



Visha & Upavisha Medicinal Plants: Their Therapeutic Significance

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ABSTRACT

Charaka says "Even an acute poison can become an excellent drug if it is properly administered". On the other hand, even a drug if not properly administered becomes an acute poison." Holistic approach towards Ayurveda is "permanent cure with delayed effect & with no known side effects". If this approach critically analyzed wsr to current scenario i.e. immediate effect, then the question of existence of AATYAYIKA CHIKITSA (Acute management/Immediate effect) in ayurveda will be screened. For this we need the drugs possessing qualities particularly like vyavayi, vikasi, teekshna, sooksma, ushna. Most of the Visha & upavishas possess few of these potential qualities. In ayurveda usage of Visha & upavisha drugs like vatsanabh, kupeelu, gunja, karveer etc are extensive in different classical formulations which are having therapeutic significance. The side effects can be screened & evaluated with due thoughtfulness of adulteration, commercialization & products against classical instruction.

KEYWORDS : Visha & upavisha, aatyayikachikitsa, potential qualities, immediate effect, side effects

INTRODUCTION:

According to mythology Visha & Amruta (nectar of immortality) arose from a common milk-ocean, suggesting the paradoxical nature of visha & amruta. The concept of poison is broad and etiologically varied.

The ayurvedic concept of medicine suggests that when a drug enters the body, it does its beneficial work & leaves. Additionally we shall only admit in passing the concept of toxicity by accumulation of drugs in the body, for this reason, medicine should not accumulate in the body in such a way as to produce side effect. But How far it is true in today's scenario. The latter point is mostly the per view of Posology-formulations (Visha & Upavishas one of the ingredient) are prescribed for long duration. Again whether to accept or not/safe or not, is matter of discussion.

Definition- poison- A substance which on inhalation, absorption, application within the body in relatively small amounts, produces injury to the body by its chemical action. (Dorland: medical dictionary)¹

Charaka says "Even an acute poison can become an excellent drug if it is properly administered". On the other hand, even a drug if not properly administered becomes an acute poison.² Few factors decides poison as medicine – (YOGAAD)

- Particular Dosage
- Proper time of administration
- Duration of the treatment
- Type of formulation
- Individual physician skill

Common man's understanding about Allopath treatment is -Immediate Effect With Fewer Side Effects & about Ayurveda is -Delayed Effect/ No Side Effects/Permanent Cure. Latter one is subject for discussion. To change the Delayed effect phenomenon of Ayurveda, our aacharyas might have looked towards some points to adapt immediate effect phenomenon. For that first and far most they look towards quality of the drugs to decide the pharmacokinetic & pharmacodynamic action.

Qualities of the Drugs – Responsible for Immediate action

- Teekshna, Sooksma, Vyavayi, Vikasi
- Laghupaaki

- Ushnaveerya
- Aashukaari

Based on above mentioned qualities – Group of Drugs to consider mainly

- Visha Dravyas (medicinal plant)- especially Vatsanabh (Aconitum ferox)
- Upavisha Dravyas (medicinal plants)
(Qualitatively the one which stays near to Visha)- 11 in number

Therapeutic Significance: Screening of formulations (either visha or upavisha medicinal plants as one of the ingredient) that prescribed by an Ayurvedic physician in day today practice then total number of Formulations makes us to think inductively about extensive usage of Visha & Upavisha medicinal plants in the management of Diseases & their effect.

If we screen Ayurveda formulary of India & Bhaishajya Ratnavali for formulations, nearly about 160 formulations in AFI and nearly about 430 formulations in Bhaishajya Ratnavali we found.

Table No.1-Drug & Number of formulation AYURVEDA FORMULARY OF INDIA³

Total Number of Formulations(visha/upavisha medicinal plants as one of the ingredient)- 163 in number			
DRUG NAME	NO OF FORMULATION	DRUG NAME	NO OF FORMULATION
Vatsnabh (Aconitum ferox)	38	Arka (Calotropis procera)	19
Jayapal (Croton tiglium)	05	Datur (Datura metal)	17
Langali (Gloriosa superb)	04	Bhallataka (Semicarp us anacardium)	15
Karveer (Neerium indicum)	04	Bhanga (Cannabis sativa)	11
Danti(Baliospermum montanum)	31	Snuhi (Euphorbia nerilifolia)	07
Ahiphena (Papavarum somniferum)	06		

Table No.2 Table No.1-Drug & Number of formulation-BHAISHAJYA RATNAVALI-4

Toatal Number of formulation(Visha & Upavisha medicinal plants as one of the ingredient)- 434 in number			
DRUG NAME	NO OF FORMULATION	DRUG NAME	NO OF FORMULATION
Vatsnabh (Aconitum ferox)	130	Arka (Calotropis procera)	21
Jayapal (Croton tiglium)	60	Datur (Datura metal)	44
Langali (Gloriosa superb)	16	Bhallataka (Semicarpus anacardium)	45
Karveer (Neerium indicum)	14	Bhanga (Cannabis sativa)	13
Ahiphena (Papavarum somniferum)	22	Snuhi (Euphorbia nerilifolia)	45
Kupeelu (Strychnous nuxvomica)	17	Gunja (Abrus precatorius)	07

Now we will look at the formulations (visha & upavisha medicinal plants as one of the ingredient) extensively& routinely using in day today clinical practice

For Example:

Table No 3-(A) Drugs & Name of formulations.⁵

Vatsnabha (Aconitum ferox)	Bhallataka (Semicarpus anacardium)	Kupeelu (Strychnous nuxvomica)	Snuhi (Euphorbia nerilifolia)
AnandBhairava rasa	Sanjeevanivati	Agni tundivati	Arshakuthara rasa
Tribhuvankeerti rasa	Narasimhachoorana	Mahavishagarbha tail	Jalodaraari rasa
Vataviswansana rasa	Amrutabhallatakaghrita	Vishamustivati	Kaseesadi tail
Mirutyunjaya rasa	Prasaranitaila	Shoolaharana yoga	Abhyalavana
Swasakuthar rasa	Panchatiktaguggulughrita	Krimimudgara rasa	
Sanjeevanivati	Kutajavaleha		

Sootashekara rasa			
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Table No3 (B) Drugs & Name of Formulations

Datur (Datura metal)	Arka (Calotropisprocera)	Jayapal (Croton tiglium)
Piyushvallirasa	Pravalpanchamruta rasa	Aswakanchuki rasa
Sootashekara rasa	Mahavataavidwansana rasa	lcchabhedi rasa
Jayamangal rasa	Sootikabharana rasa	Sukhvirechanavati
Kanakasavam	Bruhunmareechaditail	
Tribhuvankeerti rasa		
Laxmivilasa rasa		
puspadhanwarasa		

Intresting to know the fact that apart from oral medicines, as an external application visha&upavishas extensively used in lepa&taila formulations. Higher counter irritant action might be the one of reason.

Significance: Expecting an Immediate effect or acute management with ayurvedic formulations, utility of *visha & upavishas* are must & obvious.

Expecting side effects; we may say that in ayurveda usage of toxic substances always after *shodhana* (purificatory) procedures & no chance of side effects but one thought, how far our *shodhna* (purificatory) procedures are valid. That's why, can't ignore the side effects looking into the matters like

- Validity of shodhana (purificatory) procedures.
- Cumulative effect of drugs.
- Duration of treatment.
- Adulteration of the Drugs.
- Ignorant physician.

Probable solutions: Looking into above facts, it is indirectly & relatively signifies the utility of "Wash out period" conceptie the period allowed for all of the administered drug to be eliminated from the body.⁶ This can be considered for ayurveda pharmacology for particular drug.⁶ For example: if we are prescribing *vatsanabha* (*Aconitum ferox*) preparation, prescribe it for particular period that to avoid excess duration & accumulation of drug. After that change the *vatsanabh* (*Aconitum ferox*) preparation to another *visha & upavisha* medicinal plant preparation of equal potency for particular period. This provides a gap for *vatsanabh* (*Aconitum ferox*) dosage. Giving gap means following wash out period concept or else it is better to look towards the "Clinical Toxicology" an emerging branch for better solutions.

Conclusion: Given information denotes the higher significance of *visha & upavisha medicinal plants* in day today clinical practice. That's

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