

Polyherbal Lepa Therapy for Amavata: Pharmacological and Clinical Aspects of Shatpushpadi Lepa

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ABSTRACT

Amavata is a chronic inflammatory disorder of the joints described in Ayurveda, characterized by pain, swelling, stiffness, and restricted joint movements. The pathogenesis of the disease mainly involves the formation of ama and the aggravation of vata dosha^[1]. The clinical features of *Amavata* closely resemble those of rheumatoid arthritis. *Shatpushpadi Lepa* is a classical polyherbal ayurvedic formulation mentioned in the Bhaishajya Ratnavali and is applied externally over affected joints along with *kanji*^[2]. This formulation may help reduce joint pain and swelling. The predominance of *katu* and *tikta* rasa, along with *ushna virya*, indicates its potential role in ama pachana and kapha-vata shamana. Most of the ingredients present in *shatpushpadi lepa* possess significant anti-inflammatory pharmacological properties. External application of lepa may improve local blood circulation, reduce inflammation, and enhance joint mobility.

Keyword: *Amavata*, Pachana, *Shatpushpadi lepa*, *Ama*.

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INTRODUCTION

Amavata is considered one of the most common endogenous diseases caused by the recurrent formation and accumulation of ama. In Ayurveda, the concepts of Agni and ama are significant in preserving health and in the development of various diseases. Agni impairment leads to incomplete digestion and metabolism, resulting in the generation of *ama*^[3], which behaves like a toxic or foreign substance within the body. *Ama*, along with aggravated Vata dosha, plays a major role in the pathogenesis of *Amavata*. Clinically, it is a chronic inflammatory joint disorder characterized by pain, swelling, stiffness, and restricted joint movement. Numerous herbals and Ayurvedic formulations have been described in classical texts for the management of *Amavata*. *Shatpushpadi lepa* is considered an effective external therapeutic agent. It is a polyherbal Ayurvedic formulation applied locally over the affected joints along with Kanji. The formulation is simple to prepare, and its ingredients are readily

available. Local application of lepa may help pacify doshas at the site of application and provide quick symptomatic relief from pain and inflammation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study is a literature-based review conducted to evaluate the therapeutic importance of *Shatpushpadi lepa* in the management of *Amavata*. Relevant information was collected from classical Ayurvedic texts, and research articles. A detailed review of the ingredients of *shatpushpadi lepa*, including their ayurvedic properties such as rasa, guna, virya, vipaka, karma, and *prabhav*, was carried out using different Nighantus. The modern pharmacological actions of the ingredients were also reviewed based on the available scientific literature.

Table 1 :- The ingredients Shows of *Shatpushpadi lepa* along with the parts of the plants used in formulation.^[4]

Table 1: Ingredients list of Shatpushpadi lepa

Dravyas	Scientific name	Pryojang	Part
Shatpushpa	<i>Anethum sowa</i>	Fruit	1
Vacha	<i>Acorus calamus</i> Linn.	Rhizome	1
Shigru	<i>Moringa oleifera</i> Lamk.	Bark	1
Gokshura	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i> Linn.	Whole plant	1
Varuna	<i>Crateva nurvala</i> Buch. - Ham.	Stem bark	1
Sahadevi	<i>Vernonia cinerea</i> Less.	Whole plant	1
Punarnava	<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i>	Root	1
Karchura	<i>Curcuma zedoaria</i> (Christm) Rosc.	Rhizome	1
Prasharni	<i>Paederia foetida</i> Linn.	Root	1
Jayanti	<i>Sesbania sesban</i> (Linn) Merr.	Bark	1
Hingu	<i>Ferula assa-foetida</i>	Gum- resin	1

Preparation of lepa: All the ingredients were taken in equal proportions, mixed with kanji, and applied in a lukewarm state over the affected joints. After complete drying of the application, the paste was gently removed and the area was washed with water^[5].

RULES FOR APPLICATION OF LEPA :-

- Lepa should always be applied in the *Pratiloma* direction (the opposite direction of hair follicles).
- Lepa should not be applied at night.
- According to Sushruta, the ideal thickness of a lepa should resemble the thickness of *Ardramahishcharmotsedha* (thickness of moist buffalo skin), which is considered to be approximately a standard measurement.

- Lepa should always be freshly prepared and should never be used in a stale condition.
- A fresh layer of lepa should not be applied over the previously applied paste. [6]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Shatpushpadi lepa is a topical Ayurvedic preparation used for local application. Most of the ingredients present in *shatpushpadi lepa* possess *katu- tikta rasa, laghu, rukshna and tikshna guna, ushna virya and katu vipak*[7]. These properties are opposite to the

guru, snigdha, pichhil, and sheeth qualities of ama. Hence, the local application of this lepa on affected joints in *amavata* may help alleviate ama at the local level. Due to its *vedanasthapaka* (analgesic) and *shothahara*(anti-inflammatory) effects, the formulation may help alleviate *sandhi-shula and sandhi-shotha*. Its *vata- and kapha-shamaka actions help in reducing* the localized vitiation of doshas at the affected joints. Therefore, it may be beneficial in breaking the local pathogenesis of the disease.

Table 2: Rasa Panchaka of Shatpushpadi lepa [7]

Ingredients	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipak	Prabhav	Doshakarma
Shatpushpa	Katu, Tikta	Laghu,Ruksha Tikshna	Ushna	Katu	Shothhara, Vednasthapan	Kapha-vatashamak
Vacha	Katu, Tikta	Laghu, Tikshna	Ushna	Katu	Deepan, Shothhara, Vednasthapan	Kapha-vatashamak
Shigru	Katu, Tikta	Laghu,Ruksha Tikshna	Ushna	Katu	Deepan, Shothhara, Vednasthapan	Kapha-vatashamak
Gokshura	Madhur	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhur	Vednasthapan	vatashamak
Varuna	Tikta, Kashya	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Deepan, Anuloman	Kapha-vatashamak
Sahadevi	Tikta	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Shothhara, Vednasthapan	Kapha-vatashamak
Punarnava	Madhur,Tikta, Kashya	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Madhur	Deepan, Rechana, Shothhara	Tridosha-shamak
Karchura	Katu, Tikta	Laghu,Tikshna	Ushna	Katu	Deepan, Shothhara, Vednasthapan	Kapha-vatashamak
Prasharni	Tikta	Guru	Ushna	Katu	Rasayan	Kapha-vatashamak
Jayanti	Katu, Tikta	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Deepan, Shothhara, Vednasthapan	Kapha-vatashamak
Hingu	Katu	Laghu, Snigdha, Tikshna	Ushna	Katu	Deepan, Pachana, Anulomana, Vedanasthapan	Kapha-vatashamak

Table 3 : Therapeutic Properties of Shatpushpadi lepa

Therapeutic properties	Drug
Anti- inflammatory ^[7]	Shatpushpa, Shigru, Varuna, Sahadevi, Prasarni, Jayanti, Hingu
Analgesic ^[7]	Vacha, Gokshura
Anti- arthritic ^[7]	Varuna

CONCLUSION

Amavata is a disease of the *Rasavaha srotas* produced by the interaction of ama and aggravated *vata dosha*, which localizes in the joints due to dysfunction of *jatharagni*. The progressive stage of this disease shares many similarities with rheumatoid arthritis, as both conditions present with symptoms such as joint pain, swelling, and stiffness. *Shatpushpadi lepa* is an Ayurvedic external preparation. Shatpushpadi lepa may aid in relieving the local symptoms of *amavata*, including pain, swelling, and stiffness, through its vata-kapha pacifying and *ama*-reducing properties. Amavata is a systemic disorder with complex pathogenesis, and topical therapy alone may not be adequate for complete management. Therefore, the combined use of suitable internal Ayurvedic medications along with the local application of lepa may play a significant role in achieving effective *samprati vighatana* and comprehensive management of Amavata.

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