



ANALYSIS OF 24 UPAKRAMA OF AACHARYA CHARAKA IN PRESENT SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

Agadatantra is one among the eight branches of *Ayurveda* which deals with the management of poisoning. *Chaturvishanti upakrama* are procedures of poison treatment. In present day due to increase in pollution many toxic substances are present in the environment. This study is to evaluate the *Chaturvishanti upakrama* with modern treatments of poison. As the data obtained from this review can be used for effective treatment of poisoning in *ayurveda*.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Agadatantra*, poison, *upakrama*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has the history of several stages of development in its long history. *Agada Tantra* is the sixth branch of *Ayurveda*.^[1] *Agada Tantra* concern with the healthy lifestyle by preventing and promoting the health aspects with the help of concepts of positive physical and mental health.^[2] Concepts of *Agada Tantra* is practiced especially in rural and tribal area.^[3]

Agada Tantra deals with the study of nature, effect and treatment of poisonous substance both animate and inanimate.^[4] According to *Aacharya Sushruta Agada Tantra* is the branch of *Ayurveda* which deals with the study of *sarpa* (Snakes), *Keeta* (Insects), *Luta* (Spiders), *Musaka* (Rat), etc. and animate poison (*Sthavara*) with combined poison, diagnosis and its treatment.^[5]

The word *Agada Tantra* is consist of three separate words –

A+Gada+Tantra

A denotes – To combat

Gada denotes - *Visha*

Tantra denotes - Science

i.e. Anti poison

Antipoison means the antidotes which is used against poison. Antidotes are the substances which neutralize the effect of poison.^[6]

The word *Gada* has two meanings i.e. diseases as well as poison so *Agada Tantra* is the branch which deals with the conquering poison.^[7] In *Ayurvedic* text the treatment of poison is scattered but *Aacharya Charaka* described *Chaturvimshati Vishopakramas* in *chikitsasthana* which is used against the condition of the poisoning.^[8]

My paper elaborates the scientific principle of 24 *upkramas* according to modern treatment of poisoning.

Chaturvimshati upkramas of Aacharya Charaka^[9]

1. *Mantra* (Incantation)
2. *Arishtha* (Tourniquet)
3. *Utkartana* (Incision)
4. *Nishpidana* (Application of pressure around the bite)
5. *Choosana* (Suction)
6. *Agni* (Cauterization of bitten site)
7. *Parisheka* (Washing the affected part)
8. *Avagaaha* (Immersion bath)
9. *Raktamokshana* (Blood letting)
10. *Vamana* (Emesis)
11. *Vireka* (Purgation)
12. *Upadhana* (Application of medicine on head after incision)
13. *Hradyaavarana* (Administration of ghee)
14. *Anjana* (Collyrium)
15. *Nasya* (Nasal medication)
16. *Dhoom* (medicated fumigation)
17. *Leha* (medicine resembling with jam)
18. *Aushadha* (medicine)
19. *Prashamana* (Removal of residual poison)
20. *Pratisaarana* (Dusting of powdered medicine)
21. *Prativisha* (Antidote)
22. *Sangyasthapana* (bringing back senses)
23. *Lepa* (Application of medicated patse)
24. *Mritsanjeevana* (Revival of the apparently dead)

Chaturvimshati Upkrama of Aacharya Charaka

1. *Mantra*

Mantra is the most effective treatment in all animate poison like snake bite etc. It is also the sure treatment. *Mantra*^[10] are short sentences and having style of

pronunciation, the *mantras* are full of divine power. *Mantra* affect the mind so ultimately on body. The *mantra* work after the *siddhi* of the practitioner on that particular *mantra*. *Mantra* is used to block the spread of poison through vessels so as to save patients life. *Mantra* is used to make patient happy and keep patient away from fear & anxiety.^[11]

Principle: *Mantras* are helpful in starting the body's natural healing process.

2. Arishta Bandhan

It is known as the process by which ligature is applied to physically block^[12] the spread of poison. If the poison mix with the blood then poison reaches to different organs of the body and affect the body so with the application of ligature we can able to restrict the spread of poison. If the physician is an expert so this blockage can be done by the use of *Mantras* also.^[13] In modern treatment of poisoning tourniquet has been used for bite as well as injected poison.^[14]

Principle: Whom venom enters into the body it may have fatal effect on body through lymphatic & venous drainage by constricting bands, the lymph & venous drainage got block and spread of poison stop.^[15]

3. Utkartana

Utkartana is termed as excision of the bitten part. It is the best treatment for removal of unabsorbed poison. Incision at the site of bite permitting the blood to come out and so unabsorbed venom is removed from body.^[16]

Principle: With the help of incision, bleeding occurs so spreading of *visha* is stopped because the root cause is destructed. Incision may becomes effective when it remains parallel to the fang marks, about 1 cm long & not deepen than 3 mm.^[17]

4. Nishpidana

It is known as the application of pressure, by applying pressure blood squeezes out so with blood venom also come out from that body part. This treatment is very effective when venom is not spread from the site of bite. *Nishpidana* is avoided on *marmas* & joints¹⁸.

Principle: If strong pressure is applied over bitten area then very little venom reaches the blood streams.^[19]

5. Choosana

It is known as the suction. In this process the sucking of blood is done by mouth.^[20] The person direct suck the venom from site of bite & mouth is filled with absorbent material like ash, cow dung etc.^[21]

Principle: By sucking venom is removed with blood and so not able to spread in the body.

6. Agni

When the bitten part is cannot subjected to *aristabandhana* then *agnikarma* is applied.^[22] Except in *mandali nsarpa dansha* (Bite of viper snake). The *agnikarma* is done by iron, red hot gold, or ember. In viper snake bite (*Mandali Sarpa dansha*) the *pitta dosha* is increased so toxic effect may aggravates.

Principle: In modern it is known as cauterization. The fire convert everything into ash and *agnikarma* mainly indicated in *twaka* & *mamsagatavisha*.

7. Parisheka

Parisheka means sprinkling. In this the bitten area is washed by running water or medicated water, cold, warm or lukewarm water as per the condition of patient.^[23]

Principle: Appropriate irrigation of bite has been able to decrease their rate of infection.

8. Avagahana

Dipping the affective part in a medication oil or decoction is known as *Avagahana*.^[24]

Principle: In modern it is known as immersion bath. It is very helpful in removing toxic matter from body and maintenance of proper blood circulation.

9. Raktamokshana

In body blood is the media to blow up the poison so by bloodletting poison is removed from the body. Bloodletting is the most effective treatment in removing poison and slow down the toxicity manifestation of poison. In conditions when there is absence of visible veins (because of swelling), sring (horns of animals) then leeches may be applied over the site of bite.

Principle: When the poisoned area becomes swollen, rigid & painful, *raktamokshana* should be restored easily.^[25]

10. Vaman

When the poison is in stomach, *vaman* is indicated. When the poison is unabsorbed. Same procedure is done in modern practices.^[26] In any ingested poison within 4-6 hr. vomiting is indicated.^[27] In case of *kapha dosha* aggravation the *vaman* is indicated.^[28]

Principle: It cleanses the body toxins by expelling the harmful material out of the body by mouth.

11. Virechana

Virechana means expulsion of ingested poison through anal route.^[29] When the poison is in *pakwashaya* the *virechana* is indicated to expel the poison out of the body. In modern *virechana* is compared with purgation and purgatives is used for flatulence, pain in abdomen and burning sensation in gut. For the elimination of absorbed poison the purgation is the method and it is done by magnesium or sodium sulphate.^[30]

Principle: *Virechana* is the best treatment of *pitta dosha*. In purgation the ingested toxic material like foreign bodies and toxic substances which is not bounded by activated charcoal were removed and the therapy is known as whole bowl irrigation.

12. Upadhana

This treatment is also known as *Kakapada*. In this vortex is incised with the help of sharp object in a cross shape or in the shape of Crow's leg and fresh flesh with blood taken from animals is placed above the incised part.^[31]

Principle: It is the best method to make the patient conscious and neutralize the action of poison immediately.

13. Hridyaavarana

Hridyaavarana is done to protect the heart. In this Ghee & honey mixed with *agada* or *agada* mixed with honey given to the patient. The heart is to be primarily protected because it is one of the most important vital organ.^[32] The following items were used to protect the heart^[33] – Honey, *Ghee*, Marrow, Milk, *Gairika*, Juice of cow's dung, *Ikshu* (*Saccharum officinarum*), Blood of goat, Ash mixed with water.

Principle: From the heart poison spreads all over the body mixed with blood. The poison derange *kapha*, *pitta* and *vata* including their reservoirs and then occupy the heart. Poison and *ghee* have diametrically opposite properties. So on administration of ghee immediately after poisoning slow down the spread of poison so, delay the absorption of poison in body and so more time is available for treatment.

14. Anjana

When patient feels sleepy, vision becomes discoloured, hazy or blurred and also eyes were swelled and becomes edematous, congested then *anjana* is indicated.^[34] Pungent and hot drugs (fine powder of *maricha*) is usually applied to get over the loss of consciousness of patient. In cobra bite best results is seen.

Principle: To protect the eyes from the action of poison.

15. Nasya

Nasya is a type of medication which are given in the form of liquids and fine powders. When poison is located in the head³⁵ and patient is unconscious then *nasya* is given usually. *Nasya* have local as well as systemic effect. Local acting drugs are decongestants and for allergy treatments and systemic acting drugs for migraine, hormone treatment as well as nicotine replacements.

Principle: To restore the consciousness of the patients.

16. Dhooma

Dhooma means fumes or smoke inhaled by nostril known as *dhoompana*.^[36]

Principle: Fumes of antitoxic materials are used. This fumes enters into the body and clears all the channels of circulations from all obstructions. In this way this fumes nullify the toxic effect of poison.

17. Leha

Leha means semisolid preparation made from various drugs to combat with poison known as *leha*.^[37] *Vishahaari leham* is one of the *leha* used for diagnostic as well as therapeutic purposes.^[38]

Principle: In poisoned condition the dryness of throat as well as mouth is most common so patient feel unable to swallow the medicine so in the form of *leha* it is easy to administer.

18. Oushadha

This is a wide range of therapy depending upon the nature of poison and condition of the patients. Medicine such as *kashaya*, *gutika*, *lehas*, *nasya*, *anjana*, medicated *peya* are used.^[39]

Principle: To avoid the complication and to maintain the health of patient.

19. Prashamana

It is the use of suppressive drugs as well as the procedures to suppress the effect of poison and make the patient alive. In this cold potency drug is used.^[40]

Principle: After bloodletting the residual blood is under the heat of poison should be suppressed by external application of medicinal paste or by irrigation of water so patient may alive and stable.

20. Pratisaarana

It is the rubbing of medicated powder means local application of drugs. After the process of *raktamokshana* if the blood doesn't come out then some medicated powders are rubbed at that particular area so flow of blood increases.^[41] On the other hand if the pure blood is oozes out then also *pratisarana* is done to stop the bleeding.^[42]

Principle: Rubbing of medicated powder over skin absorbs excess moisture, relieves itching and irritation and make skin cool smooth and also dries the oozing.

21. Prativisha

When poison spreads all over the body and uncontrollable by mantra and other procedures then this is the method for treatment of poison. This is the last measure in the treatment of poison hence it is used in extreme condition. Victim of drunken root poison is subjected to bite of venomous snake and a person who is victim of venomous bite are treated with root poisons.^[43]

Principle: *Prativisha* is compared to antidote in modern and so specific antidote is mentioned for specific poison to neutralizes the effect of poison without causing appreciable harm to the body.

22. Sandnyasansthapana

This method play vital role to regain the conscious state of an unconscious person for that many measures used like venesection is done in the vein of forehead or extremities. In modern also many efforts were used like ventilators, artificial respiration and other drugs.^[44]

Principle: *Sandnyasansthapana* is the process to bring back the senses, so patient become conscious and remain alive.

23. Lepa

As the poison causes necrosis, fainting so far maintenance of health application of cold paste is done, medicated paste bandages are used in the treatment of skin conditions which is associated with venous origin.^[45]

Principle: It is application of medicated paste over the body. As the water causes the fire the application of cold

paste control the effect of poison like fainting, palpitation etc.

24. *Mritasanjeevan*

It is the ancient classical therapies through which the life of an individual can be regained. This therapy may co-relates with broad spectrum antidote or a universal antidote which is used to counteract with poison.

Principle: This method is used for such type of patients which is apparently dead but the life energy remains hidden in the body. Nowadays this therapy has vanished.

DISCUSSION

After the detailed study of reviewing these *upkramas* it was found that 07 procedures (*mantra*, *arishta*, *utkartana*, *nishpidana*, *choosana*, *agnikarma*, and *parisheka*) are local & 16 procedures are generalized as well as first 07 procedures are carried out in *jangama visha*, rest are used for *sthavara* as well as for *jangama* depends on the stage of poisoning.

CONCLUSION

It is seen that 24 *upkarmas* have their own significance in neutralizing the poison in different ways and many of them based on same principle as that of modern.

The 24 *upkarmas* given by *aacharya Charaka* has great importance in emergency. This *upkarmas* does not require more time and most important is having quick action. It is very important to apply these *upkarmas* and see the results. This will prove the *ayurveda* in emergency.

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