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EXPLORING MEDICINAL HERBS FOR KASA FROM DHANWANTARI NIGHANTU

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is India's most ancient and traditional system of medicine, based on centuries of experience. It promotes physical and mental fitness through disease prevention and treatment. Kasa Roga is a common respiratory ailment affecting a large population of all age groups. Kasa is classified as one of the Pranvaha Stroto - Dushtijanya Vyadhi. It involves the vitiated Prana Vayu and Udana Vayu, further aggravated by other Doshas and expelled forcefully with a coughing sound resembling a broken bronze vessel. Dhanwantari Nighantu, written by Mahendra Bhogika, 10^{th} – 13^{th} Century A.D. Total of 7 Vargas have been explained, starting from Guduchyadi varga and ending with Misrakadi varga; in this total of 527 drugs are mentioned in this Nighantu. **AIM**: To enlighten the kasahara dravyas mentioned in this Nighantu, which mainly focuses on herbal medications.

Keywords: Kasa, Kasahara, Kaphanissaraka, antitussives, swasahara, anti-inflammatory, bronchodilators.

INTRODUCTION

Kasa, as described in Ayurveda, involves the vitiation of both Kapha and Vata doshas, leading to respiratory symptoms. When Kapha accumulates excessively, it obstructs the Pranavaha Srotas (respiratory passages), while the aggravated Vata, especially udana vayu, further exacerbates this obstruction by causing erratic movements and disturbances.

The development of Kasa can vary. It might manifest as an independent condition or as a symptom associated with other diseases. Additionally, if left untreat-

ed, it can evolve into complications such as Swasa (asthma).

Early intervention is crucial in managing Kasa to prevent such complications. Ayurveda emphasises the importance of understanding and accurately differentiating Kasa types to tailor treatment effectively.

The drugs used to treat Kasa may possess some qualities, like kasa hara-antitussives, bronchodilators, expectorants, antispasmodics, and anti-inflammatories.

Dhanwantari nighantu is one of the known compendium of Ayurvedic texts. The author of the text, Mahendra Bhogika, belongs to the 10^{th} to 13^{th} century A.D. This book contains total seven vargas namely Guduchyadi varga, Shatapushpadi varga, Chandanadi varga, Karaviradi varga, Amradi varga, Suvarnadi varga and Misrakadi varga and the total number of drugs are 527. In these drugs, this article is mainly focussing on the kashtaoushadis, i.e herbal drugs.

Materials and methods:

- Dhanwantari Nighantu, edited and translated into Hindi by Prof Priyavat Sharma and Guruprasad Sharma, has been taken as the base for the study.
- The published works in journals, and web pages are consulted to review the Kasa hara dravyas mentioned in other texts for better understanding.
- The Nighantu has been searched for the term kasa hara, and related terms i.e., it was listed out.
- The properties mentioned for this list of plants are tabulated and analysed dravyas in managing kasa roga.

Observations:

From the observation, it was identified that 38 drugs had been included in the Kasa hara and related terms which acts on kasa mentioned in Dhanwantari Nighantu. The list of the dravyas is listed in table no. 1 below.

Table No. 1 Shows the list of plants which acts against Kasa .[1]

Sl. No	Drug	Botanical name	Family	Properties	Term used
1	Ativisha	*Aconitum heterophyllum*	Rananculaceae	Rasa- Katu, tikta Virya - Ushna Doshakarma - kapapittahara	Kasaghni
2	Vasaka	*Adhatoda vasica*	Acanthaceae	Guna - shita Dosha karma – Pittasleshmahara	Kasajith
3	Khadira	*Acacia catechu*	Fabaceae	Rasa – Tikta Virya – Shita Doshakarma – Sleshmapittahara	Kasahara
4	Kiratatikta	*Swertia chirata*	Gentianaceae	Rasa – Tikta Guna – Laghu Virya – Anushna Doshakarma – sleshmapittahara	Kasapaha
5	Shati	*Hedychium spichatum*	Zingiberaceae	Rasa- Tikta Guna - Tikshna Virya – Ushna Doshakarma – kaphahara	Kasaghni
6	Gandhapalashi	*Hedychium spichatum*[2]	Zingiberaceae	Rasa- Kashaya, katu Doshakarma- vatahara	Kasahara
7	Pushkaramula	*Innula racemosa*	Asteraceace	Rasa-Tikta, katu Virya – ushna Doshakarma- vatakaphahara	Kasaghna
8	Bharangi	*Clerodendrum serratum*	Verbenaceae	Rasa-Tikta Virya- ushna Doshakarma- vatahara	Kasaghna

9	Katrunam	*Cymbopogon martini*	Poaceae	Doshakarma – kaphapittahara	Kasaghna
10	Sringhi	*Pistacia integerrima*	Anacardiaceae	Rasa- Tikta Guna- guru Doshakarma- vatahara, urdwaga vata	Kasaghna
11	Ajasrunghi	*Gymnea sylvestre*	Asclepideaceae	Rasa- Madhura Virya- shita	Kasahara
12	Prushnaparni	*Uraria picta*	Fabaceae	Rasa- Madhura Guna- laghu Virya- ushna Doshakarma- tridoshahara	Kasaprashamani
13	Kantakari	*Solanum Xanthocarpum*	Solanaceae	Rasa- katu ,tikta Virya – ushna Doshakarma – vatahara	Kasajith
14	Shyonaka	*Oroxylum indicum*	Bignoniaceae	Rasa – Tikta Virya – shita Doshakarma- pittasleshma hara	kasajayeth
15	Ksheerakakoli	*Fritillaria royelei* [3]	Lilliaceae	Rasa – madhura Doshakarma- vatapittahara	Kasahara
16	Katukaalambuni	*Lagenaria vulgaris*	Cucurbitaceae	Rasa – katu, tikta Doshakarma- kaphahara Vatavardhaka	Kasajith
17	Jimuthaka	*Luffa echinata*	Cucurbitaceae	Doshakarma- Tridoshahara	Kasa
18	Dhamargava	*Luffa aegyptica*	Cucurbitaceae	Rasa – tikta Virya – ushna Doshakarma- kaphavatahara	Kasari
19	Bimbi	*Coccinia indica*	Cucurbitaceae	Doshakarma- kaphapittahara	kasapaha
20	Vibhitaka	*Terminalia belerica*	Combretaceae	Guna- Laghu Vipaka - katu	kasaghna
21	Swethapushpi [4]	*Cucumis trigonus*	Cucurbitaceae	Doshakarma - kaphahara	Kasahara
22	Rasna	*Pluchea lanceolata*	Asteraceae	Rasa – tikta Guna – Guru Virya- ushna Doshakarma- vatakaphahara	Kasajith
23	Sukshma ela	*Elettaria cardamomum*	Zingiberaceae	Virya- shita	Kasahita
24	Talisa	*Abies webbiana*	Pinaceae	Doshakarma- kaphapittahara	kasaghna
25	Vamsharochana	*Bambusa arundincea*	Poaceae	Rasa – Kashaya, Madhura, tikta	Kasaghna
26	Palashagandha	*Miliusa tomentosa*	Annonaceae	Rasa- madhura, kashaya Guna- Ruksha Vipaka – madhura Doshakarma- Pittahara	Kasashodini
27	Dhanyakam	*Coriandrum sativum*	Apiaceae	Guna- snigdha Vipaka- Madhura	Kasahitam
28	Kapitta	*Feronia elephantum*	Rutaceae	Rasa- madhura, amla Guna – Guru Doshakarma- kaphahara, vatavardhaka	Kasahara

29	Kachura	*Curcuma zedoria*	Zingiberaceae	Rasa- Katu,tikta Virya- ushna Doshakarma- vatakaphashamaka	Kasaha
30	Sumukha	*Brassica juncea* [5]	Cruciferaceae	Doshakarma- kaphavatahara, pittavardhaka	Kasanashana
31	Bijapura phala and kesara	*Citrus medica*	Rutaceace	Rasa- Madhura Guna-Guru, snigdha Virya-shita Doshakarma- vatapittahara	Kasahara
32	Uttarapathika	*Vitis vinifera*	Vitaceae	Rasa- madhura Guna- Snigdha Virya- shita Doshakarma- vatahara	Kasahara
33	Kadamba	*Anthocephalus cadamba*	Rubiaceace	Rasa- kashaya Virya- shita	Kasapaha
34	Shirisha	*Albizzia lebbeck*	Fabaceae	Rasa- tikta Virya- ushna Doshakarma- tridoshahara	Kasahara
35	Yava	*Hordeum vulgare*	Poaceae	Rasa- madhura Guna- Ruksha, Guru Virya- shita Doshakarma- pittakapha hara	Kasahara

36. Trutiya chaturbhadra - kasanashana
37. Laghu panchamula - kasanashana
38. Bruhat panchamula – kasahara

Results:

A total of seven Vargas in these totals of 38 drugs are acting on kasa in Dhanwantari Nighantu

1. **Guduchyadi varga** – 22 drugs (Ativisha, Vasaka, Khadira, Kiratatikta, Shati, Gandhapalashi, Pushkaramula, Bharangi, Katrunam, Sringhi, Ajasrunghi, Prushnaparni, Kantakari, Shyonaka, Ksheerakakoli, Katukaalambuni, Jimuthaka, Dhamargava, Bimbi, Vibhitaka, Swetapushpi, Rasna).
2. **Shatapushpadi Varga** – 6 drugs (Sukshma ela, Talisa, Vamsharochana, Palashagandha, Dhanyakam, Kapitta).
3. **Chandanadi Varga** – 1 drug (Kachura)
4. **Karaviradi Varga** – 1 drug (Sumukha)
5. **Amradi varga** – 4 drugs (Bijapura Phala and Kesara, Utharapathika, Kadamba, Shirisha).
6. **Suvarnadi varga** - 1 drug (Yava)
7. **Misrakadi varga** – 3 drugs (Trutiya Chaturbhadra, Laghu Panchamula, Bruhat Panchamula).

DISCUSSION

Kasa is one of the most prevalent health conditions that trigger day-to-day activities. If left untreated, it may cause many complications. The causes of kasa may be improper ahara, vihara, pollution etc.., . Due to that, vimargagamana of prana vayu and udana vayu leads to prakopa of vata kapha dosha, mainly in pittasthana. The drugs treated in kasa can Kapha nisaraka are expectorant drugs that eliminate thick sputum from the bronchioles known as kaphanisaraka. Kaphotklesha dravyas increase mucus secretion from the respiratory tract's mucous membrane, while chedana dravyas help remove sputum by stimulating the respiratory muscles and cilia of the mucous membrane. Kaphotklesha dravyas, being saumya, promote excessive kapha secretion to liquefy dried kapha for easy elimination from the tract, while chedana dravyas eliminate accumulated and sticky kapha from the channels, known as srotoshodaka or srotorodhaka.

These drugs typically have a katu rasa. They predominantly exhibit vayavya and agneya qualities in the panchamahabhutika, exerting their actions through excitation and sharpness. The actions of Kaphotklesha, which increases mucus secretion, and kapha chedaka, i.e sputum elimination, are mediated by the vagus nerve and sympathetic nerve fibres. Kasa hara dravyas are bronchial sedatives and antitussives, acting as cough suppressants. They work by suppressing the coughing impulse and correcting the abnormal movements (vimargagamana) of prana vata and udana vata. The properties of vatahara in these drugs help correct these movements. These drugs typically exhibit Madhura, Snigdha, and Ushna guna, which effectively suppress the cough and cough reflex. Drugs which are associated with Swasahara i.e.., bronchial antispasmodics and bronchodilators, they act on bronchial spasms caused by inflammation in the mucous membranes of the bronchi and bronchioles, which narrow the air passages. Stimulation of the vagus nerve can cause constriction of bronchial muscles, leading to airway obstruction and dyspnea which are said to be acting on Kasa. Drugs with Ushna virya and kapha-vata hara properties help reduce these spasms and decrease the stickiness of kapha. Bronchodilators and antispasmodics indirectly assist in suppressing cough, as shwasa (breathing difficulty) is a complication of kasa (cough). Tikshna guna aids in kaphanisaraka by removing the upalepa of kapha in kanta and uras. Vatahara, by Vatanulomana, pacifies vimarga kupita vata caused by vimarga gamana of prana vayu and apana vayu. Katu rasa's action in pittasthana improves agni function, thus normalising both pitta and vata karma. The tikshna guna causes the bhedana of kapha that is stuck to the srotasas due to its pichila and Sandra guna. Once the dosha is separated from the Srotas by the ushna guna and ushna virya of drugs, it promotes easy expectoration. The process corrects digestion, assimilation, and metabolism, enhancing the body's immunity with its rasayana effect and preventing the recurrence of symptoms. The bitter alkaloids of drugs exhibit bronchodilator effects, which are particularly beneficial for respiratory disorders. These compounds provide relief to the lungs by eliminating accumulated phlegm, aiding in the expulsion of mucus from the respiratory tract and sinuses. The vilayana (liquefaction) of kapha facilitates easy expectoration. Additionally, it acts as a mucolytic agent by chedana (breaking down) of kapha. In cases where kasa (cough) is caused by infection, inflammation occurs, and anti-inflammatory drugs aid in reducing inflammation in the respiratory tract. Madhura rasa acts as a rasayana, providing continuous support and boosting immunity. It also exhibits its antitussive activity by mechanically stimulating the airways laryngopharyngeal and tracheobronchial mucous areas. Additionally, drugs which are having associated with Shota Hara's properties as an anti-inflammatory drug help reduce inflammation in the respiratory tract. The pungent principles present in certain drugs act as potent antitussives, likely by blocking the vagal sensory afferents through counter-irritation. Additionally, these principles can also induce a local anesthesia effect.

CONCLUSION

From the above study, it can be concluded that dravyas help expel the secretions from the upper respiratory tract, which are kaphanisaraka, i.e., expectorants. Utklesha drugs, i.e Madhurarasa, Shita virya, madhuravipaka, and guru guna, help in liquefying the dried kapha, which is adhered to srotas. This chedana dravyas having ushna guna, katu, tikta, kashaya rasas, and katu vipaka helps eliminate the drugs from the respiratory tract, obstructing the airway. The medicines which suppress the cough are said to be Kasahara, i.e antitussives or cough suppressants, which help to relax the spasm of bronchi or bronchioles and are helpful in bronchial spasm conditions. These drugs, possessing similar properties as mentioned here, can be clinically trailed to achieve the kasahara effect in managing Kasa Roga which are said by Dhanwantari Nighantu.

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