachan* in conditions like *agnimandya*, *ajirna*
8. *Vilayana*: as it is prepared by *ushna au-shadhi*, it is *ushna*, *tikshna*, hence it can melt *kapha vata vibandha* in many diseases.
9. *Darana*: bursting, it helps in bursting of wounds in which large pus pockets having number of opening, especially in those where we cannot perform surgical interventions like wounds in children, female, weak and panic patients and wounds over sensitive and vital portions.
10. *Vrana Shodhana and ropana (healing of wounds)*: in *dushta vrana* (infected wounds), where the flies get attracted and lay a lot of eggs. It results in maggots' formation. These maggots engrave wound surface which results into painful inflammation and delayed wound healing. It can be managed with by irrigation of wounds by *Ksharodaka*. It cleans the wound as well as improves healing process.
11. *Vrana kled Shoshana in kanduyukta vrana*: decrease itching in *dushta vrana*.
12. *Stambhana of excessively bleeding wounds*: chemical cauterization of bleeding capillaries.

In *Charaka samhita* functions of *Kshara* are *Kledana* then *vishoshana*: it has ability to generate exudates and cleans up by drying, *Pachana*, *Dahana*, *Bhedana*.

The general properties of *Kshara* or Biosalt can be stated as

- 1) Alkaline nature.
- 2) Antacid action.
- 3) Diuretic nature.
- 4) Depurative (purifying/ purgative).
- 5) Attenuating behavior.

Kshara is employed in such complicated cases where surgery is inapplicable. It is claimed that in many cases the purpose of surgical treatment may be served by oral administration of *Kshara*. All the reasons mentioned above, *Kshara* is best among the *Shastra* and *Anushastra*.

According to *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya*; the diseases in which *Kshara* is used as treatment are as follows:

Paneeya Kshara: *Gara visha*, *dushi visha* (chronic poisoning), *gulma*, *udara*, *agnimandya*, *ajirna* (~indigestion), *aruchi* (~disguassia), *anaha* (~fullness of abdo-men), *sharkara* and *ashmari*, *abhyantara vidradhi*.

Pratisaaraneeya Kshara: *kushtha* (~skin diseases), *kitibha* (~psoriasis), *kilasa* (~vitiligo), *mandala kushtha*, *bhagandara* (~fistula-in-ano), *dushta vrana* (~infected wounds), *nadivrana* (~sinus), *bahya vi-dradhi*, *dushta*

vrana (infected wounds), *ar-buda* (~tumor), *charmakeela* (~wart), *tilaka-laka* (~mole), *nyachha*, *vyanga* (~pigmentation of skin), *mashaka* (~nevus), *sapta mukh roga* i.e. *upajivha*, *adhijivha*, *upakusha* (~gingivitis), *danta vaidarbha*, *vataja*, *pit-taja*, *kaphaja rohini*.

Paneeeya and Pratisaareneeya: *krumi* (worms), *visha*, *arsha* (~hemorrhoids).

Contra indications of *kshara*

1. Weak patients or physically debilitated patients, Children, Old patients, Patient who afraid for medical procedures, Whole body oedema, Ascetic patients, *Raktipitta*, *Pitta prakruti*, *Timira* (eye disease), Pregnancy, During Menstruation, High grade fever, Diabetic patients, *Ruksha*, *Kshatksheena*, Thirst, *Moorchha* (unconscious), Impotent, *Apavrutta yoni*, *Udvrutta yoni*, *Phalayoni*

2. When the sites of diseases are *Marma*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Sandhi* (joints), *Tarunasthi* (cartilaginous bones), *Sevani*, *Dhamani*, *Gala* (Throat), *Naabhi* (Umbilicus), *Nakhaanta*, *Shepha* (penis), *Srotas*, thin musculature, Eyes except eyelid diseases.

3. The conditions like whole body oedema, bone pain, dysguassia, heart pain, joint pain.

Dose of *Paneeeya Kshara*

Uttama matra: 1 *pala* ~ 40 ml

Madhyama matra: 3 *karsha* ~ 30 ml

Heena matra: ½ *pala* ~ 20ml

But dose should be calculated by *Vaidyas* according to *Dashavidha Pariksha*. *Pratisaaraneeya Kshara*: as per requirement.

Process of Application of *Pratisaaraneeya Kshara*: The area, where *Kshara* is to be applied, is roughened or small cuts are taken. The *Kshara* is applied with the help of stick (*shalaka*) and kept for 100 *matra* (~ 100 seconds). The area like *nasa* (nose) or eye-lid, the time of *Kshara* application is about 50 *matra* (~50 seconds), then washed with *amla varga dravya* and ghee, honey is applied for healing. The *samyakyoga*, *ayoga*, *atiyoga* are explained in *Sushruta Samhita*. When there is over dose of *Kshara* or when it is used for prolong period the following harmful effects may be caused:

1. Loss of vision
2. Impotency
3. Loss of hairs
4. Graying of hairs
5. Cutting sensation at the site of heart (*hrudayapakartan*)
6. *Kshara* is compared with agni i.e. fire hence it has to be used with care.

It is general consideration that “*Kshara Chikitsa*” is part of *Ayurvedic* surgical procedures; though it is mentioned

in many diseases in medicinal treatment internally as well as externally.

CONCLUSION

The review of *Charaka Chikitsa Sthana* for use of *Kshara* in medicine suggests that the *Kshara chikitsa* is one of the potent tools of treatment of diseases. Many times this therapy is used only to treat Haemorrhoids and Fistula externally. But this study reveals that this therapy is used to treat many diseases internally as well as externally. In the diseases like *Unmada* and *Aps-mara*, *Gomootra* is used for treatment which is also *Kshareeya* in nature. To establish the importance of *Kshara* in medicinal treatment the detail review of *Charaka Chikitsa Sthana* has been taken.

The *Kshara* is such a rare combination that we can find many properties in a single formulation. We can modify the properties of *Kshara* by making change in the drugs used for its preparation. For example when we want to use the *Kshara* in *Kaphanubandhi Raktapitta*, we have to reduce the *Tikshnatva* (sharp penetrating action) of *Kshara* hence we can make the *Kshara* from the drugs like *Kamalnaala* (*Nelumbo nucifera*).

Kshara has rapid action and it is safer when used in proper dose and according to *Dashavidha Pariksha* of patient.

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