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# Utility of *Lepa Kalpana* with special reference to *Visha Chikitsa* - A Review

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## ABSTRACT

*Agadtantra* is the one of the branches of *Ashtang Ayurveda*, which deals with the signs and symptoms and also with management of poisoning resulting from various sources. Poison or *Visha* is mainly classified as *Sthavar*, *Jangam* and *Krutrim Visha*. Signs and symptoms of any poisoning is seen externally, internally or both. The external signs and symptoms appear on the skin in the form of local pain, *Raga* (Redness), *Shotha* (inflammation), *Sphota* (blisters/vesication), *Kandu* (Itching), *Srava* (oozing) etc. Treating these external signs and symptoms is important in the management of poisoning. *Lepa* is an important treatment modality told by *Acharya Charaka* in *Chaturvimshati Upakram*. Its importance is also described by other *Acharyas*. *Agada* plays very important role in the *Visha Chikitsa* and is well described in *Agadtantra*. *Vishaghana Lepa* is used in the treatment of various poisonous conditions arising due to *Sthavar Visha*, *Jangam Visha*, *Gara Visha* and *Dooshi Visha*. *Lepa* has important role in local treatment and prevention of further spread of poison. In this article *Lepa* treatment which is used for the treatment of poisoning is well explained along with importance of *Lepa*, mode of application, mode of action and list of various *Vishaghna Lepas* and *Agada*'s.

**Key words:** *Lepa*, *Visha*, *Visha Chikitsa*, *Vishaghna Lepa*, *Agada*, *Ayurveda*

## INTRODUCTION

*Agadatantra* is one of the branches of *Ashtang Ayurveda*, which deals with the signs and symptoms and also with management of poisoning resulting from various sources.<sup>[1]</sup> Poison or *Visha* is mainly classified as *Sthavar*, *Jangam* and *Krutrim Visha*.<sup>[2]</sup> *Sthavar Visha* can again be classified as *Visha* and *Upvisha*.<sup>[3]</sup> Manifestation of these poisoning is seen on human body in the form of systemic and local signs and

symptoms. In systemic manifestation pathology takes place inside the body and in local manifestation pathology takes place at the locally or at site of contact of the poison. Majorly local effect of poison is seen on the skin and some of the systemic effects also affect skin.

Skin is the largest organ in the body it works as a protective barrier. Skin prevents entry of microorganisms, toxins and foreign substances in the body. The external signs and symptoms appear on the skin are in the form of local pain, swelling, rashes, itching and various skin lesions. Treating these external signs and symptoms is important in the management of poisoning.

In modern medical science these skin lesions are treated with the topical application of analgesic, antibiotic, anti-allergic and steroidal ointments. In *Ayurveda Lepa* treatment is very useful for treatment of skin lesions.

*Antahaparimarjan* & *Bahiparimarjana* are two types of *Chikitsa* i.e., mode of treatment. *Bahiparimarjana*

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Chikitsa is mainly applied on *Twak* i.e., Skin and the treatments like *Abhyanga*, *Swedana*, *Parisheka*, *Unmardana* are included in *Bahirparimarjan Chikitsa*.

*Lepa* treatment is one of the important *Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa*.<sup>[4]</sup>

In the treatment of poisoning the various *Lepas* are used. In *Visha Chikitsa*, *Lepas* are considered as the basic & important treatment and it is well described in *Samhitas*. They neutralize the poison and prevent further spread of poison and eliminate the harmful effect of the poison locally. After that the poison doesn't enter in the body. In the various poisonous case the local area (site of contact or site of bite) shows various changes such as *Raga* (Redness), *Shotha* (inflammation), *Sphota* (blisters/vesication), *Kandu* (Itching), *Srava* (oozing) etc. which can be treated by *Vishaghna Lepa*. *Lepa* also absorbs the remaining amount of poison from the local site. It is used in the treatment of *Sthavarvisha*, *Jangamvisha* and *Krutrimvisha*.

## AIM

To evaluate importance of *Lepa Kalpana* in treatment of poisoning.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To study *Lepa Kalpana* in detail.
2. To study need and scope *Lepa Kalpana* from *Agadtantra* perspective

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Various Ayurvedic Samhitas were critically studied along with their commentaries.
2. Different reference books regarding *Agad Tantra* were studied.

## OBSERVATIONS

### Definition of Lepa

Drugs in the form of paste used for topical (External) application is known as *Lepas*.

The *Lepa* should not produce irritation or sensitization of the skin, nor should it retard wound healing; it

should be smooth, inert, odourless, physically and chemically stable and compatible with the skin and with incorporated medicaments. The proportions of the ingredients should be such that the *Lepa* is not too soft or too hard for convenient use. The consistency should be such that the *Lepa* spreads and softens when stress is applied.<sup>[5]</sup>

### Definition of Lepa

Drugs in the form of paste used for topical (External) application is known as *Lepas*.

### Method of Preparation of Lepa

*Lepa* can be prepared with *Ardra Dravyas* (wet ingredients) and also with *Shushka Dravyas* (dried ingredients). Pharmaceutically *Lepa Kalpana* is basic *Kalpana* of *Kalka*. In both the cases the *Kalka* (paste) should be prepared first by utilising the liquid media like *Swarasa*, *Kwatha*, *Ghrita*, *Taila*, *Godugdha*, *Gomutra*, *Jala* according to condition of particular disease.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Types of Lepa

#### A. According to Acharya Sushruta:<sup>[7]</sup>

1. <i>Pralepa</i>	2. <i>Pradeha</i>	3. <i>ALepa</i>
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#### B. According to Acharya Vagbhata:<sup>[8]</sup>

1. <i>Snaihika</i>	2. <i>Nirvapana</i>	3. <i>Prasadana</i>
4. <i>Stambhana</i>	5. <i>Vilayana</i>	6. <i>Pachana</i>
7. <i>Pidana</i>	8. <i>Shodhana</i>	9. <i>Shoshana</i>
10. <i>Savarnikara</i>		

#### C. According to Acharya Sharandhara:<sup>[9]</sup>

1. <i>Doshaghna</i>	2. <i>Vishaghna</i>	3. <i>Varnya</i>
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#### 1. Doshaghna Lepa

This *Lepa* is prepared by finely powdering *Punarnava*, *Daru Haridra*, *Sunthi*, *Sarshap* and *Shigru Bija* separately, then it is mixed together and preserve. While using this, mix the *Churna* with *Aranala/Kanji* and apply. This *Lepa* is indicated in *Shotha*.

## 2. Vishaghna Lepa

This *Lepa* is prepared by pounding the ingredients *Shirish Twak, Yastimoola, Tagara Kanda, Chandana, Ela, Jatamansi, Haridra, Daru Haridra, Bala Mula, Kustha Mula* all in equal parts into fine powder and preserved. While using, mix it with *Ghrita* and Hot water, make the paste and apply in *Pratiloma Gati*. This *Lepa* is indicated in *Jwara, Shotha, Visarpa* and *Kustha*.

## 3. Varnya Lepa

This *Lepa* is prepared by pounding the ingredients *Rakta Chandana, Manjistha, Lodhra, Kustha, Priyangu, Vatankura* and *Masura Dal*. For using add lemon juice/milk/egg-albumin, prepare the paste and apply it to the face. This *Lepa* is indicated in *Vyanga*, improves colour and complexion of the skin.

### Vishaghna Lepa

#### Definition

- The *Lepa* which destroys the effect of poison is known as *Vishaghna Lepa*.
- *Lepa* is the one of the *Chikitsaupakram* among *Chatur Vimshati Upakrama* according to *Charaka Samhita*.<sup>[10]</sup> Importance of *Lepa Chikitsa* in *Visha Badha* is also explained by various *Acharyas*.
- *Visha* vitiates *Doshas* and these *Doshas* are treated with *Vishaghna Lepa* having *Shital Guna*.
- In the treatment of *Kushtha Roga* importance of *Agad Yogas (Vishaghna Yogas)* been described in *Charak Samhita*, when skin lesion is stony hard, rough, stable and old then one can use *Agad Yogas (Vishaghana Yogas)* in the form of *Lepa, Paana, Anjana, and Nasya*.<sup>[11]</sup>

#### Rules for application of Lepa

- *Lepa* should always be applied in *Pratiloma* direction i.e., the opposite direction of the hair follicles as the drugs get quickly absorbed through hair roots, sweat glands and capillaries. <sup>[12]</sup>
- The *Lepa* should not be applied at night time<sup>[13]</sup>
- *Lepa* should not be left in situ after drying. It must be removed as soon as it dries up.<sup>[14]</sup>

- *Lepa* in wet state help to cure the diseases and on drying, they lose their potency and cause the irritation of the skin.
- Only freshly prepared *Lepa* should be used.<sup>[15]</sup>
- *Lepa* should be applied only once and should not be applied over the previous one.<sup>[15]</sup>
- All these rules are addressed for proper absorption and avoiding any ill effects of *Lepa*.

#### Pramana of Sneha in Lepa

According to *Sushruta Samhita*, when *Lepa* is used for *Doshaj Vikara, Sneha Dravya* should be added. The addition of *Sneha* is depending on the *Dosha* involved.

The *Sneha pramana* is as follows

- A. *Vataj Shotha* : 1/4<sup>th</sup> part of *Lepa*.
- B. *Pittaj Shotha* : 1/6<sup>th</sup> part of *Lepa*.
- C. *Kaphaj Shotha* : 1/8<sup>th</sup> part of *Lepa*.<sup>[16]</sup>

#### Thickness of Lepa

- *Acharya Sushruta* instructed that the Thickness of *Lepa* should be equivalent to *Ardra Mahisha Charma* (moist buffalo's skin.) <sup>[17]</sup> It is 4-5 mm approximately. Hence, a *Lepa* having thickness <4-5 mm should be considered as "Thin *Lepa*" and greater should be considered as "Thick *Lepa*."
- Whereas *Acharya Charaka* clarifies that when a rubefacient action of a drug is expected, it should be applied uniformly thick over the skin. However, when softening and soothing action is to be elicited, the drug should be applied uniformly thin over the skin. In fact, this statement interprets the mode of application of a drug as per the requirement and not the properties of the mentioned drugs.<sup>[18]</sup>
- *Acharya Sharangdhar* has told the size of *Lepa* according to the purpose of usage of *Lepa* as
  - *Doshaghna Lepa* : ¼ *Angula Utsedha*. (= 0.325 inch)
  - *Vishaghna Lepa* : 1/3 *Angula Utsedha*. (= 0.205 inch)

- *Varnya Lepa* : ½ *Angula Utsedha*. (= 0.175 inch)<sup>[19]</sup>

#### Mechanism of Action of Lepa

- Network of *Siras* is formed underneath the skin and their openings are attached to hair follicles which carry sweat and replenish *rasa* inside and outside through them only the *Veerya* of *Abhyanga*, *Snana* and *Lepa Dravyas* enter the body after being transformed in skin. “*Swedam Abhivahanti Rasamch Abhitarpayanthi Antharbahischa.....*”<sup>[20]</sup>
- Because of rubbing during exfoliation of *Lepa*, the skin temperature increases which might be hastening the pilosebaceous uptake and skin permeation of the drug in the topical formulation.<sup>[21]</sup>
- To be absorbed through the skin, a chemical must pass through the epidermis, glands, or hair follicles. Sweat glands and hair follicles make up about 0.1 to 1.0 percent of the total skin surface.
- Though small amounts of chemicals may enter the body rapidly through the glands or hair follicles, they are primarily absorbed through the epidermis.
- Chemicals must pass through the cell layers of epidermis before entering the dermis where they can enter the blood stream or lymph and circulate to other areas of the body.
- The stratum corneum is the outermost layer of the epidermis and the rate-limiting barrier in absorption of an agent. After penetrating through the stratum conium and into viable epidermis and dermis the molecules of the formulation produce its characteristic pharmacological response through receptors even before the blood and lymph circulations remove it. Thus, helps to remove or neutralize the toxins in initial stage only.<sup>[22]</sup>

#### Precaution for using *Vishaghna/Agada Lepa*<sup>[23]</sup>

- *Vishaghna Lepa* should be used very cautiously. After confirmation that the person is poisoned then only these *Agad Lepas* should be used.

- If *Vishaghna Lepa* are used in poison fewer people, then it may cause ill effects to the patient and may be harmful for the patient. So, all precautions should be strictly followed when *Agada* has to be used.

#### *Agad/Vishaghna Kalpas*

- There are various *Agada*'s used for treatment of poison.
- *Agada* are administered as *Pana*, *Anjana*, *Nasya*, *Lepa* and *Abhyanga*.
- Some *agada* which are used as *Lepa* for treating poison are listed as follows

#### According to *Charak Samhita*

SN	Name of <i>Agada/Lepa</i>	Indication	Reference
1.	<i>Kakandadi Agad</i>	<i>Sarva Keeta Visha</i>	<i>Ch. Chi</i> 23/53
2.	<i>Mrutasanjeevana Agada</i>	<i>Sarva Vishaghna</i>	<i>Ch. Chi</i> 23/58
3.	<i>Gandhastinama Agada</i>	<i>Savisha Vrana</i> <i>Vishajanya Damstra</i> <i>Buta Graha,</i> <i>Visuchika, Unmada,</i> <i>Apasmara</i>	<i>Ch. Chi</i> 23/75-76
4.	<i>Mahagandhasthi Agada</i>	<i>Sarva Vishaghna</i>	<i>Ch. Chi</i> 23/77-84
5.	<i>Kshar Agada</i>	<i>Shotha, Gulma, Arsha,</i> <i>Bhagandhar</i>	
6.	<i>Khandasharkara Lepa</i>	<i>Vatapradana</i> <i>Vishajantu Damstra.</i> <i>Pittapradhana</i> <i>Vishajantu Damstra</i>	<i>Ch. Chi</i> 23/170-171
7.	<i>Chandanadi Agada</i>	<i>Sarvavishahara</i>	<i>Ch. Chi</i> 23/191-192
8.	<i>Madukadi Lepa</i>	<i>Luta Visha</i>	<i>Ch. Chi</i> 23/200-202

9.	Kapotavitaadi Lepa	Vruschika Visha, Manduka Visha	Ch. Chi 23/208-209
10.	Vishaghna Lepa (Shirisha + Nirgundi)	Sarva Visha Hara	Ch. Su 3/28

#### According to Sushruta Samhita

SN	Name of Agada/Lepa	Indication	Reference
1.	Shirishadi Agada	Hrut Peeda due to Visha	Su. Ka 1/36
2.	Shyamadi Agada	Hasta and Nakha Visha	Su. Ka 1/37
3.	Chandanadi Lepa	Abhyangaja Visha	Su. Ka 1/53
4.	Chandan-Agrutadi Lepa	Cosmetic induced Twakavikara	Su. Ka 1/60-61
5.	Mahasugandhi Agada Lepa	Aabharana Janya Visha Paaduka Visha	Su. Ka 1/77
6.	Vamshadi Agada Lepa	Loota Visha, Mushika Visha, Sarpa Visha, Keeta Visha	Su. Ka 5/78-79
7.	Shirisha-Rajanyadi Agada	Mushikavisha	Su. Ka 7/33
8.	Kustadi Agada Lepa	Keetavisha	Su. Ka 8/47
9.	Meshasrunyadi Agada	Mandukavisha	Su. Ka 8/50
10.	Krushna Mrutrika Lepa	Pippalika Damstra Visha	Su. Ka 8/55
11.	Padmakadi Agada Lepa	Luta visha	Su. Ka 8/104

#### According to Ashtang Sangraha

SN	Name of Agada/Lepa	Indication	Reference
1.	Sanjeevini Agada Lepa	Sarva Visha Hara	A.S.U 40/46
2.	Pippalyadi Lepa	Vruschika Visha	A.S.U 43/50

3.	Harenyavadi Lepa	Gara Visha Upahata Twacha	A.S.U 40/69
4.	Gruta Lepa	Sarvavishahara	A.S.U 40/88
5.	Chadana-Shirisha Lepa	Sarpavisha	A.S.U 42/9
6.	Kashmaryadi Agada Lepa	Mandalisarpavisha	A.S.U 42/20
7.	Dashanga Lepa	All type of Keetavisha	A.S.U 43/31
8.	Sheerisha Beeja Lepa	Mandukavisha	A.S.U 43/34
9.	Vachadi Lepa	Keetavisha	A.S.U 43/35
10.	Hingu-Haritaladi Lepa	Vruschikavisha	A.S.U 43/48
11.	Matulungadi Lepa	Alarka Visha	A.S.U 46/48

#### DISCUSSION

- Lepa is one of the important treatments in Agadtantra. Lepa acts locally as well as systemically. It neutralizes the poison and prevents its further spread. It acts as Vishaghana on vitiated Doshas from Twacha and Rakta.
- For local application Vishaghana Lepa is mixed with Ghrita or lukewarm water or Kwath (decoction) or Tandulaodak. These are the best media for all Vishaghana Lepa. These media increases efficacy and penetration of the drug.
- Action of the treatment is completely depending upon the type and thickness of Lepa. In Sushruta Samhita the thickness is compared with buffalo's skin and In Sharangdhar Samhita it is said to be 1/3<sup>rd</sup> Angula.
- In Lepa Chikitsa the drugs enter into the body from Romkupa then into the Swed Vaha Strotas and further acts on the body.
- Lepa Chikitsa is not only effective in Vishabadha (Poisoning) but it is also effective in the Twak Vikar, Kushtha, Unmmada, Apasmar, Gulma, Arsha like disorders.

**CONCLUSION**

In the *Visha Chikitsa*, *Lepa* plays very important role. *Vishaghana Lepa* is applicable in all types of *Visha Badha*. *Lepa* is effective in treatment of local as well as systemic signs and symptoms of *Visha* and prevention of its further spread. *Lepa* are also effective in neutralizing the locally present *Visha*. *Vishaghana Lepa* is indicated only in confirmed and fully diagnosed poisoning case. There are many *Vishaghana Lepa* and *Agada* being used as *Lepa* in *Visha Chikitsa*. Effects of *Vishaghana Lepas* are well described in the *Various Samhitas*.

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