

KSHARA PRAMUKYATA IN ARSHAS – A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

¹Dr Aiyanna P P, ²Dr Nanda K O, ³Dr Sidayya Aradyamath

¹Assistant Professor, Dept. Shalya Tantra, ²Assistant Professor, Dept. of Prasuti Streeroga

³HOD&Reader Dept. Shalya Tantra JSS Ayurveda Medical College

Mysuru-Karnataka

ABSTRACT

Arsha is the gift of sedentary life style, erect posture, inconsistent and in appropriate diet which is unavoidable due to busy life style. A large proportion of the world population is troubled with Arshas. Treatment of ano-rectal diseases through Ayurveda is becoming popular in India and abroad. People have started realizing that Ayurveda has its potential in treating these diseases. Acharya Sushruta, the pioneer in the field of surgery, enumerated four curative measures in the management of Arshas, that is Bhesaja Chikitsa, Kshara karma, Agnikarma and Shastrakarma. Pratisaraneeya Kshara the alkaline group of medicinal substances has emphasized throughout the classical literature for Arshas of Mrudu, Prasrita, Avagadha and uchrita nature. Pratisaraneeya Kshara described as an upakrama, substitute for surgical instruments, can be used safely and effectively in patients who are afraid of surgery. The detailed descriptions of many Kshara preparations are available in susruta samhitha. Hence an effort has been made to describe the preparation, application and action of Apamarga Prateesaraneeya kshara in treating Arshas effectively .

KEYWORDS: Arshas , Prateesaraneeya kshara , kshara

INTRODUCTION

Acharya Susruta, the pioneer in the field of surgery, while describing the chikitsa of Arshas emphasised much on the procedure of Kshara Karma.¹ The effect of Kshara is praised so much that it can replace Sastra Karma since it does the functions of Chedana, Bhedana, Lekhana karmas without the help of Sastra.

Today's patient's attitude is that all want quick relief but at the same time not interested to undergo surgery that gives severe post-operative pain. In such conditions the alternative is Kshara Karma procedure that gives relief and the pain is

insignificant. The present therapeutic modalities like cryosurgery, rubber band ligation, infrared photo coagulation etc needs high cost sophisticated instruments even though these are simple. Further it has its own disadvantages. In developing countries like India the above procedures are beyond the reach of common man. One positively helpful alternative is Kshara Karma. One big advantage of Pratisaraneeya Kshara is that it can be safely and effectively administered to old age patients and those unfit for surgery. Another merit is that it causes insignificant pain. Hence the Kshara

Karma is not just an alternative but a better alternative.

Kshara Karma

It is a procedure where in Chedana, Lekhana, Darana etc. are performed by employing some specially formulated Yogas called Kshara (Caustic alkali). Kshara means any substance possessing the property of destroying or hurting body tissue and liquify the lesion. It is of two kinds Paneeya Kshara and Pratisaraneeya Kshara².

Paneeya Kshara are those which can be used internally, generally it is a mridu kshara.

In Pratisaraneeya type the kshara is applied over the lesion and it is a teekshna kshara. The Arshas which are soft, deeply spread, protruded type are fit for Pratisaraneeya Kshara.

Method of Pratisaraneeya Kshara

Patient is made to lie down in lithotomy position and arsho yantra is introduced into guda after following all the pre-operative procedures. The pile mass is squeezed, scraped or rubbed according to the condition and then Kshara is applied over the pile mass for hundred matra kala,³ till it turns to the colour of ripened jamoon fruit. Then it is washed with juice of amla rasa dravyas to neutralise. Then arshoyantra is removed.

Pratisaraneeya kshara⁴

This term consists of two words in it, 'pratisarana' and kshara. Pratisarana is a upakrama, garshana. It is also used to denote, healing or dressing the edges of a wound or an instrument used for anointing a wound. The term Pratisarana consists of two words in it. 'Prati' meaning every or opposite, 'sarana' meaning to spread, to stretch. In this context Pratisarana is used to mean local application.

Preparation of Pratisaraneeya Kshara⁵

Acharya Susruta has dedicated the whole of 11th Chapter of sutra Stana to describe kshara. After reviewing classical texts, Susruta's technique is found to be ideal in Pratisaraneeya kshara treatment. The physician who prepares the kshara should have a clean bath early in the morning of autumn season and has to observe fast on the same day. It must be an auspicious day. He should go up the hills and look for such plants which are middle aged and free from ravages or insects. The panchangas of plants should be collected, dried up and made into small pieces. Then these are burnt with limestone. While burning the dispersed parts of the plants are kept with the help of tilanala. When the ash cools down it should be separated from the residue of lime stone and bhasmasharkara. The collected ash should be mixed well with six times of water or cow's urine, then filtered twenty one times in a big vessel through a piece of cloth. The residual portion is thrown away and the filtrate (ksharodhaka) should be kept on mandagni and continuously stirred well until it reduces to 1/3rd. This is mrudukshara. From these eight palas has to be taken and mixed with shankanabhi, shukti and kata sharkara, each in eight palas, to make prativapa. In the meantime, heating should continue and prativapa should be mixed. Care should be taken that it is not too liquid or too dried up. The solution thus obtained is known as madhyama kshara.

Madhyama kshara should be heated up again by adding some medicinal plants such as Danti (*Baliospermum montanum*), chitraka (*Plubago zeylanica*). With this thick solution is obtained which is known as

Teekshna kshara. If Teekshna kshara losses its potency then it should be mixed with new kshara and heated again to maintain sufficient concentration.

Properties of kshara⁶

Rasa : Katu
Veerya : Ushna
Varna : Shukla
Doshagna : Tridoshagna
Guna : Sowmya, thiksna, agneya.
Karma : Dahana, pachana, darana, vilayana, shodana, ropana, shoshana.

Prepared kshara, being a composite of many drugs, alleviates three doshas. Being white in colour it is plain. In spite of placidity its actions like cauterising, digesting and splitting is carried out as it is made of drugs having the property of pungent hot, sharp, digestive and suppurative. When used externally it has cleansing, heating, absorbant, and scraping. When used internally it destroys worms, amadosha, kapha, skin diseases, poison and obesity. Further, if used in excess it can result in impotency.

Table No. 1. Plants which are mixed to Mridu Kshara to make it Madhyama Kshara⁷

S.N.	Sanskrit Name	Source
1	Bhasma Sarkara	Secreted drops form plant edges during burning became solid form
2	Kata or Sudha Sarkara	Unburnt, semi burnt pieces of limestone (CaO)
3	Sukti	Animal product
4	Sankha Nabhi	Animal product (CaCo3)

Table No. 2. Medicinal plants which are mixed to make Madhyama to Teekshna Kshara⁸

S.N.	Sanskrit Name	Latin Name	Family
1	Danti	<i>Baliospermum montanum</i>	Euphorbiaceae
2	Dravanti	<i>Crotan tiglium</i>	Euphorbiaceae
3	Chitraka	<i>Plubago zeylanica</i>	Plumbazinaceae
4	Langali	<i>Gloriosa superba</i>	Liliaceae
5	Hingu	<i>Ferrula narthax</i>	Apiaceae
6	Vaca	<i>Acorus calamus</i>	Araceae
7	Sukti	<i>Mytilus margariferns</i>	Pearl (Oyster)
8	Pravala	<i>Corallium rubrum</i>	Animal product (CaCo3)
9	Bida Lavana	----	Mineral Product (NH ₄ Cl)
10	Sauvarchala Lavana	Rock Solt	Mineral Product (NaCl)

Indications of Kshara

Pratisaraneeya kshara is indicated in good number of diseases by ancient acharyas. Susruta indicated it in sixteen conditions, out of which Arshas is also one.

Arshas is one among the nine discribed by Vagbhata. It is also one among the four diseases described by Caraka.

Chemical composition of Kshara: Prof A R Vasudev Murthy, describes the chemical

composition of kshara in his *Indian Tradition of Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, as follows.

The wood ashes contain potassium and sodium carbonates (K_2CO_3 and Na_2CO_3). Limestone and sea shells contain calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$). On heating strongly carbonate decomposes into calcium oxide (CaO), quick lime and carbon di oxide (CO_2), which escapes into the air. Calcium oxide reacts with water vigorously and gives calcium hydroxide ($Ca(OH)_2$) which is lime water indeed. Calcium hydroxide reacts with potassium/sodium carbonate and gives rise to calcium carbonate which comes down as precipitate. Alkali hydroxide (KOH) remains in solution which may be concentrated by boiling to different extents. These essential chemical reaction can be expressed in terms of the following equations.

1. $CaCO_3 \rightarrow CaO + CO_2 \uparrow$
2. $CaO + H_2O \rightarrow Ca(OH)_2$
3. $K_2CO_3 + Ca(OH)_2 \rightarrow 2KOH + CaCO_3 \downarrow$

DISCUSSION

Kshara therapy techniques have advantages over other treatment methods of haemorrhoids like:

1. Post-operative pain is mild in intensity.
2. No bleeding
3. Minimum hospitalization
4. No scope for recurrence
5. No stricture formation (if correct procedure is followed).
6. In *Kshara* therapy, as the coagulation of haemorrhoidal veins occurs, no chance of bleeding.

7. Treating all the pile mass in one sitting with the help of local anaesthesia, thus reducing the total duration of treatment.

Probable Mode of Action

Pratisaraneeya kshara acts on haemorrhoids in two ways - (1) It cauterises the pile mass directly because of its ksharana guna (corrosive nature). (2) It coagulates protein in haemorrhoidal plexus.

The coagulation of protein leads to disintegration of haemoglobin into haem and globin. Synergy of these actions result in decreasing the size of the pile mass. Further, necrosis of the tissue in the haemorrhoidal vein will occur. This necrosed tissue slough out as blackish brown discharge for 3 to 7 days. The haem present in the slough gives the discharge its colour. The tissue becomes fibrosed and scar formation seen. The haemorrhoidal vein obliterates permanently and there is no recurrence of haemorrhoids.

CONCLUSION

The disease described as Arshas in Ayurvedic literature can be regarded as haemorrhoids described in modern medical science. A clear cut description of anatomy and physiology of anorectal region is found in Ayurvedic literature. Susruta's clinical classification of the disease is helpful in the treatment.

Teekshna Kshara prepared with pH of 13.5 is effective in the treatment of haemorrhoids.

Histopathological examinations of blackish brown discharge reveals the presence of necrosed haemorrhoidal tissue. This confirms the mode of action of Kshara.

Kshara Karma has advantages over classical haemorrhoidectomy with minimum hospitalisation, less pain, minimum

bleeding, no stricture formation (if correctly applied), and no recurrence. In Kshara therapy, as the coagulation of haemorrhoidal veins occurs, no chance of bleeding. Altered Kshara Karma has advantage over the classical Kshara Karma - treating all the pile mass in one sitting, reducing the total duration of treatment. Hence indeed it is the need of the day to popularize and practice such treatment modalities for the benefit of mankind.

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CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Dr Aiyanna P P

Asst. Prof. Department of Shalya Tantra,
JSS Ayurveda Medical College

Mysuru-Karnataka-India

Email: draiyanna@gmail.com

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