

TREATING KARNA SRAVA THROUGH AYURVEDA – A CASE STUDY

Prakruthi G

Assistant Professor, Department of Shalaky Tantra
Sri Paripoorna Sanathana Ayurveda Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, Arjunabettahalli, Nelamangala,
Bangalore – 562123, Karnataka, India

Corresponding Author: prakruthikalpana@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Karna (ear), the organ of hearing is considered as one among the *Navadwaras* which is predominant in *Akasha Mahabhuta*. *Karna Srava* is one among the 28 *Karna Rogas* explained by Acharya Sushruta. The present article emphasises the importance of *Sthanika Chikitsopakramas* used to treat the disease *Karna Srava* successfully. A 24-year male patient approached *Shalaky tantra* OPD of SPSAMCH and RC, Arjunabettahalli, Nelamangala with the complaints of right ear pain for 3 days associated with itching. On examination, pus and fungus mass were found in the right ear and tympanic membrane was not visible. It was treated accordingly using appropriate *Sthanika Chikitsopakramas* like *Karna Prakshalana* and *Karna Dhupana* and *Shamanoushadhis* which gave complete relief to the patient. Based on the *Lakshanas* in the present case, *Karna Srava* is correlated to otomycosis which is having the similar symptoms. Otomycosis is a fungal infection of the ear canal with the symptoms of pain, itching, discharge and ear block. Any ailment connected with the ear should be treated as early as possible due to the importance of organ of hearing and also due to its delicacy and inaccessibility.

Keywords: *Karna Srava*, Otomycosis, *Karna Prakshalana*, *Karna Dhupana*.

INTRODUCTION

*Shalaky tantra*¹ is the branch dealing with *Urdhwajatrugata Rogas* and its *Chikitsa* in detail. It involves all the diseases and its treatment affecting *Netra*

(eye), *Karna* (ear), *Nasa* (nose), *Asya* (mouth) and *Kanta* (throat) and all *Chikitsopakramas* to treat the diseases affecting it, including *Shastra Chikitsa*.

Karna, one among the *panchendriya*,² is responsible for *shabdagrahana*³ and is considered as a *bahyasrotas*.⁴ *Acharya Sushruta* has explained 28 *Karna Rogas*⁵ in detail which includes the signs and symptoms and treatment. He has included *Karna Srava* as one among the *Karna Roga*. *Acharya Vagbhata* has explained 25 *Karna Rogas*⁶ but he did not explain *Karna Srava* under *Karna Roga*.

About the disease *Karna Srava* – Due to *Agantuja* or *Doshaja Nidana* there will be formation of pus due to the vitiation of *Kapha Dosha*. Due to *Pittoshmata*, the pus will be liquified and by *Chalaguna* of *Vata Dosha* it will flow out. *Karna Srava* is one of the clinical features of the many disease such as otitis externa, otomycosis, chronic suppurative otitis media, furunculosis in external ear, diffuse otitis externa etc., The treatment principle of *Karna Srava* is same like *Krimikarna* and *Putikarna* which mainly includes *Karna Prakshalana*, *Karna Dhupana*, *Karna Pramajana*, *Karna Pichu*, *Shirovirechana*, *Snehana*, *Swedana*, *Gandusha*, *Kavala*, *Dushtavrana Chikitsa* based on the symptomatology.⁷

About the disease Otomycosis – Otomycosis is a fungal infection of the ear canal that often occurs due to *Aspergillus Niger*, *A. fumigatus* or *Candida albicans*. The clinical features of otomycosis includes intense itching, discomfort or pain in the ear, watery discharge with a musty odour and ear blockage. The fungal mass may appear white, brown or black. On examination with an otoscope, *A. Niger* appears as black headed filamentous growth, *A. fumigatus*, pale blue or green and *Candida* as white or creamy deposit. Meatal skin appears sodden, red and oedematous. Treatment consists of thorough ear toilet to remove all discharge and epithelial debris which are conducive to the growth of fungus. It can be done by syringing, suction or mopping. Specific antifungal agents can be applied. Antifungal treatment should be continued for a week even after apparent cure to avoid recurrences. Ear must be kept dry.⁸

Case Report: A 24-years male patient approached *Shalakyata* OPD of SPSAMCH and RC, Arjunabettahalli, Nelamangala (IPD No. – 460) presented with pain and itching sensation in right ear for 3 days. When he woke up from the sleep, he noticed slight pain

in the right ear and as the day advanced it started aggravating. He neglected as that was not disturbing his routine activities. Later since morning the pain got aggravated and he approached to us and he had the same episode of ear discharge 2 months before. On examination external auditory canal of the right ear was filled with purulent discharge and after *Pramajana* fungus moulds were found which was adhered to the tympanic membrane. The left ear canal was clear with visible normal tympanic membrane.

Treatment:

- The purulent discharge was removed by wiping (*Karna Pramajana*) followed aural syringing (*Karna Prakshalana*) using *Triphala Kashaya*.
- *Karna Prakshalana* was continued for 4 more days with *Gomutrarka Pichu* to control the discharge and to cleanse the entire canal.
- *Karna Dhupana* with *Haridradi Varti* is done for next 3 days.
- Internally,

Triphala Guggulu was given 2 BD for 5 days.

Tab. Nirocil was given 1BD for 10 days.

Tab. Septec was given 1BD for 5 days.

Specific advice for patient – Patient was advised not to take head bath, not to consume refrigerated food items, not to be exposed for cold wind. Ear canal should be kept dry.

Karna Prakshalana:

- The patient was made to sit on a comfortable chair.
- Lukewarm *Triphala Kashaya* is taken in a 10ml syringe.
- A kidney tray is placed over the shoulder. Patient's head is slightly tilted over the tray to collect the return fluid.
- Pinna is pulled upwards and backwards and a stream of *Kashaya* from the ear syringe is directed along the posterosuperior wall of the meatus.
- At the end of the procedure, ear canal and tympanic membrane must be inspected and dried with a pledget of cotton.

Karna Pichu:

- *Karna Pramajana* was done to remove the moisture from the ear canal.
- *Gomutrarka* was taken in a cotton wick and

placed over the affected site for 3 hours.

- After 3 hours, wick should be removed, and fresh cotton plugs was kept.

Haridradi Dhupa: Fumes coming out of burnt *Haridradi Dhuma Varti* were directed to both the ears and cotton plug was kept after *Dhupana*.

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS:

Mucopurulent discharge in the ear was due to the fungus infection. Ear pain was reduced after 3 days of *Karna Prakshalana*. Ear itching reduced by 5th day. Discharge was reduced markedly by 6th day, of *Karna Prakshalana*, *Pramarjana* and *Pichu Dharana*. For next 3 days, *Karna Dhupana* was done after which there was a complete reduction in all the symptoms. Follow up was done on 15th day and 30th day and there is complete absence of all the symptoms.

DISCUSSION

General management of ear disease includes oral intake of *ghrita*, *rasayanas*, avoidance of physical exercise, bathing without wetting the head, celibacy and vocal rest. In the present case, firstly *Karna Prakshalana* was done using *Triphala Kashaya* to clean the surface area which has got infected due to the fungus infection. After the part has cleaned with *Gomutrarka Pramajana* followed *Karna Pichu* using *Gomutraka*. After the wound started healing, *Haridradi Dhupa* was given to normalise the ear canal by controlling *Vata* which is the prime cause.

Mode of action of karna prakshalana: *Triphala* contains *Amalaki*, *Vibhitaki*, *Hartitaki* in equal quantity. These drugs have anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial activities which helps in easy clearing of infection and reduction in pain.⁹

Mode of action of Pichu: It is a unique drug delivery system. *Gomutraka* used in the present case. Fungicidal effect against *Aspergillus fumigatus*, *Aspergillus flavus*, *Aspergillus Niger*, *Aspergillus, Malassezia*, *C. tropicalis* and *C. glabrata* has been observed in various studies.¹⁰

Mode of action of haridradi Dhuma: *Haridradi Dhuma Varti* contains *Triphala*, *Trikatu*, *Haridra* and *Triphala Ghrita*. Mainly it contains *Haridra*. Many studies have reported Anti-inflammatory, anti-fungal,

anti-microbial activities of *haridra*.¹¹ The proven anti-inflammatory and antifungal activity of *Haridra* and other drugs in the *Varti* has given added effect and also in the form of *Dhupa* where it can combat the pain caused due to impaired *Vata Dosha*. The internal medicines given are *Triphala Guggulu*, *Tab.Septec* and *Tab.Nirocil*. All are said to be potent anti-allergic and anti-infective which have further helped in steady wound healing.

CONCLUSION

In the present case, carefully the fungal mass is removed with the help of *Sthanika Chikitsopakramas* and the canal was cleared. Unskilled attempts at removal of adhered fungal mass may lacerate the meatal lining, damage the tympanic membrane or the ear ossicles. Precautionary measures have to be taken while attempting such cases. The main aim in treating this condition is to control the vitiated *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha*. Selection of appropriate *Sthanika Chikitsopakramas* along with internal medicines has helped to treat a case of *Karna Srava* successfully through Ayurvedic management.

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