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Ancient methods of poisoning

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ABSTRACT

Visha (Poison) is a substance which after entering the body disturbs natural and Physiological functions of the body (i.e. *Dosha, Dhātu and Mala*) and it also degrades the health of the human being and which result in destructions of life.

The substance immediately after entering into the body causes the vitiation of the healthy *dhatus* or killing of the healthy person is defined as *visa*. Whatever substance, after entering into the body, creates panic in the normal functions of the basic tissues, destroys the wellbeing and threatens the life is called as poisons. Derivatives of *Visha* is explained differently by different *Acharyas* depending upon their aim and areas of interest. *Acharyas* have defined different methods of poisoning under the heading of *Vishadana Adhishthana*. *Acharyas* have also mention detail treatment for it. In modern time these methods of poisoning are relevant and influences human life.

Keywords: *Visha, Vishadanaadhishthana, Agadtantra, Poison.*

INTRODUCTION

Agada means the medicaments which are used as an antidote to combat this morbid condition; *Tantra* can be defined as, the Science through which the positive health of an individual is preserved. The word *Agadtantra* is derived from two words, *Agada* and *Tantra*. *Agada* itself is derived from word *Gada*. The word *Gada* has two meanings, one is disease and other is Poison. *Gada* means pain, discomfort, poison, disease or morbid conditions produced by any type of poison such as (*Visha, Vairodhika*) inhaled, absorbed, applied,

injected or developed within the body. *Agada* means anything that conquers a poison.

Agadtantra is the system of knowledge for conquering poisons. The science which deals with poisons with reference to their sources, properties, mode of action, symptoms which they produce, lethal dose, nature of fatal results, treatment, method of their detection & estimation and autopsy findings. A poison is a substance which when administered, inhaled or ingested is capable of acting deleteriously on human body [1], thus almost anything is a poison. There is no bounding between a medicine and poison, for a medicine in a toxic dose is a poison and a poison in a small dose may be

medicine. Ayurveda has always elaborated every topic very vastly and regarding poisoning Acharyas has commented on visha, vishadana adhishtana² i.e. methods of poisoning, vishadata lakshana [3], and treatment in detail.

VISHADANAADHISHTHANA [2]

Sushruta enumerates different methods of poisoning as the poison can be administered to other person through following means.

- Food materials
- Drinks
- Tooth-brush
- Materials used for massage, like oils etc.

- Comb
- Powders useful for massage
- Medicated decoction, useful for bath.
- Different pastes, useful in beautifying complexion.
- Garlands
- Clothes
- Bed and its belongings
- Body coverings for protection from enemies
- Ornaments
- Foot wear
- Foot rest
- Cloths on back of horses and elephants.

According to different samhitalakshana and treatment are as follows.

Serial No.	VishadanaAdhishtana	Lakshana	Treatment
1.	Annapana [4]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daaha • Nakhashatan • Moorcha • Vaman • Atisar • Aadhman • Trushna • Karshya • Pandu 	
2.	Dantakashtha [5]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mukhagatshoth • Chimchimayam • Shool • Mukhagatdaaha • Lalastrav • Vranotpatti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pratisaran • Kaval • Gandush • Vaman • Virechan
3	Abhyanga, utsadana, kashaya, anulepana, shayya, vastra, kavach [6]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitikotpatti • Sphot • Shool • Strav • Twakpaak • Swedotpatti • Jwar • Twakvidaran 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lepa • Sheetambusan
4	Avalekhan [7]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keshashat • Shirahshool • Romkoopraktastrav • Pitikotpatti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lepa
5	Paduka-padpeeth [8, 9]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SthanikSphototpatti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lepa

6	Nasya, dhoompan [10]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GudagatSphot • Shoth • Strav • Paada-Sushupti • Nasagatraktastrav • Shirahshool • Indriyvikruti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheetambusnan • Vishaghnanasya • Ghrutpaan
7	Savish pushpa [11]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netragatstrav • Shirahshool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lepa
8	Savishkarnapuram [12]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoth • Shool • Strav • Karnabadhira 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karnapooran
9	Savish anjan [13]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netrastrav • Netramaladhikya • Netradaaha • Netrashool • Drushtibhram • Netrahani 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghrutapana • Tarpan • Anjan

DISCUSSION

In ancient time, the king has the threat of being poisoned by enemies through food, clothes, bed etc. It is also mentioned that during war, the king and his military faced the threat of vitiation of the path, water, shades, food, fuels, food of animals etc. by poison. The king on entering the enemy kingdom should examine the grass, water, path, food, smoke, air etc. that may be poisoned by enemy [14]. In the context of poison, it is mentioned that women, desirous of luxuries and prosperity and also king's close relatives or associates inspired by enemies to destroy him, mix Gara or poison with food [15-17].

In Kautilya's Arthashastra, several tactics that could be employed in war against enemies or traitors are mentioned. Among them, various poisoning methods are described, which are commonly adopted by weaker kings and by others in internal conflicts or conspiracies [18].

Ayurveda is a unique science which has described many unique theories. Methods of poisoning are one of them. Ayurveda has described detailed sign and symptoms along with management. Detailed study of the topic may help today's researchers to analyze the area of study in depth.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this literary review was to study Ayurved samhitas for different methods of poisoning. Ayurveda has literature which elaborates the methods of poisoning along with its detailed signs, symptoms and its management. Besides ayurveda, Kautilya in his Arthashastra has also mentioned the methods of poisoning, management of poisoning, importance of vishavaidyaka and laws against this type of crime.

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