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Vishaghna (anti-toxic) property of Shirisha (Albizia lebbeck) : A Review

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a traditional healthcare system of Indian medicine since ancient times. Majority of medicine mentioned in Ayurveda are plant based. Herbal medicine is based on the premise that plants and plants extracts contain natural phytochemicals with biological activity that can promote health or alleviate illness. Shirisha (Albizia lebbeck) is one of the important herbs having broad spectrum therapeutic effects. In classical textbook it is mentioned as the best among the Vishaghna (anti poisonous) drug. In Ayurveda it is used in allergic skin conditions, allergic cough and seasonal cold to get relief. It's action is Shothara (anti-inflammatory), Vedanasthapan (analgesic), Varnya (complexion promoter), Vrishya (Spermatogogue), Vishaghna (antipoisonous), Shirovirechana (Nasya), Chakshushya (beneficial to eyes), Stambhana (anti Diarrheal), Kaphagna (antitussive), Raktashodhaka (Blood purifier) and Kustaghna (anti leprotic), Kandughna (Antipruritic). Research conducted during past have also reported its anti-inflammatory, anti-histaminic, antianaphylactic, anti-asthmatic, anti-microbial properties.

Key words: Ayurveda, Shirisha, Vishaghna, Anti-toxic, Agad, Therapeutic effect.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a traditional healthcare system of Indian medicine since ancient times. Majority of medicine mentioned in Ayurveda are plant based. The overuse of synthetic drugs, results in higher incidence of adverse reaction, has motivated humans to return to nature for safer remedies. The present review is about Shirisha (Albizia lebbeck) plant which is important herbal drug in various aspects like chemical constituent, pharmacological activity and being used

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traditionally for longer period of time. Shirisha (Albizia *lebbeck*) is one of the important herbs having a broad spectrum of therapeutic effect. Many drugs and formulations have been described as Vishaghna (antipoisonous) among which one of the most important and commonly used drugs is Shirisha and it is said to be best among all the *Vishaghna* (anti-poisonous) drugs.^[1] Many formulations of Shirisha having different modes of administration, both internal administration and also for external applications have been mentioned in the management of various poisons in Brihattrayee (Major treatises of Ayurveda). lt also shows antimicrobial, analgesic, antiinflammatory, antidiarrheal, immune modulatory, anti- asthmatic, anticonvulsant properties stated by various researchers.

OBJECTIVE

Present review is aimed to compile up the data to highlight the Vishaghna property of Shirisha and effort is made to collect scientific evidences and researches to evaluate the antitoxic effect of Shirisha Dr. Rashmi Choudhary et al. Vishaghna (anti-toxic) property of Shirisha (Albizia lebbeck) : A Review

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(*Albizia lebbeck* Benth) for the treatment of poisonous conditions.

Vishaghna property (antitoxic) of *Shirisha* mentioned in *Brihattrayee* (Major treatises of Ayurveda)

Panchangas of Shirisha are used as Paana (internal medication), Nasya (Nasal inhalation), Anjana (collyrium), Lepa (ointment) showing Vishaqhna property. Shirisha Beeja is used in Dantha kashta twigs), In Visha Chikitsa (tooth brush as Prathisarana.^[2] It's Twak (bark), Phala (fruits) and Sara (heart wood) is used for Lepa (ointments), Paana (internal medication) and Anjana in different types of Mushika Damsha (rat bites) like Putraka, Krishna and Kashaya Danta.^[3] Similarly, Phala is used for Vamana (emesis) and Sara (heart wood) is used for Shirovirechana (Nasya).^[4] In Keeta Visha Chikitsa (Insect poisoning), Shirisha Twak (bark) is used for Paana (internal medication) and Lepa Chikitsa (ointments), Alepa (external application) and Seka.^[5] In Pitta Pradhana Luta Damsha (spider bites), Shirisha Twak (bark) is used for both Paana (internal medication) and Lepa (ointment).^[6] As Prathisarana (rubbing), Shirisha Twak is used in Vishadaqdha Vrana (wound caused by poisoned arrows or Weapons).^[7] White pepper triturated with the juice of flowers of Shirisha is considered to be best among all types of treatment for Sarpa Dansha (snake bites).^[8] In case of Vrishchika (scorpion bites) Chikitsa Shirisha Phala (seed), Pushpa (flowers) and Beeja (seeds) are used in different forms like Paana (internal medication), Anjana (collyrium) and Lepa (ointment).^[9] Especially in Ratri (night), Vrishchika (scorpion bites) Chikitsa-Pushpa (flowers) and Beeja (seeds) are considered to be best. In Luta (spider bite) Chikitsa, Shirisha Twak and Phala is used for Lepa and Paana. Shirisha Sara and Phala (fruits) are used for Shirovirechana (Nasya) in Bhujanga (snake bites), Luta (spider bite) and Undhura (mice).^[10] In Mushika (rat bites) Damsha Shirisha Beeja (seed) is considered to be the best.^[11] Some examples of different Agads of Shirisha for Internal/ External Use are as follows:

Mritasanjivini Agad

Pushpa (flower) of *Shirisha* used as *Ghreya* (Inhalation through nose), *Vilepana* (ointments), *Dharana* (as an

amulet), *Dhoopana* (fumigation), *Grihastasya* (kept at home), in *Sarva Visha Nashaka* (all types of poisons) and *Jwara* (fever).^[12]

Gandhahasti Agad

Pushpa (flowers) is used as *Paana* (Internal medication), *Anjana* (collyrium), *Lepa* (ointment) for *Sarva Visha Nashaka*.^[13]

Mahagandhahasti Agad

Panchanga (five parts of the plants) is used for *Mushika* (rat bite), *Luta* (spider bite), *Sarpa* (all types of snake bites) *Mula* and *Kanda Visha* (roots and rhizomes poisoning) in the form of *Paana* (Internal medication), *Anjana* (collyrium), *Lepa* (ointment).^[14]

Dhoomagad

Pushpa (flowers) is highly significant in the cases of *Keeta* (insect bites), *Mashakadamsha* as *Dhoom* to fumigate the home.^[15]

Sarvakarmika Agad

In *Luta Visha* (spider bites), *Beeja* (seed) is used as *Paana* (Internal medication), *Nasya* (Nasal inhalation), *Anjana* (collyrium), *Lepa* (ointment).^[16]

Parama Agad

Twak (bark) is used in *Sthavara* (vegetative poison), *Jangama* (animal poison) as *Paana* (Internal medication), *Nasya* (Nasal inhalation), *Anjana* (collyrium).^[17]

Pancha Shirisha Agad

In Jangama (animal poison), Sthavara (vegetative poison) Visha, Paana (Internal medication) of Panchanga (five parts of the plants- flowers, fruits, leaves, bark, root) of Shirisha is used.^[18]

Vamshatwagadi Agad

Pushpa (flowers) is used as *Lepa* (ointment), *Anjana* (collyrium), *Nasya* (nasal inhalation), *Varti* (suppository) in *Luta* (spider bite), *Undura, Pannaga* (variety of snake).^[19]

Mahasugandi Agad

Lepa (ointment) and *Dharana* (wearing) of *Pushpa* (flowers) is used *Sarva Visha Nashaka* (all types poison) and also used for induction of abortion.^[20]

Ksharagad

Paana (internal medication), Nasya (nasal inhalation), Abhyanga (massage), Lepa (ointment) of Twak (bark) of shirish is used in Jangama (animal poison), Sthavara (vegetative poison), Sarva Visha nashaka (all types poison).^[21]

Koshatakyadi Agad

Twak (bark) in the form of *Paana* (internal medication) is given in *Vishavegantara* (between stages of poisoning).^[22]

Ashtanga Agad

In *Gonasaja Sarpa* (a variety of snake), *Paana* (internal medication) of *Beeja* (seed) of *Shirisha* is administered.^[23]

Recent research Works

In Visha Damsha conditions, Sthanika Chikitsa (local external treatment) plays an important role to reduce the pain, itching and inflammation at the site.^[24] best Vedanasthapaka Shirisha is (analgesic), Shothaghna (antiinflammatory), Vrana Ropaka, Vishaghna (anti-toxic) and Tridosha Shamaka.^[25] Phytochemical screening of successive extracts of Albizzia lebbeck leaves shows presence of carbohydrates, alkaloids. tannin, flavonoids, terpenoids, coumarins, glycosides, phenolics, and saponins.^[26] The presence of these phyto-constituents makes them an efficacious herbal drug. After several experimental model & clinical trial multidimensional activity of Shirisha like analgesic, antiinflammatory, anti-allergic, anti-bacterial, antifungal, antiprotozoal, anticonvulsant, anti-anaphylactic, antioxidative is proved.

- Anti allergic activity: One of the study carried on rats investigated that the extract of bark of A.lebbeck supress histamine signalling genes H1R and histadine decarboxylase(HDC).This genes are allergic disease sensitive genes and there expression level effect severity of the allergic symptoms.^[27]
- Antimicrobial screening: Active compound isolated from stem bark showed that the total

glycosides, cardenolide glycoside and anthraquinone glycosides were active against the test cultures.^[28]

- Anticonvulsive activity: Leaves of Albizzia lebbeck showed anticonvulsive activity against seizures induced by maximal electroshock, lithiumpilocarpine in laboratory animals. The saponins of A. lebbeck possess nootropic activity.^[29]
- Anti-inflammatory activity: An experimental study on petroleum ether, ethyl acetate, the methanol extract of *Albizia* bark was carried on carrageenan-induced paw edema in mice. The extract at the dose of 400mg/kg/BW was given and 36-68% inhibition of edema volume at the end of 4hr was observed.^[30]
- Anti-fungal activity: The anti-fungal activity of lebbeckalysin was screened with an agar diffusion assay. Two hundred micrograms of lebbeckalysin were added to test its inhibitory effect on different fungi. The IC 50 value for the anti-fungal activity of lebbeckalysin against Rhizoctonia solani (pathogenic fungus) was determined.^[31]
- Immuno-modulating activity: The study affirms that ethanolic extract of the Shirishadi Compound is an effective immunomodulatory agent. The effectiveness of extract-treated animals in overcoming the side-effects of CP induced immunosuppression provides evidence for balancing and adaptogenic effectiveness of extract. The extract potentiated the non-specific immune response. Increase in percentage of neutrophil is attributed to marginalization of phagocytic cells i.e. improved defensive response under normal circumstances.^[32]
- Antioxidant properties: The bark extracts of Albizia lebbeck posses free radical scavenging activity against 1, 1-di diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl radical (DPPH) and reducing power assays. Their results on DPPH free radical scavenging at 1000 µg/ml indicated maximum antioxidant activity of 91.82% and 90.08% respectively.^[33]
- Antipyretic Activity: The effects of the different extracts administered at doses of 1 g/kg except

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the n-butanol extract which was administered at a dose 0.25 g/kg.All of the treatments decreased the body temperature significantly. The maximum decrease of 8° C was shown by the dichloromethane extract.^[34]

- Analgesic Activity: The effect of the different extracts of A. *lebbeck* on pain sensation was tested using hot plate method. Maximum increases in the pain threshold were observed 90 minutes after administration of each extract.^[35]
- Antibacterial properties: The bark of Albizia lebbeck has acrid taste and its extract showed antimicrobial activity. Novel macrocyclic alkaloids (budmunchiamines A, B and C were isolated from A. amara. They were also found to have antiplatelets aggregation and bactericidal activity.^[36]

DISCUSSION

It may be concluded that Albizia is a important plant with various therapeutic properties mainly as Vishaghna drug. Panchangas of Shirisha are used as Paana (internal medication), Nasya (Nasal inhalation), Anjana (collyrium), Varti, Seka, Lepa (ointment) in many formulations showing Vishaghna property. Shirisha is used as Paana (internal medication) in formulations with many different Anupanas (adjuvants) like Ghrita (ghee) and Madhu which plays a major role in counteracting the Visha and stops the Visha from spreading all over the body. Lepa (Ointment) Yogas are not only the Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa but also acts on local poisoning in the cases of bites to reduce the pain, itching and inflammation at the site. Shirisha helps in pacifying the Bhrajaka Pitta situated in the Twacha thus directly removes the Visha and stops spreading of Visha into the Rakta. Nasya (nasal inhalation) is one of the eliminating therapy which helps to remove the vitiated Doshas, toxins and poison from the nasal route when the effect of poison is seen in the head due to which obstruction occurs at nose, eye, ear, tongue and throat and if person is unconscious Anjana is used when symptoms related to eyes appear like swelling in the eye ball, drowsiness. Pharmacodynamics of Shirisha shows that it possesses Kashaya, Tikta Rasa. Tikta Rasa itself is antitoxic in nature & Kashaya Rasa help in the healing procedure in bite cases. Apart from Raspanchaka, Toxic and antitoxic drugs act on the basis of their Prabhav, which is the known special potency and power the drug. In the cases of poisoning specially in insect bite, snake bite, rat bite symptoms are pain, inflammation & oedema. Phytochemical screening of successive extracts of Albizzia lebbeck leaves shows presence of carbohydrates, alkaloids, tannin, flavonoids and saponins. After several experimental model & clinical trial multi dimensional activity of Shirisha like analgesic, antiinflammatory, anti-allergic, anti-bacterial, antifungal, antiprotozoal, anticonvulsant, anti-anaphylactic, antioxidative is proved. This piece of report would promote these species for extensive research, to fetch the optimistic utility of its phytoconstituents for therapeutic applications. Herbal medicine are now in great demand in developing world for primary health care because of better cultural acceptability, better compatibility with human body and minimal side effects. Most herbal products on the market today have not been subjected to drug approval process to demonstrate their safety and effectiveness. So, to make it accepted as viable alternative to modern medicine, the vigorous method of scientific, experimental and clinical validation must be applied to prove the safety and effectiveness of therapeutic plants. In the present review attempt is being made to describe the traditional as well as contemporary, scientific and experimental researches which are done to reveal the antitoxic effect of Shirisha plant.

CONCLUSION

Acharya Charaka quoted Shirisha as a best anti poisonous drug and also mentioned in Vishaghana Gana Dravyas (antipoisonous drugs). Many studies conducted by different branches by using different parts of the plant have proved antimicrobial, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, anti-diarrhoeal, immuno- modulatory, antiarthritic, anti-asthmatic, anticonvulsant, anti- allergic, hepatic protective and antioxidant activity of the drug. Thus, it seems to be a promising drug for various activities. In all Samhitas

various *Yogas* have been mentioned for internal and external use containing *Shirisha* as an ingredient. All the *Yogas* are not in practice and hence there remains scope for further research on these *Yogas*. The present review highlights on the major goal of Ayurveda and their significant role in healthcare system. Therefore exploration of different Ayurvedic herbs can be carried out through experimental studies with their proper documentation. It will be helpful in enhancing the use of herbal drugs like *Shirisha* (*Albizia lebbeck*) in general practice and making it globally accepted by humans.

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