



Review Article

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A REVIEW ON CHARAKA SAMHITOKTA BHESHHAJA PARIKSHA: ANCIENT METHODS OF DRUG STANDARDIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Charaka Samhita is one of the most important scientific evidence-based treatises of Ayurveda. Along with various important subjects it explains ten examination criteria of treatment. These are Karana i.e., Physician, Kaarana i.e., Medicine / Herb, Karyayoni i.e., Pathology, Karya i.e., equilibrium of Dhatus or Health, Karya Phala i.e., Relief, Anubandha i.e., Life span, Desha i.e., Place as well as Patients' body, Kala i.e., year, seasons as well as stages of disease, Pravritti i.e., initiation of treating and Upaya i.e., best qualities of Physician, Medicine etc. except relief and life span which are objectives. Among these criteria Medicine holds the place next to the physician. Examination of a medicine is as important as the physician. In Charaka Samhita the standardization of the medicine is explained as Bheshaja Pariksha, which is elaborated in this article along with the example discussed in the text itself. With reference to this the points of Bheshaja Pariksha discussed in the text were compiled. The example of Madanaphala in the same text is compared with these points. Discussion is made based on points. It is observed that the guidelines discussed about standardization of drug are followed while mentioning the details of Madanaphala at various citations. The guidelines are in detail, exhaustive, scientific and ahead of time which can be followed even now for drug standardization.

Keywords: Bheshaja Pariksha, Standardization, Charaka Samhita, Madanaphala

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era of standardization, it becomes interesting to look back to see the measures taken in old times for the standardization of medicine, mainly Herbs. In this article method of examination of herb or standardization of herb explained by Charaka Samhita along with example given in the same text is elaborated.¹

Bheshaja Pariksha according to Charaka Samhita is explained as follows²—

- **Idam Eva Prakriti** – This is the nature of the Plant material.
- **Evam Gunam** – This is the property.
- **Evam Prabhavam** – This is the major effect.
- **Asmin Deshe Jatam** – In this place the plant has been grown.
- **Asmin Rutau Jatam** – In this season it is grown.
- **(Asmin Rutau) Evam Gruhitam** – In this season it is thus collected.
- **Evam Nihtam** – This is how it is kept.
- **Evam Upaskrutam** – This is how it is processed.
- **Anaya ca Matraya Uktam** – In this dose it is used.
- **Asmin Vyadhau** – In this disease condition it is used.
- **Evamvidhassya Purushasya** – In this type of body.
- **Etavantam Doshama Apakrshati Upashamayati Va** – This type of Dosha either removes or pacifies.

Whatever may be the medicine, it can be examined in the upper said manner and then can be established and used in practice.

Bheshaja Pariksha in detail with example

To observe these guidelines the example of Madanaphala explained in the text at different places is taken for elaboration. The general guidelines given for these criteria in Charaka Samhita are as follows –

Idam Eva Prakriti

This is the nature of the plant. For example, about Madanaphala, it is said to be the best medicine for Vamana (Therapeutic emesis), and this is because the fruit is Anapayee or to be more precise it is harmless, or which induces emesis with utmost ease when used for emesis. Some scholars explain Prakriti of the plant means morphological characters. Although it is also important to know the morphological characters to identify the authentic drug / plant / plant part, similarly the Therapeutic nature also must be considered. Because two identical plants may differ in therapeutic properties as plants belonging to same family can possess similarity in morphology. The morphology of the Madanaphala is also explained which is discussed in the point 'Asmin Rutau Jatam'.

Evam Gunam

Gunas are the properties and the characteristics of the Dravya. A medicine is said to be useful if it is having its medicinal properties at its optimum level. This optimum level is expressed in the term Sampad.

- **Desha, Kala, Guna, Bhajana Sampad³** – Proper place, season, characteristics and instruments.

- Upagata Sampurna Pramana Rasa Veerya Gandhani, Anupahat Gandha Varna Rasa Sparsha Prabhava⁴ – Properly matured attaining proper size, shape and weight, properly developed taste, potency, smell, unaffected smell – colour – taste – touch and its innate properties.
- Bahu Kalpa, Bahu Guna, Sampanna, Yogya⁵ - Can be made available in different formulations, having multiple characteristics, perfectly developed having all the above-mentioned characteristics and most importantly it should be the choice of drug.

The properties of Madanaphala are explained in two ways. First are the physical properties like how the fruit during collection should be. Size, shape, colour, appearance, smell and touch like Oval in shape, medium in size, pale yellow in colour and devoid of green colour, free from insect bite or worm infestation, after ripening they should become sweet to smell and soft to touch. Secondly the medicinal properties for which we are selecting the medicine. Appropriate physical properties indicate the quality of the material in selection primarily.

Also, there are 133 formulations of Madanaphala are explained in Charaka Samhita Kalpa Sthana Chapter 1. Which indicates Bahu Kalpa property of the drug. The various indications in which the drug is used are Shleshma Jwara Gulma Pratishyaya etc. Kaphaja Vyadhis indicates Bahu Gunam. Sampad is explained above. Yogyam means the selection of the patient as well as the selection of proper form and dosage for that patient. Wrong indication always fails the medicine no matter how potent and useful it is. Therefore, a drug must be used in its proper indication to get the desired result.

Evam Prabhavam

Madanaphala are considered as the best for Vamana due to Anapayitva i.e., due to lack of adverse drug effect.⁶

Asmin Deshe Jatam

Deshe Sadharane Jangale Vaa.⁷ The fruits must be collected from the habitat of the plant. It must belong to Saadharana or Jangala Desha i.e., Arid or semi- arid places and not damp or humid places.

Asmin Rutau Jatam

Yatha Kalam i.e., seasonal, Annual medicines which grow in rainy season and attain maturity at the time of winter, Perennial herbs when matured etc. For Madanaphala, they should be collected in between Vasant and Greeshma Ritu.⁸ Availability of the fruits throughout the year is not considered here. This indicates that the effect of seasons is equally important for the appropriate properties to develop in the material.

(Asmin Rutau) Evam Gruhitam

Partwise these medicines or herbs should be collected in respective season as follows⁸ –

Stem and leaves which are mature but not old – Varsha (Rainy season) and Vasanta (Spring).

Roots – Greeshma (Summer) or Shishira (Winter) after fall of old leaves.

Bark, Tubers - bulbs - rhizomes, Latex – Sharad (Autumn).

Heartwood – Hemanta (Winter – early winter).

Flowers and fruits - As per the proper season.

With reference to Madanaphala, it should be collected in the period between Vasanta Ritu and Greeshma Ritu. (Apparently between March and June). Preferably on Pushya, Ashvini or Mrigashiras Nakshatra and on Maitra Muhurta i.e., early morning or at dawn.

Procedure of the collection

Direction

Plant should be either on east side or north side.

Procedure

The person should approach the herb having the thought of wellbeing of patient and whose behavior is good, should have respect towards nature, should be clean and wearing white cloths, should not consume any food article to avoid any natural urge at the time of collection as well as to avoid traffic of thoughts, should offer prayers to Deity, Ashvini Kumar, Brahman and Cow.

Madanaphala should be ripped and not be irregular in shape they should be in oval shape. It should be of Pandu colour i.e., of pale yellow and not should be green. It should be devoid of Krimi or worms / insects, it should not be over matured or degraded. It should not be eaten by insects.⁹

Evam Nihtam

The collected material should be kept in an appropriate container in a cabin specially made for storage of medicines. In this context the storage of Madanaphala is well elaborated. The material should be kept in airtight container and in a place where no direct air enters (to avoid contamination). The medicine should be observed daily and should be kept protected from moisture, smoke, dust, animals like rats or mice, quadrupeds and should be kept up high.⁹

Evam Upaskrutam

This means Samskara or some procedure to change the physical form or quality of the material for use. These are various procedures like Cleaning, Drying, processing, Triturating, Pounding etc.

For example, collected Madanaphala should be cleaned and tied in the Kusha grass like a Puta, covered with cow dung and kept in the pile of either of Yavatusha (Barley Husk), Masha (Black gram), Shali (Raw Rice), Kulattha (Horse gram), Mudga (Green gram) or anything like these. It should be kept for Eight nights or till they become soft and starts generating sweet aroma. Once they become soft and of required aroma it should be removed from the pile and unwrapped and dried in sun. When they get dried well the seed should be removed. These seeds should be triturated with Ghrita (Ghee / Clarified butter), Dadhi (Curd), Madhu (Honey), Palala (paste of sesame) simultaneously. Again, dried and put into a dry and clean earthen pot, covered and tied with cloth and kept hanging on the roof to protect from reach of children, insects and pests.⁹

Anaya ca Matraya Uktam

Madanaphala is mainly used for the process of Vamana i.e., therapeutic emesis. Madanaphala is said to be the safest emetic

agent and is used in a dose of “Antarnakha Mushti”, or the physician can calculate the dose according to the strength of patient and the disease. (Antarnakha Mushti - A dose equivalent to the quantity of drug hold in a closed fist)¹⁰

Asmin Vyadhau

A medicine is said to be used in its own indications then only we can get the expected results. Indications of Madanaphala are given as follows.¹¹

- Kaphaja Vyadhi (Kaphaja diseases)
- Granthi (Glandular growths)
- Jwara (Fever)
- Udara (Ascites)
- Kapha Abhibhuta Agni (Depletion of digestive fire due to Kapha)
- Utklishta Kapha Pitta (Aggravated Kapha and Pitta), Sukumara Rugna (patients with Delicate body)

Evamvidhasya Purushasya

Although the indications are given, it can not be used in all the patients. It should be used only in the patients which are indicated for Vamana process. In such patients only we can observe the expected results.¹²

Etavantam Doshama Apakarshati Upashamayati Va

Since, Madanaphala is a Shodhana Dravya it is used for Apakarshana (Removal) of Dosha mainly Kapha and Pitta accompanied by Kapha. By elimination of Doshas it reduces the increased Doshas and eases the disease.¹³

Thus, in Charaka Samhita itself we can find the guidelines for the standardization of medicine or herb which can be seen elaborated for the better understanding the depth of the criteria.

DISCUSSION

Even in the ancient era the method of drug standardization was elaborated.

Apart from only the drug examination, some more criteria were taken into consideration.

The place of cultivation and collection are also taken into consideration which contributes to the quality and efficacy of the medicine. As plants cultivated in their own habitat are having samskara of soil, seasonal variations, air, water, temperature etc.

Not only the time of collection but the time of cultivation is also important as it affects the growth of the plant.

Different seasons for harvesting of different part used are indicative of optimum level of potency in that part in corresponding season.

Processes done on the raw herb before storage and use must be contributing to the shelf life and enhancement in efficacy. We must search this type of preparatory processes for various plants after collection and before storage.

The most important are the indications not only for disease but the patient's body and condition also for the application of drug.

Proper selection of the indication can help avoid the adverse drug reaction.

In today's era where the methods of cultivations are evolved like tissue culture, green house, hydroponic cultivation, one need to know the effect of these techniques on the medicinal properties of the drug. Comparative study of the herbs grown in the natural habitat and herbs cultivated by above mentioned methods are needed to be done to assess the physical and chemical properties. Similarly, these need to be assessed for similar clinical conditions to see their efficacy.

These are the guidelines which need to be followed even in today's era where green - house cultivations have changed the perspective and impact of Ritu and Desha on the plant.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the Standardization method explained in Charaka Samhita seem to be more exhaustive, scientific and ahead of time which needs to be observed (followed) for various plants and medicines. Comparative pharmaco-gnostical, phytochemical as well as clinical study of herbs cultivated by various methods like green house technology, tissue culture, hydroponic technique etc. with traditional ancient methods should be conducted to see the difference. Comparative study of raw herbs as it is, and raw herb processed before storage need to be conducted for shelf-life and therapeutic efficacy.

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