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## A Review on Kshara Karma Therapy

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### Abstract

Kshara is the one of Ayurvedic dosage form used in India from ancient period for treatments of various diseases and disorder. Kshara is a caustic, alkaline in nature obtained from the ashes of medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Depending on Kshara use it classified as; Pratisaraniya Kshara and Paniya Kshara. Panchanga of medicinal plant used for preparation of Kshara. Kshara Karma therapy is useful as the substitute of surgical instruments, because they can be used safely on the patients who are afraid of surgery. It is a milder procedure compared to surgery and thermal cautery. It is versatile, because even such places that are difficult in approach by ordinary measures can be treated by Kshara Karma therapy.

**Keywords:** Kshara, Caustic, Panchanga, Ashes, Surgery.

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### Introduction

Ayurveda is serving the mankind since a long time with the aim to provide healthy status to healthy individual and to cure the disease. About 1000 single drugs and 8000 compound formulations are seen in various classical book of Ayurveda such as Charaka Samhita, Susruta Samhita, Astanga Samgraha, Astanga Hrudaya, Sarangadhara samhita and Nighantu granthas (Panda Purnendu *et al.*, 2017). In

Samhita period detail descriptions of Kshara Kalpana regarding their methods of preparation, definition, varieties, properties and applications are found. Acharya Sushruta defines as the material which destroys or cleans the excessive/the morbid Doshas are known as Kshara (Kshyaranat Kshyananat va Kshara). According to Acharya Charaka, Kshara Dravya has Ksharanatwa (corrosive) in nature. Acharya Dalhana the commentator of Sushruta Samhita

explained the word Ksharana as one which mobilizes and removes the deformed flesh, skin etc. or which removes the vitiated Doshas from their location. Acharya Charak has mentioned two types of Kshara preparation and has also mentioned the use of Kshara according to disease. Acharya Chakrapani has described the method of preparation of Kshara. Acharya Yadavji have described separate chapter of Kshara Kalpana. Acharya Sushruta has narrated Kshara in scope of Shalya Tantra (surgical branch) due to actions like Chhedana (excision), Bhedana (incision), Lekhana (scrapping) etc. (Pandey Shruti *et al.*, 2016)

Kshara are alkaline substances which are obtained from the ash of drugs. It is used both internally as well as externally. Internally used kshara is called paniyakshara and externally used kshara is called pratisaraneeyakshara. It is again divided into three types i.e., mrudu, madhyama and teekshnakshara (Ghosh *et al.*, 2018).

The process of preparation of Kshara involves the extraction of 'alkalies' from ash of dried plants. It is said that the diseases which are difficult to treat can be cured by Kshara therapy or alkaline therapy (Vagbhata, 2010). Kshara therapy not only minimizes complication but also reduces recurrence of diseases. Kshara can reduce the chances of post-surgical infections due to its alkalinity.

Kshara has the top most place in all surgical and parasurgical measures (Sushruta, 2010).

### **Classification of Kshara**

As per text various classifications of Kshara are available. All such classifications are based on some fundamental factors (Srivastava, 2018). As per given below;

**On the basis of application,** "Sushruta" classify as; Pratisaraniya Kshara (External application) and Paniya kshara (Oral administration).

Whereas, "Vagbhata" classify as;

Bahya (External) Parimarjana and Antaha (Internal) Parimarjana.

**On the basis of concentration/potency,** This classification is entirely based on the strength or concentration of Kshara to achieve different depths of burning at the site. The Pratisaraniya Kshara has been further sub classified into tri folds;

- Mridu (Mild)
- Madhyama (Moderate)
- Tikshna (Strong)

### **On the basis of origin,**

- Vanaspatija (Medicinal Plant)  
e.g. Apamarga Kshara Yava Kshara
- Pranija (Animal)  
e.g. Shankha (Coral)
- Khanija (Mineral)  
e.g. Tankan (Borax).

**Method of Preparation for Kshara (Pandey Shruti *et al.*,2016)**

According to	Procedure (Yukti)
Sushruta Samhita	In Sushruta Samhita for increasing or decreasing the strength of Kshara, some methods other than the general method were described through Sanskara-Vishesha and Gunantaradhan (modification of properties). Acharya Sushruta in Sutra Sthana described the special procedure for the preparation of Kshara which is not “Ek-aushadh Kshara” but a Kshara- Kalpa in which by the Samyoga of Ksharas (combination of alkali), Agni (fire intensity), Kala (time), Yukti (procedure), and Samskara, changes can be brought.
Sharangdhara Samhita	dried parts of plants which exude milky sap are burnt into ash form in fire. The ash thus obtained is dissolved in four times of water in mud pot and kept overnight. Next day morning the clear supernatant water is decanted out into a clean vessel and boiled till all the water evaporates, leaving of a fine white powder at the bottom. This is known as Kshara.
Rasa Tarangini	the plants containing Kshara are dried and burnt into ash form. The ash thus obtained is dissolved in four times of water and rubbed with hands properly and contents are kept without any disturbance for 3 hours. Then contents are filtered with three folded cloth. This filtered liquid is boiled till total water content gets evaporated. Finally, Kshara is obtained in greyish white powder form.
Acharya Yadavji (Dravya Guna Vigyana)	Panchanga (five parts of plant) of the plants containing Kshara are collected and dried, and then they are burnt to get ash form. The burning should be done till matter get burnt. The ash is dissolved in six times of water in an earthen pot and kept for one night. Next day morning contents should be filtered for 2 times and obtained liquid is heated, till total water content is get evaporated, then Kshara is obtained which is similar to the colour of greyish white.

**Apamarga Pratisaraneeya Teekshana Kshara** 500 gms were collected and mixed with 6 times (approx 3 liters) of water and filtered 21 times. The filtrate is clean and clear like color of cow's urine and it is kept on mild fire and liquid evaporates to 1/3rd of its original

The Panchanga (whole plant) of Apamarga (Achyranthes aspera) 5 kgs should be collected, dried up and burnt. The whole ash

quantity. This is known as Mridu or mild concentrate Kshara. Then add 50 gms of red hot Shukti (Limestone) to the filtrate solution and continuously stirred well until it evaporates to 1/3rd of its original quantity. This is known as Madhyama or moderate Kshara. This should be further heated up by adding 5 gms of Chitraka Kalka (Plumbago gelanica). With this thick solution is obtained which is known as Pratisaraneeya Teekshana or highly concentrate Kshara. It will be collected and stored in air tight container (Annoymous, March 2020).

### **Indication**

Externally it has; cleansing, heating, absorbent and scraping properties. Internally it destroys; worms, amadosha, kapha dosha, skin diseases, poison and obesity.

**Indications of Apamarga Pratisaraneeya Teekshna Kshara** – Internal haemorrhoids, after fistulectomy, rectal prolapsed, after excision of pilonidal sinus, after incision and drainage of anorectal abscess (Annoymous, April 2020).

### **Conclusion**

Sushruta has described it as one of the best Para-surgical tool for treatment of various surgical ailments. Kshara karma therapy is a process of application pratisaraneeya teekshnakshara. It is a non-surgical procedure of Ayurveda indicated for the management of Arsha (Hemorrhoids). Kshara is an alkaline in

nature derived from a combination of various herbs that is applied on the pile mass with help of a special slit proctoscope.

Kshara are superior to the Shastra and Anushastra and due to its Tridoshaghna properties, potential to perform Chedana (excision), bhedana (incision) and lekhana (scrapping) because of their power to alleviate all the three doshas. It is a type of chemical cauterization. It destroys the unhealthy tissues and promotes healing process.

Finally we conclude that, Kshara karma therapy is found to be suitable and acceptable as compared with the prevalent method in medical science.

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### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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