

CLINICAL IMPORTANCE OF UPAVISHA - A THERAPEUTIC PORTRAYAL OF TOXIC DRUGS

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ABSTRACT

Upavisha is a group of drug having toxic properties but with lesser virulence than Mahavisha group of drugs. Empirical knowledge of the therapeutics of these drugs may open new dimensions of their clinical uses. Thus this review is a sincere attempt to gather the scattered knowledge about classical therapeutic uses of Upavisha drugs in various treatises.

KEYWORDS: Upavisha, clinical, therapeutic.

INTRODUCTION

It is the way of use of the drug which decides whether it is toxic (harmful) to the body or has a healing effect. These two quite opposite effects are like the two facets of a same coin. The effect is decided by the side by which the coin falls. In nutshell- in proper form and dose if it is administered, its therapeutic effects can be tapped.

Upavisha are class of relatively less virulent plant toxins and are mentioned and classified by different treatise.

Various classical texts mentioned Upavishas and mentioned few drugs under it. Rasatarangini mentioned highest eleven drugs under Upavisha. These eleven drugs are considered here and a literary review has been done to explore the therapeutic uses of these Upavisha drugs. As the name signifies these are toxic in nature but on the other hand also has many therapeutic importances. This review is an attempt to explore it.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Brihatrayi and other popular classics and chikitsa granthas are been explored and all the therapeutic uses described in these classics and compendias are presented here in tabular form. Further these are critically analysed as per their uses (Amayik prayog), parts used (prayojyang), route of administration (Bheshaj prayog marg), special procedures like nasya, anjan etc.

As these are sthavar visha and thus can be used as an antidote or for treatment of Jangama visha. Thus all the evidences where upavisha drugs are used as a treatment if jangama vishsor other toxicity are critically analysed and mentioned.

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS**Therapeutics of Vishtinduka (Strychnos nux-vomica).**

Disease	Form in which drug is used	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
Fever	Purified seed	Oral	Maricha powder	Vataj jwara, constipation	S.B. 4.101
Dyspepsia	Purified seed	Oral	Navasadar, Hingu, Lemon juice		S.B. 4.256
Visuchika	Purified seed	Oral	Hingu, Navasadar		S.B. 277

Therapeutics of Ahiphena (Papaver somnoferum).

Disease	Form	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
Diarrhoea	Latex	Oral	Bark of Kupilu, Honey		V.D. 6.3
Cough and Fever	Latex	Oral		Khakkasa Niryuha	S.B.4.325-36
Dandruff	Seed	Topical			S.G. 3.11-19

Therapeutics of Jayapala (Croton tiglium).

Disease	Form	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
Udar roga	Oil	Oral		In severe condition	A.H.Ci 15.70
Wound	Oil	Local	Chirbilva		S.S.Ci. 2.89-92
Snake poison	Oil	Anjan			

Therapeutics of Dhatura (*Datura metel* Linn.)

Disease	Form	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
Fever	Leaf juice	Oral	Sugar		S.B 4.109
Worms	Leaf juice	Oral			B.P. Ci. 7.24
Ticks and lice	Leaf juice	Local	Mercury		V.M. 7.13
Cracked feet	Seed	Local	Cooked in mustard oil and manakanda		V.M.51.36
Filaria	Seed	Oral	Cold water	Vardhmaan prayog like pippali	B.S. Slipada-23
Chronic coryza	Seed	Oral	Kustha decoction		S.B. 4.1005
Rabies	Seed	Oral	White punarnava		S.S.K. 7.52
	Seed	Oral	Sharpunkha root and Rice water		do
	Seed	Oral	Root of Kaakudumbara and Rice water		A.S.U. 46.69
	Fruit	Oral	Asana Root		R.M. 29.28
Alopecia	Leaf juice	Local	Bhallatak	After making scar in scalp	A.H.U. 24.28-20
Eczema and ringworm	Leaf juice	Local	Neem leaf juice, Betel leaf juice		S.G.3.11.52
Boils	Root	Local	Mandukaparni panchang juice		G.N. 4.1.119
Pain in breast	Fruit	Local	Haridra		C.D. 63.58
Unmaad	Seed	Oral	Rice, Milk, Jiggery, Ghee	White Datura	C.D.20.6

Therapeutics of Bhang (Cannabis sativa).

Disease	Form	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
Malarial Fever	Leaf Powder	Oral	Bengal gram and jaggery	Checks fever with rigor	S.B. 4.97
Diarrhoea and sprue	Leaf	Oral	Jatiphala, Indrayava		B.P. Ci. 2.147
	Leaf	Oral	Latex of Udumbara		S.B. 4.166
Anoerexia	Ark	Oral	Yavani		S.B. 2.264
Kustha	Leaf powder	Oral	Honey, Ghee		V.M. 51.56-57
Ksudrakustha	Leaf	Local	Vridhadaruka root, Sinsapa		B.S. Ksudraroga 53
Rasayan	Panchang	Oral			B.S. Rasayana 408
Contracting vagina	Leaf	Douche			Y.T. 80.112
	Leaf	Douche	Jatiphala, Ahiphena, DaruHaridra		Y.T. 80.113
Insomnia	Fried leaf powder	Oral	Honey		B.P.Ci.1.325

Therapeutics of Gunja (*Abrus precatorius*).

Disease	Form in which drug is used	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
Avabahujka, Visvachi, Gridhrasi, Pain by vata	Seed paste	Local		After incision	S.G. 3.11.101-102
Gandamala	Seed, root	Massage on gandamala		Cooked in oil and water	B.P.Ci. 44.47
Dental caries	Root	Chewed			R.M. 5.13
Baldness	Root paste	Local	With rasayana medicine		S.S.Ci. 20.25
Dandruff and other scalp disorders	Seed	Local	Oil made with bhringraj juice		V.M. 57.70
Shiroroga	Root	Pradhaman			G.N. 3.1.61
Diminution of vision	Root	Oral	Cow's urine		G.N. 3.3.377
Promoting growth of ear lobes	Powder	Massage		Buffallo butter	C.D. 57.57
Visarpa	Leaf paste				H.S. 3.33.11
Kustha	Powder	Local	Butter		G.N. 2.36.157

Therapeutics of Bhallatak (*Semicarus anacardium*).

Disease	Form in which drug is used	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
Kustha	Seed powder	Oral	Trifala, Neem, Ghee		C.S.Ci. 7.82
	Seed powder	Oral	Shilajit, Makshika bhasma etc	Medogata kustha	S.S.Ci. 9.6
	Seed powder	Oral	Haritaki, Vidang, Ghee	Kaphaj kustha	S.S.Ci. 9.7
	Seed powder	Oral	Tuvrak beej, bakuchi beej etc.		A.H.Ci. 19.53
	Seed	Local	Vidang, haritaki		A.H.Ci. 19.12
Vitiligo	Purified nuts	Local	Snuhi latex		C.S.Ci. 20.11
Piles	Purified nuts	Oral	Butter, bilwa etc		C.S.Ci. 14.70
	Purified nuts	Oral		Bhallatak kaipa	S.S.Ci.6.17
	Purified nuts	Oral		Bhallatak Tail	S.S.Ci.6.18
	Purified nuts	Oral	Kutaj Bark		A.H.Ci. 8.62
	Purified nuts	Oral	Sesame		V.M. 5.10
Guinea worm	Purified nuts	Oral	Jaggery		S.B. 4.884
Splenomegaly	Purified nuts	Oral	Haritaki, jeerak, jiggery		V.M. 37.45
Scrofula	Purified nuts	Local	Sarsap, Neem leaf, Goat's urine		SG. 3.11.98

Urustambha	Purified nuts	Oral	Pippali, Pippalimula, honey		V.M. 5.10
Vatavyadhi	Purified nuts	Oral	Sesame, jaggery		S.B.4.462
Depilatory	Oil	Local	Snuhi latex		S.B. 1.106
For regaining normal colour of wound scar	Oil	Local			S.S.Ci 1.90-93
As Rasayana	Purified nuts	Oral		Bhallatak Rasayana	C.S.Ci. 1.2.13-19
	Purified nuts	Oral		Bhallatak Vardhaman	V.M. 69.23-27
	Oil	Oral		Dose as per strength (1 month)	V.M. 69.28
As Aphrosisiac	Purified nuts	Oral	Cooked with milk		A.S.U. 50.29
Alopecia	Purified nuts	Local	Datura leaf juice		A.H.U. 28.30
Worms	Oil	Oral or enema			A.,H.Ci. 20.32
	Oil	Oral	Vidanga	Heated in sun	G.N. 2.6.39
Poisoning	Flower	Local		In case of Poisoned anjana	S.S.Ka. 1.71
Malarial fever	Purified nuts	Oral		On sadvent of fever	
Gulma	Purified nuts	Oral		Bhallatak Ghrita	CD. 30.97

Therapeutics of Arka (Calatropis).

Disease	Form in which drug is used	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
Loss of appetite	Flower	Oral	Sauvarchal, navasadar, marich	Ark vati	SB. 4.254
Visuchika	Root bark	Oral	Lemon juice		SB 4.278
Piles	Root bark	Fumigation	Sami		C.S.Ci 14.49
	Latex	Local	Stem of snuhi, cow urine etc.		C.S.Ci 14.57
	Leaf		Panchalavan	Ksar	B.S. Arsa 18-19
Hiccough	Flower	Oral	Clove		S.B. 4.354
Bronchial asthma	Leaf buds	Oral	Besan and honey		S.S.U.51.36-37
Cough	Latex	Oral	Sugar		S.B.4.334
Throat disorder	Latex	Oral	Samudra lavana, cow milk		G.N. 29.45
Jaundice		Oral	Ankot		R.M. 3.18
Splenomegaly	Leaf	Oral	Salt, ksar, curd		V.M. 37.43
Filaria	Root bark	Local	Shuktamla		V.M. 42.3
Urustambha	Root bark and leaf	Oral	Water and oil	Cook	C.S.Ci 27.51
Gandamala	Latex	Local	Japa flower, oil,		R.M. 5.30

			lac juice		
Kustha and other skin disorders	Leaf juice	Local	Mustard oil, haridra		V.M. 51.36
	Leaf		Neem, saptaparna		S.S.Ci.9.51
	Latex	Local	Mustard oil, realgar, orpiment		C.S.Su 3.12
	Latex				V.D.11.48
	Latex		Haridra		B.S. Ksudraroga 54
Wounds				Samsodhana ghrita	S.S.Su. 37.16
	Leaf	Local		Covering the wound	C.S.Ci 25.95
	Latex	Local	Snuhi latex		S.Y. Tail 115
	Leaf	Local	Jaya etc.	To wash penis	V.M. 49.9
Head boils	Latex	Local	Besan, mustard oil		G.N. 3.1.93
	Leaf paste	Local			G.N. 3.1.94
Eye disease	Root	Topical	Water		B.S. Netra 43
	Seed		Milk		V.D. 16.27
Ear disease	Leaf bud	Topical		Putpaak	S.S.U. 21.23-24
	Mature leaf	Topical	Ghee	Juice extracted after applying ghee	V.M. 59.12
		Topical		For maggots	V.D. 16-63
Caries	Latex	Local	Saptapaarna kseer		A.H.U. 22.20
Poisoning	Root bark powder		Datura, karveer	For tt of Snake poisoning	R.M. 29.6
	Latex		Sesame etc.	In dog bite	S.S.Ka. 7.51-52
	Latex			In scorpion bite	G.N. 7.5.1
Raktagulma	Flower	Oral	Sesame oil		Y.R. p 266
Yonivyapad (kaphaj)	Latex	Suppository	Barley powder, rock salt		C.S.Ci. 30.71
Boils	Root	Local	Cow's urine		G.N. 4.1.120
For evacuation	Latex	Oral			C.S.Su. 1.115
Scrotal enlargement	Root bark powder	Local	Shuktamla		CD. 40.21

Therapeutics of snuhi.

Disease	Form in which drug is used	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
Piles	Latex	Local	Haridra		S.S.Ci. 6.12, C.S.Ci. 14.52,53,57, R.M. 19.5
	Leaf	Local			V.D. 5.3
Fistula in ano and sinus	Latex	Wick	Ark, Daruharidra		CD. 46.8
	Latex	Wick		Jatyadi varti	CD. 45.8
Udara roga	Latex	Oral	Pippali	Pippali vardhmaan prayog with snuhi latex	V.M. 37.8-9
	Latex	Oral	Milk, Ghee		C.S.Ci. 13.138-141
	Latex	Oral	Snuhi, ghrita		S.S. Ci. 14.10
	Latex	Oral	Rice powder, Pippali powder		V.M. 37.10, R.M. 7.4
Vatavyadhi			Snuhi kanda lavana		S.S.Ci. 4.31
Tumour	Stem	Fume			V.M. 41.44
Enlarged uvula	Latex	Local			V.M. 58.9
Gulma	Latex	Oral	Trivrita powder, honey, ghee		C.S.Ci. 5.153
Eczema	Drugs Cooked in snuhi stem	Local	Mustard seed paste		A.H.Ci. 19.69
Vitiligo	Latex	Local	Purified Bhallatak nuts		A.H. Ci. 20.11
Earache	Warm stem juice	Topical			G.N. 4.2.32
Caries	Root	Local			G.N. 3.5.175
Difficult labour	Latex	Applied on head			G.N. 6.4.35
Cracked feet	Latex	Local	Sesame oil, rock salt	Cooked in oil	V.D. 11.57
Wound	Cooked leaf	Local			V.D. 16.100
	Latex	Local	Sesame oil, bee wax		S.Y. 5.115

Therapeutics of Langali (*Gloriosa superba*).

Disease	Form in which drug is used	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
For extraction of foreign body	Tuber paste	Local			
For easy delivery	Tuber paste	Applied on naval area, pelvis and vulva	Root of patha		G.N. 6.4.23, B.S. Stiroga 230
	Tuber paste	Applied on palm and sole		For placental delivery	S.S.SA. 10
Vatarakta		Oral		Langalyadi vatika	G.N. 2.20.26-38
Piles	Tuber paste	Local	Sirisa seed		G.N. 2.4.119
Boils	Root and seed	Local	Shuktamla		G.N. 2.4.121
Baldness	Tuber paste	Local			A.H.U. 24.28-29
Scrofula	Tuber paste	Nasya	Sesame oil, nirgundi juice	Cooked in oil	A.H.U. 30.21
Ear diseases	Root	Nasya	Tulsi ,oil	Unmantha	A.H.U. 18.46
	Root juice	Karnapurana	Trikatu		G.N. 3.2.64

Therapeutics of Karveer (*Nerium indicum* Mill.).

Disease	Form in which drug is used	Route of administration	Co-drug or vehicle	Remarks	Reference
Kustha	Leaf paste	Local	Sesame oil		C.S.Su. 3.17
		Local	Daruharidra		C.S.Ci. 7.97-99
		Local		Svetakarviryadi taila	C.S.Ci. 7.105
		Local		Svetakarvirapallavadi tail	C.S.Ci. 7.106-7
Minor skin diseases	Root	Local	Sesame oil, Aconite, cow's urine		V.M. 51.127
		Local	Dugdika	Grey hair	C.S.Ci. 26.266
	Juice	Local		Baldness	A.H.U. 24.29
		Local		Eczema	CD. 50.49
Upadamsa	Leaf	Wash	Jati, Aragvadh etc.		S.S.Ci. 19.39
	Root paste	Local	Water		B.P.Ci. 51.35
Epilepsy	Leaf powder	Nasya		White karveer	S.B. 4.458
Eye disease	Leaf juice	Topical		Conjunctivitis	B.S.Netra 39
Gravels	Alkali	Oral	Patala alkali		S.S.Ci. 7.23
For tearing of wounds		Local	Chirbilva, Kalihari, Danti etc.		S.S.Su. 37.10
Kikkisa	Leaf	Local		Cooked in oil	A.H.Sa. 1.61

EXTERNAL USES

External uses of Vishtinduka

NIL

External uses of Ahiphena.

Disease	Part used	Refernce
Dandruff	Seed	S.G. 3.11-19

External uses of Jayapala.

Disease	Part used	Refernce
Wound	Oil	S.S.Ci. 2.89-92

External uses of Dhatura.

Disease	Part used	Refernce
Ticks and lice	Leaf juice	V.M. 7.13
Cracked feet	Seed	V.M.51.36
Alopecia	Leaf juice	A.H.U. 24.28-20
Eczema and ringworm	Leaf juice	S.G.3.11.52
Boils	Root	G.N. 4.1.119
Pain in breast	Fruit	C.D. 63.58

External uses of Gunja.

Disease	Part used	Refernce
Ksudrakustha	Leaf	B.S. Ksudraroga 53
Avabahujka, Visvachi, Gridhrasi, Pain by vata	Seed paste	S.G. 3.11.101-102
Gandamala	Seed, root	B.P.Ci. 44.47
Baldness	Root paste	S.S.Ci. 20.25
Dandruff and other scalp disorders	Seed	V.M. 57.70
Promoting growth of ear lobes	Powder	C.D. 57.57
Visarpa	Leaf paste	H.S. 3.33.11
Kustha	Powder	G.N. 2.36.157

External uses of Bhallatak.

Disease	Part used	Refernce
Kustha	Seed	A.H.Ci. 19.12
Vitiligo	Purified nuts	C.S.Ci. 20.11
Scrofula	Purified nuts	SG. 3.11.98
Depilatory	Oil	S.B. 1.106
For regaining normal colour of wound scar	Oil	S.S.Ci 1.90-93
Alopecia	Purified nuts	A.H.U. 28.30

External uses of Arka.

Disease	Part used	Refernce
Piles	Root bark	C.S.Ci 14.49
	Latex	C.S.Ci 14.57
	Leaf	B.S. Arsa 18-19
Filaria	Root bark	V.M. 42.3
Gandamala	Latex	R.M. 5.30
Kustha and other skin disorders	Leaf juice	V.M. 51.36
	Leaf	S.S.Ci.9.51
	Latex	C.S.Su 3.12
	Latex	V.D.11.48
	Latex	B.S. Ksudraroga 54
Wounds		S.S.Su. 37.16
	Leaf	C.S.Ci 25.95
	Latex	S.Y. Tail 115
	Leaf	V.M. 49.9
Head boils	Latex	G.N. 3.1.93
	Leaf paste	G.N. 3.1.94
Eye disease	Root	B.S. Netra 43
Eye disease	Root	B.S. Netra 43
	Seed	V.D. 16.27
Ear disease	Leaf bud	S.S.U. 21.23-24
	Mature leaf	V.M. 59.12
		V.D. 16-63
Caries	Latex	A.H.U. 22.20
Boils	Root	G.N. 4.1.120
Scrotal enlargement	Root bark powder	CD. 40.21

External uses of Snuhi.

Disease	Part used	Refernce
Piles	Latex	S.S.Ci. 6.12, C.S.Ci. 14.52,53,57, R.M. 19.5
	Leaf	V.D. 5.3
Tumour	Stem	V.M. 41.44
Enlarged uvula	Latex	V.M. 58.9
Eczema	Drugs Cooked in snuhi stem	A.H.Ci. 19.69
Vitiligo	Latex	A.H. Ci. 20.11
Earache	Warm stem juice	G.N. 4.2.32
Caries	Root	G.N. 3.5.175
Difficult labour	Latex	G.N. 6.4.35
Cracked feet	Latex	V.D. 11.57
Wound	Cooked leaf	V.D. 16.100
	Latex	S.Y. 5.115

External uses of Langali.

Disease	Part used	Refernce
For extraction of foreign body	Tuber paste	
For easy delivery	Tuber paste	G.N. 6.4.23, B.S. Striroga 230
	Tuber paste	S.S.SA. 10
Piles	Tuber paste	G.N. 2.4.119
Boils	Root and seed	G.N. 2.4.121
Baldness	Tuber paste	A.H.U. 24.28-29

External uses of Karveer.

Disease	Part used	Refernce
Kustha	Leaf paste	C.S.Su. 3.17
		C.S.CI. 7.97-99
		C.S.Ci. 7.105
		C.S.Ci. 7.106-7
Minor skin diseases	Root	V.M. 51.127
		C.S.Ci. 26.266
	Juice	A.H.U. 24.29
Upadamsa		CD. 50.49
	Leaf	S.S.Ci. 19.39
	Root paste	B.P.Ci. 51.35
Eye disease	Leaf juice	B.S.Netra 39
Gravels	Alkali	S.S.Ci. 7.23
For tearing of wounds		S.S.Su. 37.10
Kikkisa	Leaf	A.H.Sa. 1.61

Most of the external uses of Upavisha are related to the minor skin disorders (ksudra kustha).

THERAPEUTIC USES OF UPAVISHA AS NASYA-ANJANADI SPECIAL KARMA

Disease	Upavisha	Route of Administration
Snake poison	Jayaphal Oil	Anjan
Contracting vagina	Bhanga Leaf	Douche
Shiroroga	Gunja Root	Pradhama
Piles	Arka root bark	Fumigation
Yonivyapad (kaphaj)	Arka Latex	Suppository
Fistula in ano and sinus	Snuhi Latex	Wick
Tumour	Snuhi stem	Fumigation
Difficult labour	Snuhi Latex	Applied on head
For easy delivery	Tuber paste	Applied on naval area, pelvis and vulva
	Tuber paste	Applied on palm and sole
Scrofula	Tuber paste	Nasya
Ear diseases	Root	Nasya
	Root juice	Karnapurana
Epilepsy	Leaf powder	Nasya

UPAVISHA USES IN POISONING

Jayapala Anjan	Snake poison
Datura seed orally	Alarka visha
Datura deed and leaf orally	Alarka visha
Datura fruit	Alarka visha
Ark root bark	Snake poison
Ark latex	Alarka visha
Ark latex	Scorpion bite

ABBREVIATIONS USED

A.H. : Astangahridaya, A.S. : Astangasangraha, B.P. : Bhavaprakasha,
 B.S. : Bangasena, CD : Chakradatta, C.S. : Charaka Samhita, G.N. : Gadnigraha,
 H.S. : Harita Samhita, Ka : Kalpasthana, R.M. : Rajmartand, Sa. : Sarirasthana,
 S.B. : Sidhabhesajamanimala, S.G. : Sarangdhara Samhita, Si : Sidhi sthana,
 S.S. : Sushruta Samhita, Su : Sutrasthana, S.Y. : Sahasrayoga, U : Uttarantra,
 V.D. : Vaidyamanorama, V.M. : Vrindamadhava, Y.R. : Yogaratnakara, Y.T. :
 Yogatarangarini.

CONCLUSION

An ample amount of significant uses of Upavisha drugs are revealed in this review. Not only internally but many external applications are there in which many diverse forms of disorders are mentioned in the compendias. Out of these mostly minor skin disorders are mentioned. Internally they are having diversified therapeutic properties from fever treatment to treatment of severe udararoga; and from corryza treatment to Rasayana.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

Upavisha either used internally or externally, seems to be diverse in effects. Still there major role in minor skin disorders (ksudra roga) is revealed in this review. Therefore future studies in this direction are encouraging to unfold new dimensions of therapeutic uses of Upavisha drugs.

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