

A REVIEW: PHYSIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF *USHNODAKA* AND ITS EFFECT ON BODY

¹*Dr. Harsh Sharma, ²Dr. Rajesh Kumar Sharma and ³Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sharma

¹P.G. Scholar, P.G. Department of Kriya Sharir, Dsrrau, Jodhpur.

²Associate Professor & H.O.D., P.G. Department of Kriya Sharir, Dsrrau, Jodhpur

³Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Kriya Sharir, Dsrrau, Jodhpur.

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Harsh Sharma

P.G. Scholar, P.G.

Department of Kriya Sharir,

Dsrrau, Jodhpur.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda the 'Science of life' aims at maintaining the healthy status of our body by prevention of disease and treatment of disease. According to *Ayurveda* the healthy status of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *mala* and *Agni* are the key factors for maintaining the health of an individual. Any imbalance in these factors due to any reason causes disturbance in the equilibrium of our body which results in ill health. In *Ayurveda* the term '*Ushnodaka*' means warm water but here water should be boiled not just heated. *Ayurveda* recommends drinking of warm water instead of cold water which weakens our *Agni* (digestive fire) by slowing down the digestive process. In *ayurveda* methods of preparation of *Ushnodak* according to the predominance of *doshas* is mentioned by various *Acharyas*. *Ushnodaka* is used as *Anupana* for the treatment of various disorders. This is a review article on the physiological importance of *ushnodaka* in maintaining the health and its effect on our body.

KEYWORDS: *Ushnodaka*, *anupana*, *swasthya samrakshana*, method of preparation.

INTRODUCTION

According to *Ayurveda* the condition where all *dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala* are in the state of equilibrium can be defined as health in *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* mentions two methods for the maintenance of health that is *Swasthya rakshana* i.e., maintenance of healthy status of body and *Aturasya Vikara Prashamana* i.e., if a person is suffering from a disease i.e., *vikara* then curing the disease by giving suitable treatment.^[1]

Water is the most essential part of our life for our survival. It is *Satmya* (adaptable) to all human beings. According to ayurveda the term ushnodaka means warm water. the term kalpana originated from the root 'KRIPU SAAMARDHYE' meaning the process which makes a substance potent or active.^[2] *Ushnodaka* is one which comes under the *upkalpana* of *kwath kalpana*.^[3] The classics have mentioned the use of warm water which is used as an *Anupana* (a drink which is taken before, after and along with food) and *Sahapana*.

Ayurveda recommends drinking of warm water. *Ayurveda* recommends the maintenance of *jatharagni* (digestive fire) for the proper metabolism and nutrition of *sapta dhatus*. Cold food and liquid can weaken digestive fire (agni) as it slows down the digestive process by diluting the digestive juices. Regular intake of cold water and food can weaken the digestive fire and as a result the food taken will remain undigested giving rise to the development of metabolic toxins i.e., *Ama* in the body. This *Ama* which is developed as a result of improper digestion can lead to various other metabolic disorders.

USHNODAKA

Ushnodaka refers not only to warm water but according to the classics reduction of water after boiling to one half of its quantity is called *Ushnodaka*[4]. In *Ayurveda* the importance of *ushnodaka* is mentioned in various disease. *Jwara* is considered as *Amasya samuth vyadhi* and for the treatment there is need of *pachana dravya* due to *anubandh* of *Ama*. Digestive fire is stimulated by the *Ushnodaka* due to its *deepana* and *pachana* properties, it disintegrates *kapha*, carries *pitta* and *vata* in their normal courses, and is wholesome for those suffering from *jwara* caused by *kapha* and *vata dosha*.

ABSOLUTE USHNODAKA

Depending on the properties and reduction of water Acharya has mentioned the qualities of ideal ushnodak. Acharya Shushrut and Vagbhat mentioned that when the water is boiled and reduced to 1/4th, 1/3rd, 1/2nd, which is devoid of foam or froth, which is still and light is ideal ushnodak and should be selected according to the lightness or heaviness.^{[5][6]}

USHNODAK GUNA KARMA

In Ayurvedic classics the various properties of *Ushnodaka* is mentioned by *Acharyas* which is summarised in the table.

Lakshana	Ch. ^[7]	Shu. ^[8]	A.H. ^[9]	YR ^[10]	BP ^[11]
Vatahara	+	+	+	+	+
Kaphahara	+	+	+	+	-
Medohara	-	+	-	+	+
Agni Vardhaka	+	-	-	-	-
Amahara	-	+	+	-	+
Deepana	-	+	+	+	-
Kanthaya	-	-	+	-	-
Pachana	-	-	-	-	+
Basti Shodhan	-	+	+	-	+

APPLICATION OF USHODAKA

Ushnodaka is wholesome (*hita*) for those suffering from Vata and Kaphaja Jvara as it promotes Agni (Digestive fire), removes Srotorodha and expels kapha dosha and promote sweating and appetite. For Pattika Jvara, water should be first boiled with bitter drugs and allowed to cool for drinking. according to *Acharya Vagabhat* Ushnodaka is helpful in increasing the digestive fire, helps in the digestion of undigested *Ahara* (*ama*), it is good for the throats (*kanthya*), easily digested (*laghu*), cleanses the urinary bladder (*basti shodhanum*), relieves hiccup, flatulence, removes the aggregation of *vata* and *kapha doshas* due to their cold properties and recommended in several conditions like onset of *jwara* (fever), cough, *pratishaya*, dyspnea and pain due to *vata dosha*.^[12]

USHNODAKA ACCORDING TO SEASON

In *Ayurveda* it is also mentioned that in what amount water should be reduced in different *ritu*. *Ushnodaka* should be taken in *shishir*, *varsha* and *hemant ritu* while in other *ritu* *Ushnodak* should be avoided.^[13]

According to *yogaratanakar* in *shishir*, *vasant* and *greeshma* ½ part should be reduced while boiling, in *pravrat* and *sharad ritu* 1/8th should be reduced and in *hemant ritu* 1/4th should be reduced.^[14]

USHNODAKA ACCORDING TO DOSHAS

Acharya has mentioned the use of *ushnodaka* by its reduction based on the predominance of *doshas* i.e., *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. According to *Acharya Shushrut* if the water is boiled to

specific quantity it can help to reduce doshas such as water which is reduced to $1/4^{\text{th}}$ is *vataghna*, $1/2^{\text{nd}}$ is *pittaghna* and $3/4^{\text{th}}$ is *kaphaghna*.^[15]

In *sharangdhar samhita acharya* mentioned different *doshagan* properties as $3/4^{\text{th}}$ for *vataghana*, $1/4^{\text{th}}$ for *pittaghna* and $1/2$ reduction for *kaphagna* work. *Ushnodaka* can be used depending on different condition and internal environment of our body.^[16]

USHNODAKA AS ANUPANA

Any substance or drug which is taken along with or after the *Ahara* or *Aushadh* is termed as *Anupana*. *Acharya Sharangadhara* mentions that, just as a drop of oil quickly spreads over the water, like that medicine spreads in the body by the effect of *Anupana*.

Acharya shushrut mentioned rain water as best *anupana* among all. *Acharya vagbhat* also stated *jala* as *shresth anupana*.

Using *ushnodaka* as *anupana* along with *aushadha* is more beneficial as *acharya Shanrangdhar* also mentioned that *ushnodaka* helps drug to travel and reach to its target faster and thus by this *ushnodaka* acts as a catalyst which makes the drug work more efficiently.

PHYSIOLOGICAL ACTION OF USHNODAKA

In *Ayurvedic* physiology, the term *dosha* means the disturbing factor, it has got definite physiological importance in normal state. Basically three *dosha* i.e., *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* are responsible for the maintenance of homeostasis in the body, and healthy state of a person is actually a state of equilibrium of these *tridoshas* while the illness is caused as a result of disturbance in the state of equilibrium among these *dosha*.^[17]

The *deepana* and *pachana* properties of *Ushnodaka* i.e., warm water causes expansion of *Srotas* (microchannels) of our body. Due to this property the *Ushnodaka* helps to remove the *anubandh* or the deposition of *mala* and *doshas* in the *srotas*. In *ayurvedic* physiology for the *dhatu poshana* three theories are given which are termed as *Dhatu poshan nayay*. In this the *poshana* or the nutrition of the successive *dhatu* depend on the different theories given by the *acharya*. Due to intake of *Apathya Ahara-vihar* these *srotas* gets blocked which results in the incomplete nourishment of these *dhatu*. *Ushnodaka* helps to remove the blockage and thus nourishment of these *Dhatu*. When these *srotas* gets blocked due to the intake of *Apathya*

Ahara vihara, the movement of *doshas* in the body gets disturbed causing imbalance in the *doshas* resulting in the disturbed physiological actions and thus leading to illness.

CONCLUSION

In *Ayurvedic* classics the health benefits, importance and various methods of preparation of *Ushnodaka* are mentioned. *Ushnodaka* not only helps to maintain the healthy status of the body but also helps medicines to work more effectively when taken as *Anupana*. Following the *Ritucharya* if a person is taking the *Ushnodaka* according to the *Ritu* he can maintain the balance of *doshas*. The *deepana* and *pachana* properties of *Ushnodaka* helps to remove the obstruction in our microchannels i.e., *Srotas*. *Acharya Sushrut* as mentioned the properties of *Ushnodaka* also mentioned the *Medohara* property of *Ushnodaka* which helps to remove the excessive fat which is accumulated in our body. *Ushnodaka* is simple and effective formulation which have miraculous effect on our body.

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