

A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ON MUKHA SWASTHAYA UPAYA (ORAL HYGIENE)

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a science of life which offers a holistic approach to health, including detailed guidelines for maintaining Mukha Swasthaya (oral health). Oral hygiene, considered an essential part of daily regimen (Dinacharya), plays a crucial role in preserving overall health. Our Acharyas had described various practices such as Dantadhavana, Jivha Nirlekha, Gandusha and Kavala and the use of herbal formulations for strengthening the teeth agums. This article presents a study of the methods described in Ayurvedic texts for maintaining the oral hygiene revealing their scientific relevance and utility.

KEYWORDS: Mukha Swasthaya, Dantadhavana, Dinacharya, Oral Hygiene, Kavala.

INTRODUCTION

Oral health is an integral part of general health. Habits like chewing tobacco, consumption of fast food with high sugar and acidic contents, aerated drinks and liquor etc leads to accumulation of plaque, calculus and bacteria further causing problems like halitosis, gingivitis, periodontitis etc. Ayurveda focuses on preventive aspects as "swasthasya swasthya rakshanam."^[1] Ayurveda recognizes Mukha (Oral cavity) as one of the nine orifices of physical body. The different regimens mentioned in Ayurveda classics are Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Sadvritta, Achara Rasayana and Pathya Ahara Vihara. Further few procedures explained in Dinacharya like Dantadhavana, Jivhanirlekha, Kavala, Gandusha and Tambula Sevana are best to avoid oral cavity diseases. Herbs like Neem, Triphala, Haridra (turmeric), and Lavanga (clove) possess antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties that contribute to oral hygiene.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To study about the concept of Mukha swasthaya described in the Ayurveda.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data and information were collected from the classical ayurvedic textbooks, modern literature, thesis and research journals. All these references were compiled, analysed and described in a systematic manner.

DANTADHAVANA

The term comes from Sanskrit, where "Danta" means "tooth" and "Dhavana" means "washing" or "cleansing." It is one of the daily routine (Dinacharya) recommended in Ayurveda to maintain overall health. The stems used for Datuna should be healthy, soft, without leaves and knots. As per Acharya Sushruta, Datuna should be fresh and straight. Its length should be 12 Angula (9 inches) and thickness should be equal to Kanshtika Anguli (little finger).^[2] These herb sticks should be either Kashaya (astringent), Katu or "Tikta" (bitter) in Rasa.^[3] Acharya Sushruta also includes madhura Rasa.^[4]

Table no. 1: Dantadhavana according to body constitution (prakriti).^[5]

Sno.	Prakriti	Stem indicated	Rasa/Taste
1.	Vata	Madhuka	Madhura
2.	Pitta	Nimba	Tikta
3.	Kapha	Karanja	Katu
4.	Rakta- Pitta	Khadira	Kasaya

The benefits of Dantadhavana include

- Getting rid of bad breath.
- Increasing appetite.
- It helps to control plaque as some stems has anti-bacterial action.^[6]

JIHVA NIRLEKHANA

Cleaning method for tongue with the help of scraper is known as Jihvanirlekhana. It should be done after Danta dhavana (brushing tooth) using soft tongue scraper. Tongue scrapping is done gently with a metal scrapper from root to tip. It is ideal to use gold, silver, copper or branches of the tree for the process of jihva nirlekhana. This stimulates the whole digestive tract and increases the Agni (digestive fire).^[7]

PRATISARANA

It is application of medicated paste, powder with the tip of the finger (Angulyagram).

Types

1. Kalka (Paste)
2. Avalehya (Linctus)
3. Churna (Powder)

Pratisarana is used in the management of Danta rogas (tooth diseases), Dantamula rogas (gum diseases), Mukha rogas (mouth diseases), Stomatitis, gingivitis, periodontitis etc.

GANDUSHA AND KAVALA

Filling the mouth with oil or medicated water (Kwatha) and holding it for a few minutes without moving it inside the oral cavity is called Gandusha. It is to be held inside the mouth till there is secretion of tears from the eyes or watery discharge from mouth. Daily practice of Gandusha helps in treating conditions like Arochaka, Asya Vairasya, Dantamala, Mukha Dourgandhya, Shopha, Jadya, Praseka. It gives strength to the Dantamoola and Danta.^[8] In classics it is mentioned that avoiding of Dantadhavana and Gandusha etc. are the major cause for Mukha Roga.^[9] It should be done after the age of 5 years. Sharangadhara explains Gandusha as Asanchari Mukha Purna where as Kavalas is Chalanasheela.

Types^[10]

1. Snehana
2. Shamana
3. Shodhana

KAVALA DHARANA

In this process a medicated decoction or semisolid or kalka is simply move in mouth and then split out. It exerts a soothing and cleansing action on mouth.^[11]

Types

1. Snaihika (lubrication effect)
2. Shodhana (purification)
3. Shamana (mitigating effect)

4. Ropana (healing effect)

It reduces plaque formation and gives strength to teeth and oral mucosa. For example- Madhuyashti and Tila kalka kavalas dharana has seen good effect in mouth opening in patients of O.S.M.F. (oral submucous fibrosis).

TAMBULA SEVANA

According to Acharya Charaka for refreshing, cleaning of oral cavity; tambula sevana is indicated.^[12] It also increases interest for ahara. One can use Jati, Katuka, Puga, Lavanga, Kankola, Karpooora niryas, sukshama ela etc for this. Chewing two betel leaves, betel nuts, slaked lime and extract of Khadira is taken as ideal combination for mouth freshening.

Appropriate timings for this can be after sleep, food, bath and vomiting.^[13]

ORAL HYGIENE METHODS WHICH ARE USED NOWADAYS**1 Brushing^[14]**

Tooth Brushing is an act of scrubbing teeth with the toothbrush equipped with a toothpaste. It can help in prevention of cavity, periodontal diseases and tooth loss. Researchers and dentists have concluded that brushing immediately after consuming acidic beverages should be avoided. It is better to brush before breakfast or dinner.

2 Flossing^[15]

It is a process of interdental cleaning to remove food and dental plaque between the teeth or the places where toothbrush cannot reach. The method includes using a thin filament, such as dental floss, and gently curving it around each tooth to clean the gum line.

3 Rinsing^[16]

Usually mouthwashes are antiseptic solutions intended to reduce the microbial load in the oral cavity. Commonly used solution are chlorhexidine, essential oils (eucalyptol, thymol, methyl salicylate and menthol), fluorides, oxygenating agents and cosmetic antiseptic mouth washes.

DISCUSSION

A nutritious, balanced diet is essential for overall health and it's important for our oral hygiene also. Calcium rich foods, such as low fat or fat-free milk, yogurt helps to promote strong teeth and bones. Vitamin C promotes gum health.

Among various mukha swasthya upaya, Gandusha and Kavalas are two primary oral cleansing techniques; specialized therapy to treat as well as to prevent oral diseases. Many drugs are mentioned for Gandusha; among these Triphala with Madhu is widely used in day to day dental practice. Triphala has been mentioned as best Rasayana, Kapha Pittaghna,

Ropana, Kleda Prashamana and Madhu is well known for its Kaphagna, Lekhana, Sandhana, Ropana, Prasadana, Sukshma marganusari effect.^[17]

Danta and Asthi are same in composition. All the components which are useful for bone formation are also applicable for teeth. Acharya Charaka mentioned that cartilages are also formed with bones and the factors which are responsible for the growth of basic principle will also act to enhance its subdivisions.^[18]

All these practices strengthens the Mukha Pratyangas like Danta, Oshta, Danta Mamsa, Jiwha and Hanu sandhi. Its overall benefit is to strengthen the Mukha at both anatomical and physiological aspects. The act of Gandusha and Kavala gives proper exercise to the muscles of cheeks, tongue, lips and soft palate there by increasing the motor functions of these muscles.

CONCLUSION

Prevention and cure are the two main aspects to maintain the health. In present era dental disorders are more prevalent in general population due to lack of awareness, disinterest, and faulty life style. Ayurvedic practices like Dantadhavana, Gandusha, Kavala possesses fourfold benefits like health promotive, preventive, curative and restorative. Thus, all these measures may help considerably reducing the impact of oral cavity disorders.

The maintenance of oral hygiene is very important not only for cosmetic purpose but also for good quality of life ahead.

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