

A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON THE AYURVEDIC ASPECT OF ALARKAA VISHA

Priya Thakur^{1*} and Munna Lal Prajapati²

¹PG Scholar (MD 2nd Year), ²HoD, PG Deptt. of Agada Tantra

Rajiv Gandhi Government Post Graduate Ayurvedic College, Paprola, Distt. Kangra,
(Himachal Pradesh).

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Priya Thakur

PG Scholar (MD 2nd Year)

Rajiv Gandhi Government

Post Graduate Ayurvedic

College, Paprola, Distt.

Kangra, (Himachal Pradesh).

ABSTRACT

Rabies, or hydrophobia, is a severe viral infection affecting the central nervous system, transmitted through the saliva of rabid animals such as dogs, cats, monkeys, and other wildlife.^[1] The disease is caused by the Rhabdoviridae family of viruses, including various types within the Lyssavirus genus.^[2] Ayurveda describes Rabies as *Alarka visha*, where imbalances in body doshas disrupt the central nervous system (*Sangyavaha Strotas*). Symptoms begin with a wound exhibiting dark blood and numbness, progressing to prodromal and encephalitic stages, and eventually hydrophobia (*Jalsantrasa*). Immediate Ayurvedic interventions involve blood extraction from the wound, cauterization with warm ghee, and application of *Agada* (a traditional remedy). Internal treatment includes purgation with *Calotropis procera* milk, supported by herbal remedies. Ayurveda emphasizes early intervention and the use of anti-rabies herbal drugs (*Agadapana*) and purification techniques (*Tikshna Samshodhana*) for effective management and

prevention of Rabies. This study is an attempt to conceptualize the concept of *Alarka visha*.

KEYWORDS: *Alarka visha*, Rabies, Vitiation of *dosha*, *Visha*, Treatment.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ancient branch of science dedicated to the maintenance of health and the treatment of various illnesses.^[3] This comprehensive system of medicine encompasses eight distinct branches, one of which is *Agada Tantra*.^[4] *Agada Tantra*, also known as *Danshtra Chikitsa*, focuses on the study of poisons and their effects on the human body. Poisoning,

according to Ayurveda, can occur through various means such as bites from animals, ingestion of harmful substances, or topical application of toxic pastes.

A particularly lethal form of *Jangam visha* is *Alarka visha*, associated with the bites of animals such as cats, dogs, wolves, and monkeys.^[5] Once transmitted, this condition is invariably fatal if left untreated. In modern science, *Alarka visha* is comparable to rabies, a disease that is 100% preventable but fatal if not treated promptly. The widespread prevalence of *Alarka visha* poses a significant health risk, as it is found in various environments around the world, including urban, rural, and forested areas. Rabies is estimated to cause 59,000 human deaths annually in over 150 countries, with 95% of cases occurring in Africa and Asia. In India, 17.4 million animal bites occur annually, resulting in 20,565 human rabies deaths.

It is a zoonotic disease that affects warm-blooded animals like dogs, jackals, and wolves. Rabies is typically transmitted to humans through bites or licks from infected animals. While the disease is found on every continent except Antarctica, over 95% of human fatalities occur in Asia and Africa. Each year, over 15 million people receive a post-exposure vaccination to protect against the disease.^[6]

OBJECTIVE

- 1) To take reference of *Alarka visha* from *Sushruta Samhita* and *Charaka Samhita*.
- 2) To understand the sign and symptoms of the *Alarka visha* in *Sushruta Samhita* and *Charaka Samhita*.
- 3) To understand the treatment of *Alarka visha* in *Sushrut Samhita* and *Charak Samhita*.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

A literature review is done through *Sushruta* and *Charaka Samhita* and available online data.

Signs and Symptoms in rabid animal

According to *Acharya Charaka*, due to the vitiation of *tridosha* and contrariety of *dhatu*s dogs suffer from headaches, salivation, and drooped face.^[7] According to *Acharya Sushruta* and *Vagbhata*, when *vata* gets aggravated in the body of a dog, fox, jackal, bear, tiger, etc. It merges with aggravated kapha and accumulates in the channels of the sense organs, leading to a loss of sensation. Such sensory-deprived animals run at random with drooped tails, lowered jaw and shoulder, exuding more saliva and biting anyone th at comes close.^[8,9]

The bite of an *Alarkaa-peedita pashu* (rabid animal) causes the following signs and symptoms to appear in humans.

Signs and Symptoms	<i>Charaka Samhita</i> ^[10]	<i>Sushruta Samhita</i> ^[11]	<i>Ashtaang Samgraha</i>	<i>Ashtaang Hridayam</i>
<i>Suptata</i> (Loss of sensation)	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Krishna asrukastrava</i> (Blackish coloured bleeding)	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Kandu</i> (Itching)	✓	-	✓	✓
<i>Nistoda</i> (pain)	✓	-	✓	✓
<i>Vaivarnya</i> (Discolouration)	✓	-	✓	✓
<i>Kleda</i> (Exudation)	✓	-	✓	✓
<i>Vidaha</i> (Burning sensation)	✓	-	✓	✓
<i>Raga</i> (Redness)	✓	-	✓	✓
<i>Shopha Granthi</i> (Suppurative and cystic swelling)	✓	-	✓	✓
<i>Danshavdaran</i> (Tearing of tissue)	✓	-	✓	✓
<i>Sphota</i> (Appearance of vesicles)	✓	-	✓	✓
<i>Nikunchana</i> (Contractures)	✓	-	✓	✓
<i>Mandal</i> (Ring like patches)	✓	-	✓	✓

Local and General Signs and Symptoms

Arishta lakshna (terminal signs) of *Alarka visha* poisoning^[12]

- If the patient continuously produces sounds resembling those of a bitten animal.
- If the patient visualizes the image of a bitten animal in water, they should be aware that such negative symptoms often indicate a strong belief that death is inevitable.

Jalasantrasa (Hydrophobia)

When an individual becomes frightened by the sight, touch, or sound of water, this condition is known as *Jalasantrasa* (Hydrophobia), and it is considered incurable.^[13]

Ayurvedic Approach to the Prevention and Local Management of Rabid Bites

Squeeze out the blood from the wound & it should be thoroughly scrubbed with *Neem* Soap & then flushed, and washed with *Neem kwatha* (Decoction) for a minimum of 5 minutes. In the case of a Punctured Wound catheter should be used to irrigate the wound. Residual Virus should be inactivated by irrigating with virucidal agents like Alcohol Tincture, Iodine 0.1% or Pro- iodine. Ayurveda recommends cauterizing the wound with warm ghee and applying a mixture of antidotes to neutralize the virus. In contrast, modern medicine advises the use of Anti-Rabies Serum (ARS) at a dose of 10 IU/kg locally. If suturing is necessary, it should be

done after 24 to 48 hours, using minimal stitches.

Ayurvedic Approach to the Prevention and Systemic Management of Rabies: Ghrutpaan (Ghee Consumption) and Purgation

The affected individual should be given aged ghee along with purgative medications. Additionally, a milky extract of *Arka* (*Calotropis procera*) should be administered.

Propitiatory bath

The individual should be brought to the riverbank or a junction of four roads, where they should bathe with cold water drawn from pots containing precious gems and medicinal plants.

Samshodhana (Purificatory therapies)

After the bath, the person should be administered strong purificatory therapies (Vomiting and purgation) because, in a person who is not purified well, the poison gets aggravated again, even though the wound has healed.^[14]

Agnikarma

The blood containing poison should first be removed from the bite site. Then, the area should be cauterized by applying hot ghee, followed by the application of *Agada* (ant poisonous medicine) as a warm poultice. Additionally, juice from the flowers of *Pratyakpushpa* (*Achyranthes aspera*) should be squeezed onto the wound.^[15]

Preparation of Medicines and Treatment for Alarka Visha

- A paste of *Palala* (sesame) mixed with sesame oil (*Tila taila*), the milky sap of *Arka* (*Calotropis procera*), and jaggery (*Guda*) should be administered. Additionally, a combination of *Dhatura* (*Datura metel*) and *Shweta Punarvana* (*Boerhavia diffusa*) should be given. These remedies are believed to eliminate the poison from a rabid dog as swiftly as the wind disperses a mass of clouds.
- A warm poultice made from a paste of *Tila* (*Sesamum indicum*), *Guggula* (*Commiphora mukul*), *Durva* (*Cynodon dactylon*), *Dadima* (*Punica granatum*), and *Guda* is highly effective for alleviating the local symptoms of a dog bite when applied repeatedly.
- Uses of *Nala* (*Arundo donax*) Roots:
The roots of *Nala* (*Arundo donax*), when macerated with water, are beneficial for both

drinking and external application.

- A mixture of *Rasona* (*Allium sativum*), *Marich* (*Piper nigrum*), *Pippali* (*Piper longum*), and *Triphala* (*Emblica officinalis*, *Terminalia chebula*, *Terminalia bellerica*), when macerated with cow bile, serves as an effective remedy for dog bites. This preparation, when used as nasal drops, collyrium, or for external application, is considered the best treatment.
- 20 ml of aged ghee mixed with milk is to be administered twice daily. Then milky Juice of *Calotropis* will be given with rock salt or *Tila kalka* + *Tila Tail* + Milky Juice of *Calotropis* daily in the morning for purgation.¹⁶ An equal part of *Dhatura* with *Shweta Aparajita/Punrnava* or *Sharapunkha* 1 *Karsh* + *Dhatura* ½ *Karsha* with rice water will be given to relieve the Rabies (*Alarka visha*).¹⁷
- *Pippaliyadi Anjana* (Agada Yoga):
A mixture of *Pippali*, *Marica*, *Yavaksara*, *Vacha*, rock salt, and *Sigru*, when ground with the bile of *Rohita* fish and applied as collyrium to the eyes, effectively neutralizes poison in the eyes.

DISCUSSION

Modern science recognizes that there is no specific treatment for rabies, which is typically fatal, with prevention being the primary focus.^[18] Ayurveda aligns with this view, as outlined in the *Sushruta Samhita*, where various formulations (*yogas*) are described to prevent the onset of rabies. *Dhatura Sharpunkha* yoga is one of them. According to *Bhavaprakasha*, *Dhatura* (*Dhatura metel*) and *Sharapunkha* (*Tephrosia purpurea*) are *vishapaha* (anti poisonous), when both drugs are used in combination the anti-poisonous effect is enhanced. *Dhatura* itself is a *Sthawara visha* (Vegetable poison) and the use of *Sthawara visha* is recommended in the treatment of *Jangama visha* (Animal poison), after *shuddhikaran* (purification) of *sthawara visha*. *Dhatura*, when combined with *Shweta Punarnava* (*Boerhavia diffusa*), enhances its effects, as both are *vishghna* (anti-poisonous).

CONCLUSION

In *Sushruta Samhita*, it is mentioned that the person in whom the poison increases on its own, does not survive, hence it should be made to increase quickly, if not increasing on its own. This indicates that prophylactic treatment plays a major role because as the disease progresses it is very difficult to treat and becomes incurable. Various remedies useful in dog bites are described in *Brihatrayee*. There is a need to study the efficacy of these drugs, as the

efficacy of this drug is proved will be a precious gift to the world of medical science and ultimately a blessing for humanity.

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