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Role of Ayurveda in the Management of *Arsha* (Haemorrhoids) – A Review

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ABSTRACT

Arsha (Piles) is an extremely common problem reported since thousands of years with a prevalence rate that is highest among all the anorectal disorders. In modern medical science, many procedures are described for management of haemorrhoids, of which haemorrhoidectomy is commonly preferred by surgeons, but after sometime of excision there is great possibility of reappearance of the disease. But in *Ayurveda* fourfold management of *Arsha* has been indicated eg. *Bheshaja*, *Kshar Karma*, *Agnikarma* and *Shastra Karma* according to chronicity and presentation of the disease. Among these *BheshajChikitsa* and *Kshar Karmas* show wonderful results in management of *Arsha*

Arsha (Haemorrhoids) is an engorged condition of the haemorrhoidal venous plexus along with abnormally displaced enlarged anal cushion, characterized by inflamed or prolapsed pile mass, bleeding per rectum and some discharge from the anus. The term ‘Haemorrhoids’ is popularly used for pathological varicosity of the haemorrhoidal veins due to increased pressure that may result from chronic constipation or diarrhoea, straining during defaecation or pregnancy etc. In classics of *Ayurveda*, it has been explained that this disease kills the afflicted like an enemy, hence it is coined as *Arsha*. The disease is initiated with *Agnimandya* (Improper digestion) due to improper food habits and lifestyles. However, haemorrhoids can re-occur even after proper management hence it is mentioned as one among *Ashtamahagada* .

KEYWORDS

Arsha, *Bheshaja*, *Kshar*, *Agnikarma*, *Shastra Karma*



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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has existed as an unbroken tradition for thousands of years catering health, based on unique principles. *Ayurveda* plays a vital role in curing *Arsha* (Hemorrhoids) without surgical intervention. There are many herbal drugs that have *Arshoghna* property. Many treatment modalities are explained in *Ayurvedic* classics for the management of *Arsha*. *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned this disorder in the *Ashta Mahagada* (Eight grave diseases)¹. *Arsha* occurs in *Guda* region, which is undoubtedly a *Marma* (vital part). Manifestation of the disease occurs due to many factors eg. improper diet intake, prolonged standing or sitting, faulty habits of defaecation etc. which results in derangement of *Jatharagni* leading to vitiation of *Tridosha*, mainly *Vata Dosha*. These vitiated *Doshas* get localized in *Guda Vali* and *Pradhana Dhamani* which further vitiates *Twak*, *Mansa*, and *Meda Dhatus* due to *Annavahasrotodushti* leads to development of *Arsha*². The word *Arsha* pertains to a disease occurring in *Guda* or anorectal region. It tortures the patient and may create hinderance in the function of anorectal region.

Importance of *Guda*: The importance of *Guda* can be viewed in the terms of the following facts:

- *Guda* is a *sadhyapranaharamarma* means the vital organ of the body to which any damage will cause death³.

- *Guda* is a *srotas*⁴.

- *Guda* is categorized under *karmendriya* group and the function designated to it, is defecation and releasing of flatus⁵.

- *Guda* is one of “*Pranayatana*”. *Pranayatana* is enlisted because its proper action is very important for functioning of body⁶.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To review the literature of *Arsha* in *Ayurvedic* texts.

- To collect the information regarding the drugs mentioned as *Arshoghna* and to find out various methods for management of *Arsha*.

Classification of *Arsha* (Piles)-

1. On the basis of the origin⁷- 1. *Sahaja* (Hereditary) 2. *Janmottarakalaja* (Acquired)

2. On the basis of the character of bleeding⁸:

1. *Ardra* (*Sravi*)-Bleeding piles due to vitiation of *Rakta* and *Pitta Dosha*.

2. *Shushka*- Non bleeding piles due to vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*.

3. On the basis of site⁹:

1. *Bahya* (*samvarani*)

2. *Abhyantara* (*visarjini, pravahani*)



4. On the basis of prognosis¹⁰ - 1. *Sadhya* (Curable), 2. *Yapya* (Palliative) 3. *Asadhya*(Incurable)

The common clinical features are loss of appetite, pain in the anal region, difficulty in passing the stools, oedema of the body, anxiety, headache, vomiting and inactivity, bleeding per rectum, backache and emaciation, etc¹¹.

Management of Arsha(Therapeutic)–

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned four-fold treatment for *Arshas* - Drug therapy (*Bheshaja karma*), surgical therapy (*Shastra karma*), Chemical cauterization (*Kshara karma*) and Cauterization (*Agni Karma*); on the basis of *Dosha* involvement and the stage of *Arshas*. However, the basic management principle for every disease in

Ayurveda is to avoid the causative factor, which helps either in breaking etio-pathogenesis at basic level of the disease. *Sushruta*, the Father of Indian surgery had a deep clinical understanding of this subject. According to *doshas* following treatment is given-

- 1) *Vatarsha* - *Snehana*, *Swedana*, *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Asthapana* and *Anuvasana* *Basti*
- 2) *Pittarsha* - *Virechana*
- 3) *Kaphjarsha* - *Aharadravya* mixed with *Shunthi* and *Kulattha*.
- 4) *Raktarsha* - *Shamana*
- 5) *Sannipatkarsha* - mixed treatment of all *Dosha*¹².

1. *Bheshaja Chikitsa* (Medical management): First of all *Bheshaja Chikitsa* is described in management of *Arsha*.

Table 1 Internal Medicines

Rasaushadhi	Choorna	Asava/Arista	Gud/Vatika
-Arsha-kuthara	-Lavannothamadi	-Abhyarishta	-SuranPutpaka
-NityoditRas	Choorna	-Dantyarishta	-BahusalaGud
-ChakrakutharRas	-NagrodhradiChoorna	-Duralabharishta	-Kankayangutika
	-KesarChoorna	-Drakshasava	
	-Samangadichoorna		

Local Measures:

Similarly there are many preparations which are to be used locally. Most of these preparations are helpful in eliminating the painful or troublesome manifestations of *Arsha* as mentioned in table no.2

Table 2 Types of Preparations

<i>Abhyanga</i>	Medicated oil processed with <i>chitraka</i> , <i>yvaksharabilwa</i> etc		
<i>Swedna</i>	<i>Swedna</i> with <i>Vijyapinda</i> , <i>Rasoonpinda</i> etc		
<i>Avagahan</i>	<i>Avgahan</i> with <i>Triphla</i> , <i>Arka</i> , <i>Agnimanth</i> , <i>Kanji</i> etc		
<i>Basti</i>	<i>ChitrakadiTailabasti</i> , <i>KasissadiTailabasti</i> , <i>YastimadhuTaila</i>		
<i>Dhoopna</i>	<i>DhoopanawithVidanga</i> , <i>Devdaru</i> , <i>Pippali</i> , <i>Ghee</i> etc		
<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Haridrachurnapralepa</i> ,	<i>pippalyadipralepa</i> ,	<i>hartaladipralepa</i> ,
	<i>snuhiksheermixedharidrachurnalepa</i>		



Systemic measures:

The systemic medicines act by improving appetite, regularize bowel habits, astringent action on blood vessels and maintain *agni* and *doshas* in equilibrium.

Acharya Charaka has stressed that *Jathragni* to be kept in normal status. He describes there is nothing equal to *Takraprayoga* in the treatment of *Arsha*.

Ksharakarma (Potential Cauterizing Application)

Kshara is a caustic chemical, alkaline in nature obtained from the ashes of medicinal plants. It is the superior most among the sharp and subsidiary treatments because of performing *Chhedana* (excision), *Bhedana* (Incision), *Lekhana* (Scraping) and *Shamana* of the *Tridoshaja* disorders¹³. It is versatile, because it can be used in such places that are difficult to approach by ordinary measures. It can be administered both internally and externally.

The description of *Kshara* have also been mentioned in detail in the *Brihattraisamhitas* (i.e. *Charaka*, *Sushruta*, *Vagbhata*).

Ksharasutra (Surgical ligature):

The *Kshara sutra* is a Para surgical measure capable to perform excision slowly by virtue of its mechanical pressure and chemical action. *Acharya Sushruta* advised *Ksharsootrain Nadivrana* and *Bhaganda*¹⁴. But *Chakradutta* has given reference of *Kshara sutra* preparation by smearing repeatedly the latex of *Snuhi* and *Haridra* powder in the treatment of *Arshas*.

Agni karma (Thermal therapy):

Agni karma is an important Para surgical measure. *Agni Karma* is said to be superior karma due to non-recurrence of diseases. It can be useful in such diseases which are incurable even by Drugs, Instruments and *Kshara*. It is used extensively in the surgical practice in modified form by way of electric heat cauterization and freezing.

Pathy-apathya of Arsha:

Pathya^{15,16}

Different leafy Vegetables prepared in *Ghee*, *Yavagu*, Mutton soups, Pomegranate, Butter milk etc are *Pathya* for *Arsha* patient.

1. **Anna Varga:** *Godhuma*, *Yava*, *Rakthashali*, *Shastika*, *Kulattha*, *Priyangu*.
2. **Shaka Varga:** *Surana*, *Nimba*, *Patola*, *Vartaka*, *Punarnava*, *Shigru*, *Balamuli*.
3. **Ksheera Varga** *Aja Ksheera*, *Takra*.
4. **Phala Varga:** *Amalaki*, *Kapittha*.
5. **Ahara Upavarga:** *Palandu*, *Nagara*, *Maricha*.
6. **Mansa:** *Mruga Mansa*.

Apathya-

Fishes, Oilcakes and the food stuffs made of rice, *Bilva*, Fibrous root of Lotus etc. are *Apathya* for the *Arsha* patients.

1. **Ahara** – *Viruddha Ahara*, *Vishtambhi Ahara*, *Guru Ahara*, *Anupa Mansa*, *Dushta Udaka* etc. etiological factors.
2. **Vihara** – *Vegavarodha* (Suppression of natural urges), *Atti Stri-sanga* (Over indulgence)

in sex), *Utkatasana*(defective sitting posture),
Prishtha Yana (riding), bathing in the sun,
improper management of *Vamana*and *Basti* etc.



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