



**A REVIEW ARTICLE ON ATIVISHA (ACONITUM HETROPHYLLUM) – AN
IMPORTANT HERBAL MEDICINE FOR PEDIATRIC AGE GROUP IN AYURVEDA**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of Ayurveda is maintaining the health of healthy person and to cure the diseased person. Ayurveda deals with prolongation of healthy life in terms of mental, physical, social and spiritual health of a person. In literature of Ayurveda there are innumerable medicinal plants which are having a lot of benefits to the health and these herbal medicines are having very minimal adverse effects. Ativisha (botanical name – Aconitum heterophyllum) is one of the valuable herb in Ayurveda, especially in paediatric diseases. The different classical texts of Ayurveda like '*Bruhdatrayi*, '*laghutrayi* and various '*Nighantu*, mentioned many uses of ativisha. Ativisha is having tremendous role in various paediatric diseases such as fever, diarrhoea, indigestion, helminthiasis etc. hence one synonym of the ativisha is '*Shishubhaishjya*', means a best medicine for the paediatric age group. In classical texts of Ayurveda various formulations of ativisha are mentioned. The aim of this study is to evaluate the various medicinal properties of ativisha with special reference to its importance in paediatric age group.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Ativisha (Aconitum heterophyllum), paediatric health.

INTRODUCTION

Ativisha (Aconitum heterophyllum) has dried, tuberous, biennial, paired roots. It is a perennial herb, native of western Himalayas. It is consisted of 250 species of angiosperm plants. The species A. heterophyllum belongs to the genus Aconitum, they are whitish or grey in colour. Most of the species are having lethal nature and should be handled delicately. The roots of the plant are used in various ayurvedic medicinal formulas, which are extremely beneficial especially in paediatric practice.

Classification

Kingdom: plantae phylum: Magnoliophyta Class: Magnolipsida Family: Ranaunculaceae.

Synonyms

Sanskrit: Aruna, Ghunapriya, visha, shishubhaishjya
English: Atis Root
Marathi: Ativisha Hindi: Atis
Kannada: Ativisha, Atihage

Description of ativisha in texts of ayurveda

Acharya Sushrut mentioned *ativisha* in *pippalyadigana* *vachadigana*, *mustadigana*, and *shiro virechanadravya*. In *Ashtang Hridaya*, it is mentioned under *ghunapriya*, *Vachaharidradigana*, *mustadigana*

Acharya Charak has included *ativisha* in *lekhaniya*

mahakashaya, *tiktakandha*, *arshoghna mahakashaya*.

According to Kaidev Nighantu *ativisha* has *tikta ras*, *ushna* & *laghu* properties .it is beneficial for *kapha* and *pitta dosha*, cough and vomiting.

In Raja Nighantu three types *ativisha* are mentioned *Shukla*, *Krushna* & *Arunavarna*.

Properties and action according to ayurveda

Rasa: Katu, tikta Guna: Laghu, Ruksha Virya: Ushna Vipaka: Katu

Karma: deepana, Pachna, Sangrahi, kaphapittahara

Phytochemical constituents

The constituents of A. Heterophyllum are, Alkaloids Amide alkaloids Flavonoids, flavonol glycosides diterpenoid norditerpenoid the main constituent of A. heterophyllum is atisine. It is one of the bitter constituents which are prescribed in Ayurveda^[1] for non-insulin dependent diabetes.

Phenolic and flavonoid compounds extracted from A. heterophyllum has antioxidant and antibacterial effects.^[2]

Ativisha is the active ingredient of herbal preparation Diarex vet with other herbs and it is very effective in cases of indigestion, flatulence and diarrhoea of different

aetiologies like protozoal, bacterial and fungal.

Pharmacology

The alkaloid atisine produce hypotension the whole aqueous extract of the root induced marked hypertension. The anti-inflammatory activity of *A. heterophyllum* was demonstrated by Verma et al. For this ethanolic root extract of

A. *heterophyllum* (225,450,900 mg/kg p.o.) was calculated in cotton pellet-induced granuloma in rats.

The extract has reduced inflammation as evidenced by reduced weight of cotton pellet in cotton pellet-induced granuloma in rats.^[3]

B. *Heterophyllum* has antifungal cytotoxic, antiviral, and immune-stimulant properties^[4]

C. *Heterophyllum* other properties also like antifungal cytotoxicity, antiviral and immune- stimulant properties.

Medicinal uses

Internal use

Ativisha is used in variety of health problems in Ayurveda, especially it has an important place in paediatric practice (hence the name given '*Shishubhaishjya*', meaning best medicine for children). The powder of roots is an anthelmintic and in action it is potent against guinea - worms, it is also used in bronchitis. It has best results in gastroenteric fever in infants and children. *ativisha* is commonly used in children for diarrhoea, fever inflammation.

The important formulations of *Ativisha* are *panchatiktaguggul ghrita*, *Sudarshana churna* *Balchaturbhadra churna*, *Rasnerandadi kwath*.

Balchaturbhadra Churna

This is the most commonly used ayurvedic medicine in paediatric practice. It is used in various childhood diseases. The ingredients of this medicine are *nagarmotha*, *pippali*, *ativisha*, and *kakrashringi*. It is given with honey to manage fever, diarrhoea, cough, dyspnea and vomiting in children. The reference for this formulation is given in the text of Ayurveda named *bhaishjyaratnavali* 71/69

For treatment of cough and dyspnea

Equal quantities of powdered form of *pushkarmoola*, *ativisha*, *karkatshringi*, *magadhi*, *dhaniya* and *yavasa* all mixed with honey are beneficial in all types of *swasa* (dyspnea) and *kasa* (cough).

The reference for this formulation is given in the text of Ayurveda named *yogratnakar*.

External use

The seeds crumpled in honey are applied locally on

throat for tonsillitis. In headache, migraine inhalation of roots by nose is very much effective.

CONCLUSION

Ativisha holds an important place in paediatric practice in Ayurveda. One of the synonym '*Shishubhaishjya*' indicates its prime importance in paediatric practice. For respiratory problems in children like dyspnea and dry cough *ativisha* shows tremendous benefits. *Ativisha* is also very beneficial in digestive system for anorexia, indigestion, diarrhoea and vomiting. *Ativisha* also has an anti-helmenthic properties. So due to all of these benefits in paediatric age group, *ativisha* (*Aconitum heterophyllum*) is really a very important drug.

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