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Review Article

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Ayurveda perspectives on *Damstra Chikitsa* w.s.r. to critical considerations of Therapy

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Abstract

Damstra Chikitsa is stream of Ayurveda toxicology which works around the prevention and treatment of toxins (poisonous conditions). The poisons may enter in human body through poisonous animals, insects, birds, worms and plants. The *Damstra* or *Agada Tantra* helps in the treatment of such types of poisonous conditions. This branch also contributed towards the management of disease which may arise due to the administration of poisonous vegetables, metals and synthetic poison, etc. Ayurveda advocated uses of *Mantra chikitsa*, *Arishta/Venikabandhana*, *Utkartana*, *Utkartana*, *Utkartana*, *Nishpeedanam*, *Agnikarma*, *Parisheka* and *Raktamokshan*, etc. for the management of poisons condition. The ultimate aims of *Damstra Chikitsa* reside around towards the removal of poison through excretory route, delaying effects of poisons, reverses the effects of poisons, preventing circulation of poison inside the body and removal of poison using natural adsorbent, etc.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Damstra, Visha Chikitsa, Agada Tantra, Poison, Toxins*

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1. Introduction

The ayurveda term *Visha* referred to the poison and Ayurveda branch *Agada Tantra* offers several therapeutic regimens under the heading of *Visha Chikitsa* to prevent and treat pathological conditions associated with poisons. *Visha Chikitsa* provides therapeutic relief against the poisons of spoiled food,

reptile, animal, insect bites, poisonous metals and minerals, etc. The *Agada Tantra* works as like modern toxicology. *Visha Chikitsa* utilizes antidotes, adsorbent, spiritual therapies and purification, etc. measures for curing pathological conditions which arises due to the poisons. (1-4)

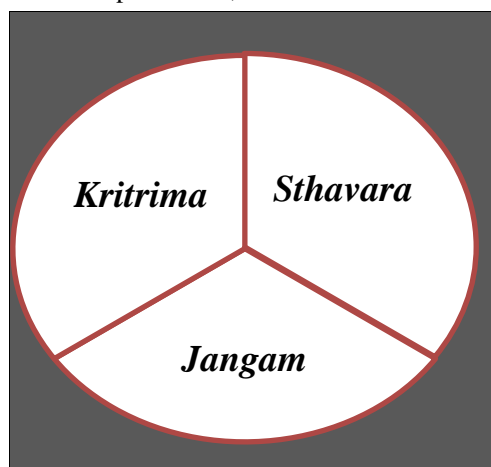


Figure 1. Classification of *Visha* on the basis of their origin

The *Vyavayi*, *Ushna*, *Vikasi*, *Ruksha*, *Ashukar* and *Apaki*, etc. properties of *Visha* cause *Vishannatva* in the body and produces uneasiness followed by unconsciousness, fainting and death. Ayurveda mentioned *Mahavisha* and *Upavisha* on the basing of their toxic potency; *Mahavisha* produces highly potent toxic effect while *Upavisha* produces less toxic effect. (4-7) The classification on the basis of origin depicted in Figure 1.

As depicted in Figure 1 the *Sthavara*, *Jangam* and *Kritrima* are three types of *Visha* on the basis of their origin. *Sthavara Vishas* belongs from minerals or poisonous herbs origin and *Jangama Vishas* belongs from animal kingdom and *Kritrima Vishas* means synthetic poisonous.

2. *Visha Chikitsa* (6-10)

Mantra

Mantra is combination of words recites with a rhythm in typical manner to acquire spiritual power which helps to combat against *Visha*. *Mantras* help to eliminate poison from the body and provide moral support. *Mantra chikitsa* is considered effective way of treatment especially in case of *Jangama visha*. *Mantras* relieve panic attack caused by poison and provide mental strength to resist effects of poison.

Aristha bandhana

It is approach to arrest the spread of poison using ligature (*Bandhana*), this can be done in two ways first one is *Aristha* with *Mantra* and second one is *Aristha* with *Rajju*. *Bandhana* should be done at 4 *Angula* above the site of bite. Ancient Ayurveda philosopher advises uses of cloth, thread, rope and fiber, etc. for the *Bandhana* purpose. The *Bandhana* prevent spread of poison and delay effects of poison.

Utkartana

Small incision is made at the site of bite considering presence of *Marmas* points, this small incision at the sight of bite allow blood to ooze out and poison material also comes out along with blood. This is to be done at the early state of poisonous bite so to prevent spread of poison in other body part.

Nishpeedana

Removal or expulsion of poison by squeezing the area of bite, the site of the bite is gently squeezed to expel out poison from the body, in this way poison may come out with the secretion of blood. The *Marma* and *Sandhi* points should not be squeezed. Modern science also described similar procedure with the name of pressure embolism. It is mainly recommended when squeezing is not possible.

Chushana

Chushana means sucking; in this method blood through the mouth is sucked from the site of bite. The recent advancement in the field employed some equipment which helps in sucking instead of mouth. Traditionally it was done after filling the mouth of physician with mud, ash and medicines so to avoid effect

of poison inside the physician body. The poison along with blood is sucked and spit out. Syringes or suction apparatus used in current practice instead of mouth on the fleshy part of body.

Agnikarma

The site of bite is cauterized using heated rods of metals; however this technique is contraindicated in *Mandali sarpa visha*. This therapy used for *Twakamansagata visha* and when *Aristhabandhna* is not possible. The heat cauterization destroys tissues and removes poisonous undesired growth and minimizes spread of infection. Heat energy helps to reduce poisonous property of *Visha* thus nullify its effects.

Parisheka

In this method medicated decoction sprinkle continuously over the affected site, in this approach decoction of *Chandana* and *Usheera* are mainly used for their cooling and soothing effects. It is desirable to perform *Parisheka* after *Raktamokshana* in the therapeutic management of poisons. The cold and soothing effects of drug helps to reduce symptoms of poison and prevent further spread of poison by contracting blood vessels.

Avagahana

Avagahana involves immersion of affected body part in a medicated decoction, the immersion bath containing medicated liquid offers relief and cover large area for the local effect of drug. *Avagahana* neutralizes the effect of poison, eliminate toxic matter and reduces absorption of poison inside the body thus delay its effect.

Raktamokshana

Raktamokshana is process of bloodletting through which poison can be drained out and blood purification reduces effects of poison. It can be done by puncturing vein or leech therapy. Application of horn or alabu, etc. also advocated for venesection. *Raktamokshana* advises in case when discoloration of poisoned area observed. *Raktamokshana* is considered effective therapy for condition in which poison spread to the body.

Vamana

The induction of vomiting causes expulsion of ingested poison, in this way poison gets eliminated from the stomach *via* the oral route of alimentary canal. Emesis is considered useful technique for removing unabsorbed poison. *Vamana* should be done in case of snake bite above the umbilical region.

Virechana

Virechana means therapeutic purgation indicated in second phase of poisoning when the poison is in the *Pakwasaya*. In this process poison gets eliminated from the intestines *via* anal route. This procedure considered effective when patient feels symptoms of abdomen distension, burning sensation and urinary retention, etc. *Virechana* can be done in snake bite for *Pitta* predominant person when bite exists below the umbilicus & localized in *Pakwashaya*.

Updhana karma

In this therapy incision like a shape of paw of a crow and flesh of goat when poison obstruct channels of circulation. *Acharya Vagbhat* advocated incision in lower limbs when snake bites in the upper region and *vice versa* also applicable. This process eliminates poison from the body and decreases edema caused by poison.

Nasya

This is the process in which medicines instilled through the nostril, in case of poison this approach become useful when poison spread up to the head region. *Nasya* cleans obstruction of nose and throat, etc. and helps to restores consciousness.

Aushadha

This therapy utilizes medicines rationally in case of poisoning conditions. These drugs acts like antidote and possess properties opposite to that of poison. *Hinga*, *Pippali Churna* and *Lavana*, etc. helps to stop complications of poison like; *Jwar*, *Hikka*, *Kasa* and *Shwas*, etc. *Maricha*, *Sunthi*, *Pippalli*, *Haridra*, *Kantkari* and *Grahadhuma*, etc. can be used to heal wound caused by poison.

3. Conclusion

Ayurveda has several approaches for the management of *Visha* including *Aristha Bandhana*, *Vamana*, *Mantra*, *Utkartana*, *Aushada*, *Pratisarana*, *Virechna*, *Nasya*, *Prativisha*, *Anjana*, *Raktmokshna* and *Lepa*, etc. These therapies helps to removes poison, provides symptomatic treatment, counteracting the effect of poison, slow down spread of poison and delay effect of poison thus provides therapeutic relief in poisoning conditions. However these therapies should be selected on the basis of condition of patient and types of poison.

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Conflict of Interest

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