

ROLE OF MEDOHARA AND PRAMEHAGHNA DRAVYAS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF METABOLIC DISORDERS: A COMPREHENSIVE AYURVEDIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Metabolic disorders have emerged as major health concerns in the present era. Conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, dyslipidemia, hypertension, and metabolic syndrome are commonly associated with inappropriate dietary habits, physical inactivity, stress, and sedentary behaviour. Their coexistence may contribute to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and other chronic complications. Ayurveda explains disorders arising from excessive nourishment through concepts such as *Santarpana*, *Medo Doṣa*, *Sthaulya*, *Prameha*, *Madhumeha*, and impairment of *Agni*. Excessive consumption of heavy, oily, and sweet foods, overeating, and inadequate physical activity are described as important factors in the development of *Santarpanajanya Vikāra*. The concepts of *Sthaulya* and *Prameha* also show considerable relevance to obesity and metabolic disturbances in the contemporary context.^[1,2] Ayurvedic classics describe

several *Medohara*, *Lekhaniya*, and *Pramehaghna Dravyas* that may be useful in disorders involving excessive accumulation of *Meda* and derangement of *Prameha*. These drugs are described with actions such as *Lekhana*, *Dīpana*, *Pācana*, and *Kaphahara*. A critical review of classical Ayurvedic literature identified numerous *Medohara* and *Lekhaniya Dravyas*, with many possessing *Tikta*, *Kaṭu*, or *Kaṣāya Rasa*, *Laghu-Rūkṣa Guṇa*, and properties that may

help reduce *Kapha* and *Meda*.^[3] The relevance of Ayurvedic medicines in metabolic disorders has also been investigated through modern scientific research. A systematic review and meta-analysis published in 2022 evaluated 199 randomized controlled trials involving 21,191 participants and 98 Ayurvedic medicines used in type 2 diabetes mellitus. Several interventions demonstrated improvements in glycaemic parameters; however, the review also reported limitations in methodological quality, reporting, and the availability of high-quality evidence.^[4] The present review therefore discusses the Ayurvedic understanding of metabolic disorders, with particular emphasis on *Medohara* and *Pramehaghna Dravyas*. It further examines selected medicinal plants, their Ayurvedic properties, possible pharmacological mechanisms, and available experimental and clinical evidence. The review aims to provide an integrated perspective on the potential role of these Ayurvedic drugs in the management of metabolic disorders.

KEYWORDS: *Medohara*, *Pramehaghna*, *Medo Doṣa*, *Prameha*, *Madhumeha*, metabolic disorders, obesity, diabetes mellitus, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

Metabolic disorders such as obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, dyslipidemia, hypertension, and metabolic syndrome are increasing globally and are commonly associated with unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and sedentary habits. These conditions often coexist and may increase the risk of cardiovascular and other chronic complications.^[5]

Ayurveda emphasizes proper *Āhāra* and *Vihāra* for maintaining health. Excessive intake of heavy, oily, and sweet foods, overeating, lack of exercise, and excessive daytime sleep are described as causes of *Santarpanottha Vikāra*. The concepts of *Sthaulya*, *Medo Doṣa*, and *Prameha* provide an Ayurvedic framework for understanding several features of metabolic disorders. *Prameha* involves multiple *Doṣas* and *Dūṣyas*, with important involvement of *Kapha*, *Meda*, and *Kleda*.

Although *Prameha* is not directly equivalent to diabetes mellitus or metabolic syndrome, certain etiological and clinical features show similarities. Therefore, *Medohara* and *Pramehaghna Dravyas*, traditionally used to regulate *Meda*, *Kapha*, *Kleda*, and *Prameha*, may have potential relevance in the management of metabolic disorders.

Ayurvedic Concept of Metabolic Disorders

Santarpana

Santarpana refers to excessive nourishment resulting from overconsumption of heavy, oily, and sweet foods along with inadequate physical activity. Persistent *Santarpana* may promote aggravation of *Kapha* and accumulation of *Meda*, contributing to conditions such as *Sthaulya* and *Prameha*.^[1,6]

In the present context, this concept may be discussed in relation to excessive energy intake, obesity, and sedentary habits; however, *Santarpana* should not be considered an exact equivalent of any single modern disease.

Medo Doṣa

Medas is one of the seven *Dhātus* and has an important role in maintaining normal body functions. Excessive accumulation or abnormality of *Meda* is particularly associated with *Sthaulya*. Classical descriptions of excessive *Meda* include increased sweating, excessive hunger and thirst, reduced physical activity, and weakness.^[1,2] Thus, *Medo Doṣa* is an important concept for understanding the therapeutic role of *Medohara Dravyas*.

Prameha

Prameha is a major disease group described in Ayurveda, comprising twenty types based on *Doṣa* involvement—ten *Kaphaja*, six *Pittaja*, and four *Vātaja*. *Madhumeha* is included under *Vātaja Prameha*. Excessive intake of heavy, oily, and sweet foods, overeating, and lack of physical activity are among the important causative factors described for *Prameha*.^[1,7]

Role of *Agni*

Agni plays a central role in digestion and metabolism according to Ayurveda. Disturbed *Agni* due to improper diet and lifestyle may contribute to abnormal processing of nutrients and disease development. Therefore, maintaining appropriate *Agni* through suitable diet, lifestyle, and treatment is an important aspect of Ayurvedic management of metabolic disorders.^[1,6]

Concept of *Medohara Dravyas*

Medohara refers to the therapeutic action of reducing excessive or abnormal *Meda*. Such drugs are particularly considered useful in conditions involving aggravated *Kapha* and increased *Meda*. The *Charaka Saṁhitā* describes *Lekhaniya Mahākaṣāya*, while various classical texts mention several drugs possessing *Lekhana* and *Medohara* properties.^[1,3]

Many *Medohara* and *Lekhaniya Dravyas* possess *Tikta*, *Kaṭu*, or *Kaṣāya Rasa*, along with *Laghu-Rūkṣa Guṇa* and other properties that are traditionally considered useful for reducing *Kapha* and *Meda*.^[3]

Lekhana, Dīpana and Pācana Actions

Lekhana denotes the therapeutic action of reducing excessive accumulation. *Dīpana* supports digestive capacity, whereas *Pācana* is associated with the proper processing of undigested or improperly metabolized substances. These actions together are considered important in the Ayurvedic management of disorders involving excess *Kapha*, *Meda*, and *Kleda*.^[1,3]

Concept of *Pramehaghna Dravyas*

Pramehaghna Dravyas are substances traditionally used in the management of *Prameha*. Classical literature describes numerous medicinal plants with *Pramehaghna* properties, and their selection depends on the involved *Doṣa*, *Dūṣya*, disease stage, and individual patient factors.^[7]

Medohara and *Pramehaghna* actions may overlap, particularly in *Prameha* associated with excessive nourishment, obesity, and *Kapha-Meda* involvement. Thus, these drugs may act through multiple Ayurvedic therapeutic principles rather than through a single mechanism.^[3,8]

Selected Important *Medohara* and *Pramehaghna Dravyas*

For a focused review, selected drugs with classical importance and available scientific evidence are discussed below.

<i>Dravya</i>	Botanical name	Main Ayurvedic relevance	Major area of modern research
<i>Vijayasāra</i>	<i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i>	<i>Pramehaghna, Kapha-Pitta-hara</i>	Glucose regulation
<i>Guḍmāra</i>	<i>Gymnema sylvestre</i>	<i>Pramehaghna, Kaphahara</i>	Glycaemic control
<i>Kāravellaka</i>	<i>Momordica charantia</i>	<i>Tikta, Kaphahara, Pramehaghna</i>	Glucose regulation
<i>Mamejaka</i>	<i>Enicostema littorale</i>	<i>Tikta, Dīpana, Pācana</i>	Hypoglycaemic potential
<i>Methikā</i>	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>	<i>Dīpana, Pācana</i>	Glucose and lipid metabolism
<i>Haridrā</i>	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	<i>Kaphahara, Lekhana</i>	Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity

Vijayasāra

Vijayasāra (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) is traditionally used in *Prameha*. Its classical properties support its use particularly in conditions associated with *Kapha* and abnormal *Meda*. Modern studies have investigated its possible glucose-lowering effects.

Guḍmāra

Guḍmāra (*Gymnema sylvestre*) is traditionally used for *Prameha*. Modern research has focused mainly on its possible effects on glucose metabolism. A systematic review and meta-analysis of clinical studies reported improvement in glycaemic parameters with *Gymnema sylvestre* supplementation, although variation among studies was present.

Kāravellaka

Kāravellaka (*Momordica charantia*) is a bitter medicinal plant commonly used in traditional medicine for diabetes. A systematic review and meta-analysis of ten studies involving 1,045 patients reported reductions in fasting glucose, postprandial glucose and HbA1c compared with placebo. However, the authors noted that the included studies had moderate to high risk of bias and the quality of evidence was limited.

Mamejaka

Mamejaka (*Enicostema littorale*) is traditionally used in *Prameha* and other metabolic conditions. Its bitter taste and *Dīpana-Pācana* properties provide a classical basis for its use. Experimental studies have reported hypoglycaemic and antioxidant potential, but good-quality human clinical evidence remains limited.

Methikā

Methikā (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*) has both dietary and medicinal importance. It has been studied for possible effects on blood glucose and lipid metabolism. The systematic review of Ayurvedic medicines in type 2 diabetes included *Trigonella foenum-graecum* and reported a reduction in HbA1c compared with control in the available trials.

Haridrā

Haridrā (*Curcuma longa*) is widely used in Ayurveda. It is traditionally associated with *Kaphahara* and *Lekhana* actions. Its major constituent, curcumin, has been studied extensively for antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. These activities may be relevant to

metabolic disorders, but evidence for isolated curcumin should not automatically be considered evidence for every Ayurvedic preparation of *Haridrā*.

Modern Pharmacological Evidence

Modern research suggests that several plants traditionally used as *Medohara* and *Pramehaghna Dravyas* may influence glucose metabolism, lipid levels, oxidative stress and inflammation.

The strongest evidence among the selected drugs is currently available for some commonly studied plants such as *Gymnema sylvestre* and *Momordica charantia*. However, clinical evidence varies considerably between individual drugs and preparations.

A large systematic review and meta-analysis published in 2022 evaluated 199 randomized controlled trials involving 21,191 participants and 98 Ayurvedic medicines. Several interventions showed reductions in HbA1c and fasting blood glucose. However, the review also found that methodological reporting was often inadequate and adverse events were not consistently reported.^[4]

Therefore, the available evidence is encouraging but should not be interpreted as definitive proof of efficacy for all Ayurvedic medicines.

Ayurvedic–Modern Correlation

The possible relationship between Ayurvedic actions and modern metabolic effects can be summarized as follows:

Ayurvedic concept	Possible modern interpretation
<i>Medohara</i>	Reduction of excessive adiposity or lipid accumulation
<i>Lekhana</i>	Reduction of excessive tissue accumulation
<i>Pramehaghna</i>	Possible improvement in glucose regulation
<i>Kaphahara</i>	Relevance in obesity-associated metabolic dysfunction
<i>Dīpana</i>	Support of digestive and metabolic function
<i>Pācana</i>	Support of normal metabolic processing
<i>Rasāyana</i>	Antioxidant and tissue-supportive potential

These are conceptual correlations, not direct equivalents. Modern biomedical parameters such as blood glucose, HbA1c, triglycerides and LDL cholesterol cannot be considered identical to Ayurvedic concepts such as *Meda*, *Kleda* or *Doṣa*.

Role in the Management of Metabolic Disorders

Ayurvedic management of metabolic disorders includes correction of causative factors along with appropriate *Āhāra*, physical activity, daily routine, and medicines. In *Prameha*, dietary and lifestyle modification are considered important components of management.

In individuals with excess body weight and *Kapha-Meda* predominance, *Medohara* and *Lekhana* approaches may be considered according to the clinical condition. Similarly, appropriate *Pramehaghna Dravyas* may be selected in patients presenting with features of *Prameha*. The choice of treatment depends on *Prakṛti*, *Doṣa*, *Dūṣya*, *Agni*, age, strength, associated conditions, and disease stage.^[1,3]

Caution is required when Ayurvedic medicines are used along with conventional antidiabetic drugs, as combined treatment may influence blood glucose levels. Appropriate clinical monitoring is therefore advisable.

DISCUSSION

Metabolic disorders are multifactorial conditions influenced by diet, lifestyle, body composition, and metabolic abnormalities. Ayurveda considers these factors through concepts such as *Santarpana*, *Medo Doṣa*, *Sthaulya*, *Prameha*, *Agni*, and *Doṣa*.^[1,6]

Medohara and *Pramehaghna Dravyas* are particularly relevant because several traditionally used drugs are described for conditions involving excessive *Meda*, *Kapha*, and *Prameha*. Many *Medohara Dravyas* possess *Tikta*, *Kaṭu*, or *Kaṣāya Rasa* and *Laghu-Rūkṣa Guṇa*, which are traditionally associated with reduction of *Kapha* and *Meda*.^[3]

Modern research provides preliminary evidence for the metabolic effects of selected plants, including *Gymnema sylvestre* and *Momordica charantia*. However, variations in plant species, preparations, dosage, study methodology, and quality of evidence make comparison difficult.

An important challenge is that modern studies often evaluate isolated extracts or standardized preparations, whereas classical Ayurveda selects and administers medicines according to *Rasa-Pañcaka*, *Doṣa*, *Dūṣya*, *Agni*, and individual patient characteristics. Future research should therefore incorporate appropriate Ayurvedic principles while maintaining accepted standards of clinical research.

CONCLUSION

Medohara and *Pramehaghna Dravyas* have an important role in the Ayurvedic understanding and management of metabolic disorders. Their therapeutic relevance can be explained through concepts such as *Santarpana*, *Medo Doṣa*, *Sthaulya*, and *Prameha*.

Classical literature describes several drugs with *Medohara*, *Lekhana*, *Dīpana*, *Pācana*, and *Kaphahara* actions. Modern studies have also reported promising effects of selected plants on blood glucose and other metabolic parameters.

However, the strength of evidence varies among individual drugs and preparations. Well-designed clinical trials with standardized formulations, adequate safety monitoring, and objective metabolic outcomes are needed. An integrated approach involving appropriate *Āhāra*, *Vihāra*, physical activity, and individualized Ayurvedic treatment may provide a useful framework for managing metabolic disorders.

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