A REVIEW ON CHITRAKA WITH ITS MEDICINAL PROPERTIES W.S.R TO ITS AMA PACHAN AND AGNI DEEPANA ACTION

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ABSTRACT

If we talk about Ayurveda, Science of life, the concept of Ama is unique. Ama is a Sanskrit word that translates literally to mean things like "unripe" "uncooked" "raw" "immature" or "undigested. Essentially, it is a form of un-metabolized waste that cannot be utilized by the body. To some degree, the formation of small amounts of Ama is a normal part of the digestive process, provided it is efficiently removed. But when it is not regularly cleared and eliminated, Ama becomes hugely problematic. In fact, Ama is said to be the root cause of all disease, and Amaya, a Sanskrit word for disease literally means "that which is born out of Ama. The connection between Ama and the disease process makes perfect sense because the qualities of Ama are in direct opposition to those of Agni. Strong Agni is essential to the maintenance of proper health. In other words, when Agni is compromised and when Ama accumulates, our health suffers, and the two situations are mutually reinforcing. In Ayurveda, the concept of Agni, is of central importance. In fact, the strength of Agni in the body is among the most critical factors in determining overall health. By contrast, Ama is a toxic, disease causing substance that forms as a result of impaired Agni, and that, in turn, destroys Agni. In this way, impaired Agni and the creation of Ama routinely enter into a vicious and self-perpetuating cycle. Unfortunately, the accumulation of Ama is extremely detrimental to our health; it can lead to all kinds of imbalances and is a causative factor in any number of diseases. Ama pachan and Agni Deepana is the best concept to improve all heath issues, for this the wonderful drug Chitraka is mentioned in our Ayurvedic texts. Here in this article we are going to discuss about Chitrak & its medicinal aspect as mentioned in Ayurvedic texts.

KEYWORDS: Ama, un-metabolized, Amaya, Agni.

INTRODUCTION

Chitraka is a well recognized and reputed plant to treat number of disease as it has proven effect in Ama pachan and Agni deepana. The word Chitrak gives us a unique resemblance to the leopard as it tears accumulated lumps like.1 Chitrak is one of the powerful digestive and carminative herbs of Ayurveda. It is used in most of Ayurvedic medicines for indigestion. The white variety of Chitrak, Plumbago zeylanica L, commonly known as lead wort. It is an oldest herb that was used in Ayurveda for several disorders over thousands of years. It grows wild in India and also refined commercially There is no uniformity in literature that states P. zeylanica is herb or shrub. It is a perennial bushy shrub but in some of the works it is also defined as herb2.3 While some has given the class of shrub4. P. zeylanica plant accomplishes a height of about 0.5–2 m. Leaves are dark green in colour with the thickness of 1.5 inch and distance of leave is roughly up to 3 inch. The leaves are alternate, simple, ovate or ovate-lanceolate, elliptical or oblong and they consume hairy margin. The stipules are inattentive and petiole is thin with a tallness of approx. 0.5 mm. The inflorescence is of terminal raceme-type, flowers are white in colour with the stalk measurement of 4 to 12 inch, the diameter of the flower is ½ to ¾ inch, these are existent in bunches or clusters. They are bisexual, regular, pentamorous, pedicellate and pleasant fragranced. The flowers come round the year and pollination process is completed with the help of insects. The mucilaginous glands supports the plant to trap the insects on it. White flowered is innate to South Asia. It is dispersed in tropical and subtropical countries of the world. Budding in deciduous woodland, savannahs, scrublands from sea level up to 2000 m altitude4–6. In India it is sprinkled in central India to West Bengal, Maharashatra, and Uttar Pradesh to some parts of South India. The plant also enjoys regional names:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindi</th>
<th>Chita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>Chitramulam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Leadwort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>Chita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marathi</td>
<td>Chitramula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>Chitro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Chittiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayalam</td>
<td>Vellakotuveri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>Chitra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Showing synonyms7,10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synonyms</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agnika &amp; Analnma</td>
<td>Due to its fiery hot nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dipaka</td>
<td>Due to Ushna veerya it stimulates digestive fire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Botanical description 11-14

Table 3: Showing Botanical description of Chitraka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kingdom</th>
<th>Plantae</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subkingdom</td>
<td>Tracheobionta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super division</td>
<td>Spermatophyta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Magnoliophyta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Magnoliopsida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subclass</td>
<td>Caryophyllidae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Plumbaginaceae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genus</td>
<td>Plumbago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Species</td>
<td>zeylanica</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Binomial name: Plumbago zeylanica Linn.

Classical Categorization: 15

Caraka: Dipniya mahakashaya16, Sulaprasmama mahakashaya17, Arsogna mahakashaya18, Lekhaniya mahakashaya.19


Sharangdhar nighantu: Acharya Sharangdhar mentioned that those Dravya which are used for digestion of unripe food i.e., Ama rasa and to initiate the digestive fire termed as Deepana-Pachan dravya, example is Chitraka29.

Varieties: Vagbhata quoted three varieties viz., Sveta, Pita & Asita citraka. Usually we come across the following three varieties: P. zeylanica (White); P. rosea L. (red) and P. capensis (blue)30.

P.V. Sharmaji described the later two varieties as P. indica Linn. and P. Auriculata Linn.31

In Raja nighantu the second variety of Citraka i.e., Rakta citraka is denoted as kalah.32

Distribution30, 31

It is a plant that grows all over the year; this plant grows up to the height of 3 to 6 feet & sometimes cultivated.

Botanical Description33

- Leaves: Its leaves are dark green in colour, ovate in shape, are about 2 to 3 inches in length and are 1 to 1.5 inches wide.
- Flowers: Flowers are white in colour with five petals.
- Root: Its root is light brown in colour from outside and is white from inside.
- Fruit: Capsule, Oblong, Pointed; pericarp thin below, thick and hardened above.

Part Used34, 35

Root Bark

Dosage36

Powder: 0.5 – 2 g.

Decoction: 25-50ml.

Physical Properties37

Ras (Taste): Katu (Bitter)

Guna (Properties): Laghu (light), Tikshan (Which penetrates very fast).

Viraya (Action): Ushna (Hotness)

Vipaka (Post digestive effect): Katu (Bitter)

Dosha: It pacifies Kapha (Cough), and Vata (Vayu) predominately, but it also acts as a Tridosh Ghan, that is the one which helps in maintain all the basic constituents of our body.

Major Chemical Constituents33

1. Plumbagin
2. 3 - Chloroplumbagin
3. Plumbagic Acid
4. Isozeylinone
5. Glucose
6. Fructose
7. Aspartic Acid
8. Hydroxyprolin

About Ama dosha and Agni 38

Ama is fairly easy to clear from the digestive tract, but once it spreads into the deeper tissues, it becomes much more difficult to eliminate. As Ama accumulates in the body, it inevitably clogs the channels of the body (Srotamsi) and disrupts tissue nutrition. This alone is problematic, but Ama can disturb physiological processes at the cellular level as well. When Ama finds its way into the deeper tissues, it coats and clogs individual cell membranes inhibiting cellular communication and weakening the immune response. This eventually leads to a loss of intelligence at the cellular level, which can cause much more serious diseases such as autoimmune disorders, or cancer.

Signs & Symptoms of Ama

Generalized signs and symptoms of Ama in the body include:

- Clogging of the channels (may cause symptoms like sinus congestion, lymph congestion, constipation, fibrocystic changes, etc.)
- Fatigue
- Heaviness
- Abnormal flow of Vata (there are many ways this can manifest in the body, but examples include excess upward moving energy causing heartburn or excess downward moving energy causing diarrhoea)
- Indigestion
- Stagnation
- Abnormal taste, muted taste, or poor appetite
- Sexual debility
- Mental confusion
- Feeling unclean

Depending on where Ama is in the body, it can cause more specific signs and symptoms such as a thick coating on the tongue, all kinds of congestion, loss of strength, dull eyes, skin blemishes, fevers, excess weight, poor circulation, oedema and swelling, stiffness or inhibited movement, soreness at the roots of the hair, or generalized aches and pains. In the digestive tract, Ama

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tends to cause changes taste perception, loss of appetite, indigestion, malabsorption, vitamin and mineral deficiencies, bloating, gas, constipation, diarrhea, sticky stools, or itching at the anus. *Ama* is also often responsible for foul smelling breath, mucus, urine, and stools. Mentally and emotionally, *Ama* leads to a distinct lack of energy and enthusiasm, low self esteem, anxiety, worry, depression, fear of the unknown, a foggy mind, and unclear thinking.

Modern diseases that are a direct result of *Ama* accumulation include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Atherosclerosis</th>
<th>Candida albicans overgrowths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elevated blood sugar</td>
<td>Blood urea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late-onset diabetes</td>
<td>Gout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some types of depression</td>
<td>Gall stones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheumatoid factor</td>
<td>Kidney stones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated Immunoglobulin E</td>
<td>Increased liver enzymes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helicobacteri bacteria</td>
<td>Glaucoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leukocytosis</td>
<td>Fevers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess red blood count</td>
<td>Bacterial infections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess platelet count</td>
<td>Tumors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Causes of *Ama***

There are any number of reasons that *Ama* can begin to accumulate in the body, but impaired Agni is always a piece of the puzzle. And because *Ama* itself disturbs *Agni*, it can sometimes be difficult to tease out which came first. In reality, it doesn’t matter. Habits that disrupt Agni can often be implicated in the formation of *Ama*. Likewise, habits that contribute to the formation of *Ama* will disturb *Agni*. Here are some examples of such habits:

- A poor diet, which might involve
- Overeating or emotional eating
- Improper food combinations
- Especially heavy food
- Fried food
- Excess amounts of cold or raw foods
- Highly processed or sugary foods
- An excess of the sweet, sour, or salty tastes

A detrimental lifestyle (e.g. high stress, excess or inadequate sleep, lack of routine, excessive or inadequate exercise, etc.).

1. Irregular eating habits
2. Sleeping or eating before food is digested
3. Sleeping during the day (for some constitutions)
4. Lack of exercise
5. Repressed or unresolved emotions

The qualities of *Agni* and *Ama* illustrate their perfect opposition to one another.

**In Ayurveda**, removing the cause of an imbalance is always one of the first steps in the line of treatment. Herbal support is often indicated when the *Agni* is strong enough to produce an appetite, but not strong enough to completely digest the food, resulting in the formation of ama. The bitter and astringent tastes are a powerful combination because the bitter taste dries and drains *Ama*, while the pungent taste destroys and digests it. This is a common flavor combination in herbs and formulas widely used to digest *Ama*.

Ayurveda revere a surprising number of herbs for their ability to digest and eliminate *Ama*. *Citraka* is one among them to digest *Ama* and stimulate digestive fire.

**Therapeutic potential**

1. **Grahaniroga**
   a) *Chitrakadya gudika*
   b) *Citruka ghtra*

2. **Piles**
   a) Paste of *Citruka* mixed with *Sunthi* and sour gruel is applied to haemorrhoids.
   b) Bark of *Citruka* is pasted with in a jar. Curd or buttermilk prepared in the same, on intake, destroys piles.
   c) One who takes root of *Citruka* or *Musali* or *Krsna cirabilva* pounded with cow’s urine, does not suffer from piles.

3. **Diarrhoea**
   After taking *Pippali* with honey, *Citruka* with buttermilk or only tender fruits of *Bilva* one is freed from diarrhoea.

4. **Udararoga**
   *Citrakaghrta*

5. **Oedema**
   a) *Citrakaghrta*
   b) Regular local application of the warm paste of *Citruka* and *Devadaru* or *Sarsapa* and *Sigru* pounded with urine is useful.

6. **Cough**
   *Citrukadi leha*

7. **Hoarseness of voice**
   Goat’s ghee processed with *Yavaksara* and *Ajamoda* or *Citruka* and *Amalaka* or *Devadaru* and *Citruka* mixed with honey is beneficial.

8. **Prameha**
   Decoction of *Citruka* is useful in sukrameha.

9. **Wind in stomach**
   *Saddharana Yoga*

10. **As Rasayana**
    *Citruka rasayana*

11. **Kustha**
    *Kustha* is alleviated by taking *Haridra* 40 gm with urine for a month. In similar way, *Citruka* finely powdered or *Pippali* should be taken with urine.

12. **Vitiligo**
    Cow’s urine mixed with *Citruka*, *Trikatu* and honey should be kept in a jar of ghee for a fortnight. The patient should thereafter take it.

13. **Aneamia**
    One suffering from anemia, should take roots of *Bala* and *Citruka* 10 gm with warm water or seeds of *Sigru* mixed with equal salt keeping on milk diet.
14. Filaria
Application of Citraka or Devadaru as paste is useful.55

15. Abscess
Cirabilva, Bhallataka, Danti, Citraka, Karavigra and exocrine of pigeon, heron and vulture act as tearing agents for abscess.56

16. Obesity
Intake of Citraka root with honey keeping on wholesome diet is useful.

CONCLUSION
This review clearly shows the importance of Citraka as a useful medicinal plants. Citraka is used from the ancient times as an important herb to treat number of disease due to its Ama pachan and Agni deepana properties mentioned by Acharya Sharangdhara. This review encapsulates about the morphology of the plant along with its chemical composition, propagation, therapeutic use. It includes a short review on Ama dosha and Agni, as they play an important role in maintaining the equilibrium of the body and Citraka is best among Ama Pachan & Agni deepana actions.

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