

TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF APAMARGA KSHARASUTRA IN TREATING BHAGANDARA (FISTULA-IN-ANO): A COMPELLING CASE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Bhagandara* (Fistula-in-ano) is a challenging anorectal disorder characterized by persistent pain and pus discharge. Traditional surgical interventions often pose significant risks, including fecal incontinence. *Ksharasutra*, an ancient Ayurvedic technique, offers a promising alternative with both chemical and mechanical action to treat the condition effectively. A 40-year-old male presented with a six-month history of pain and pus discharge from the perianal region. Clinical examination revealed an external opening at the 3 o'clock position, 4 cm from the anal verge, and an internal opening at the same position in the anal canal at the dentate line. Diagnosed with *Bhagandara*, the patient underwent treatment with *Apamarga Ksharasutra* after giving informed consent. **Method:** The procedure involved local anesthesia with 2% xylocaine jelly and probing to confirm the fistulous tract. *Apamarga Ksharasutra*, composed of *Snuhi*

Ksheera, *Apamarga Kshara*, and *Haridra* powder, was ligated into the fistulous tract. Weekly changes of the *Ksharasutra* were performed using the Rail-Road technique until the fistulous tract was completely excised. **Results:** The initial 4 cm tract was successfully cut through in 21 days, with the *Ksharasutra* changed weekly. The patient experienced minimal discomfort, which subsided after sitz baths. Follow-up over three months showed no signs of recurrence, and the patient's quality of life improved significantly. **Conclusion:** This case highlights the transformative impact of *Ksharasutra* in managing *Bhagandara*. The treatment not only

ensures effective excision and healing but also minimizes the risks associated with traditional surgical methods. The success of this case underscores the potential of *Ksharasutra* as a superior and validated method for treating fistula-in-ano, meriting further recognition and implementation in clinical practice.

KEYWORDS: *Apamarga Kshara sutra, Ayurveda, Bhagandar, Fistula-in-Ano.*

INTRODUCTION

Anorectal diseases such as *Arsha* (piles) and *Bhagandara* (fistula in Ano) are notoriously difficult to cure, with *Bhagandara* being counted among the *Ashta Maharogas* (eight serious diseases). This chronic disease, although not fatal, significantly affects the patient's quality of life due to the discomfort and problems it causes, as mentioned in the Samhitas. The term *Bhagandara* combines two words: "*Bhaga*," which refers to the area around the anus that extends to the genitals, and "*Darana*," which means "to tear" or "destroy." Therefore, the abscess (*pidika*) that develops in this region and leads to fistula is called as "*Bhagandara pidika*".^[1] This disease or sinus infection, which damages the area around the genitals, urinary bladder and anus, is often the result of rupture of a *Bhagandara Pidika* or abscess in this region. The sinuses can secrete various substances such as gas, feces, urine, semen, menstrual fluid, or even worms.^[2] *Bhagandara* is named for its presence in the rectum, perineum, bladder and surrounding areas (collectively called *Bhaga*). In their non-suppurative stage these pustules are called *pidika* and in their purulent stage they are called as *Bhagandara*. *Acharya Susruta*, a pioneer in ancient Indian medical science, outlined several comprehensive approaches for treating anorectal diseases. His methodologies include:

1. *Bhaisaja Chikitsa* (Medicinal Therapy): Utilizing herbal and natural medicines to manage and treat anorectal conditions.
2. *Kshara Karma* (Alkaline Therapy): Employing alkaline substances to treat the affected area.
3. *Agni Karma* (Thermal Cauterization): Using heat to cauterize and heal anorectal issues.
4. *Shastra Karmachikitsa* (Surgical Intervention): Performing surgical procedures to address severe anorectal diseases.

Among these conditions, *Bhagandara* (anal fistula) is particularly notorious for its complexity and recurrence. Traditionally, the excision of the fistula has been the go-to method, as suggested by *Susrut*. However, this approach can have significant drawbacks. Specifically, removing a high anal fistula often carries the risk of fecal incontinence, which

can drastically diminish a patient's quality of life. This has driven the search for more refined and less invasive treatments. One such revolutionary technique is *Kshara Karma*, which has emerged as a game-changer in the field of anorectal treatment, especially for conditions like *Bhagandara*.^[3] *Kshara Karma* leverages both mechanical pressure and the chemical action of specially prepared alkaline substances to gradually excise the fistula. This method provides a controlled and precise approach to treating the condition, significantly minimizing the risks associated with traditional surgical methods. A pivotal component of *Kshara Karma* is *Ksharsutra*, a para-surgical solution that has transformed the management of anorectal diseases. The *Ksharsutra* technique involves the use of a medicated thread that is carefully prepared with alkaline substances. This thread is placed in the fistulous tract, and its action is twofold. Mechanically, the thread exerts pressure, leading to the gradual cutting and drainage of the fistula. Chemically, the alkaline properties of the thread promote healing and prevent infection.

The benefits of *Ksharsutra* in the treatment of *Bhagandara* are manifold:

Minimized Risk of Incontinence: By avoiding extensive surgical excision, the integrity of the anal sphincter is preserved, reducing the risk of fecal incontinence.

Controlled and Gradual Excision: The progressive action of *Ksharsutra* allows for precise removal of the fistulous tract, enhancing the effectiveness of the treatment.

Reduced Recurrence: The combination of mechanical and chemical actions ensures thorough treatment, minimizing the chances of recurrence.

Enhanced Patient Outcomes: Patients experience less pain, quicker recovery, and improved overall quality of life.^[4]

CASE REPORT

Case Study: Successful Management of *Bhagandara* (Fistula-in-ano) with *Apamrga Kshar Sutra*.

Patient Profile

Age-40 years

Gender- Male

Department- Shalya Tantra, Gopabandhu Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya

Chief Complaints

- Pain and pus discharge from the perianal region for the past six months.

Clinical Findings

External Opening: 3 o'clock position in the perianal region, approximately 4 cm from the anal verge.

Internal Opening: 3 o'clock position into the anal canal at the dentate line, confirmed through digital per rectal examination and probing.

Diagnosis

- *Bhagandara* (Fistula-in-ano).

Treatment Plan

After obtaining the patient's informed consent, the decision was made to manage the condition using *Apamrga Kshar Sutra*.

Procedure

1. Preparation

- Application of 2% xylocaine jelly for local anesthesia.
- Probing to confirm the fistulous track. [Fig. 1]



2. *Kshar Sutra* Application

- *Apamrga Kshar Sutra* was carefully ligated into the fistulous track. [Fig. 2]



3. **Post-procedure Care:**

- Advised the patient to maintain local hygiene through sitz baths with lukewarm water.
- Emphasized the importance of proper bowel habits to prevent complications.

4. **Follow-up and Management:**

- The wound was monitored and found to be healthy during each change of the *Kshar Sutra*. [Fig. 3]
- Kshar Sutra was changed weekly using the Rail-Road technique until the complete cutting of the fistulous track was achieved.
- The initial length of the fistulous track was 4 cm, which was completely cut through in 21 days.



- Weekly changes of the *Kshar Sutra* caused burning pain in the ano for only one day, which subsided after sitz baths.

Outcomes

- The unit cutting length of the track was 1.44 cm per week.
- After the complete cut-through of the track, the patient was followed up weekly for three months.
- No signs or symptoms of recurrence were observed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ksharsutra has emerged as a groundbreaking treatment in the management of ano-rectal disorders, showcasing miraculous results. Particularly effective in treating fistula-in-ano, this ancient Ayurvedic technique combines the potent therapeutic properties of natural ingredients to achieve unparalleled success.

Ingredients of *Apamarga Kshar Sutra*

1. *Snuhi Ksheera*

- **Properties:** *Shodhana* (purifying), *Ropana* (healing), *Katu* (pungent), *Tikta* (bitter) *Rasa*, and *Ushna Virya* (hot potency).
- **Benefits:** Enhances the healing process by curing infection and reducing inflammation.

2. *Apamarga Kshara*

- **Properties:** *Chedana* (excision), *Bhedana* (incision), *Lekhana* (scraping), and *Tridoshaghna* (alleviating all doshas).
- **Benefits:** Cauterizes tissue indirectly through its *Ksharana Guna*, facilitating effective excision and incision of the fistulous tract.

3. *Haridra Powder*

- **Properties:** *Rakta Shodhana* (blood purifying), *Twaka Doshahara*, *Shothahara* (anti-inflammatory), *Vatahara* (alleviates Vata), *Vishaghna* (antimicrobial), and *Vrana Ropana* (wound healing).
- **Benefits:** Provides bactericidal action along with significant healing properties, promoting a healthy recovery.^[5]

Mechanism of Action: *Apamarga Kshar Sutra* exhibits both chemical and mechanical cutting actions while simultaneously promoting healing. The *Snuhi Ksheera's* healing

properties, combined with the potent actions of *Apamarga Kshara* and *Haridra* powder, ensure comprehensive treatment of the fistulous tract. This unique combination results in effective excision and healing, with minimal discomfort to the patient.^[6]

Validation and Recognition: The efficacy of *Ksharsutra* has gained recognition and validation not only in traditional Ayurvedic texts but also in modern medical literature. Organizations such as ICMR, WHO, and CSIR have proposed the establishment of *Kshar Sutra* centers dedicated exclusively to the treatment of ano-rectal diseases on a national scale. This initiative underscores the proven success and acceptance of *Ksharsutra* as a superior method for managing fistula-in-ano and other related disorders. In a recent case at Gopabandhu Ayurvedic College and Hospital, a 40-year-old male with a fistula-in-ano experienced remarkable results with *Apamarga Kshar Sutra* treatment. Over 21 days, the 4 cm fistulous tract was completely cut through, with weekly *Kshar Sutra* changes causing only transient burning pain, easily managed with sitz baths. The patient showed no signs of recurrence during the three-month follow-up period, highlighting the treatment's effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *Acharya Susrut's* ancient wisdom, combined with the modern application of *Kshara Karma* and *Ksharsutra*, offers a highly effective and minimally invasive solution for treating *Bhagandara* and other anorectal diseases. This innovative approach not only aligns with the principles of Ayurveda but also meets contemporary medical standards, ensuring better patient care and outcomes. *Ksharsutra* represents a remarkable confluence of ancient Ayurvedic wisdom and modern therapeutic efficacy. Its ability to perform precise chemical and mechanical actions while promoting healing makes it an invaluable tool in the management of ano-rectal disorders. As more dedicated centers for *Ksharsutra* treatment emerge, the broader medical community will continue to witness the profound benefits of this traditional yet revolutionary approach.

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