



A NARRATIVE REVIEW ON PRATISARANEeya KSHARA KARMA IN SECOND DEGREE INTERNAL HEMORRHOIDS

ARYA M.S^{1*} P. BENEDICT² M.S DEEPA³

MS Scholar, Rtd. Professor & HOD, Associate Professor, Dept. of Salyatantra, Government Ayurveda college, Trivandrum, Kerala, India

Corresponding Author Email: arjunmathu17@gmail.com Access this article online: <https://jahm.co.in>

Published by Atreya Ayurveda Publications under the license CC-by-NC-SA 4.0

Submitted on- 26-12-24

Revised on- 29-12-24

Accepted on-31/12/24

ABSTRACT:

The ancient Ayurvedic procedure of *Kshara Karma* (chemical cauterisation) has been recognized by Acharyas as a valuable treatment option for effectively managing hemorrhoids (*Arshas*). *Kshara Karma* is a para-surgical procedure in Ayurveda that utilizes caustic alkaline substances to manage anorectal conditions. Acharya Sushruta outlines *Kshara karma* under *arsho chikitsa adhyaya*. *Arsho chikitsa* incorporates a four-part treatment modality, comprising medication (*bheshaja*), caustic alkaline therapy (*kshara*), thermal cauterization (*agni*), and surgical intervention (*sastra*). *Prathisaraneeya kshara* treatment is indicated for hemorrhoids characterized by being soft, extensive, deep-seated, and protruding. *Kshara* is a potent alkaline caustic substance derived from the ash of specific medicinal plants. It is the most crucial instrument among *shastra (surgical)* and *anusastra (parasurgical procedures)*, as it performs functions like excision, cutting and scraping. It also effectively balances all three doshas (*Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*). Moreover, *Kshara* requires specialized techniques for its application. Recent Studies proves that *Prathisaraneeya kshara* (external application of *kshara*) effectively treats hemorrhoids through its corrosive properties.

Keywords: *Kshara karma, Arshas, Prathisaraneeya kshara, Anusastra*

INTRODUCTION

Hemorrhoids are a very common anorectal disease. Hemorrhoids are dilated veins in the anal canal originating in the subepithelial region formed by the radicals of superior, middle and inferior rectal veins.[1] It occurs due to distal displacement of anal cushions which are prominence of anal mucosa formed by loose connective tissue, smooth muscle, arterial and venous vessels.[2] The prevalence rate of hemorrhoids is 4.4% in the world in about 10 million people. It may occur in any age group, mostly seen between 30 to 65 years of age. The main clinical symptom is painless bleeding during defecation with or without prolapsing anal tissue. Based on position hemorrhoids are classified as internal, external and intero external. Internal hemorrhoids based on appearance and degree of prolapse is divided into 4 grades. Grade 1 is non prolapsing hemorrhoids, grade 2 hemorrhoids prolapse on straining but reduce spontaneously, grade 3 hemorrhoids is prolapsing type requiring manual reduction and grade 4 is non reducible prolapsing hemorrhoids. Treatment of hemorrhoids starts from methods for bowel regulation using adequate dietary modification. Then based on the degree of hemorrhoids definitive managements and surgeries are adopted such as Sclerosing therapy, Barron's rubber band ligation, Infrared coagulation, cryotherapy, hemorrhoidectomy. According to Ayurvedic classics, hemorrhoids (*arsas*) are classified among the eight major diseases (*ashtamahagadas*).[3] Acharya Susrutha comprehensively discussed the etiology (*nidana*), pathogenesis (*samprapti*), symptoms (*rupa*), and

treatment (*chikitsa*) of hemorrhoids. *Arshas* is caused when *doshas* vitiate the *twak*, *mamsa* and *medas* and sprouts of muscles of different shapes are produced in the rectum.[4] *Arshas* is classified as *Sahaja* (hereditary), *janmottaraja* (acquired) and as *suska* (dry), *ardra* (wet). Susrutha advocated a fourfold therapeutic approach, known as *chaturvidha sadanopayasya*, comprising: *bheshaja*, *kshara*, *agni* and *sastra*. [5] Among this *kshara karma* is a non surgical procedure used in many medical conditions.

Kshara therapy is administered through two distinct methods -*Paneeya*: Oral route for systemic effects and *Pratisaraneeya*: Topical application for localized treatment. Based on its potency *kshara* is of 3 types – *mridu*, *Madhyama* and *tikshna*. *Pratisaraneeya kshara* is applying caustic alkali externally and is indicated in *arshas* which is *mridu*, *prusrutha*, *avagadha* and *uchritha* which has properties similar to second degree internal hemorrhoids. Also *tikshna Pratisaraneeya kshara* is found to be effective in hemorrhoid treatment due to its potent therapeutic action.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article reveals the efficacy of *kshara karma* in second degree internal hemorrhoids. The literary study on *kshara karma* and *arshas* was done using various ayurvedic texts, research articles and internet sources.

Description of *arshas* and *kshara karma* in ayurveda classics

The term '*arshas*' is derived from '*arivat*' like a 'foe' that is the one which is residing nearby and causing trouble. In case of *guda arshas*, the sprouts of

muscles which reside nearby rectum and causing its obstruction just as how the foes torment the person. *Arshas* is caused when the vitiated *doshas* vitiate the *twak*, *mamsa* and *medas* and sprouts of muscles of different shapes are produced in the rectum.

Nidana of arshas

Arshas occurs in persons having weak digestive activity and accumulation of wastes, the faeces. When these individuals again indulges in following nidanas arshas manifests. These include indulging in excessive exercise, riding vehicles for prolonged period, excessive exertion, sitting for prolonged periods on rough surface, abrasions that are caused by sharp objects, contact with excessive cold water, *athipravahana* (excessive straining during defaecation), suppression of the *vata mutra purisha vegas*, premature initiation of *vata mutra purisha vegas*, due to accumulation of toxins, due to certain disease conditions. In women, arshas also manifests due to *garbhapata vikaras* due to improper development of foetus. All these nidana will aggravate apana vayu. The viguna apana vayu causes withholding of faeces in rectum. Thus the stool becomes hard and when it passes through rectum there will be friction leading to *arshas*. [6]

Samprapti of arshas

Tridoshas gets vitiated when a patient follows the *nidanas* mentioned in *arsho roga* for a prolonged time. The vitiated *doshas* hampers the digestive activity [7]. Due to this *agnimandya*, the *samana vayu* located near to *agni*, also gets vitiated. All these causes further vitiation of apana vayu situated in colon and rectum. These causes

accumulation of faeces in rectum which further becomes hard. The vitiated *tridoshas* singly, double or with *raktha* moves throughout the body. These *doshas* then reaches *guda pradesha* through *dhamanis* and vitiates *twak*, *rakta*, *mamsa* and *meda* in *guda pradesha*. Thus the *guda* and *guda vali* gets affected. *Mamsapraroaha janana* occurs in *guda* leading to *arshas*. The *nidana* and *samprapti* of *arshas* shows that when a proper diet and regimen is not followed, it will lead to arshas.

Rupa of arshas

Rupa of *arshas* includes emaciation, loss of enthusiasm, feeble voice, profound loss of complexion, pain in the vital organs, with cough, thirst, halitosis, difficulty in breathing, exhaustion, vomiting, oedema, fever, impotence, deafness, blindness, urinary gravel and calculi, voice feeble, loss of appetite, pain in all *joints*. [8]

Arshas chikitsa upaya

There are fourfold treatment methods in *arsho chikitsa* such as *Bhesaja* (use of medicines), *Kshara* (use of caustic alkalies), *Agni* (use of fire/ branding), *Shastra* (use of sharp instruments/ surgery).

Bheshaja Sadhya arshas

- Not chronic
- Having mild aggravation of *doshas*
- Mild symptoms
- Mild complications

Kshara Sadhya arshas

- Soft
- Broad
- Deep
- Bulged up

Agni karma Sadhya arshas

- Rough
- Immovable
- Big
- Hard

Shastra sadya arshas

- Thin root
- Bulged up
- Exuding (fluids)

Kshara karma as external application is found to be effective in the management of hemorrhoids.

Kshara

Kshara is a caustic chemical. It is alkaline in nature and is obtained from the ashes of medicinal plants. *Kshara* is the most important one among *Shastra* (sharp instruments) and *Anushastra* (accessary instruments). *Kshara* does functions like excision (removal), cutting (dividing) and scraping, mitigates all the three *doshas* .

Kshara destroys the vitiated tissues and make them fall .It does *sodhana* both internally and externally. It destroys, dissolves, melts, softens, liquifies the tissues.

Properties of *kshara*

Rasa -katu

Veerya -ushna

Varna -sukla

Guna -soumya,teekshna,agneya

Doshagna-tridoshagna

Karma -chedana, bhedana, lekhana, dahana, pachana, darana, vilayana, sodhana, ropana, soshana.

Based on administration

- *Paneeya*
- *Prathisaraneeya*

Chemical composition of *kshara*

Numerous ions, including sodium, potassium, calcium oxide, magnesium, carbonate, and silica, are present in *kshara*. Many of these ions are broken down and many new ones are created throughout the *kshara* preparation process. The number of hydroxide ions in a *kshara* determines its alkalinity. Adding limestone, conch shell, etc., can raise the alkalinity. [9]

Preparation of *kshara*

The plant collected should be dried in shade and cut into pieces. Then these pieces, are burnt to ash. Then the ash is mixed with 6 parts water and is stirred and kept overnight. The next morning, it should be macerated well and is filtered through a thick cloth. This filtering is repeated for 21 times . At last the filtrates should be taken in a stainless steel vessel and should be heated to evaporate all the water.

Preparation of *Tikshna kshara*

The pieces of dried wood of the plant *Mushkaka* are collected. Lime stone is spread over it and burnt into ashes. Then the ashes of lime stone and *mushkaka* wood are collected separately and stored. The wood with leaves, roots and fruits of *Kutaja, Palasa, Aswakarna Paribhadra, Vibhitaka, Argavadha, Arka, Snuhi, Apamarga, Patola, Naktamala, Vasa, Kadali, Chitraka, Putika, Indra, Asphota, Ashwamaraka, Saptachada, Agnimantha, Gurja* and other four species of *Kosataki* are burnt to ashes in the same way. This ashes in a quantity of nearly a *drona* (12228 gm) are dissolved in 6 *Drona* of pure water or cow urine and are stirred up.

Then it is filtered and the filtered alkali water is kept in a wide mouthed vessel and is boiled on heat.

When this alkaline water becomes fully saturated it is filtered by a clean linen. Half part of filtrate is taken out and rest is continued to boil. After this *Kata-Sarkara* the ash of burnt lime stone and *Shankhnabhi* are burnt red hot in equal part and are immersed in the alkaline water (1/2 part previously preserved). Then the both sample of concentrated alkaline water are mixed together. These are

preserved in Iron container and called as *madhyama Kshara*.

When Ash of lime stones (*Kata-sarkara*) is not added during the preparation of *Kshara*, the product is called-*Mridu Kshara* (Mild alkali). During the preparation of *kshara* when powder of *Danti*, *Dravanti*, *Vaca* etc.-each of 4 tolas are added the end product-*kshara* is called *Tikshna kshara* (strong alkali).(as in figure 1)



Figure 1 showing the preparation of *Tikshna kshara*

Procedure of application of *prathisaraneeya kshara*

- The place of application of alkali inspected thoroughly
- Area should be either scrubbed, scraped or cut (incised)
- Then the alkali held in an instrument and applied on the site of the disease
- After applying a period of time of pronouncing one hundred letters, it should be removed.
- The *arshas* becomes *pakwajambu phala varna* by this and then it is to be washed with *jambeera swarasa*. [10]

***Samyak kshara dagdha lakshana* (proper cauterisation)**

- Mitigation of the disease -subsiding of symptoms like pain, swelling, bleeding
- Feeling lightness of the diseased part .[11]

Hina dagdha lakshana (inadequate cauterisation)

- Stoppage of exudations
- Pricking pain
- Itching
- Loss of movement
- Increase of the disease

Atidagdha lakshana (over cauterisation)

- Burning sensation
- Ulceration
- Redness
- Exudation
- Twisting pain in the body part
- Exhaustion
- Severe thirst
- Fainting
- Death. [12]

Signs of good burning (cauterisation)

- Falling off of the diseased part
- Black colour is obtained at the *kshara* applied part (as in figure 2)
- Ghee processed (boiled) with drugs of sour taste group, together with *madhuka* acts as palliative (to reduce burning sensation/pain).

Effect during application of *tikshna kshara* in *arshas*

When *Tikshna kshara* is applied in second degree internal hemorrhoids the colour of *arshas* changes to pakwajambu varna as in figure 2. This is due to

the necrosis occurring to the haemorrhoidal mass. *Kshara* due to its *ksharana* (corrosive) property cauterises and coagulates the hemorrhoids. The necrosed mass thus formed later sheds off after sloughing.



Figure 2 showing *arshas* before and after *kshara karma*
DISCUSSION

Hemorrhoids is one of the common anorectal condition. In the conventional modern management of hemorrhoids there are non operative and operative treatment methods. These are having many drawbacks like pain, secondary haemorrhage, discharge, bowel incontinence, urinary retension, anal stricture formation and prolonged hospital stay. Hence a minimally invasive technique of *kshara* has a good relevance in clinical practice.

Kshara is having katu rasa, ushna virya, katu vipaka, Soumya, Tikshna, agneya gunas and tridosahara action. Due to all these properties the *kshara* becomes corrosive in action and it causes *ksharana* of unhealthy tissues. *Kshara* possess *agneya, tikshna, dahana, pachana, darana, vilayana, shodana, ropana, shoshana, lekshana* properties.[13] These properties of *kshara* causes cauterisation of hemorrhoids and coagulation of proteins in haemorrhoidal plexuses.[14,15]

Also due to alkaline nature of *kshara* saponification of fat occurs and this lead to formation of alkaline proteinates.[16] This causes liquefaction necrosis. Also as the *kshara* is hygroscopic in nature it causes extraction of water from cells. All these results in necrosis of haemorrhoidal tissue. Later sloughing of the tissue occurs and the wound heals with minimum fibrosis. Adhesion of mucosal and sub mucosal layers occurs and thus prevents further dilatation of haemorrhoidal plexus.

CONCLUSION

Hemorrhoids disturbs the routine life of an affected person. Conventional management procedures of hemorrhoids like Sclerosing therapy, Barron's rubber band ligation, Infrared coagulation, Cryotherapy, Haemorrhoidectomy have drawbacks like pain, secondary haemorrhage, discharge, bowel incontinence, urinary retention and prolonged hospital stay. *Tikshna Prathisaraneeya kshara* has a good effect on second degree internal hemorrhoids. *Kshara Karma* involves therapeutic actions such as *chedana, bhedana, lekhana, dahana, pachana, darana, vilayana, sodhana, ropana, soshana*. *Kshara*, possessing the potent property of *Ksharana* (caustic action), effectively eradicates vitiated tissues, inducing their sloughing and eventual removal.

Kshara application is a simple, effective treatment for hemorrhoids with low recurrence. *Kshara* treatment is cost-effective, minimally invasive, and requires minimal hospital stay. Common complications associated with modern hemorrhoid management includes pain, discharge, hemorrhage, and infection. *Ksharakarma* significantly reduces

the risk of these complications. Hence by *ksharakarma* it is possible to manage *arshas* without moving to surgical measures.

REFERENCES

- 1.Das S. A concise textbook of surgery. In: The rectum and anal canal. 6th ed. KOLKATA: Published by Dr. S. Das. 13, Old Mayors' Court, Kolkata - 700005. INDIA; 2010: 959.
- 2.Bhat M S. SRB's Manual of Surgery. In: Rectum and anal canal. 6th ed. Jaypee brothers medical publishers; 961.
- 3.Murthy KRS(editor).Vagbhata's Astanga hrdayam, Nidanastana. Chapter 8, verse no.30,2021st edition, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy: 83.
- 4.Murthy Srikantha(editor). Vagbhata's astanga hrdayam nidanasthana. chapter 7 arsas nidana.verse no.2, Reprinted 2013. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy: 66.
- 5.Murthy Srikantha(editor). Susruta samhita cikitsa sthana and Kalpa sthana. Arsas chikitsita. Verse no.3, Reprint edition 2017. Varanasi: Chaukhambha orientalia: 77.
- 6.Murthy Srikantha(editor). Vagbhata's astanga hrdayam nidanasthana. chapter 7 arsas nidana.verse no. 10-15 Reprinted 2013. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy: 68–69.
- 7.Murthy Srikantha(editor). Vagbhata's astanga hrdayam nidanasthana. chapter 7 arsas nidana.verse no.21-22, Reprinted 2013. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy: 70.
- 8.Murthy, Srikantha. Vagbhata's astanga hrdayam nidanasthana. In: chapter 7 arsas nidana. Verse no.23-28 Reprinted 2013. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy: 70–71
9. Ravishankar A. G: Prathisaraneeya Kshara – A Potent Weapon Against Dushta Vrana. May-june 2013
- 10.Murthy Srikantha(editor). Susrutha samhitha sutrasthana. chapter 11 Ksharapaka vidhi adhyaya. verse

Arya M.S, P. Benedict, M.S Deepa. A narrative review on Prathisaraneeya Kshara Karma in second degree internal haemorrhoids. *Jour. of Ayurveda & Holistic Medicine*, Vol.-XII, Issue-XII (Dec. 2024).

no.15. Reprint edition 2017. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia Varanasi: 67.

11.Murthy Srikantha(editor). *Susrutha samhitha sutrasthana*. chapter 11 Ksharapaka vidhi adhyaya.verse

no.26. Reprint edition 2017. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia Varanasi: 68.

12.Murthy Srikantha(editor). *Susrutha samhitha sutrasthana*. chapter 11 Ksharapaka vidhi adhyaya.verse

no.26. Reprint edition 2017. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia Varanasi: 68–69.

13Murthy Srikantha(editor). *Susrutha samhitha sutrasthana*. chapter 11 Ksharapaka vidhi adhyaya. verse

no.5 Reprint edition 2017. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia Varanasi: 63.

14.Raj P, Mishra I, Bopparathi S, Kumar P. A Case Study on Effective Management of Abhayantra Arsha by Kshara Karma. *Int J Ayurveda Pharma Res*. 2021 Nov 7;70–2.

15.Mahapatra A, Srinivasan A, Sujithra R, Bhat RP. Management of internal hemorrhoids by Kshara karma: An educational case report. *J Ayurveda Integr Med*. 2012;3(3):115–118.

16.Palao R, Monge I, Ruiz M, Barret JP. Chemical burns: Pathophysiology and treatment. *Burns*. 2010 May 1;36(3):295–304.

CITE THIS ARTICLE AS

Arya M.S, P. Benedict, M.S Deepa. A narrative review on Prathisaraneeya Kshara Karma in second degree internal haemorrhoids. *J of Ayurveda and Hol Med (JAHM)*. 2024;12(12):23-30

Conflict of interest: None

Source of support: None