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KSHARA PRAYOGA IN ENT – A REVIEW ARTICLE

[1]Dr. Shruti H. K., [2]Dr. Hamsaveni V.

[1]PG Scholar - Department of Shalakya Tantra, Sri Kalabyreshwara Swamy Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital, Bangalore.
[2]Professor & HOD – Department of Shalakya Tantra, Sri Kalabyreshwara Swamy Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital, Bangalore.

***Corresponding Author: Dr. Shruti H. K.**
PG Scholar - Department of Shalakya Tantra, Sri Kalabyreshwara Swamy Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital, Bangalore. **DOI:** https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23802295

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ABSTRACT
Kshara Karma is a significant parasurgical procedure described in Ayurveda under Shalakya Tantra for the management of various ENT disorders. Kshara, a potent alkaline preparation, possesses properties such as Lekhana, Dahana, Shodhana, Shoshana, and Ropana, enabling it to remove abnormal tissues, control secretions, and promote healing. Acharya Sushruta considered Kshara to be better than the other Anushastra because of its various therapeutic effects. The article looks at the preparation, classification, properties, indications, and uses of Kshara in cases concerning the ear, nose, and throat. Its mode of action can be compared with modern chemical cauterization, where controlled tissue destruction promotes healing and prevents recurrence. Kshara Karma is a minimally invasive, cost-effective, and useful therapeutic approach when performed appropriately with proper patient selection and precautions. More clinical studies need to be carried out in order to develop standard protocols and to broaden its use in ENT practice

KEYWORDS: Kshara Karma, Pratisaraneeya, Paneeya, Disorders of the ENT, Chemical Cauterization.

INTRODUCTION
Kshara Karma is one of the important parasurgical procedures described in Ayurveda, particularly in Shalakya Tantra for the treatment of disorders involving the ear, nose, and throat. Kshara is a potent alkaline preparation obtained from various plant, animal, and mineral sources, possessing unique therapeutic properties such as Lekhana (scraping), Dahana (cauterization), Shodhana (cleansing), Shoshana (drying), Pachana (digestion), and Ropana (healing).[1] Acharya Sushruta has described Kshara in Ksharapaka Vidhi Adhyaya and considered it superior among Shastra and Anushastra[2] due to its ability to perform actions similar to excision, incision, and scraping while also providing therapeutic benefits. It functions by removing the unhealthy tissue, curing the local pathology and making sure that the tissue heals. In ENT practice, where precision and preservation of normal structures are essential, Kshara Karma provides a safe, economical and effective treatment option. It is indicated in various Urdhwajatrugata disorders such as Karnashoola, Karnasrava, Karnanada, Badhirya, Nasarsha, Nasanaha, Tundikeri, and oral cavity disorders. The principles of Kshara Karma can also be correlated with modern chemical cauterization, which involves controlled tissue destruction by the use of chemical agents in order to attain therapeutic effects. Thus, Kshara Prayoga holds significant importance as an Ayurvedic therapeutic modality in ENT disorders and requires further clinical review to set up standard treatment plans.

AIMS
To review the concept and clinical applications of Kshara Prayoga in ENT disorders.

OBJECTIVES
- To study the properties, classification, and uses of Kshara.
- To understand its role in Karna, Nasa, and Mukha rogas.

- To explain the mode of action and correlate it with chemical cauterization.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A review-based study was conducted by collecting information from Ayurvedic classical texts, commentaries and relevant modern literature regarding Kshara Karma and its application in ENT disorders. The concepts of Kshara preparation, properties, classification, indications, contraindications, procedure and mode of action were analyzed. The therapeutic role of Kshara Prayoga in Karna, Nasa and Mukha rogas was reviewed and correlated with modern chemical cauterization principles.

Properties of Kshara[3]

Rasa – Katu
Veerya – Ushna
Varna – Shukla
Guna – Saumya, Teekshna, Agneya
Doshagnata – Tridoshahara
Karma – Dahana, Pachana, Darana, Vilayana, Shodhana, Ropana, Shoshana, Stambhana, Lekhana

KSHARA GUNAS[4]

KSHARA GUNAS	SUSHRUTA	VAGBHATA
Na Ati Teekshna	+	+
Na Ati Mrudu	+	+
Na Ati Shukla	+	+
Slakshana	+	+
Picchila	+	+
Avishyandi	+	+
Shiva	+	-
Shigra	+	+
Shikhari	-	+
Sukha Nirvapya	-	+
Alpa Ruk	-	+

KSHARA DOSHAS[5]

KSHARA DOSHAS	SUSHRUTA	VAGBHATA
Ati Mardava	+	+
Ati Shweta	+	+
Ati Ushna	+	+
Ati Teekshna	+	+
Ati Picchila	+	+
Sarpita	+	+
Sandrata	+	+
Apakwata	+	+
Heena dravyata	+	+
Ati Sheeta	-	+

Classification of Kshara[6]

1) Paneeya Kshara
2) Pratisaraneeya Kshara

Pratisaraneeya Kshara is divided into

1) Mrudu Kshara
2) Madhyama Kshara
3) Teekshna Kshara

Kshara Paka Vidhi[7]

The physician should choose an auspicious day during Sharad Rutu, cleanse himself and undergo fasting. He shall search for a Kala Muskaka tree grown in the auspicious region. A tree of madhyama ayu, enriched with good potency & not afflicted by cold, rains, fire, poisons and insects should be selected. On the first day the physician should offer worship and oblations to the tree On the second day, the tree with samula, phala, patra, shakha should be collected and stored in the form of a heap in a place devoid of breeze. It should be burnt with the help of dried reeds of Tila (sesame) plant keeping the blocks of Sudha sharkara. Ashes of the tree shall be collected in a separate vessel and that of the limestone in a separate one, after the fire gets extinguished all by itself. The ash is taken in the quantity of 1 drona, mixed in six drona of water. This ash mixed water shall be filtered through cloth for twenty-one times. This filtered water is now put in a large iron cauldron and boiled. While boiling, the liquid should be slowly and constantly stirred with a ladle. During the process of boiling, when the liquid becomes clear, red colored, sharp and slimy, the vessel should be removed from the fire. This should again be filtered through a thick cloth into another iron vessel and the filtrate should be cooked again. Before heating, one or one and half kudava of the solution of ash should be removed and kept separately, stored in a different vessel. Boiling

continued & reduced to one third - Ksharodaka, Paneeya kshara.

Boiling continued till it becomes na ati sandra or na ati drava - Mrudu kshara. After that, the ash of Katasharkara, Bhasmasharkara, Kshirapaka and Shankhanabhi are burnt on fire and made red hot and put into iron vessel containing the solution of ash (alkali) and stirred well. Then eight pala of ash of Shankhanabhi etc are macerated in two drona of the same solution, made into paste is added as prativapa. Cooking is continued while stirring the contents all through till the mass becomes neither too solid nor too liquid, the liquid is then poured into the iron vessel, closed with a lid and preserved carefully. This is the method of preparing Madhyama kshara. In addition to Katasharkaradi herbs, the fine powder of equal quantity of each of Danti, Dravanti, Chitraka, Langali, Putikapravala, Tadapatri, Bida lavana, Suvarchika, Kanakakshiri, Vacha and Ativisha all or as many as available are added in quantity of one shukti. In this way if prativapa of Katasharkara etc is added with prativapa of Danti etc and cooked, it is called as Tikshna kshara.

Indications of Paneeya Kshara in Karna Rogas

DISEASES	FORMULATIONS	REFERENCES
Karnaroga	Dashamoola Taila contains Yavakshara Used for Paana, Nasya	B.R. (65/94-98)
Karnashoola	Taptaraja Taila contains Yavakshara Used for Paana	B.R. (65/134-143)

Indications of Paneeya Kshara in Nasa Rogas

DISEASES	FORMULATIONS	REFERENCES
Peenasa	Chitraka Haritaki contains Yavakshara Used as Avaleha	B.R. (63/25-28)
Vataja Pratishyaya	Ghrita mixed with Yavakshara Used as Paana	Ch.Chi. (26/134)
Kaphaja Pratishyaya	Mudga+ Trikatu+ Yavakshara+ Lashuna swarasa+Ghrita-Vamana aushadha	Ch.Chi. (26/150) A.H.Ut. (20/13)

Indications of Paneeya Kshara in Mukha Rogas

DISEASES	FORMULATIONS	REFERENCES
Kaphaja Jihwakantaka	After lekhana – Patola+Nimba+Vartaka+ Yavakshara Yusha Advised with Bhojana	Su.Chi. (22/46)
Galashundi	After Chedana, Yavakshara siddha mudga yusha Advised with Bhojana	B.R. (61/59) Su.Chi. (22/56)
Kaphaja Swarabheda	Chavya+Bhargya+Haritaki+Trikatu+Yavakshara+ ChitrakaMoola+Madhu Used as Leha	Ch.Chi. (26/287)

Indications of Pratisaraneeya Kshara in Karna Rogas

DISEASES	FORMULATIONS	REFERENCES
Karnashoola	Gandha Taila contains Varataka Kshara Used for Karnapoorana	Ch.Chi. (26/224-225)
Karnashoola, Karnanada, Badhirya	Hingwadi Taila contains Kshara Used for Karnapoorana	Ch.Chi. (26/222) Y.R. (64/46-47)
Karnanada, Badhirya	Apamargakshara taila For Karnapoorana	Chakradatta, Karnaroga Chikitsa (57/26) Y.R. (64/43)
Karnashoola, Karnanada, Badhirya, Karnasrava	Swarjika kshara taila Used for Karnapoorana	Chakradatta, Karnaroga Chikitsa (57/27) B.R. (62/27)
Karnanada, Krimikarna, Badhirya, Karnasrava, Karnashoola	Kshara taila contains Swarjika & Yavakshara Used for Karnapoorana	Ch.Chi. (26/226-229) Chakradatta, Karnaroga Chikitsa (57/18-22) B.R. (62/65-69)
Karnasrava, Karnapaka, Karnashoola, Karnanada, Karnakshweda, Krimikarna, Karnakandu, Karnashotha, Karnapratinaha, Badhirya	Madhukadi Taila contains Swarjika kshara & Yavakshara Used for Karnapoorana	B.R. (62/65-69)

Indications of Pratisaraneeya Kshara in Nasa Rogas

DISEASES	FORMULATIONS	REFERENCES
Nasanaha, Nasarbuda	Kshara Pratisarana with Apamarga or Arka kshara	Su.Su. (11/11)
Nasa Arsha	Shikhari taila contains Yavakshara Used for Nasya	Chakradatta, Nasa Roga Chikitsa (58/29) B.R. (63/33)Y.R. (65/83)
Nasagata Raktapitta	Utpala Kshara+Honey For Pratisarana	Ch.Chi. (4/93-94)

Indications of Pratisaraneeya Kshara in Mukha Rogas

DISEASES	FORMULATIONS	REFERENCES
Kaphaja Osta Roga	Trikatu churna+Swarjikakshara & Yavakshara+Vida lavana+Honey For Pratisarana	Su.Chi. (22/8) Chakradatta, OstaRoga Chikitsa (56/6)
Mamsaja Osta Roga	Application of kshara to excess growth	A.H.Su. (11/30)
Jalarbuda	If it is deep seated – Kshara Karma	A.H.Ut. (22/10)
Dantavaidarbha	Kshara Pratisarana after dantamoola shodhana	Su.Chi. (22/22) A.H.Ut. (22/39) B.R. (61/25) Y.R. (63/113)
Danta Naadi	After Chedana – Kshara Karma	Chakradatta, Dantaroga Chikitsa (56/28-30) Y.R. (63/119) Su.Chi. (22/26-28)
Dantapuppata	After Raktamokshana – Panchalavana +Yavakshara+Honey for Pratisarana	Su.Chi. (22/13) A.H.Ut. (22/32) Chakradatta, Dantaroga Chikitsa (56/15) Y.R. (63/99) B.R. (61/17)
Adhimamsa	After Chedana – Pathadi Churna+Honey for Pratisarana	Su.Chi. (22/24-25) Y.R. (63/115-116)
Dantaharsha	Yavakshara + Tila taila Kavala	Yogamruta
Adhidanta	Kshara Lepa	A.H.Ut. (22/16)
Krimidanta	Hingu+Katphala+Kasisa+ Swarjika+Kusta Tied in the form of Pottali & placed over the affected tooth	A.H.Ut. (22/19-20)
Dantasharkara	Pratisarana with Yavakshara+Honey	A.H.Ut. (22/17) Chikitsa Manjari
Dantashoola	Saindhava + Kshara + Honey For Pratisarana	Yogamruta
Upajihva	Vyoshadi Churna Or Taila contains Yavakshara used for Pratisarana	Chakradatta, Jivharoga Chikitsa (56/55) Y.R. (63/152-155)
Upajihva	After lekhana, kshara pratisarana	Su. Chi. (22/48) A.H. Ut. (22/45) B.R. (61/-55)
Tundikeri	Apamarga kshara pratisarana	Su Su 11/11
Adhijihva	Yavakshara + Ardraka Swarasa Lepana	Yogamruta
Mukharbuda	After Chedana – Shunthi + Svarjikakshara Churna + Madhu – used for Pratisarana	A.H. Ut. (22/77-78)
Gala Roga	Pippalyadi Churna contains Svarjika Kshara used for Mukhadharana	Chakradatta, Mukha Roga Chikitsa (56/80)
Kantha Roga	Yavaksharadi Gutika having Yavakshara - used for Mukha Dharana	B.R. (61/75)
Danta, Jivha , Gala, Mukha roga	Kalaka Churna contains Yavakshara used for Mukha Dharana	Ch. Chi (26/194-195) A.H. Ut. (22/99) Chakradatta, Kantharoga Chikitsa (56/78-79)
Kantha, Danta And Mukha Roga	Peetaka Churna contains Yavakshara used for Kavala Dharana	Ch. Chi (26/196-197) A.H. Ut. (22/100) Chakradatta, Mukha Roga Chikitsa (56/81-82)

Kantha Roga	Kshara Gutika contains Palasha Kshara, Muska Kshara, Yavakshara - used for Mukha Dharana.	Ch. Chi (26/192-193) Chakradatta, Kantharoga Chikitsa(56/86-87) B.R. (61/100)

Contraindications of Kshara karma[8]
Durbala, Baala, Sthavira, Bhiru, Sarvanga shotha, Udara roga, Raktapitta, Garbhini, Rutumati, Pravriddha Jwara, Prameha, Rooksha, Kshataksheena, Trishna, Moorcha Kleeba, Apavritta & Udvritta Phala, Apavritta & Udvritta Yoni

Contraindicated Sites for Kshara karma[9]
Marma, Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, Tarunasthi, Sevani, Dhamani, Gala, Nabhi, Nakhanta, Shephasrota, Alpa mamsa pradesha, Netra except Vartmagata rogas

Method of Application of Kshara[10]
Poorvakarma
The patient is made to sit in Nivata pradesha (devoid of strong wind), all the necessary arrangements should be done which is told in Agropaharaneeya Adhyaya

- Examination of the patient and Kshara karma pradesha
- Doshanusaara poorvakarma to be carried out
- In **Vata dushti**- Lekhana karma (scrapping)
- In **Pitta dushti**- Gharshana Karma (scrubbing)
- In **Kapha Dushti**- Pracchana karma (Pricking).

Pradhana Karma - Apply Kshara using Shalaka for the duration of 100 Maatrakaala. (approximately 2 to 3 mins).

Paschat Karma
Application of Ghrita or Yastimadhu churna processed with Amlavarga dravyas.
Lepa prepared out of tila and yastimadhu taken in equal quantity.
Vrana Ropana – Tilakalka mixed with yastimadhu ghrita.

Probable mode of action of Kshara[11]

- Shodhana → Elimination of unwanted and harmful components.
- Ropana → Helps in wound healing, granulation & proper tissue regeneration
- Shoshana → Drying up and absorption of excessive secretions
- Sthambhana → Controls excessive bleeding
- Vilayana → Liquifies, breaks down & dissolves localized unhealthy tissue
- Dahana →Burns & destroys unhealthy & excess tissues
- Pachana → When applied to inflammatory swellings leads to pus formation
- Lekhana → Scrapes away excess or abnormal tissues
- Darana → Splits open masses or thickened tissues allowing drainage

Cauterization
Definition – It is a medical practice or technique of burning or destroying the tissues using heat, electricity, chemicals or freezing agents to achieve hemostasis or tissue removal.

Purpose – To control bleeding,
To destroy infected or necrotic tissue,
To remove warts, tumors, lesions,
To prevent spread of infection.

Types of Cauterization – Thermal Cauterization
Electro Cauterization
Chemical Cauterization
Cryo cauterization

Chemical Cauterization[12]
Chemical cauterization is a medical procedure that uses chemicals—most commonly **silver nitrate**—to destroy unwanted tissue, such as warts or small skin lesions or to seal blood vessels to control bleeding.

Commonly used chemical agents
Silver Nitrate: Used to treat warts, reduce granulation tissue, and stop minor nosebleeds (nasal cautery).
Trichloroacetic acid: Used for getting rid of skin lesions.

Cantharidin: A substance that causes blisters & is generally used in case of warts.

Procedure
Preparation: The affected area is cleaned with saline and the skin around the lesion may be protected with petroleum jelly to prevent the chemical from harming the healthy tissue.

Application: A silver nitrate applicator stick (often called a "lunar caustic" stick) is slightly moistened with distilled water and applied to the target tissue.

Reaction Time: The chemical is left on the site for a few minutes (1to 2 mins) to allow it to destroy the tissue.
Removal: The area is washed using saline in order to get rid of the excess chemicals.
Aftercare: The site may be covered with a dry dressing

Mechanism of Action as Cautery
When applied to moist skin, a mucous membrane, the silver nitrate stick becomes active when a membrane or a wound surface is present.

The process works through a chemical reaction:
Protein Coagulation - The coagulation of protein takes place when the free silver ions in the silver nitrate combine with the proteins and the chlorides in the tissue fluid to form silver chloride.

Eschar formation - Results in the coagulation and denaturation of the cellular proteins and thus causes the development of an eschar.

Vessel Obstruction - The eschar formed blocks the small blood vessels, thereby stopping light bleeding and aiding in the closing of the wound and its healing.

Mode of Action of Alkali

Saponification of Fats: Alkalis hydrolyze lipids and phospholipids within the cell membranes (stratum corneum This results in the production of 'soaps', since the alkali is able to penetrate more deeply as a result of the integrity of the skin's natural permeability barrier being destroyed.

Liquefactive Necrosis (Protein Denaturation): Hydroxyl ions break down proteins in the tissue, turning them into soluble proteinates. As a result, the tissues become soft, dissolve and turn into a liquid state, which enables deep and rapid penetration.

Hygroscopic dehydration: It occurs because alkalis are highly hygroscopic and therefore attract and retain water from tissue, leading to considerable cellular death and tissue damage.

Exothermic Reaction: When solid or concentrated alkalis (for example, sodium hydroxide) come into contact with moisture on the skin, they give off a large amount of heat (Exothermic reaction) and thus cause thermal burns as well as chemical damage.

Vascular Thrombosis: Alkalis lead to damage of the blood vessels, which in turn causes thrombosis and further necrosis of the tissue as a result of the lack of blood supply.

Nutrient Starvation: When it is applied to the base of a skin tag, the alkali leads to serious irritation and inflammation, which in turn stimulates a strong immune response that cuts off the blood supply and causes the tag to wither; since the alkali usually penetrates into the dermis, the body fills the gap with dense, disorganized collagen and as a result a scar is formed.

DISCUSSION

In the Samhitas we find a discussion of the properties and therapeutic applications of kshara in general, with reference to its use in a variety of surgical and parasurgical conditions, including that of urdwajatru.

The shalakya tantra includes references to the internal use of kshara in the form of churna, vati, and avalehya yogas, but pratisaraneeya kshara is extensively documented and clearly specified for local therapeutic purposes. Kshara possessing katu rasa, ushna virya, teekshna, sukshma, shlakshna etc gunas, executes the action of Dahana, Pachana, Darana, Vilayana, Shoshana, Sthambhana, Shodhana & Ropana. Kshara karma and agni karma are considered as Gariyatama & Gariyatara respectively.

CONCLUSION

Kshara is an alkaline substance obtained from a variety of sources. Kshara is just as useful to physicians and surgeons. It carries out the various functions of shastra, anushastra and bheshaja. It is very important to assess the Rogi Bala and Vyadhi Bala if the procedure is to yield the proper benefits. Kshara karma can be conducted as a daycare procedure, can be performed under local anesthesia which will be effective if used judiciously & cautiously to avoid post procedure complications. Documentation of significantly more number of clinical researches along with outcome measures are recommended to frame standard treatment protocol & is the need of the hour

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