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AYURVEDIC HERBS IN RESPIRATORY DISEASES: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Acute respiratory infections accounts for 20–40% of outpatient and 12–35% of inpatient attendance in a general hospital. Upper respiratory tract infections including nasopharyngitis, pharyngitis, tonsillitis and otitis media constitute 87.5% of the total episodes of respiratory infections. The vast majority of acute upper respiratory tract infections are caused by viruses. All the respiratory diseases can be summed up under the broad heading of *Shwasa* in Ayurveda. A review was conducted from all the available literary sources and the analysed material was presented in an organised manner. The review concluded that a lot of Ayurvedic herbs have a potent role in the management of upper respiratory tract infection.

Keywords : URTI, *Shwasa*, respiratory infection, Ayurvedic herbs.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is known as the traditional form of healing. It has been practiced since from ages. It was said and also a well-known fact that few decades back, our ancestors and saints were liable to gain the longevity of life. The average life span of the human is considered as 100 years. Today because of several reasons, natural disasters and some circumstances; this graph is declining rapidly. Ayurveda gives us this knowledge of health. Unlike many diseases, which can be attributed to the life style of modern man, Respiratory tract infection is an ancient illness. *Shwasa Roga* is a disease described in Ayurvedic texts that shows close resemblance with respiratory diseases of both infective as well as non-infective origin. Clinical correlation of the drugs can be made on the basis of clinical manifestations. Ayurvedic medicines can be a potential and effective alternative for the treatment against the respiratory diseases. Ayurvedic medicines are being used for the treatment of diseases globally so that people all over the world can keep faith on it on the basis of scientific evidences. Ayurvedic drugs include the respiratory tonics and naturally occurring bronchodilator and immunomodulator. Respiration is the evident feature of life which is carried out by *Prana vayu*. *Prana vayu vaigunya* also

accounts to many respiratory disorders. Ayurvedic texts have mentioned respiratory diseases under the various types of *Shwasa roga*. Environmental toxicant induces respiratory disease have also been increased day by day in all over world including India. The toxicant emitted from air pollution has been affected to human being and causes health hazards. The air pollutant like DDT, TCDD, Atrazine, Benzopyrene and Carbofuran causes severe consequences of health hazards in human beings including chronic bronchitis, emphysema. Ayurveda is an ancient medical science and mentioned air pollutant like *raja- dhooma* as causative factors of respiratory disease including allergic bronchitis (*shawas*), allergic rhinitis (*Pratishyaya*), cough (*kasa*) and hiccough (*hikka*)¹Bronchial asthma is one of the most common chronic disease worldwide which is characterized by airflow obstruction with inflammation associated with airway hyper-responsiveness that led to excessive narrowing of airflow along with wheezing, chest tightness and episodic dyspnea²According to Ayurveda, prolonged exposure to *Hetu* hampers the functions of Prana Vayu that initially causes structural damage to the lungs which simultaneously converts the normal elasticity and smoothness of lungs into

hardness and roughness.³Present study aims a review on the management of respiratory diseases through different Ayurvedic herbs which can be managed through Ayurvedic approach that includes a combination of *Shodhana Chikitsa*, Ayurvedic drugs, lifestyle management and wholesome diet.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To review the concept of Ayurvedic herbs in respiratory diseases.

MATERIAL AND METHODS-

Various Ayurvedic classic texts have been used for this study as source materials. Main Ayurvedic classic texts used are *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Astanga Hridaya*, *Astang Samgrah*, *Sarngadhara Samhita*, *Bhava prakasha*, *Kaiyadeva Nighanyu* and various other Ayurvedic literature. Also, relevant modern medical science book, various review and research articles, Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India and website have also been referred.

OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

A variety of single herbs have a potent role in infective as well as non-infective respiratory diseases. Some have been listed below:

1. ***Yastimadhu*** Also known as Glycyrrhiza Glabra (Botanical name) and Mulethi, this herb is consumed in various forms such as *churna* (powder), decoction, infusion or

lozenges and is effective in treating cough, hoarseness, asthma, laryngitis, and bronchitis. Its recommended dose is 1-4 g orally, three times daily; 1-4 g powdered root/150 ml water. To treat asthma, it can be taken in the dose of 20-60 g with honey. Half teaspoon *yashtimadhu* and half teaspoon of ginger can help manage the symptoms of mild respiratory infections. Some other remedies include: To treat tuberculosis, take the powdered root of *Yastimadhu* and wood of *Rakta Chandana* (*Pterocarpus santalinus* Linn.) with milk, 3 times a day. For treating throat issues, take 16.3 g of the powdered root of *Yastimadhu* and boil it in 250 ml milk. This can be consumed twice a day.

2. ***Khadirkastha*** It offers numerous therapeutic benefits for allergy-related respiratory issues. *Khadira* is available in the tablet, powder, or syrup forms. An important Ayurvedic tablet – *Khadiradi Gutika* and *Lavangadi Vati* – is used for treating cough, asthma, bronchitis in addition to other respiratory concerns. Suggested home remedies include sore throat, cold, and cough with *Khadira* bark's decoction. Dose of Powdered form is 1-3 g, Decoction: 30-100 ml per day and Heartwood extract: 500 mg – 1 gm per day.

3. ***Vidarikanda*** Also going by the names of Indian Kudzu (English name)

and *Swadukanda/Kandapalaash* (Sanskrit name), offers expectorant characteristics. *Vidarikanda* powder along with *Mulethi*, *Sunthi*, and *Bala* eliminates excessive congestion in the lungs. The root extract is taken orally in the dose of 1.5-3 grams (in 3 divided doses per day) for 1-4 weeks along with milk.

4. *Pushkarmula* -Native to the Western Himalayan region, this plant is also known as *Kashmira*, *Orris Root*, and *Pushkarmula*. Note that it smells like camphor. It comes with expectorant, anti-catarhal, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties. This herb helps to treat cough, bronchial asthma, contagious fevers, throat inflammation, sore throat, dyspnea, pleurisy, tuberculosis, and chest pain. The plant's roots are used to treat respiratory issues as well as cold, cough, and asthma. In fact, it is one of the primary ingredients in the Ayurvedic tonic – *Dashamoolarishta*. Cough can be treated by consuming its root powder in 1-3 grams along with Dashmoola decoction.

5. *Vasa- Vasaka* or Malabar Nut, helps in treating bronchitis, asthma, excess mucus, and chronic respiratory tract conditions. This bitter- and astringent-tasting herb comprises of two types, black and white. It comes with potent anti-bacterial and anti-microbial properties. The use of *Vasaka* is very beneficial in the diseases like

respiratory tract infections. It possesses the property of antimicrobial and helps in preventing any fungal or bacterial infections. It is very effective in preventing or managing many respiratory disorders. It contains bronchodilatory property, which help in reducing the symptoms of bronchitis. It is effective as supportive medicine for tuberculosis and pneumonia. Its dose includes Dry leaf powder 1-3 gm, Leaf juice: 10-20 ml, Root decoction: 40-80 ml and Flower juice: 10-20 ml

6. *Guduchi* This medicinal herb giloy is very effective for many diseases and the whole plant is used for the medicinal purposes like leaves, stem and roots. This herb is used as a supportive supplement to relieve the problem of Swine flu and other infective respiratory diseases. The juice of giloy along with Amla and Neem is the best antioxidant tonic, which can be effective in removing body's toxins and helps in relieving various respiratory diseases.

7. *Neem* The antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties of neem are very popular in common. It has been used in Ayurveda for centuries in dealing with lots of problems associated with skin, respiratory tract and blood purification. It is quiet useful in various allergies and allergic disorders. It is very useful in reducing inflammation and swelling. It is

well known supportive supplement in bronchitis and helps in recovering patients suffering from respiratory infections.

8. Shirisha The medicinal properties of shirish are very useful in lot of diseases. It is known for its antioxidant properties helps in removing toxins produced by various infections and inflammations in the body. The formation of toxins or metabolites, after the metabolism of carbohydrate and proteins can be removed with regular intake of this herb.

9. Ashwagandha is known for boosting the strength and immunity, which is useful in respiratory tract infections. It's rejuvenating property that is useful in cells rejuvenation, during chronic lung infections. It is useful in relieving stress, fatigue and weakness from the body. It is can be used against allergies and various infections of the body. It possess the property of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, which helps in reducing inflammation during respiratory diseases.

10. Dalchini possesses the antimicrobial properties which is effective against the pathogenic microbes of respiratory tract. It also helps in eliminating the problem of cough and cold, by expelling out the excess mucus from the lungs, along with the respiratory tract. It is best supporting supplement against many breathing problems such as cough, cold and

bronchitis. It is also known as cardamom, as its seeds possess properties which are helpful in reducing *Vata* and *Kapha*. Ela is quite effective in reducing the risk of sore throat and hoarseness during influenza and cold. There are many other medicinal uses of ela including oral disorders, depression, impotency and hiccups.

11. Pippali is very effective in case of mucus and cold conditions in the lungs. It enhances vasodilatation and blood circulation to the lungs. It has decongestant, bronchodilator and expectorant properties. It rejuvenates the lungs. People who are prone to frequent cold can get relief from the symptoms by using Pippali.

12. Vanshlochana It is very effective against upper and lower respiratory disorders. It is useful in suppressing cough and clean the respiratory system clean by expelling out mucus plugs or sputum. It helps provide relief in the problems like dry cough and sore throat.

13. Tulsi is known to heal the problems associated with throat and chest. It is known for its antioxidant properties, as it removes toxins from the body. It is best herb used to treat common cold, flu and headaches. Among various wonderful properties *tulsi* contains anti-inflammatory property which reduces the respiratory inflammations like rhinitis and sinusitis. If

tulsi is consumed regularly it helps in relieving chronic cough.

DISCUSSION

Respiratory diseases have the pathogenesis of vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha*. The drugs like *yashtimadhu* and *vasa* help in expectoration of excess secretions both in infective and non- infective respiratory diseases. Drugs like *tulsi* have effect on overall detoxification of the body along with specific action on respiratory diseases. Drugs like *vanshlochana* help in expectoration of cough and also help in conditions of sore throat. *Pippali* helps in dealing with chronic conditions of cough and asthma, even better when used in the form of *vardhamaan pippali rasayana* because of its *kapha vatahara* property. Drugs like *neem* and *shirisha* have anti-inflammatory and *rasayana* (rejuvenation of the body) property which helps curing the infections in general. *Ashwagandha* helps in overall rejuvenation of the body and is helpful in regaining the body strength in chronic ailments like tuberculosis, COPD and Bronchial asthma.

CONCLUSION

The study result concluded that the *Shodhana*, *Shaman*, herbal and herbo-minerals compound drug has got significant role in respiratory ailments. Ayurveda is the best way to effectively & safely manage the condition

without inducing any drug dependency where various *Shodhana* procedures and use of internal medication not only detoxifies the body but also provides nutrition & increases the elasticity of lung tissue & develops natural immunity of the body thus decreasing episodic recurrence of the disease and providing long term relief to the patient.

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