



Review Article

**PAIN MANAGEMENT OF PRIMARY DYSMENORRHOEA WITH *CHATURBEEJA CHURNA***

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**ABSTRACT**

In Ayurveda, a *Churna* called *Chaturbeeja churna* has been mentioned which is a combination of four drugs. It is a combination of *Methika*, *Chandrashura*, *Kalajaji*, and *Yavanika*. This combination has been mentioned mainly to deal with *Vata rogas*. It is also told to be *Shoolahara* and acts on *Prasuta vata* as *Vatanulomana* in *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*. This article explores the effect of *Chaturbeeja churna* on primary dysmenorrhoea. Alongside Ayurveda, research evidences have been taken into account. *Chaturbeeja churna* has been found to have significant utility in pain reduction in dysmenorrhoea. It holds good in the context of Ayurveda as the pain (*Ruja*) is caused only by a causative factor (*Nidana*) that is done by oneself. The International Association for the Study of Pain defines pain as 'An Unpleasant sensory and emotional experience arising from actual or potential tissue damage'. In the recent times painful menstruation has increased at a huge rate. The allopathy medicine compound Dicyclomine (10 mg) and Mefenamic Acid (250 mg) due to its side effects there has been a lot of distress. Therefore, there is a need to find alternates to control and manage the pain during menstrual cycle.

**INTRODUCTION**

Dysmenorrhoea or painful menstruation is one of the most frequent among gynaecological complaints as nearly 50% of adult female population (peak at 18-24 years), suffer from this. Although the disease *Kastartava* is not mentioned as an individual disease, it is a symptom of various *Yonivyapad* (female reproductive disorder) especially *Udavartini*, *Vatala yonivyapat* and *Sannipataja yonivyapat*. It is a *Tridoshaja Vyadhi* (disease caused due to all three *Doshas*) with *Vata* predominance.<sup>[1]</sup>

In Ayurveda, a *Churna* (combination of powders) called *Chaturbeeja churna* has been mentioned which is a combination of four drugs.

It is a combination of *Methika* (fenugreek seeds), *Chandrashura* (Garden cress seeds), *Kalajaji* (*Nigella* seeds) and *Yavanika* (Carom seeds).

This combination has been mentioned mainly to deal with *Vata rogas* but alongside a few specific indications have been mentioned.

Diseases like *Ajeernam* (indigestion), *Shoola* (pain), *Adhmanam* (distention of abdomen), *Parshwashulam* (pain in flanks) and *Katishulam* (low back ache) have been indicated for the usage of *Chaturbeeja churna*.<sup>[2]</sup> It is also told to be *Shoolahara* and acts on *Prasuta vata* (*Vata* increased after birth) as *Vatanulomana* (Downward flow of *Vata*) in *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*.<sup>[3]</sup> This article has been written with the intention of exploring the effect of *Chaturbeeja churna* on primary dysmenorrhoea.

**Significance of *Chaturbeeja churna***

*Chaturbeeja churna* is made of very common, accessible ingredients. Due to the availability of the drugs, it can be used more frequently. The ingredients have a minimal cost which adds up to the advantage of using this formulation.

***Methika***

*Methika* also known as *Trigonella foenum* Linn. belongs to Fabaceae and it is cultivated in several parts of India. Fenugreek has activities like antioxidative, antineoplastic, anti-inflammatory,

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antiulcerogenic, antipyretic, immunomodulatory, and antitumor.<sup>[2]</sup> It has *Katu rasa* (pungent taste), *Laghu* (light), *Snigdha guna* (unctuous) and *Ushna* (hot) *Veerya*. A survey conducted in Jammu and Kashmir revealed that *Methika* was a very common herb used for treating menstrual disorders.<sup>[4]</sup>

### **Chandrashura**

*Chandrashura* (*Lepidium sativum* Linn.) is an annual herb belonging to the Cruciferae family.<sup>[2]</sup> It is an abortifacient and possess properties like antibacterial, aphrodisiac, diuretic, expectorant, gastrointestinal stimulant and gastroprotective. It also acts as antispasmodic. It has *Katu rasa* and *Katu Vipaka*. It is *Ushna veerya* and *Kapha* and *Vatahara* in nature.<sup>[2]</sup> *Chandrashura* was found to be very effective in the treatment of dysmenorrhoea in a clinical study.<sup>[5]</sup> *Chandrashura* seeds were found to be one of the most commonly used remedies in *Saudi Arabia* for menstrual disorders.<sup>[6]</sup>

### **Kalajaji**

*Kalajaji* (*Nigella sativa* Linn) is an annual herb of the Ranunculaceae family. It possesses a broad spectrum of activities such as diuretic, anti-hypertensive, antidiabetic, anticancer and immunomodulatory, antimicrobial, anthelmintics, analgesics, anti-inflammatory, spasmolytic, bronchodilator, gastroprotective, hepato-protective, renal protective and antioxidant properties. The *Rasa* is *Katu rasa* with *Katu Vipaka*. It is *Ushna veerya* in nature.<sup>[2]</sup>

### **Yavanika**

*Yavanika* (*Carum copticum*) belongs to the Umbelliferae family is an annual herb. It is well known for its utility in digestive disorders. It acts as broncho dilatory, antitussive and anti-dyspnea. Medicinal effects of this plant in GIT disorders, such as reflux, cramps, abdominal tumours, abdominal pain, and *Helicobacter pylori* infections. It is also considered as an abortifacient. It is *Ushna* and *Tikshna* in nature. It is *Katu rasa* and *Katu Vipaka*.<sup>[2]</sup>

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Mode of action**

Primary dysmenorrhoea is mainly caused by *Vata* which is in *Pratiloma gati* (upward direction).<sup>[7]</sup> Therefore the objective is to correct the direction of *Vata*.

### **Methika**

Due to its *Snigdha guna* it helps to do *Anulomana* of *Vata*. *Ushna guna* and *Katu Vipaka* helps in reducing *Kostagata vata* by correcting *Agni Mandya*. *Methika* is proven to be anti-inflammatory and analgesic in nature. The chemical diosgenin and trigonelline primary constituent of *Methika* considered as Phyto oestrogen, causes variation in

the release of oestrogen and progesterone in the body directly or indirectly leading to regulated uterine contractions and controlled release of prostaglandins, there by the pain reduction. Antispasmodic and spasmolytic activity of *Methika* relieves excessive muscular contractions further leading to reduction in pain.<sup>[1]</sup> *Methika* has been proven to reduce the number of cysts in ovaries.<sup>[8]</sup> A study found that 19.7% of woman have been found to experience pain who are diagnosed with PCOD.<sup>[9]</sup> Owing to this property, it can be used to reduce menstrual cramps that occur due to Polycystic ovarian disease. Transgender men on testosterone may complain of pain that is associated with cyclical testosterone dosing, pelvic, and/or vaginal pain with penetration. Although the pathology is unclear, many have undergone hysterectomy to avoid this pain. This might indicate that testosterone might have a role in menstrual cramping. *Methika* has been proven to reduce free testosterone in the body.<sup>[10]</sup> Perhaps, this might lead to another hypothesis about the mechanism of action of *Methika*.

### **Chandrashura**

It has similar action as *Methika* on *Agni* as well as *Vata*. Due to its *Shodana* action on *Rakta*, it does better *Dhatu poshana* to *Mamsa* which might help in reducing the pain caused due to hypoxia. It is also proven to be anti-spasmodic.<sup>[1]</sup> *Chandrashura* seeds are a rich source of calcium.<sup>[11]</sup> In a study it has been shown that low levels of calcium can cause uterine spasms, reduce blood supply and cause pain.<sup>[12]</sup> *Chandrashura* seeds might be helping in primary dysmenorrhoea by increasing serum calcium levels.

### **Kalajaji**

It is *Deepana*, *Pachana* and *Vatanulomana* therefore it will align the *gati* of *Vata* reducing the pain. It is also proven to be spasmolytic and anti-inflammatory which helps to reduce pain.<sup>[2]</sup> A study suggests that the application of *N. sativa* oil on the fontanel lobe at night could have an analgesic effect that helps to relieve menstrual pain. Considering that the use of massage is an inexpensive method with little or no side effects, patient compliance is high.<sup>[13]</sup> The results of a clinical study showed that *Nigella sativa* could reduce the severity and duration of menstrual pain by exerting anti-inflammatory effects when compared to mefenamic acid due to the inhibitory action of *Nigella sativa* on spontaneous movements of uterine smooth muscles in rats and guinea pigs as well as the contractions induced by oxytocin stimulation.<sup>[14]</sup>

**Yavanika**

It is directly mentioned as *Shulahara* in *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*. It acts on *Agni Mandya* by increasing *Agni*. It is also *Vatahara* due to which it corrects the *Gati* of *Vata* and reduces pain. It is an abortifacient which implies it is *Garbshaya shodana*. This removes all the *Doshas* from *Garbshaya* preventing the *samprapti* from progressing.<sup>[2]</sup>

A study was conducted in which *Yavanika* was given alongside Dicyclomine (10 mg) and Mefenamic Acid (250 mg) and it was concluded that *Yavani* provided good relief and reduced the number of clots.<sup>[15]</sup> A study concluded that having clots made the patient two times more prone to dysmenorrhoea.<sup>[16]</sup> In this case, *Yavani* reduced the clots which might lead to reduced dysmenorrhoea. Seeds contain essential oil with 50% thymol as main ingredient which act as anti-spasmodic. This can effectively reduce dysmenorrhoea by relaxing uterine muscles.<sup>[17]</sup>

The combination has all the drugs which have a target site in *Garbhashaya*. All of them are *Vata-kaphahara* which helps to break the *Samprapti* and reduces pain. The drugs are *Deepana* and *Pachana* which correct *Agni* which is essential as *Mandagni* is a root cause for all disorders. The combination works synergistically and acts on *Apana vata* and corrects it reducing primary dysmenorrhoea. *Bheshaja kala* for administering this medicine would be in *Apana kaala* which is before food at evening.

According to the other symptoms, the associated *Dosha* with *Vata* can be assessed. This will prove to be helpful when *Anupana* has to be chosen. In case of *Shuddha vata*, *Ghritha* or *Taila* can be used. *Pitta* association can be handled by administering the *Churna* with butter and *Kapha* with *Takra*.

**CONCLUSION**

*Chaturbeeja churna* is a very useful medicine in primary dysmenorrhoea. It can be a safe and effective medicine. Clinical studies must be conducted for further evaluation of this formulation. As it is made with easily available, simple ingredients it has a great scope for utility in dysmenorrhoea.

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