

## AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF PITTAJA MUKHAPAKA: A CASE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** *Mukhapaka* is increasingly prevalent due to stress, lifestyle factors, and poor oral hygiene. *Pittaja Mukhapaka*, a subtype of *Mukharoga* described in Ayurveda, is characterised by *Ruja*, *Daha*, *Tiktavaktrata*, *Khasrokshitkshatsama*, *Vrana* and *Asyavairasyata*. Conventional therapy generally relies on topical and systemic steroids, which may lead to adverse effects on prolonged use. Ayurveda advocates for *Dinacharya*, wherein *Gandusha* plays a significant role in *Mukhapaka Chikitsa*. This case study evaluates the therapeutic potential of *Mukhapakahara Arka*, an Ayurvedic formulation attributed with *Kaphapitta Pradhana Tridoshahara*, *Dahahara*, *Shothahara*, and *Vranahara* properties. **Methods:** A 55-year-old female patient diagnosed with Pittaja Mukhapaka presented with symptoms of pricking pain, burning sensation, loss of taste, and difficulty swallowing. As described in *Ravana Arka Prakasha*, *Gandusha* with

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*Mukhapakahara Arka* was administered daily for five consecutive days. The clinical assessment included the parameters *Ruja*, *Daha*, *Tiktavaktrata*, *Asyavairasyata*, *Raga*, and *Vrana*. Observations were recorded before and after the intervention. **Results:** Following five days of treatment, a marked improvement was observed across all clinical parameters. There was a significant reduction in *Ruja* and *Daha*, as well as an improvement in *Tiktavaktrata* and *Asyavairasyata*. Additionally, *Raga* and *Vrana* decreased. The patient also reported easier swallowing. No adverse effects were observed during or after the intervention. **Discussion:** The positive therapeutic response suggests that *Mukhapakahara Arka* may offer a beneficial adjunct in managing *Pittaja Mukhapaka*. Its *Shothahara*, *Shoolahara*, and *Vrana Ropana* actions likely contributed to the observed improvements. Although the results are promising, the findings are based on a single case.

**KEYWORDS:** *Arka*, *Gandusha*, *Mukharoga*, *Pittaja Mukhapaka*.

## INTRODUCTION

*Mukha* (oral cavity) is one among the *Bahirmukha Srotas*<sup>[1]</sup> (external channels) and constitutes the initial segment of the alimentary canal. Any pathological alteration in this region significantly affects essential functions such as mastication, swallowing, speech, and overall quality of life. *Mukhapaka* is described under *Sarvasara Mukharoga* (diseases involving all regions of the oral cavity). Among its subtypes, *Pittaja Mukhapaka* is a *Pitta Pradhana Tridoshaja* disorder characterised by *Raga* (erythema), *Daha* (burning sensation), *Toda* (pricking pain), *Tanu Vrana* (superficial ulcer), *Tiktavaktrata* (bitter taste), and *Ksharokshitsama Vrana* (ulcers resembling alkali burns).<sup>[2]</sup>

Clinically, *Pittaja Mukhapaka* correlates with inflammatory ulcerative conditions of the oral mucosa, such as aphthous stomatitis or oral ulcerations, in contemporary medicine. Current management predominantly includes topical and systemic corticosteroids<sup>[3]</sup> which provide temporary symptomatic relief but are associated with adverse effects such as mucosal atrophy, secondary infections, and systemic complications upon prolonged use. Therefore, there is a compelling need to identify safe, effective, and sustainable alternative therapies that promote mucosal healing and symptom resolution without undesirable sequelae.

Epidemiological data indicate that oral mucosal lesions occur in approximately 10.26–16.8% of the population,<sup>[4]</sup> with recurrent aphthous ulcers being the most prevalent, often impairing nutrition, speech, and daily activities.

*Ayurveda* emphasises *Mukha Swasthya* (oral hygiene) maintenance through *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), which includes *Dantadhawana* (tooth brushing), *Mukha Prakshalana* (oral rinsing), *Jihwa Nirlekhana* (tongue scraping), *Kavala* (gargling), *Gandusha* (retention of medicated oil or decoction in the mouth), and *Tambula Sevana* (chewing of medicated betel leaves).<sup>[5]</sup> Among these, *Gandusha* is a localised therapeutic procedure that facilitates *Dosha Shamana* (pacification of morbid humours) within the oral cavity and enhances mucosal integrity. The therapeutic agent used in *Gandusha* may vary according to the predominant *Dosha*, including *Taila* (oil), *Kashaya* (decoction), *Arka* (distillate), or other *Kalpanas* (preparations).

In the present case study, the signs and symptoms were similar to those of a minor aphthous ulcer, which typically resolves within one or two weeks. To achieve faster relief, a 5-day *Gandusha* therapy was planned, with a follow-up observation on the third day to assess clinical improvement.

*Mukhapakahara Arka*, an *Ayurvedic* formulation mentioned in *Ravana Arka Prakasha*, possesses *Kaphapitta Pradhana Tridoshahara* (balancing all three *Doshas* with predominance of *Kapha* and *Pitta*), *Dahahara* (anti-burning), *Shothahara* (anti-inflammatory), and *Vranahara* (wound-healing) properties. Owing to the pharmacological actions of its constituent drugs, which exhibit anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, and mucosal reparative effects, it may effectively counteract *Pitta Dushti* (vitiation of *Pitta*) and restore oral mucosal homeostasis.

Hence, the present case study was undertaken to evaluate the clinical efficacy of *Mukhapakahara Arka Gandusha* in the management of *Pittaja Mukhapaka*, with the hypothesis that its pharmacodynamic actions would significantly alleviate *Ruja* (pain), *Daha* (burning sensation), and *Asyavairasyata* (loss of taste), while promoting faster ulcer healing without adverse effects.

### Educational value

- This case highlights acute *Pitta* aggravation triggered by ingestion of *Asthishrinkala*, a cause rarely documented.
- Demonstrates the rapid therapeutic effect of *Mukhapakahara Arka Gandusha* within five days.

- Contributes to clinical evidence supporting Ayurvedic local therapies as safe alternatives to corticosteroids.

## PATIENT INFORMATION

### Demographics

- Age: 55 years
- Gender: Female
- Occupation: Housewife
- Location: Bengaluru

**Chief Complaints:** Burning sensation, pain, discomfort in the throat and oral cavity, and difficulty swallowing for one night.

**History of presenting complaints:** A female patient aged 55 years was suffering from dry cough for from past 2 days, for which she was advised *Asthishrinkala* (*Cissus quadrangularis*) by her neighbour, and apparently, she consumed it, and by evening, she developed acute burning sensation, pain, discomfort in the throat and oral cavity, along with difficulty in swallowing meals. The next morning patient came to our OPD for the management of the above-mentioned complaints.

### Past Medical History

No medical history.

### Medication History

No regular medications. Took *Asthishrinkala* (self-administered) one day before symptom onset.

### Allergies

No known allergies.

### Risk Factors

Possible *Amla Pitta* (gastric acidity).

### Timeline Chart

**Table No. 1: Timeline of the Study.**

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 15-7-2023 | Consumed <i>Asthishrinkala</i> , Same day – <i>Ruja, Daha, Asyavairasyata, Tiktavaktrata, Raga</i> |
| 16-7-2023 | Presented to OPD therapy initiated.  |
| 19-7-2023 | Symptoms significantly improved.   |
| 21-7-2023 | Complete symptomatic relief  |
| 23-7-2023 | Follow-up: no recurrence   |

### Differential Diagnosis

- Recurrent aphthous stomatitis
- Oral mucositis
- Chemical burn of the oral mucosa
- Allergic ulceration.

### Diagnostic Reasoning

Symptoms developed immediately after consuming a *Pitta*-aggravating drug; classical features matched *Pittaja Mukhapaka*.

### Investigations

No laboratory investigations were required as the case was clinically evident.

### Diagnostic Challenges

The patient presented after self-medication, identifying the triggering agent required detailed history taking.

## THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION

Formulation Details of *Mukhapakahara Arka*:

Contains *Guduchi, Triphala, Jati, Vasa, Darvi, Draksha*.

### Dose

30–40 ml *Gandusha* twice daily before food for five days.

### Dietary Advice

- Avoid spicy, oily, sour, salty, or very hot food
- Prefer cool, soft food.

**Lifestyle Advice**

- Maintain oral hygiene
- Avoid speaking excessively during the acute phase

**Concomitant Medications**

None prescribed.

**FOLLOW-UP AND OUTCOMES**

**Table No. 2: Symptoms before and after treatments.**

| Sr. no | Symptoms                               | Before treatment | During treatment | After treatment |
|--------|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1      | <i>Ruja</i> (pain)                     | +++              | ++               | —               |
| 2      | <i>Daha</i> (burning sensation)        | +++              | +                | —               |
| 3      | <i>Tiktavakrata</i> (bitter taste)     | ++               | —                | —               |
| 4      | <i>Asyavairashyata</i> (loss of taste) | +                | —                | —               |
| 5      | <i>Raga</i> (redness)                  | +++              | +                | —               |
| 6      | <i>Vrana</i> (ulcer)                   | —                | —                | —               |

**Follow-up**

Day 10 – No recurrence, patient fully satisfied.

**Table No. 3. Oral Mucositis Assessment Scale.**

| Location                     | Erythema (before treatment) | Erythema (After treatment) |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Lip – upper                  | 1                           | 0                          |
| Lip – lower                  | 2                           | 0                          |
| Buccal mucosa – right        | 2                           | 0                          |
| Buccal mucosa – left         | 2                           | 0                          |
| Tongue ventrolateral – right | 1                           | 0                          |
| Tongue ventrolateral – left  | 1                           | 0                          |
| Floor of the mouth           | 1                           | 0                          |
| Palate – hard                | 2                           | 0                          |
| Palate – soft                | 2                           | 0                          |

Severity of erythema: 0 = none, 1 = not severe, 2 = severe.

**Figures:** Figures have been depicted in Figures 1 and 2.



**Figure 1: Before treatment.**



**Figure 2: After Treatment.**

## DISCUSSION

In this case study, *Sannikrishta Nidana* (immediate or directly associated causes), like *Asthishrinkala* (*Cissus quadrangularis*) and *Viprakrishta Nidana* (indirect cause), such as *Amla pitta* (hyperacidity), along with *Asthishrinkala* itself, which exhibits *Madhura Rasa* (sweet taste), *Katu Vipaka* (pungent post-digestive effect), *Ushna Veerya* (hot potency), and *Pittala* (Pitta-aggravating nature), may cause *Sthanika Pitta* (localised Pitta vitiation) and *Rakta vaishamya* (vitiation of blood), leading to *Pittaja Mukhapaka*.

*Mukhapakahara Arka* (distilled herbal preparation to alleviate oral lesions) containing *Pittahara Dravyas* is used. The *Mukhapakahara Arka*, comprising drugs such as *Guduchi*, *Triphala*, *Jati*, *Vasa*, *Darvi*, and *Draksha*, exhibits *Pittahara* (Pitta-pacifying) and *Vrana Ropana* (wound-healing) properties, thus supporting the *Ropana* (healing) of *Mukhapaka*.

Along with that, the drugs have properties such as anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-ulcer, and wound healing properties, which help in reducing inflammation and healing the ulcer.

## CONCLUSION

The *Nidana*, like *Asthishrinkala* and *Amla Pitta*, which are the causes of *Mukhapaka* in the present case study, *Mukhapakahara Arka*, a drug having the properties which might help in reducing acidic pH level of saliva, *Ruja*, *Daha*, *Asyavairasyata* and reducing the number of *Vranas* in the oral cavity, thereby helping in reducing *Mukhapaka*. Therefore, *Mukhapakahara Ark* showed potential benefit in the management of *Pittaja Mukhapaka*.

## Strengths

- Rapid response within 5 days
- Non-invasive, safe, cost-effective treatment.

**Limitations**

- Single patient
- No laboratory assessment for inflammatory markers.

**Patient perspective**

The treatment was simple and very effective. I experienced relief much faster than I expected. The burning and pain came down quickly, and I felt completely normal within a few days.

**Ethics & Consent****Informed consent**

Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for publication of this case report.

**Ethics statement**

Ethical approval was not taken as the manuscript describes a single case report.

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