



SPECIAL TREATMENT MODALITIES IN KERALIYA VISHA CHIKITSA

Aswani Mohan V M¹, P A Aboobaker²¹Final year PG Scholar, Department of Agad tantra, VPSV Ayurveda College, Kottakkal, Kerala, India²Assistant professor, Department of Agad tantra, VPSV Ayurveda College, Kottakkal. Kerala, IndiaCorresponding Author: kmaktabah@gmail.com<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj2010102022>

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda means the knowledge or science about life. *Agada tantra* is one of the branches of *Ayurveda* that deals with toxicological aspects in *Ayurveda* and their treatments. Kerala has made many unique contributions to *Ayurveda*, especially to *Agada tantra*. Because Kerala's land offered fertile ground for plants and snakes to thrive. So poisonous bite was a factor of major fear. This was the beginning of the *Visha vaidya parampara* of Kerala. Many *Vishavaidyas* were practiced during that period and so many Malayalam books were written by these *Vaidyas*. *Kriya Koumadi*, *Prayoga Sammucchaya*, *Vishavaidya Jyotsnika*, and *Vishavaidya Sara Samucchaya* are some of the famous toxicology books. There are so many traditional unique treatment modalities which are *Oothu chikitsa*, *Karu prayoga*, *Thookku dhara*, *Jaladhara*, *Vellottu prayogam* etc.

Keywords: *Visha chikitsa*, *Oothu chikitsa*, *Karu prayoga*, *Thookku dhara*, *Jala dhara*, *Vellottu prayogam*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda means the knowledge or science about life. *Ayurveda* has eight branches and *Agada tantra* is one among them. *Agada tantra* is deal with *Damsa* of *Sarpa*, *Keeta*, *Lutha*, *Vrischika*, *Mushika*, etc; their diagnosis, treatment, and the signs and symptoms of

Kritima visha, *Gara visha*, *Dushi visha*¹. Kerala has made many unique contributions to *Ayurveda*, especially to *Agada tantra*. Kerala's *Vishavaidya* tradition has an ancient and wealthy background. Because Kerala's land offered fertile ground for plants and

snakes to flourish. So poisonous bite was a factor of major fear. This was the beginning of the *Vishavaidya parampara* of Kerala. There are seven important books studied and followed by the ancient *Vishavaidyas* in the sanskrit language. They are *Narayaneeyam*, *Udeesam*, *Utpalam*, *Haramekhala*, *Lakshanamrutham*, *Ashtanga hrudaya*, and, *Kalavanchanam*. Many *Vishavaidyas* were practiced during that period and so many Malayalam books were written by these *vaidyas*. *Kriya koumadi*, *Prayoga sammuchaya*, *Vishavaidya Jotsnika*, and *Visha vaidya sara samuchaya* are some of the famous toxicology books. Among these, the most popular text *Vishavaidya Jyotsnika* is considered one of the basic textbooks of the *Keraleeya Vishachikitsa* tradition. The practice of *Vishachikitsa* comprises two parts, *Vishavidya*, and *Vishavaidhya*. *Vishavidya* means the usage of *Mantras* and *Tantras* in alleviating the consequences of poison whereas *Vishavidya* is the application of medicines and different treatment procedures.

Oothu chikitsa, *Karu prayoga*, *Thooku dhara*, *Jaladhara*, and *Vellottu prayoga* are some unique treatment modalities. *Keraleeya Vishavaidya's* successfully treated even highly poisonous snakebites by using these unique treatment modalities. Later traditional snake bite management was extinct due to some misconceptions like the *Vaidyas* are not allowed to accept remuneration from the patients and ill-effects on *Vaidya* and his family for saving snake bite victims. The introduction of Anti Snake Venom and the unavailability of good quality drugs are the major reasons for the decline of traditional management. *Visha chikitsa* used all the possible routes of drug administration and also discovered many newer modes. Starting from simple *Lepas* and oral routes, they extended it into special *Kriyas* like *Kakapada cheda*, *Karu prayoga* and *Pranalika vidhi* etc for the administration of drugs.

Thookku dhara^{2,3}

Reference of *Thookku dhara* is seen in *Vishavaidhya Jyotsnika* 6th chapter *Mandali visha chikitsa*. *Thookku dhara* is indicated in *Vishaja sopha*. A medicated decoction is poured into a pot which will be having a hole at the bottom. The pot will be tied by a rope and

the physician will hold this in his hand and will run this pot continuously over the bitten part. *Dhara* is prepared with leaves of *Nimba* (*Azadirachta indica*), *Karaskarathin pullunni* (*Loranthus ingiflorus*), *Chandana* (*Santalum album*), *Satavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Kumari swarasa* (*Aloe vera*), *Kushmanda latha* (*Benincasa hispida*), *Eranda patram* (*Ricinus communis*) are ground and mixed with water. Another opinion about *Thookku dhara* is a procedure in which, the drug used for *dhara* is *Urithooki* (*iswaramooli*). Hence the name *Thookku dhara*.

Jala dhara^{4,5}

Jala dhara is immediate treatment after a snake bite in which the *Visha* is situated in *Twak dhathu*. According to *Vishavaidya jotsnika*, *Jala dhara* should be done immediately after bite and before the spreading of *Visha* from its bite site. *Jala dhara* should be done using a hand or vessels continuously without interruption till one shiver or *Yamardham* (one and a half hours) or *Tat ardhham*. It is a very effective method for *Visha*. It alleviates *Daha* (burning sensation), *Moha* (dizziness), *Mano bhranti* (delirium), *Alasyam* (fatigue), and *Ushnam* (heat). After *Jala dhara*, *Jadya* (heaviness) is relieved by taking water added with *Maricha choornam*.

In *Visha chikitsa*, *Dhara* should be treated with *Sheetala dravyas* because of the *Teeksha* and *Ushna guna* of *Visha*. *Sheetala dhara* helps in the coagulation of blood and arrests the virulent spread of *Visha*. *Jala dhara* and *Thookku dhara* can do *Sthambana* action. So it will arrest the further spread of *Visha* from bite to other systems.

According to WHO, washing the wound is contraindicated because washing requires rubbing of the skin, which will inevitably involve massaging the tissue, thereby causing more venom to be absorbed. This should not be done as the action of washing increases the flow of venom into the system by stimulating the lymphatic system.⁶

Oothu chikitsa^{7,8}

Oothu chikitsa is a procedure of blowing medicated air into both ears and at *Moordha* by three persons at a time up to 150 times. An equal quantity of *Sunti*, *Dushsparsha*, *Maricha*, and *Visha vega* is mentioned

for chewing and blowing air. *Visha* residing in the first three *Dhatu*s (*Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*) was eliminated by this treatment procedure.

Karu prayoga^{9,10}

Karu prayoga is a procedure that was commonly practiced while treating different types of *Visha*. It comes under *Kalavanchana* or to overcome death, which is used in an unconscious patient or when the patient is in suspended animation. *Karu* is a tubular instrument shaped like a *Dhatu* flower used to blow medicines into the body. The length of the male *Karu* is 6 *Angula* and for the female is 8 *Angula*. *Karu prayoga* is done after filling *Karu* with medicines & liquids like *rasa* then it is melted by heating and blown into *Guda*, *Mutra* *marga*, *Nasa*, *Karna*, etc.

In *Rajila damsya* if the patient is seen to be dead *Karu prayoga* can be done in which the *Karu* is inserted into the ear and filled with *Rasa* after melting it by heat *Rasa* is blown into the ear. In *Sarva visha*, another *Karu prayoga* is mentioned where *Karu* is filled with *Rasa*, and a *Gulika* prepared of *Manassila*, *rasa*, *Pata*, etc then it is boiled and blown into *Guda*, *Mutra* *marga*, and *Vama Karna* as the boiling liquids are directly transferring to mucous membrane.

Karu prayoga is the last treatment in *Visha chikitsa* and is applied when all the treatment of envenomation fails. In *Karu prayoga*, different routes of drug delivery methods were mentioned like the rectal route, urethral route, nasal route, and through the ears. But this *prayoga* is not practiced nowadays because of ethical issues.

Vellott prayogam¹¹

Vellott prayogam is mentioned in *Prayoga sammuchaya*. It is indicated in *Mahamandali visha*. *Ikshvaku* is boiled in a bronze vessel along with goat's milk and given to patients presenting with headache, anorexia, increased *Vata dosha*, and *Visha* located at *Amasaya*. This *Yoga* induces *Vamana* and is indicated in all other envenomation cases. *Patalaswarasa* is also indicated instead of *Ikshvaku*.

Vishakallu¹²

Vishakallu is a medicated stone. This medicated stone was applied to the bitten part, and it works as a synthetic magnet that attracts toxins in blood when

placed at the bite site. After the procedure, used stones are kept in cow's milk for half an hour and dried to make them ready for reuse. *Vishakallu prayoga* was explained in *Kriyakoumadi*. The use of Black Snake Stones to attempt to cure snakebite is contraindicated by WHO.

CONCLUSION

Kerala *Vishavaidya* has a wide variety of successfully practiced traditional *Prayogas*. These are some unique treatment modalities and nowadays these areas are not explored well. All these *Prayogas* are different modes of medicinal administration.

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