



LOOTHA VISHA: A CASE REPORT

¹*Dr. Sunitha G. and ²Dr. Gazala Hussain

¹Final Year PG Scholar, Dept. of Agada Tantra, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheswara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India.

²Associate Professor, Dept. of Agada Tantra, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheswara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India.

***Corresponding Author: Dr. Sunitha G.**

Final Year PG Scholar, Dept. of Agada Tantra, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheswara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India.

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ABSTRACT

There are more than 40,000 species of spiders and most of them are venomous. Agada Tantra has a simplified approach towards loothas (spiders) and has included the classification, clinical features (general and specific) and its treatment (general and specific) protocol. Acharya Suhruta described Lootha Visha under Jangama Visha and explained 16 types of lootha. A patient approached to Out Patient Department of SDM College of Ayurveda and Hospital with chief complaints of whitish blisters in the neck and chest region associated with oedema and itching. He also felt burning sensation at the site of bite. There was a mild rise of temperature. On analysing it was identified as sharp spider poisoning symptom. Patient was treated with Dasanga lepa, Patola katurohinyadi kashayam, Bilvadi gutika and Ushirasava. A remarkable improvement in the condition was observed in a span of 7 days. In this article an attempt is made to conceptualize spider envenomation according to Ayurveda with a case report.

KEYWORDS: Lootha visha, Dasanga lepa, Patola katurohinyadi kashayam, Bilvadi gutika, ushirasa.

INTRODUCTION

Spiders belong to a branch of invertebrate animals called arthropods. Spiders are a large group of arachnids belonging to the araneae order. More than 40,000 species of spider have been identified to date but the real number is estimated at 4 times more than that number.^[1] Ayurvedic classics classified lootha on different aspects:

All spiders have poison glands and release their secretions into their venom sacs near their chelicerae. However, the majority of spiders do not bite humans and except for a few cases. Three important syndromes caused by spider bites are loxoscelism, latrodectism and funnel web spider syndrome. The severity of reactions to spider venom depends on factors such as its amount, site of biting and its duration and age and health condition. Mortality due to spider bite is rare. Spider venom includes different peptides and substances affecting sodium, calcium and potassium channels in neurons and also glutamate and acetylcholine receptors. Spider bite victims develop symptoms such as pain and swelling in the site of biting, necrosis, pyrexia, pulmonary edema, respiratory distress, hypertension, kidney dysfunction and death.^[5]

According to the prognostic point of view^[2]

a) *Krichra sadhya* (curable with difficulty) - 8 in number

b) *Asadhya* (Incurable) - 8 in number

Based on dosha predominance^[3]

In Ashtanga Hridaya about 28 types of *Lutas* are described. These 28 types are grouped into four consisting of equal number of species. *Vaatika* or *Vayavya* (vitiation of *vata*), *Paitika* or *Agneya* (vitiation of *pitta*), *Sleshmika* or *Saumya* (vitiation of *kapha*) and *Sannipatika* or *Mishraka* (vitiation of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* at the same time). Among this *Vata*, *pitta*, *kapha*, are *Krichra sadhya* and *sannipatika* is *Asadhya*.

Based on Vishaprabhava (action of poison)^[4]

- *Tikshna Visha* (acute): Occurrence of death is within 7 days.
- *Madhyama Visha* (moderate): Occurrence of death is within 7 to 10 days.
- *Manda Visha* (mild): Occurrence of death is within 15 days

Adhishtana of lutha visha^[6]

Spider emit poison through Swasa (breath), damshtara (teeth), sakruth (faeces), moothra (urine), sukra (semen), laala (saliva), nakha (nail), arthava (menstrual blood) i.e., total 8 adhishtana. Susrutha explained 7 adhishtanas except shwasa.

Site of bite of lootha

Spider bite above nabhi (umbilicus). Cloth and others contaminated by its poison produce disease when these come in contact with the body.

Signs and symptoms according to ayurvedic classics**Lootha damsha samanya lakshanas^[7]**

Swelling like dadru which is white, blackish, red, yellow, or blue soft elevated black or blue in the centre and is jaalakavrutha (sieve like), develop shopha like visarpa, bahuvedana, jwara (fever), aashu paka (ripen fast), kledatha (exudation), kotha (putrefaction and tissue loss), vrana will develop on the part which come in contact with the pus.

- **Vatika or Vayavya lootha:** rough, blue, accompanied with cutting pain in the joints and fever.
- **Paitika or Agneya lootha:** Burning sensation, thirst, vesicles, fever, delusion, high temperature, reddish and yellow colour, exudation, swelling like grape fruit.
- **Sleshmika or Saumya Lootha:** hard pale swelling like a fruit of *parooshaka*, more of sleep, rigors and fever, cough and severe itching.

- **Sannipatika or Mishrika Lootha:** These are also known as *Upapadika luta*. It causes vitiation of three *doshas*. The poison of these *luta* spread rapidly causing fire like burning sensation all over body and is present with all the poisoning symptoms of *Vatika*, *Paitika* and *Sleshmika*. The symptoms arise as per predominance of the *Prakriti* of the patient.

According to Sadhya-asadhyata^[8]

- **Kruchasadhya Lootha:** The bite from these spiders results in aching pain in the head, pain and itching at the site of bite and symptoms peculiar to the aggravated *vata* and *kapha*.
- **Asadhya Lootha:** The bites from these spiders are marked by bleeding, fever, burning sensation, diarrhoea and disorders due to the concentrated action of all the three deranged *doshas* of the body and the bitten part putrifies.

Stages of Spider Envenomation^[9]

Acharya Vagbhata described different stage of lootha visha in a day- wise pattern. In spider bites up to half a day the symptoms does not manifest and from the first day to the seventh day, the following features can be seen.

Day	Signs and symptoms
1 st day	Soochibhiriva vyadha (pain like pricking with needle), avaktha varna (without manifestation of colour), prachala (unsteady), kandu (itching), ruja (pain)
2 nd day	Abhunyatho antheshu (elevation at the edges), pidaka (eruptions), vyaktha varna (manifest colour), natho madhye (depressed at the centre), kandu (itching), grandhi (swelling)
3 rd day	Jwara (fever), romaharsha (horripilation), raktha mandala (red coloured), sarava roopa (saucer shaped), todha (pricking pain), srava from romakooopa (hair follicle)
4 th day	Mahan Swayadhu (profound swelling), tapa (heat), swasa (dyspnoea), brama (giddiness)
5 th day	Vikaran kuruthe (give rise to many symptoms of poisoning), visha kopa
6 th day	Reaches marma
7 th day	Jeevitha hanthi (destroy life)

A case report

A 26 aged young male, was brought to the out- patient wing at SDM Ayurveda Hospital, Hassan with chief complaints of whitish blisters in the neck and chest region associated with oedema and itching. He also felt burning sensation at the site of bite. There was a mild rise of temperature also.

On enquiry it was revealed that illness was manifested after wearing shirt which is kept in bundle of cloth for washing. Itching was the first symptom. Then blisters appeared followed by oedema.

On analysing it was identified as sharp spider poisoning symptoms were corresponding to the nail poisoning of the spider.

Treatment given

SI no	Medicine	Dose
1	Patola Katurohinyadhi Kashayam	20 ml Kashaya with water three times a day before food
2	Dasanga lepa	External application
3	Bilvadi gutika	2 Tablets bd
4	Ushirasava	30 ml bd, after food

Changes in each day after taking medication

Day	Changes
2 nd day	Temperature become normal
3 rd day	Burning sensation reduced redness reduced oedema reduced
4 th day	oedema, itching, burning sensation reduced
7 th day	Patient was symptom free except for the scars of the blisters

PHOTOS1st day3rd day5th day7th day**DISCUSSION**

Spiders are important cause of animal poisoning according to Ayurveda. Even though the exact clinical identity in modern parlance is yet to be determined, these are diagnosed and managed in scientific lines even today. Poisoning of spider may occur directly or indirectly. Various part of the spider is capable of causing poisoning. Indirect poisoning occur in two ways. By the contact of clothes contaminated with the poison and by the contact of discharge from a lesion of lootha visha.

The differential diagnosis of poisoning by various type of spider is not at all easy. Spider poison cannot be identified at the time of bite or contact. It can be confused as insect poisoning or even visarpa (erysipelas). *Agada Tantra* has simplified approach towards *Luta's* (spiders) and has included the classification, clinical features (general and specific) and its treatment (general and specific) protocol.

Patola katuohinyadhi kashayam, dasanga lepa, bilwadi gutika, ushirasava is found to be effective in case of spider poison.

Patolakatuohinyadi Kashaya

It is widely used in treatment of skin disease involving itching, pigmentation and burning sensation. It is useful in decreasing bad cholesterol and potent antitoxic effect. It contains Patola (*Trichosanthes dioica*), Katu rohini (*Picrorhiza curroa*), Chandana (*Santalum album*), Madrusrava (*Marsdenia tenacissima*). Among this Patola, Katurohini, Guduchi, Pata have kanduhara property. It will reduce itching due to lootha visha. Katurohini and Chandana have sheeta veerya, help to reduce of burning sensation produce due to lootha visha. Patola, Chandana, Pata have vishaghna property which reduce toxic effect due to lootha visha. Katu Rohini and Guduchi have hrudya property which protects hrudaya from the effect of visha. Patola root is sukha virechaka causes mild purgation which helps in elimination of toxins from the body. Katurohini is the best bhedaka dravya. Due to its laxative action it removes the toxin from the body. Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) has shown to have immunomodulatory, anti-oxidant and erythropoietin activity. Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) is known for its multiple roles in the world of Ayurveda. It used for metabolic corrections, repair liver dysfunctions and enhances immunity.^[12]

Dashanga lepa

Dashanga lepa choorna is an ayurvedic medicine in herbal paste form, used for application to treat herpes wounds, skin disease, inflammation, etc. It is made into paste along with ghee and applied locally. It contain Shirisha (*Albizia lebeck*), Yashtimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Nata (*Valeriana wallichii*), Chandana (*Santalum album*), Ela (*Elettaria cardamomum*), Jatamamsi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), Haridra (*Curcuma longa*), Daruharidra (*Berberis aristata*), Kushta (*Saussurea lappa*), Hrivera (*Pavonia odorata*).^[13] Among these shirisha is the best vishahara dravya stated in classics to eliminate lootha visha from the body. Yashtimadhu, Nata and Haridra also have anti-toxic effect for the removal of poison. Yashti madhu, Haridra and Shirisha have sophahara action i.e., reduces the inflammation due to lootha visha. Yeshtimadhu, Ela and Chandana have sheeta veerya. Jatamamsi and Shirisha have tridosahara property. Kushta and Haridra have kanduhara property. These all properties help in the reduction of signs and symptoms of lootha visha.

Bilwadi gutika

It contains Bilwa (*Aegle marmelos*), Surasa (*Ocimum sanctum*), Karanja (*Pongamia pinnata*), Nata (*Valeriana wallichii*), Devadaru (*Cedrus deodera*), Triphala (*Terminalia chebula*, *Terminalia bellerica* and *Embllica officinalis*), Trikatu (*Zingiber officianalis*, *Piper nigrum* and *Piper longum*), Daruharidra (*Berberis aristata*), Haridra (*Curcuma longa*). The drug has its reference in Ashtanga Hrdaya and Ashtanga Sangraha. It is a

combination of thirteen drugs which are triturated with ajamootra. It is advised to be given orally, as collyrium and as nasya.

It contains Nata (*Valeriana wallichii*), which is considered as a visahghna drug. A drug like bilva is a proven anti-inflammatory drug. By virtue of its ushna virya, katu vipaka and kashaya tikta rasa it is kapha vata shamana and is suitable for the treatment of pain and swelling. Pippali is also having the properties like anti-allergic, anti pyretic, analgesic and anti-inflammatory. Pippali also enhances bioavailability of other drugs. It also contains Haritaki that brings anuloma gati of Vayu, which is a prime factor for the breakage of samprapti of Shotha and Vedana.^[14] According to Ayurveda, visha enters the body it will first affect the heart, so hrdayavarana is mentioned in our classics. In bilwadi gutika drugs like Harithaki, Amalaki, Shunthi and Pippali have hrudya properties. Tulasi, Karanja, Devadaru, Harithaki, Amalaki, Shunthi, Haridra, Daruharidra, Pata are shophahara. Kanduhara drugs are Tulasi, Karanja, Devadharu, Haridra and Daruharidra. As the visha enters the body it will first vitiate blood; this formulation has Tagara which is indicated in Raktha pradushti. Thus the combined effect of all these drugs help in management of lootha visha.

Ushirasava

It contains Ushira (*Vetivera zizanioides*), Hrivera (*Coleus vettiveroides*), Padma (*Nelumbo nucifera*), Gambari (*Gmelia arborea*), Neelothpala (*Nymphaea stellate*), Priyangu (*Callicarpa macrophylla*), Padmaka (*Prunus cerasoides*), Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*), Manjishta (*Rubia cordifolia*), Dhanvayaasa (*Fagonia cretica*), Patha (*Cyclea peltata*), Kiratha thikta (*Swertia chirata*), Nyagroda (*Ficus bengalensis*), Udumbara (*Ficus recemosa*), Shati (*Hedychium spicatum*), Parpataka (*Fumaria parviflora*), Pundarika (*Nelumbo nucifera*), Patola (*Trichosanthes dioica*), Kanchanara (*Bauhinia variegata*), Jambu (*Syzygium cumini*), Shalmali (*Salmalia malabarica*).^[15] Ushirasava helps in blood purification and reduces burning sensation caused due to lootha visha.

CONCLUSION

Spider poisoning is detailed with importance in Ayurvedic toxicology. All the treatise describe spider poisoning and its management in detail. Acharya Susrutha opines that spider poisoning is most dangerous, and most difficult to treat. All spiders are poisonous and a few species may even cause death in man. The dangerous species are rare in our country. But some of the wild species of spider may cause severe poisoning. Mild to moderate symptoms of poisoning are frequently seen. Only by specific treatment against poison, spider poison is cured. If specific treatment is not given the poisoning tend to be chronic. So it is important to diagnose spider poisoning at the earliest and treat accordingly. Thus a combination of internal drugs and with external application the case was well managed.

Patola katurohinyadi kashayam, Bilwadi gutika, Dashanga lepa, Ushirasava were found to be effective in management of spider poisoning.^[15]

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