

## CONCEPT OF PRATIVISH AND ITS ROLE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF POISONING

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### ABSTRACT

*Prativish Chikitsa* means the use of toxic substance as an antitoxic agent in the management of poisoning. When all treatment measures for poisoning become unsuccessful, at that time *Prativish Chikitsa* is very useful. *Sthavara Visha* (inanimate poisons) can be successfully treated with *Jangama Visha* (animate poisons) and vice versa. In various *Ayurvedic* texts, the use of *Visha Dravya* (poisonous substance) is stated in effective treatment of poisoning. *Visha* (poison) possesses the properties like *Laghu* (lightness), *Sukshma* (fineness), *Aashu* (quick acting), *Vyavayi*, etc., hence it can spread all over the body and can reach into entire system and organs very quickly. These properties of poisons are used while using poisonous substance as *Prativish*. So, *Visha Dravyas* (poisonous substances) having opposite action to that of poison consumed can cure the signs and symptoms produced by that poison and save the life of the patient. This is the basic consideration in *Prativish Chikitsa*. This concept of *Prativish* which is existed since ancient times needs to be supplemented, explained, refurbished and narrated for proper understanding. So, this article aims to collect the references of *Prativish* and to discuss the role of *Sthavara* (inanimate) and *Jangama Visha* (animate poisons) as *Prativish*.

**Keywords:** *Prativish*, poison, *Visha*, management of poisoning, *Sthavara Visha*, *Jangama Visha*.

### INTRODUCTION

*Agadtantra* (toxicology) is one of the important branches of *Ashtanga Ayurveda* which deals with knowledge and treatment of poisons. The poisons are mainly of two types<sup>1</sup>, *Sthavara Visha* (inanimate poisons) and *Jangama Visha* (animate poisons). In *Ayurveda*, the 24 modalities of treatment explained by *Charakacharya* are the guidelines and backbone in the management of these poisons. *Prativish Chikitsa* is one of these 24 treatment modalities and it is explained in detail in *Ashtanga Hridaya Uttarthana* 48<sup>th</sup> *Adhyaya*.

*Prativish* means the use of poisons in the management of other poisons. *Prativish Chikitsa* is the last resort in the treatment of poisons and used in extreme cases when all other treatment measures for poisoning became unsuccessful<sup>2</sup>. Though the poisons are harmful to the body, they can become an excellent medicine if used with skill and in appropriate doses<sup>3</sup>.

Inanimate poisons possess the properties similar to that of *Kapha* and animate poisons possess properties similar to that of *Pitta*. Also inanimate poisons act

upwards and animate poisons act in downward direction<sup>4</sup>. These opposite natures of actions of above said poisons are effectively made use of in *Prativish Chikitsa*. Since these poisons possess opposite qualities, when they are used together, they can destroy each other. Hence inanimate poisons are quoted in treatment of animate poisons and vice a versa.

Many references are found in various *Ayurvedic* texts like *Samhitas*, *Nighantus*, *Rasa Granthas*, etc., where poisonous drugs are used as an effective measure in the management of other poisons. For example in *Alarka Visha* (rabies), *Dhatura* is suggested to be used; also *Aacharyas* have mentioned the use of *Jayapala* in snake bite poisoning & *Tamraparni* (tobacco) in *Kuchala* (nux vomica) poisoning; *Prativish* for *Dhatura* is said to be *Karpasa Beeja*, etc.

This is a subject of study that how these *Prativisha Dravyas* can be used in the treatment of poisoning and how they can act against these particular poisons.

#### **PRATIVISH CHIKITSA:**

*Prativish Chikitsa* is included under 24 modalities of treatment of poisons in *Charaka Samhita*. And it is well elaborated with its dose, indications, contra-indications, etc. in *Ashtanga Sangraha Uttarsthana* 48 - *Vishaprayogiya Adhyaya*.

Victims of venomous bites should be treated with inanimate root poisons and the persons who have consumed inanimate root poisons should be subjected to the bite of venomous snakes. This is the basic consideration in *Prativish Chikitsa*. Nothing is as effective as *Visha* (poison) to neutralise the poison or to nullify the effects of other kind of poisons<sup>5</sup>.

#### **INDICATIONS FOR USE OF PRATIVISH:**

1. When the effects of poison are not subsided by *Mantra-Tantra* procedures and drug administration<sup>6</sup>.
2. When *Visha-pidita* (patient) has crossed 5<sup>th</sup> *Visha Vega*, but has yet not completed 7<sup>th</sup> *Vega* i.e. either in 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> *Visha Vega*<sup>6</sup>.
3. When all treatment measures for animate and inanimate poisons have failed<sup>7</sup>.
4. In many other diseases, in extreme and emergency condition or when all methods of treatment fail, the poison should be administered<sup>8</sup>.

#### **DOSE<sup>9</sup>:**

1. For patients of snake bite – the vegetable poisons should use in the doses-  
*Heena Matra* (minimum dose) – 4  
*Yava* (1 *Ratti* = 125mg)  
*Madhyama Matra* (moderate dose) – 6  
*Yava* (187.5 mg)  
*Uttama Matra* (maximum dose) – 8  
*Yava* (250 mg)
2. For the patients of *Keeta Dansha* (insect bite) – 2 *Yava Matra*. (62.5 mg)
3. For scorpion bite – 1 *Tila Matra*.
4. In case of spider bite – *Sthavara Visha* (inanimate poison) should not be consumed orally; it should be applied to skin after *Pracchana Karma*.

#### **CONTRAINDICATIONS FOR THE USE OF PRATIVISH:**

1. In cases of doubt whether a person have consumed poison or not and a bite is of poisonous animal or not, *Prativish* should not be used. *Agada Kalpa* (antidotes) are used at that time<sup>10</sup>.
2. When any kind of poison is localised in blood, *Prativish* should not be administered<sup>9</sup>.
3. After the lapse of suitable stage of drug administration (*Kriyakala*), it should not be used<sup>10</sup>.
4. In a person who consumes *Ruksha Ahara* (dry food), use of *Prativish* pro-

duces disorders of vision, pain in ear and other *Vatavyadhi*<sup>11</sup>.

- In a person suffering from *Ajirna* (indigestion), use of *Prativish* may cause death itself<sup>11</sup>.

**PRECAUTION TO BE TAKEN WHILE USING PRATIVISH<sup>12</sup>:**

The physicians should understand the presence of poison by all out efforts, because *Prativish* acts like nectar when applied to wound or administered to a person who have poison in them, whereas it acts as a poison itself, when administered in non-poisonous cases.

**TO WHOM PRATIVISH SHOULD BE GIVEN & WHOM NOT TO BE GIVEN<sup>13</sup>:**

*Prativisha* should be used in a patient who is subjected to unction with *Ghrita*, purged and vomited with drugs; having *Satvika Prakruti* and in *Sheeta Kala* (winter), *Vasant Ritu* (spring) and after sunrise, but in case of emergency, it

can be given at any time, even in *Grishma Ritu* (summer).

*Prativish* should not be used in rainy season and in *Durdina* (cloudy days). The individuals who can be angered easily (*Krodhi*), *Ruksha* & *Pitta Prakruti*, king, *Brahmana*, impotent & those who suffers from hunger, thirst, over exertion, exposure to sun & one who has walked long distance are unfit for receiving *Prativish*. Those who suffer from diseases of vital organs, pregnant women, children & old age patients shall also be excluded.

The patients who have received *Prativish* should avoid spicy, *Ruksha* (dry) & salty foods, sleep during daytime, exposure to sun & wind, fear & chances of indigestion should be strictly avoided.

**SOME REFERENCES OF USE OF PRATIVISH:**

**Table No. 1: USE OF STHAVARA VISHA IN JANGAMA VISHA CHIKITSA**

Sr. No.	Name of animate poison	Inanimate poison to be used for treatment
1.	<i>Alarka</i> (Rabies)	<i>Arka Ksheer</i> – for <i>Virechana</i> (purgation) <sup>14,15</sup>
		<i>Dhatura</i> <sup>16</sup>
		<i>Dhatura</i> with <i>Punarnava</i> <sup>15</sup>
		<i>Dhatura</i> with <i>Kakodumbara</i> <sup>15</sup>
		<i>Dhatura</i> with <i>Aparajita</i> & <i>Punarnava</i> <sup>14</sup>
		<i>Dhatura</i> + rice + <i>Sharapunkha</i> <sup>14</sup> (stuffed in <i>Dhatura Patra</i> )
2.	Snake bite	<i>Gunja</i> with <i>Nakuli</i> – <i>Lepa</i> (local application) <sup>17</sup>
		<i>Teekshna Visha Lepa</i> <sup>17</sup>
		<i>Karavira</i> , <i>Arka</i> , <i>Langali</i> with <i>Pippali</i> , <i>Patha</i> – <i>Lepa</i> <sup>18</sup>
		<i>Jayapala Seed</i> – <i>Anjana</i> <sup>19</sup>
		<i>Langali Kanda</i> – <i>Nasya</i> <sup>20</sup>
3.	Scorpion bite	<i>Vatsanabha Lepa</i> <sup>21</sup>
		<i>Jayapala</i> – <i>Lepa</i> <sup>16</sup>
		<i>Arka Ksheera</i> with <i>Palashbeeja</i> – <i>Lepa</i> <sup>22</sup>

		<i>Karpasa – Lepa</i> <sup>20</sup>
4.	Rat bite	<i>Danti (Jayapala Beeja) for Virechana</i> <sup>23</sup>
5.	<i>Manduka Dansha</i> (frog bite)	<i>Snuhi Ksheera with Shirishbeeja - Lepa</i> <sup>24</sup>

**USE OF JANGAMA VISHA IN STHAVARA VISHA CHIKITSA<sup>25</sup>:**

A hooded snake is made to bite many times on a piece of meat fastened to the tip of stick. Then *Choorna* (powder) of this meat is to be administered to a patient who has consumed a poison & is not re-

sponding to any other *Agada* (antidote) preparation. But it should be given after carefully deciding the strength of a poison.

**Table No. 2: USE OF STHAVARA VISHA IN STHAVARA VISHA CHIKITSA**

Sr. No.	Name of poison	Poison to be used for treatment
1.	<i>Jayapala</i>	<i>Ahiphena with Madhu &amp; Kesara</i> <sup>26</sup>
2.	<i>Kuchala</i>	<i>Tambakhu</i> <sup>27</sup>
3.	<i>Ahiphena</i>	<i>Karpasa Beeja</i> <sup>26</sup>
4.	<i>Dhatura</i>	<i>Erandamoola</i> <sup>26</sup>
		<i>Karpasapushpa Kwath</i> <sup>26</sup>
5.	<i>Karaveera</i>	<i>Arkatwak</i> <sup>28</sup>

**Table No. 3: OTHER REFERENCES**

Sr. No.	Name of poison	Poison to be used for treatment
1.	<i>Dushivisha</i>	<i>Snuhi</i> <sup>29</sup>
2.	<i>Ahiphena</i>	<i>Tamra + Tankana</i> <sup>28</sup>
3.	Scorpion bite	<i>Haratala + Navasagara – Lepa</i> <sup>30</sup>
		<i>Somala + Nimbu Rasa – Lepa</i> <sup>20</sup>

**Table No. 4: ROLE OF DHATURA IN ALARKA VISHA**

Sr. No.	<i>Alarka (Rabies)</i> <sup>31</sup>	<i>Dhatura</i> <sup>32</sup>
1.	<i>Kapha-vata Prakopaka</i>	<i>Kapha-vata Shamaka</i>
2.	Increases the secretions of glands – salivation, lacrimation, etc.	Anticholinergic action – reduces the secretions of glands
3.	Causes perspiration	<i>Swedavarodhaka</i> (decreases sweating)
4.	Causes muscle spasm	Causes paralysis
5.	Excitation & stimulation of all parts of CNS	First stimulates & subsequently causes depression
6.	Excitation, anxiety & convulsion on small external stimulation	<i>Madaka Prabhava</i> , relieves anxiety, <i>Aakshhepanivaraka</i> (anti-convulsant).
7.	Pain at bite site	<i>Uttama Shoolahara</i> (best painkiller)

**Table No. 5: ROLE OF VATSANABHA IN SCORPION BITE**

Sr. No.	Scorpion bite <sup>33</sup>	<i>Vatsanabha</i> <sup>34</sup>
1.	<i>Teevra Sthanika Vedana</i> (severe pain)	<i>Vedanasthapaka</i> (analgesic)

2.	<i>Sthanika Shopha</i> (local oedema)	<i>Shothahara</i> (reduces oedema)
3.	Causes cardiac arrhythmia	<i>Hridaya Balya</i> , brings heart rate to normal
4.	Causes cardiac failure	<i>Hrudaya Uttejaka</i> (stimulator)
5.	Causes respiratory depression	Stimulator to respiration.

**Table No. 6: ROLE OF TAMRAPARNI IN KUCHALA POISONING**

Sr. No.	<i>Kuchala</i> <sup>35</sup>	<i>Tamraparni (Tobacco)</i> <sup>36</sup>
1.	Convulsions	<i>Aakshepanivaraka</i> (anti-convulsant).
2.	Causes extreme painful convulsions	Reduces pain by the increase in acetylcholine and beta-endorphin
3.	Exaggeration of convulsions on small external stimulus	Depresses the passage of nerve impulses & produces sedative effect
4.	Produces anxiety & restlessness	Reduces anxiety by increase in beta-endorphin.

## DISCUSSION

*Prativish Chikitsa* is important treatment measure in emergency & severe condition of poisoning. It is described in *Charaka Samhita & Ashtanga Sangraha*. Though the word *Prativish* is not used in *Sushruta & Ashtanga Hrudaya*, they have mentioned some references about the use of poison in treatment of another poison. *Prativish* can be used in 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> *Visha Vega* with great care & taking proper precaution & after careful examination of patient, type of poison, its dose, etc. Nothing is as effective as *Visha* (poison) to neutralise another poison, as it possesses *Sukshma, Vyavayi, Vikashi, Aashu, Laghu*, etc. properties which enables it to penetrate to *Sukshmatikushta Strotasa* and act very quickly.

The mode of action of *Prativish* can be better understood by their individual properties, mode of action, *Guna & Karma*. E.g. *Alarka* (rabies) & *Dhatu* both acts on nervous system & brain. *Alarka* causes increase in the secretions of glands while *Dhatu* is anticholinergic, reduces all secretions. *Alarka* causes anxiety, excitation & stimulation; while

*Dhatu* has *Madaka Prabhava*, causes depression.

*Vatsanabha* is *Vedanasthapaka & Shothahara*. If it is rubbed over skin with oil, nerve endings get stimulated first & subsequently are depressed causing numbness, loss of sensation. It may act like local anaesthetic to subside severe pain in scorpion bite. It gets absorbed through mucous membrane. So, local application can also cause systemic effects. Most of scorpion venom acts on heart causing cardiac arrhythmia & cardiac failure. *Vatsanabha* also acts on heart giving it stimulation & *Bala* (strength).

*Kuchala & Tobacco* both acts on nervous system. *Kuchala* produces severe painful convulsions while *Tobacco* causes depression of nerve impulses, sedative effect & also reduces the pain.

## CONCLUSION

From all above information, we can say that *Granthakaras* have suggested the use of equally potent *Dravya* (substance) in case of toxicity of certain poisons, with symptoms of specific system. These *Dravyas* should have affinity for that very specific system or organ in the body and also it will act vigorously like

that of poison so as to nullify it and save the life of a patient. To conclude, we can say that *Aacharyas* have put forth a concept of '*Prativish*', which is a *Dravya* that should be –

1. Equally potent to *Visha* (poison).
2. Possess *Vyavayi Guna*, so that acts vigorously on *Vshapidita* (patient).
3. Should have affinity for the same system on which poison has affected.
4. Should have action opposite to that poison.

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