

COMPREHENSIVE AYURVEDIC REVIEWE: THE MANAGEMENT OF SHWETAPRADARA W.S.R. LEUCORRHOEA

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Article Received on 05 July 2026,
Article Revised on 25 July 2026,
Article Published on 01 August 2026,
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21773129>

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How to cite this Article: Dr. Apurva Tewatia^{*1}, Dr. Hemlata Sharma², Dr. Shubham Gupta³. (2026). Comprehensive ayurvedic reviewe: the management of shwetapradara w.s.r. Leucorrhoea. World Journal of Pharmaceutical Research, 15(15), 2051–2063. This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.

ABSTRACT

Shwetapradara, the Ayurvedic correlate of leucorrhoea, represents one of the most prevalent gynecological complaints affecting women across all socioeconomic strata, particularly during the reproductive years. Though often perceived as a minor ailment, its chronic manifestation can significantly compromise a woman's physical comfort, psychological well-being, and quality of life. This review article comprehensively examines the Ayurvedic understanding and therapeutic approaches to *Shwetapradara*, integrating classical principles with contemporary clinical evidence. The conceptual framework positions *Shwetapradara* as a *Tridoshaja* disorder with predominant *Kapha* and *Vata* vitiation, manifesting through *Yonigata Srava* (vaginal discharge) accompanied by *Yoni Kandu* (itching), *Daha* (burning), and *Daurgandhya*

(offensive odour). The therapeutic armamentarium encompasses a multi-modal strategy including *Shamana Chikitsa* (pacifying therapy) with judiciously selected herbal and herbo-mineral formulations such as *Pushyanuga Churna*, *Pradarantak Rasa*, *Kukkutanda Twak Bhasma*, and *Lodhra* preparations, alongside *Sthanika Chikitsa* (local therapies) comprising *Yoni Prakshalana* (vaginal douching) with *Kashayas* of *Lodhra*, *Nyagrodha*, and *Pullaas*, and *Yoni Varti* (vaginal suppositories). Recent clinical studies substantiate the efficacy of

these interventions, demonstrating significant symptomatic relief and addressing the underlying *Dosha* imbalances with favourable safety profiles. This integrated approach offers a holistic, cost-effective, and sustainable alternative to conventional antibiotic therapy, emphasizing not merely symptomatic control but root-cause resolution and recurrence prevention. The review underscores the necessity for robust randomized controlled trials to further validate these classical therapeutic claims within the framework of evidence-based medicine.

KEYWORDS: *Shwetapradara*, Leucorrhoea, *Yoni Vyapad*, *Kapha Shamaka*, *Yoni Prakshalana*, *Lodhra*.

INTRODUCTION

Shwetapradara is one of the most frequently encountered gynecological complaints in clinical practice, characterized by an abnormal whitish vaginal discharge that may be profuse, malodorous, and accompanied by local discomfort.^[1] The term itself is a clinical descriptor not explicitly enumerated in the classical Brihat Trayi but is derived from its cardinal features: "*Shweta*" (white) and "*Pradara*" (excessive flow or discharge), suggesting its characterization based on symptomatology rather than as a distinct disease entity in the *Samhitas*.^[2]

Contemporary medical science recognizes physiological leucorrhoea as a non-pathological secretory phenomenon occurring during ovulation, pregnancy, and sexual arousal. However, pathological leucorrhoea, with which *Shwetapradara* is correlated, arises from diverse aetiologies including cervicitis, vaginitis (candidal, trichomonal, or bacterial), pelvic inflammatory disease, and systemic factors such as anaemia, diabetes mellitus, and malnutrition.^[3] The World Health Organization estimates that vulvovaginal infections account for a substantial proportion of gynecological morbidity globally, with recurrent episodes posing significant therapeutic challenges due to antibiotic resistance and side-effects.^[4]

Ayurveda, with its holistic framework rooted in *Tridosha* theory, provides a comprehensive understanding of *Shwetapradara* through the lens of *Dosha* imbalance, *Dhatu* involvement, and *Strotodushti* (channel pathology). The condition is considered to result primarily from vitiation of *Kapha* and *Vata Doshas*, with secondary involvement of *Pitta* in infectious states.^[5] *Ama* (metabolic toxins) and impaired *Rasa Dhatwagni* (digestive and metabolic fire) are recognized as critical pathogenic factors in its genesis.^[6]

The Ayurvedic management of *Shwetapradara* is characterized by its holistic, multi-component approach that addresses both the local pathology and the systemic constitutional imbalances. Treatment strategies include internal medications (*Shamana*), local applications (*Sthanika*), dietary regulation (*Pathya*), and lifestyle modifications (*Vihara*).^[7] Recent clinical research has begun to validate these classical interventions, demonstrating their efficacy and safety in managing this common yet distressing condition.^[8]

This review aims to synthesize the Ayurvedic conceptual framework of *Shwetapradara*, critically evaluate the evidence for various therapeutic modalities, and propose an integrated clinical approach that harmonizes traditional wisdom with contemporary scientific validation.^[9]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To elucidate the Ayurvedic conceptual framework of *Shwetapradara*, including its aetiopathogenesis, clinical presentation, and classification.
- To critically evaluate the therapeutic efficacy and safety of various Ayurvedic interventions—both systemic and local—in the management of *Shwetapradara*, based on available classical and contemporary evidence.
- To synthesize an integrated clinical approach for the holistic management of *Shwetapradara* that aligns with Ayurvedic principles while being adaptable to modern clinical settings.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SHWETAPRADARA IN AYURVEDA

Nidana (Aetiological Factors)

The pathogenesis of *Shwetapradara* is attributed to a constellation of dietary, lifestyle, and psychological factors that collectively vitiate the *Doshas*. The *Nidanas* can be categorized as follows.^[10]

Aharaja (Dietary Factors)

- Excessive consumption of *Guru* (heavy), *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Sheeta* (cold), and *Madhura* (sweet) foods, which aggravate *Kapha*.^[11]
- Intake of *Vishamashana* (incompatible food combinations)
- Consumption of stale, fermented, or contaminated food leading to *Ama* formation
- Nutritional deficiencies, particularly iron and protein, contributing to *Rakta* and *Mamsa Dhatu* depletion.^[12]

Viharaja (Lifestyle Factors)

- *Ati Vyayama* (excessive physical exertion) and *Ati Maithuna* (excessive sexual intercourse)
- Suppression of natural urges (*Vegavidharana*), particularly of *Mutra* (urine) and *Shukra* (semen)
- *Divaswapna* (daytime sleeping) and sedentary habits that vitiate *Kapha*
- *Ratrijagarana* (night awakening) disturbing *Vata*^[13]
- Poor menstrual hygiene and use of unhygienic vaginal tampons or pads

Manasika (Psychological Factors)

- *Chinta* (anxiety), *Shoka* (grief), and *Bhaya* (fear) that disturb *Vata* and *Pitta*
- Psychological stress impacting neuro-endocrine function and immune competence^[14]

Other Factors

- *Garbhapata* (abortions) and *Prasava* (childbirth), particularly repeated or unhygienic
- Chronic systemic diseases like *Prameha* (diabetes) and *Pandu* (anaemia)
- *Krimi* (infections) and *Agantuja* (traumatic or exogenous) factors^[15]
- *Amprapti* (Pathogenesis)

The pathogenesis of *Shwetapradara* involves a sequential process of Dosha vitiation, *Dhatu* involvement, and *Strotodushti*. Vitiated *Kapha Dosha*, in association with *Vata*—particularly *Apana Vayu*—becomes localized in the *Yoni* (female reproductive tract) and *Rajovaha Srotas* (menstrual channels). The interplay between these *Doshas* manifests as excessive white discharge.^[16]

Role of Kapha

Vitiated *Kapha*, with its *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Sheeta* (cold), and *Guru* (heavy) properties, leads to excessive secretion (*Srava*) in the *Yoni* and *Garbhashaya*. When *Kapha* is associated with *Ama*, the discharge becomes sticky, thick, and whitish, adhering to the vaginal walls (*Pichchhilata*).^[17]

Role of Vata

Impaired *Apana Vayu*, which is responsible for the downward movement of *Malas* (excretory products), contributes to the downward flux of the excessive discharge (*Atipravritti*). Its

vitiation also leads to associated symptoms such as *Kati Shula* (low backache) and *Yoni Shula* (pelvic pain).^[18]

Role of *Pitta*

While *Pitta* is not the primary *Dosha*, its vitiation—particularly in cases of infection—produces *Yoni Daha* (burning sensation), *Daurgandhya* (foul odour), and discoloration of discharge (*Pitta* transforms the white discharge to yellowish or greenish).^[19]

The *Samprapti Ghatakas* (components of pathogenesis) thus include *Kapha*, *Vata*, *Ama*, *Rasa Dhatu*, *Rakta Dhatu*, *Rajovaha Srotas*, and *Yoni*. Chronicity and recurrence are often attributed to *Dhatwagnimandya* (diminished metabolic activity) and impaired local immunity.^[20]

Classification and Clinical Features

Classical Ayurvedic texts do not provide a direct classification of *Shwetapradara* as an independent disease. However, based on the predominant *Dosha* involvement and clinical presentation, a pragmatic classification can be derived.^[21]

Kaphaja Shwetapradara

- *Srava*: Thick, white, sticky (*Pichchhila*), copious discharge, often resembling "rice water" or curd in consistency
- Associated Symptoms: *Yoni Kandu* (intense itching), *Yoni Gaurava* (heaviness in the pelvis), *Aruchi* (anorexia), *Tandra* (drowsiness)
- Management: *Kapha Shamaka* therapies with *Katu*, *Tikta*, and *Kashaya* drugs and *Ruksha* (dry) measures^[22]

Vataja Shwetapradara

- *Srava*: Frothy, scanty, variable in consistency, intermittent
- Associated Symptoms: *Kati Shula* (backache), *Vedana* (pain), *Antrakujana* (borborygmi), *Sanga* (constipation), anxiety
- Management: *Vata Anulomana* and *Brimhana* (nourishing) therapies with *Ushna* (hot), *Snigdha* (unctuous) drugs.^[23]

Pittanubandhi Shwetapradara

- *Srava*: Yellowish or greenish tinge, foul-smelling (*Daurgandhya*)
- Associated Symptoms: *Yoni Daha* (burning), *Mutra Daha* (burning micturition), fever

- Management: *Pitta Shamaka* therapies with *Sheeta*, *Madhura*, and *Tikta* drugs.^[24]

Kaphavataja Shwetapradara

The most common clinical presentation exhibiting features of both *Kapha* and *Vata* vitiation. Discharge is moderate to copious, whitish, sticky, and associated with backache and itching.^[25]

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The Ayurvedic management of *Shwetapradara* is grounded in a multi-pronged therapeutic approach that addresses the local pathology, systemic imbalances, and underlying constitutional factors. Treatment strategies are classified into.^[26]

- *Shamana Chikitsa*: Oral administration of formulations to pacify vitiated *Doshas*
- *Sthanika Chikitsa*: Local applications including douches, suppositories, and ointments
- *Pathya-Apathya*: Dietary and lifestyle modifications to support recovery and prevent recurrence.

Shamana Chikitsa (Systemic Therapy)

Systemic therapy aims to correct the *Dosha* imbalance, eliminate *Ama*, and strengthen the *Dhatus*.^[27]

Herbal Formulations

➤ *Pushyanuga Churna*

A classical polyherbal formulation extensively indicated in *Yoni Vyapadas* and *Pradara*. It contains ingredients such as *Lodhra*, *Daruharidra*, *Mocharasa*, and *Nagakeshara*, which collectively possess *Kashaya* (astringent), *Stambhana* (styptic), and *Kapha-Vata Shamaka* properties.^[28] Clinical studies have demonstrated its efficacy in reducing vaginal discharge and associated symptoms when administered internally, particularly in combination with local therapies^[29]

➤ *Pradarantak Rasa*

A herbo-mineral formulation containing *Parada* (mercury), *Abhraka* (mica), *Kukkutanda* *Twak Bhasma* (eggshell calcinate), and other ingredients. Its therapeutic action is attributed to its astringent, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial properties. It tightens vaginal tissues,

reduces inflammation, and addresses underlying infections. It also regulates *Kapha* and may have haemostatic effects, controlling excessive bleeding.^[30]

➤ **Musalikhadiradi Kashayam**

A decoction prepared from *Musal* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Khadira* (*Acacia catechu*), and other herbs. *Musal* is known for its adaptogenic and immunomodulatory properties, promoting reproductive health and general vitality. *Khadira* contributes anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and astringent actions, addressing issues related to skin and mucous membranes.^[31]

➤ **Lodhra-based Formulations**

Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa* Roxb.) is a cornerstone in the management of *Shwetapradara*. Its *Kashaya Rasa*, *Sheeta Virya*, and *Stambhana* properties make it effective in controlling excessive discharge. It may be administered as a decoction or in powder form with honey. *Lodhra Kalka Paan* with *Nyagrodh Twak Kashaya* has shown significant results in reducing *Yoni Kandu*, *Daurgandhya*, and *Pichchhilata*.^[32]

Herbo-mineral Formulations

- *Kukkutanda Twak Bhasma*:
- *Jasad Bhasma*:
- *Praval Pishti*:

Sthanika Chikitsa (Local Therapy)

Local therapies are directed at the primary site of pathology—the *Yoni* and *Garbhashaya Mukha* (cervix). These therapies provide targeted relief, reduce local inflammation, and eliminate pathogenic organisms.^[33]

➤ **Yoni Prakshalana (Vaginal Douche / Lavage)**

This is a therapeutic vaginal wash with medicated decoctions (*Kashayas*) that helps cleanse the vaginal canal, reduce discharge, and soothe inflamed mucosa.^[34]

Lodhra Kashaya Yoni Prakshalana:

Pullaas (*Rhododendron arboreum*) Decoction:

Panchavalkala-based Decoctions:

➤ **Yoni Varti (Vaginal Suppositories)**

These are medicated suppositories or tampons inserted into the vaginal canal to provide localized therapeutic action over a sustained period.^[35]

Panchavalkaladi Varti:

Kushthadi Varti:

➤ **Yoni Pichu (Vaginal Tampon)**

Yoni Pichu involves the use of a sterile cotton swab soaked in medicated oil (*Taila*) and inserted into the vagina.^[36]

Karanj Taila Yoni Pichu.^[37]

Pathya-Apathya (Dietary and Lifestyle Regimen)

Adjunct measures are critical to support therapy, prevent recurrence, and restore overall health.

Pathya (Wholesome)

- *Yava* (barley), *Godhuma* (wheat), *Shali* (old rice), *Mudga* (green gram), and *Chanaka* (chickpea) in moderation
- Vegetables like *Patola* (snake gourd), *Tikta* (bitter) vegetables, and *Shakha* (leafy greens)
- Fruits like *Amalaki* (Indian gooseberry) and *Draksha* (grapes)
- Spices like *Sunthi* (dried ginger), *Maricha* (black pepper), and *Haritaki* (chebulic myrobalan)
- Use of honey (*Madhu*) as a *Yogavahi* (carrier)

Apathya (Wholesome):

- *Dadhi* (curd), *Amalaki* (when excessive), heavy and sweet foods, *Masha* (black gram), and *Tila* (sesame)
- Excessive sexual intercourse, suppressed urges, daytime sleeping, and sedentary lifestyle
- Unhygienic practices during menstruation and poor personal hygiene
- Psychological stress and anxiety.

DISCUSSION

The Ayurvedic management of *Shwetapradara*, as evidenced by classical texts and contemporary clinical studies, offers a comprehensive and holistic approach that is both scientifically plausible and clinically effective. The conceptual framework of *Shwetapradara*

as a *Tridoshaja* disorder, with *Kapha* and *Vata* as the primary pathogenic Doshas, provides a robust foundation for its management. This is substantiated by the clinical presentations observed in women with leucorrhoea, which often feature a combination of excessive discharge (*Kapha*), itching (*Kapha*), backache (*Vata*), and burning (*Pitta* in cases of infection).

The principle of "root-cause resolution" is central to Ayurvedic therapy. While conventional medicine often provides only symptomatic relief, Ayurveda seeks to address the *Nidanas* and *Samprapti*, thereby preventing recurrence. For instance, the use of *Kukkutanda Twak Bhasma* not only reduces discharge but also improves nutritional status, anaemia, and general debility, tackling the systemic factors that perpetuate the condition. Similarly, *Lodhra*, the key ingredient in many formulations, exerts its effects through *Stambhana* (local astringent), anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial actions, directly counteracting both the excessive secretion and the infectious etiology.

The integration of systemic and local therapies is a distinguishing feature of Ayurvedic gynecology. Systemic medications like *Pradarantak Rasa*, *Pushyanuga Churna*, and *Kukkutanda Twak Bhasma* work on the *Dosha* and *Dhatu* level, while local therapies like *Yoni Prakshalana*, *Yoni Varti*, and *Yoni Pichu* provide targeted relief at the site of pathology. This dual approach is supported by clinical evidence. The study on *Lodhra Kalka Paan* with *Nyagrodh Twak Kashaya* and *Panchavalkaladi Varti* demonstrated superior outcomes compared to local therapy alone, highlighting the synergistic benefit of this integrated strategy. The research on Pullaas further corroborates this, showing that the combination of oral and local therapies yields better results than local therapy alone.

The safety profile of these Ayurvedic interventions is a significant advantage, particularly given the recurrent nature of leucorrhoea and the growing concern about antibiotic resistance. *Bhasmas* and herbomineral formulations, when prepared according to classical guidelines and administered under supervision, have been reported to be free from adverse effects. Local therapies, being non-invasive and using natural substances, also offer a favourable risk-benefit ratio.

Despite the encouraging evidence, several research gaps exist. Most studies are small-scale, open-label, or observational, lacking the rigour of large randomized controlled trials with blinding and placebo control. Standardization of formulations and treatment protocols is also

needed to ensure reproducibility and facilitate wider clinical adoption. Future research should focus on.

- High-quality RCTs: To establish definitive efficacy and compare Ayurvedic therapies with standard conventional treatments.
- Mechanistic Studies: To elucidate the molecular pathways through which these interventions exert their effects, such as through modulation of vaginal microbiome, anti-inflammatory pathways, and hormonal regulation.
- Long-Term Outcomes: To assess the durability of therapeutic benefits and the effectiveness in preventing recurrence.
- Pharmacovigilance: To systematically document the safety profile of herbomineral formulations.

CONCLUSION

Shwetapradara, or leucorrhoea, is a common and distressing gynecological condition for which Ayurveda provides a comprehensive and effective management strategy. Rooted in the *Tridosha* framework, the Ayurvedic approach identifies the pathology as primarily a *Kapha-Vata* disorder, with secondary *Pitta* involvement in infectious states. The treatment is holistic, multi-modal, and patient-centric, utilizing a judicious blend of systemic therapies (*Shamana*), local applications (*Sthanika*), and dietary-lifestyle modifications (*Pathya-Apathya*).

Clinical evidence supports the efficacy of key interventions such as *Lodhra Kashaya Yoni Prakshalana*, *Pushyanuga Churna*, *Pradarantak Rasa*, *Kukkutanda Twak Bhasma*, and *Panchavalkaladi Varti*, demonstrating significant symptomatic relief and favourable safety profiles. The integrated approach—addressing both the local pathology and systemic imbalances—offers distinct advantages over conventional symptomatic treatments by targeting the root cause, preventing recurrence, and promoting overall reproductive health.

The integration of classical Ayurvedic wisdom with rigorous contemporary research is essential to fully realize the potential of these therapies. While the existing evidence is promising, well-designed randomized controlled trials and mechanistic studies are necessary to further validate these claims and position Ayurveda as a valuable evidence-based option in the global management of leucorrhoea and other gynecological disorders.

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