

## REVIEW ARTICLE ON CHATURVIMSHATI UPAKRAMA OF VISHA CHIKITSA

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**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda offers a distinct approach to the management of *Visha* (poison) through the specialized branch of *Agadtantra*, which plays a crucial role in *Visha Chikitsa* (poison treatment). Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Vagbhata* elucidate foundational treatment principles for poisoning. *Acharya* Charaka outlines twenty-four *Upakrama* (modalities) for addressing both animate and inanimate poisonings, which continue to hold significance despite the specific treatments suggested by other scholars. Modern toxicology also presents a general treatment protocol for poisoning, encompassing vital stabilization, removal of the toxin, administration of antidotes, and comprehensive patient care. However, given the complexities of poisoning cases, these general protocols serve as guidelines for tailored management. A comparison of Ayurveda and contemporary medicine reveals that many principles advocated in modern practice have been articulated in Ayurvedic texts thousands of years prior. The *Chaturvimshati Upakrama* (24 modalities) serve as treatment principles guiding the individualized therapeutic approach. This review article aims to compare the twenty-four modalities with the general treatment protocols for poisoning in modern medicine.

**KEYWORD:-** Protocol, Agadtantra, Upakrama, Visha, Chikitsa, Charaka.

**INTRODUCTION**

*Agadtantra* is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda, contributing unique concepts to the vast repository of Ayurvedic knowledge. Key concepts such as *Gara Visha* (Adverse drug reactions), *Dooshi Visha* (Cumulative poisoning), and *Chaturvimshati Upakrama* (Twenty-four modalities) are elaborated upon by *Acharya* Charaka.<sup>[1]</sup> General treatment principles for poisoning are detailed in foundational texts including the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*. The *Charaka Samhita* discusses the manifestations and treatment of both *Sthavara Visha* (Inanimate poison) and *Jangama Visha* (Animate poison) concurrently. In contrast, the *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* address *Sthavara Visha Vega* (Inanimate poison impulses) and *Jangama Visha Vega*, particularly in the context of *Sarpavisha* (Snake venom). *Acharya* Charaka outlines the *Chaturvimshati Upakrama*, which serves as essential, timeless principles for treating various *Visha Vega*. Both

*Acharya* Charaka and *Acharya* Vagbhata emphasized that poison must enter the bloodstream to cause tissue damage.<sup>[3]</sup> Thus, the aim of the *Chaturvimshati Upakrama* is to restrict, disintegrate, neutralize, and excrete toxins from the body. General treatment principles for poisoning are also described in the *Brihatrayee* (The primary Ayurvedic texts), including the *Charaka*, *Sushruta*, and *Vagbhata Samhitas*. The twenty-four modalities presented in the *Charaka Samhita* can be applied as general principles for managing both *Sthavara* and *Jangama Visha*. In modern medicine, general treatment protocols for poisoning are outlined in various toxicology textbooks.<sup>[4]</sup> The twenty-four modalities represent a distinctive contribution from *Acharya* Charaka to the field of *Agadtantra*, with the entire toxicology curriculum encapsulated in Chapter 23 of the *Chikitsasthana* of the *Charaka Samhita*.

**AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the concept of *Dushi Visha*

2. To study about clinical manifestation and management of *Dushi Visha* according to different *Acharyas*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Various *Ayurvedic Samhitas* were critically studied along with its *Tika*'s.
2. Different reference books regarding *Agad Tantra* were studied.

**Table 1: Probable translation of *chaturvimshati upakrama*.**

Sr. No.	Treatment measure	Probable translation
1.	<i>Mantra</i>	Chanting Mantras (Hymns)
2.	<i>Arishta bandhana</i>	Application of Tourniquet
3.	<i>Utkartana</i>	Incision over the bite excluding the vital points
4.	<i>Nishpeedana</i>	Compression
5.	<i>Achushana</i>	Sucking through the site
6.	<i>Agnikarma</i>	Thermal cauterization
7.	<i>Parisheka</i>	Sprinkling water
8.	<i>Avagaha</i>	Water bath
9.	<i>Rakta mokshana</i>	Blood letting
10.	<i>Vamana</i>	Emesis
11.	<i>Virechana</i>	Purgation
12..	<i>Upadhana</i>	Medication on incised scalp
13.	<i>Hrudayavarana</i>	Protection of heart
14.	<i>Anjana</i>	Medicated collyrium
15.	<i>Nasya</i>	Medicated nasal insufflations
16.	<i>Dhuma</i>	Medicated smoking
17.	<i>Leha</i>	Medicated linctus's
18.	<i>Aushadha</i>	Anti-poisonous drugs
19.	<i>Pradhamana</i>	Medicated snuffing
20.	<i>Pratisarana</i>	Local applications
21.	<i>Prativisha</i>	Specific antidotes
22.	<i>Sadnya Samstapana</i>	Resuscitation
23.	<i>Lepa</i>	Application of medicated pastes
24.	<i>Mruta Sanjeevana</i>	Revival Therapy

### Mantra

*Mantras* serve as a powerful means of moral upliftment for individuals. Extensive research on *Mantra Chikitsa* (Therapy through hymns) is being conducted in various countries. In the context of *Trividha Chikitsa* (Three-fold therapy), *Satwavajay Chikitsa* (Psychotherapy) is particularly emphasized. *Acharya Charaka* recommends the use of various mantras to achieve this therapeutic goal. Modern science has also introduced music therapy, which fundamentally aligns with the principles of *Mantra*.<sup>[5]</sup> As these modalities are grounded in scientific approaches, it is essential to apply and evaluate their effectiveness. This could significantly enhance the credibility of Ayurveda in emergency services as well.<sup>[6]</sup>

### General treatment protocol in the management of poisoning

Toxicology is the branch of science that examines poisons in terms of their sources, properties, modes of action, symptoms produced, lethal doses, nature of fatal outcomes, treatment options, methods of detection, estimation, and autopsy findings.<sup>[7]</sup> Renowned scholars in toxicology have detailed various aspects of the general treatment protocol for managing poisoning.<sup>[8]</sup> These protocols can be summarized as follows:

- Stabilization and Evaluation

- Removal of Poison
- Use of Antidotes
- General Care
- Psychiatric Care of the Patient

Stabilization of the patient's vital signs is crucial for maintaining life during treatment administration, which may ultimately prove life-saving. Prior to initiating treatment, it is essential to evaluate the patient's condition to determine the appropriate therapeutic approach. Ensuring patency of the airway, establishment of breathing, unobstructed circulation, and maintaining the central nervous system in an alert state significantly improves patient prognosis.<sup>[9]</sup> Removal of poison encompasses both absorbed and unabsorbed toxins. The appropriate interventions depend on the patient's condition and the stage of poisoning. Often, poisons that come into contact with the patient's skin may go unnoticed, potentially leading to contact poisoning. Therefore, decontamination of affected areas is a vital component of the treatment protocol.<sup>[10]</sup>

Antidotes are substances that counteract the effects of poisons through their presence, which can be physical, chemical, physiological, or universal.<sup>[11]</sup> Unfortunately, only about 5% of specific antidotes are available for

various poisoning conditions. General care involves symptomatic treatment and comprehensive support to maintain the patient's optimal condition. Additionally, psychiatric care is crucial to prevent further exposure, such as suicidal attempts. Both general and psychiatric care contribute significantly to the rehabilitation of these patients, facilitating their reintegration into social life.<sup>[12]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Ayurveda is a time-honored science, with roots tracing back approximately 5,000 years. During this era, *Acharya* Charaka outlined various modalities for addressing poisonous conditions. A critical takeaway from his original verses emphasizes that physicians must wisely select appropriate treatment modalities based on the patient's condition and thorough evaluation. This principle is equally applicable to modern general treatment protocols, which can be rearranged as needed according to the situation. *Acharya* Charaka's teachings encompass strategies for managing both *Jangama* (animate) and *Sthavara* (inanimate) poisons. His *Chaturvimshati Upakrama* (twenty-four treatment modalities) provides a comprehensive framework for

addressing poisoning, focusing on the need for individualized treatment based on the unique circumstances of each case. When comparing the *Chaturvimshati Upakrama* with contemporary general treatment protocols, we find notable correlations in their objectives and applications. Both frameworks prioritize stabilization of the patient's vital signs, removal of the poison, and the administration of antidotes where applicable. Furthermore, both approaches emphasize the importance of a holistic view of the patient's well-being, incorporating general care and psychiatric support to address the psychological impacts of poisoning.

This alignment underscores the timeless relevance of Ayurvedic principles in modern medical practice, highlighting the need for an integrative approach that values both traditional wisdom and contemporary advancements. By applying these modalities thoughtfully, we can enhance treatment outcomes and validate Ayurveda's efficacy, particularly in emergency settings. Ultimately, recognizing the interconnectedness of these systems can lead to more effective management of poisoning and improved patient care.

**Table 2: Correlation of general treatment Protocol and *Chaturvimshati upakarama*.**

Treatment protocol	Upakrama	Purpose	Total
Stabilization and Evaluation	24, 22, 13	Establishment of vitals	3
Removal of Poison	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	Restricts the entry of the poison in to the systemic circulation and Elimination therapy	10
Use of Antidotes	12, 18, 19, 20, 21	Counteracting Medications/ Antidotes, etc.	5
General Care	14, 15, 16, 17, 23	Supportive, Symptomatic treatment	5
Psychiatric Care	1	To relieve mental agony, assurance to patient	1
	Total		24

The foremost principle in managing poisoning is the establishment of vital functions, encapsulated in the 'ABCD' approach: Airway, Breathing, Circulation, and Central Nervous System assessment. *Acharya* Charaka long ago articulated these modalities, referring to *Mruta Sanjeevan* (revival) as a method for restoring patients from states of coma. Additionally, *Hrudayavaran* (Protection of the heart) plays a crucial role in ensuring effective circulation. *Acharya* Charaka emphasized the significance of vital protection throughout the treatment process. A key aspect of treatment is the removal from exposure, which includes addressing contact poisoning. Effective removal of poisons whether absorbed or unabsorbed can be achieved through the aforementioned *Upakrama* (Modalities). *Upakrama* 2 to 8 specifically aim to restrict the entry of toxins into systemic circulation, thereby enhancing the likelihood of successful treatment. If poisons do enter the system, measures such as emesis and purgation can be utilized to mitigate their effects. While *Acharya* Charaka mentioned certain procedures like tourniquet application and incisions, which may not be widely practiced today, they could still be beneficial in remote areas where medical facilities are lacking. Training local populations in these first-aid measures could help prevent adverse outcomes in poisoning cases.

Ayurvedic texts describe specific antidote formulations (*Agad*) for various types of poisoning, with a notable emphasis on 96 antidote preparations specifically for snake venom. Within the framework of the 24 modalities, these antidotes and their various methods of administration are thoroughly addressed. After the primary treatment regimen is applied, while many cardinal symptoms may subside, general symptomatic care remains important. This can be facilitated through nasal medications, eye drops, and medicated smoke, among other therapies. Patients suffering from poisoning often experience anxiety and mental distress, which can exacerbate the physiological effects of toxins by elevating blood pressure. In such cases, psychological reassurance plays a vital role in alleviating patient anxiety. *Acharya* Charaka advocated for *Mantra Chikitsa* (therapy through hymns) as a significant modality for addressing both physical and psychological distress. While the legal standing of mantra therapy may be less recognized today, its potential for psychiatric support remains valuable in managing anxiety and mental anguish.

## CONCLUSION

Although *Acharya* Charaka dedicated only one chapter to the topic of toxicology, the *Chaturvimshati Upakrama*

represents a substantial framework encompassing comprehensive toxicological principles. Other *Samhitas* elaborate further on toxicology, revealing more detailed insights into poisons and their countermeasures following Charaka's era. Nevertheless, the *Chaturvimshati Upakrama* remains a cornerstone of Ayurvedic practice, serving as a guiding light in the management of poisoning cases. Modern toxicologists acknowledge the increasing complexity of poisoning cases, often resulting from the combination of multiple toxins. This complexity underscores the importance of general treatment protocols as essential guidelines for effective management. Thus, we can conclude that contemporary general treatment protocols for poisoning are a modern reflection of *Acharya Charaka's Chaturvimshati Upakrama*, emphasizing the enduring relevance and applicability of Ayurvedic principles in today's medical landscape. By integrating these time-tested strategies with modern approaches, we can enhance patient care and outcomes in the realm of toxicology.

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