

## A REVIEW ON TOXICITY OF SNUHI (EUPHORBIA NERIFOLIA LINN.)

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## ABSTRACT

*Snuhi* (*Euphorbia nerifolia* Linn.) is a widely known poisonous medicinal plant in *Ayurveda*. It is categorized under *Sthavara Upavisha*. In *Ayurveda*, *Upavisha* is the group of drugs that are less toxic and not so lethal but produces certain toxic symptoms on consumption or administration. *Snuhi* is one among the *Upavisha* and a well-known plant in the Indian system of medicine. In *the Ayurveda* concept, it is believed that toxic material may be useful in various diseases if it is administered properly and similarly even a drug if not administered properly becomes an acute poison. The present review article highlights overall information about the plant *Snuhi*, its toxicological aspect, management, medico-legal aspect.

**Keywords:** *Snuhi*, *Upavisha*, Toxicological aspect

## INTRODUCTION

*Agada Tantra* is one among the branch of *Ashtang Ayurveda* which narrates with detail study of *Visha* (poisons). *Visha* <sup>(1)</sup> are classified in to 2 type *Sthavara* and *Jangama*. *SthavaraVisha* <sup>(2)</sup> is again classified into two 2 subtypes *Visha* and *Upavisha*. *Snuhi* is a

well-known medicinal plant in the Indian system of medicine. It has been stated categorically that strong poisons could be the best medicine, if it is used after proper *Shodhana*, in a proper therapeutic dose and formulation. On the contrary, a good medicine may

affect adversely unless it is used for a proper person with proper dose<sup>(3)</sup>. *Rasatarangani* mentioned eleven types of *Upavisha*<sup>(4)</sup> and *Snuhi* is one among them. In *Ayurvedic* literature, *Upavisha* is the group of drugs that were less toxic and not so lethal but produce certain toxic symptoms on consumption or administration. They are having less toxic potency<sup>(5)</sup>. *Snuhi* is also identified as *Guda*, *Sudha*, *Vajri*, *Sehunda*, *Samanta Dugdha*, *Sudha*, all these are the Synonyms words used in the classics for the milky exudates of *Euphorbia nerifolia*<sup>(6)</sup>.

**Botanical Name**<sup>(7)</sup>: *Euphorbia nerifolia* linn.

**Family**: Euphorbiaceae

**Vernacular Name**<sup>(7)</sup>:

**Hindi Name**: *Sehund*, *Danda*, *Thukar*

**English Name**: Common milk hadge

**Telugu**: *Akujemudu*

**Tamil**: *Ilaikalli*

**Type of Poison**:

**Ayurveda**<sup>(8)</sup>: *SthavaraVisha*

**Modern**<sup>(9)</sup>: Irritant poison

**Classical categorisation**<sup>(10)</sup>:

*Caraka*: *Virecana*, *Sat Sodhana Vrksa*

*Sushruta*: *Syamadi*, *Adhobhagahara*

*Vagbhata*: *Nikumbhadi (Virecana)*

**Species**<sup>(11)</sup>:

- *E. nerifolia* Linn. – *Patra Snuhi*
- *E. nivula* Buch. - *Ham*
- *E. antiquorum* Linn. – *TridharaSehunda*
- *E. trigona* Haw– *TridharaSehundaBheda*
- *E. royleana* Boiss – *Thuhara*
- *E. tirucalli*– *Kanda Snuhi*

**Distribution**<sup>(12)</sup>: Plant occurs commonly in the rocky ground throughout the Deccan, Peninsula and is often cultivated for hedges in villages throughout India.

**Plant description**: Large succulent shrub or a small tree or which grows up to 20 ft. high, with jointed, cylindrical, or obscurely 5-angled branches bearing short stipular thorns, more or less confluent in vertical or slightly spiral lines. Flowers-yellowish green or greenish yellow in colour. Leaves- fleshy, deciduous, 6-12 inches long. Fruits tricolcus, consisting of appearing three radiating follicles. Seeds- minute like rape seeds.

- Flowering and Fruiting time – The plant becomes leafless during winter. Flowers begin to appear in springs and subsequently plant bears fruits.

**Toxic Chemical Constituents**<sup>(13)</sup>:

- Nerifoliol, Nerifolene, Euphorbin, Calcium malate, Euphol.

**Rasa Panchaka**<sup>(14)</sup>:

- *Rasa*: *Katu*
- *Guna*: *Laghu*, *Tikshna*, *Snigdha*
- *Virya*: *Ushna*
- *Vipaka*: *Katu*
- *Karma*: *Kapha-Vatahara*, *Dipana*, *Recana*

**Toxic Part**<sup>(15)</sup>: An acrid milky juice exuded from the stem

**Fatal Dose**<sup>(15)</sup>: A teaspoonful of juice

**Fatal Period**<sup>(15)</sup>: 3 days

**Toxic Signs and Symptoms**<sup>(16)</sup>:

**External Application**:

- When applied to the skin, produces vesication.
- When dropped into the eyes, it produces inflammation involving eyesight.

**Internal Administration**:

- It's causing irritants, vomiting, diarrhoea.
- Convulsions and coma.
- It is used for procuring criminal abortion.

**Treatment**<sup>(16)</sup>:

- Stomach wash.
- Administration of drugs indicated by symptoms.

**Post-mortem appearance**<sup>(16)</sup>:

- Gangrenous patches in the stomach.
- The spleen may be found in a rotten condition.

**Medico-legal importance**:

- It is used for procuring criminal abortion.
- It is rarely for homicidal purposes.

## DISCUSSION

*Snuhi* is a well-known medicinal plant in the Indian system of medicine. It has been stated categorically that strong poisons could be the best medicine, if it is used after proper *Shodhana*, in a proper therapeutic dose and formulation. On the contrary, a good medicine may affect adversely unless it is used for a proper person with proper dose. *Rasatarangani* mentioned

eleven types of *Upavisha*<sup>(17)</sup> and *Snuhi* is one among them. In *Ayurvedic* literature, *Upavisha* is the group of drugs that were less toxic and not so lethal but produce certain toxic symptoms on consumption or administration. They are having less toxic potency. The present review article highlights overall information about the plant *Snuhi*.

## CONCLUSION

In *Ayurveda*, *Upavisha* is the group of drugs that are less toxic and not so lethal but produces certain toxic symptoms on consumption or administration. *Snuhi* is one among the *Upavisha* and a well-known plant in the Indian system of medicine. In the *Ayurvedic* concept, it is believed that toxic material may be useful in various diseases if it is administered properly and similarly even a drug if not administered properly becomes an acute poison. So, there is a necessity to have more knowledge regarding its toxic properties, its adverse effects, and its therapeutical effect, which plays a great role in managing this toxic drug.

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