Therapeutic aspects of Eranda Tail (Oil of Ricinus Communis)

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ABSTRACT

Castor Oil is one of the main drugs used for Virechana Karma (purgative therapy) under Panchakarma therapy. Castor oil is a vegetable product extracted from Ricinus communis (castor seed). The castor oil is pungent; hot, heavy, and curative of Vata and Kapha. In combination with astrigent, sweet, and bitter substances, it also, cures Pitta. It pacifies Vata, the aggravation of which is the root cause of all diseases. It is also administered as an adjuvant for various formulations. Even though it has various medicinal properties, inappropriate usage causes adverse effects such as dizziness, abdominal cramps, diarrhoea; etc. as well as a proper review of Eranda Tail w.s.r. to Samhita is not available. So, this article mainly focuses on the properties, qualities, Indication, Contraindication, Mode of action, administration, dose, and adverse effects of castor oil.

Key words: Eranda Tail, Vata, Ricinus Communis, Castor oil, Vata Vyadhi

INTRODUCTION

The plant has been cultivated for over 6000 years and was a source of oil for lamps and cosmetics in ancient Egypt. Among Chatusnehas (four types of unctuous materials), Taila (oil) is the best for the management of Vatavadyadi (diseases of Vata) as it possesses opposite Gunas (properties) of Vata.¹ In Vatika Vikaras (disorders caused by Vata) Sneha Virechana (purgation by oil) is advised², as it clears obstruction in the Srotas (body channels) and relieves Vata vitiation subsequently. Eranda Taila (Castor oil) is one of widely used oil in Ayurvedic disease management both internally and externally. It is also administered as an adjuvant for various formulations. Eranda Taila (Castor oil) is a wonderful drug which can also rejuvenate the body and can be administered in many ways. Panchanguli (Leaves arrangement like 5 fingers), Vatari (Enemy of vitiated Vata), and Chitrabeeja (Seed with design) are synonyms³, Erand is also called as Vatari as it controls the Vata by its Madhur Rasa, Madhur Vipaka, and Ushna Virya⁴ Eranda increases the Pitta hence it is not recommended in Pitta dominant conditions. Indigestion is the root cause of many diseases. Ama, the endogenous toxin is the main culprit in the pathogenesis of many diseases. Use of Ricinus oil can prevent these conditions. Castor oil mainly consists of Ricinoleic acid. Even though it has various medicinal properties, inappropriate usage causes adverse effects such as dizziness, abdominal cramps, diarrhoea; etc.⁵ as well as a proper review of Eranda Tail w.s.r. to Samhita, is not available so this article mainly focuses on the Properties, qualities, Indication, Contraindication, Mode of action, administration, dose, adverse effects of castor oil and common Ayurvedic formulation of Eranda Tail.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the qualities and Properties of Eranda Tail according to Ayurveda.
2. Review the general and specific indications and contraindications of Eranda Tail.

3. Identify the mechanism of action of castor oil according to Ayurveda.

4. Describe the Route of administration, dose, and potential adverse effects of castor oil.


**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Review work done and literature from the classical texts and research websites have been incorporated into the study.

### 1. The qualities of Castor oil

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rasa</th>
<th>Guna</th>
<th>Virya</th>
<th>Vipaka</th>
<th>Prabhav</th>
<th>Doshgnata</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 2. Properties of Castor oil

Castor oil is sweet and heavy and increases Kapha; it is highly curative of Vata, Rakta Gulma, heart disease, and chronic fever. [8]

Castor Oil is sweet, hot (in its potency), irritating and appetizing. It leaves a pungent astringent aftertaste and is subtle. It acts as a cleansing agent in respect of the internal channels of the body and is wholesome to the skin. It is spermatopoietic, sweet in digestion (Vipaka), and rejuvenating. It purifies the semen, vagina, and removes vaginal and uterine disorders, and contributes to the preservation of sound health. It improves the memory, complexion, and intellect (of its user), subdues the bodily Vayu and Kapha, and cleanses the system from all injurious principles by inducing purging. [9]

Castor oil is known to consist of up to 90% ricinoleic, 4% linoleic, 3% oleic, 1% stearic, and less than 1% linolenic fatty acids.

### 3. Indication and Contraindication of Castor oil

**Indication**

1. If the Vata is obstructed by Meda, Kapha, Pitta, or Rakta (vitiating blood) in the disease like [10] Gulma (lump-like feeling in the abdomen), Udara (abdominal diseases include ascites), Bradhna (inguinal swelling), Piles, Splenic enlargement, Udavarta (abnormal upward movement of Vata), Yoni-Raga (gynaecological diseases), Seminal disorders, disorders of Meda and Kapha associated with Deep-seated Vatarakta (gout), Sciatica, Hemiplegia etc. and in other Vatika disorders.

2. Heart-disease[8]

3. Chronic fever[8]

4. Skin disorders[9]

5. In Kati-Guha-Koshta-Pritha pain and swelling[6]

**Contraindication**


5. Pregnancy[12]

6. Hypersensitivity[12]

7. Severe impaction[12]

8. Rectal fissures[12]

In diagnostic tests such as colonoscopies, it is essential to have a bowel preparation before performing the procedure. Castor oil may be used in these types of procedures as it is effective in bowel evacuation. However, in these procedures, patients typically have better results and satisfaction with other laxatives such as sennosides, polyethylene glycol, and bisacodyl. In a study comparing castor oil to senna graph syrup, the senna group had fewer side effects and better bowel preparation overall.
## 4. Specific Indication and their condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Indication</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Anupan</th>
<th>Acharya</th>
<th>alcoholic drink etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Vata Gulma associated with Pitta dominance</td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><em>Avarana Yukta Udara Roga</em>[15] (abdominal diseases includes ascites)</td>
<td><em>Kapha</em> is afflicted with morbid Vata and Pitta or where Vata is overlaid by Kapha and Pitta</td>
<td>With relevant herbs that cure the morbid Dosha</td>
<td>Charak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><em>Vataj Grahani</em>[16]</td>
<td><em>In Strast Dosha Avastha of Vataj Grahani for Virechan</em></td>
<td><em>Kshara</em></td>
<td>Charak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><em>Udavarta</em> (abnormal upward movement of Vata) and <em>Anaha</em>[17] (bloating in upper abdomen)</td>
<td>Obstructed by <em>Meda, Kapha, Pitta or Rakta</em> (Vitiating blood)</td>
<td>With milk, meat soup, juice or <em>Triphala</em> decoction, vegetable soup, cows’ urine,</td>
<td>Charak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Deep-seated <em>Vatarakta</em>[19] (gout)</td>
<td>whom Dosha are excessively aggraved</td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Charak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td><em>Gridhrasi</em></td>
<td>In the management of <em>Gridhrasi</em>, extensive use of Vasthi and Pana by medicated <em>Eranda Taila</em> with Vajeeandhadi drugs is recommended.[20] It is also advised to take <em>Eranda Taila</em> with <em>Gomutra</em> for one month for <em>Gridhrasi</em>. [21]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yogratnakar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td><em>Katisula</em></td>
<td>In <em>Katisula</em>, of different origin <em>Eranda Taila</em> should be taken along with <em>Dasamooloe Kashaya</em> or <em>Nagara Ambu</em>. [22]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td><em>Amavatha</em></td>
<td>To win over the mighty elephant called <em>Amavatha</em> roaming all over the body; only one lion called <em>Eranda Taila</em> is enough (<em>Aamavatha Gajendrasya Sarira Vana Charina, Eka Eka Nihantyush Eruna Taila Kesari</em>). [23]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bhavamisra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td><em>Vata Udara</em></td>
<td>In <em>Vata Udara</em>, <em>Eranda Taila</em> can be used orally along with <em>Dasaamoolo</em> or <em>Gomutra</em> or with <em>Triphala Churna</em>. [24] In <em>Udara Roga</em> <em>Samanya Vidhi</em>, there is description suggesting that <em>Eranda Taila</em> should be taken along with <em>Ksheera</em> or with <em>Mutra</em>. [25] <em>Eranda Taila</em> is advised as <em>Pathya</em> for <em>Udara Roga</em>. [26]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yogratnakar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Mode of action

Ingestion of castor oil
(Ushna, Guru, Snigdha, Tishna, Sukshma potenti Gurus or qualities)

Deepen at the level of Amaashya

Aam Pachan at the level of Dhatu

Shrot-riddha Har at the level of channels of the body

(It acts as a cleansing agent in respect of the internal channels of the body)

The action of Guru and Sara Guna lead to castor oil in Pashas without being absorbed in Amaashya

After Matapaka by Eranda Tail, Purgation Therapy occurs

6. Route of Administration and Dose

Castor oil administration is via the oral route, as the oil needs to be broken down by intestinal lipases to have its stimulant laxative effects. An appropriate daily dose for an adult male is 15 to 60 ml per day. Castor oil should be administered up to the dose of five Pala depending on the strength of the person, nature of disease, and the Kashta. If the person is weak and is of Mridu Kosta (laxed bowel) then, castor oil should be given along with food. Along with oral route it can be administered via anal route in the form of enema therapy.

7. Adverse effects of castor oil

The adverse effects of castor oil are a common reason why it is not used often in conventional medicine. In a study comparing castor oil to sennosides, castor oil tended to cause abdominal cramping, vomiting, bloating, and dizziness. Far fewer adverse effects were occurring with the use of other laxatives.

8. Common Ayurvedic formulations of Eranda Tail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guggulu Preparations</th>
<th>Oil preparations</th>
<th>Ghrita preparations</th>
<th>Other preparations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Eranda Tail in Amavat

In Amavat (Rheumatism) - Tikta Rasa & Katu Rasa with Ushna Virya pacifies the Ama. Eranda digest Rasagata ama, Eranda oil when used with Sunthis Kwath, it helps more in Ama Pachan, Warm Eranda oil can also be applied externally to joints. As mentioned earlier it is a choice of drug in Rheumatism. Eranda - Recinus oil is an exceptional fat which can be used in ama condition also.

Eranda Tail acts on Apan Vayu

Eranda has a specific action on Apan sites i.e., on colon & urogenital system. Hence it is recommended in Bradhna (inguinal swelling), Antra Vridhhi (scrotal hernia), scrotal enlargement due to Vata, Piles, Udavarta (abnormal upward movement of Vata), Yoni-Roga (gynaecological diseases), Seminal disorders and Mutrakrichha (Dysuria).

In all types of Vataja Shul

In backache, cervical pain, sciatica and in arthritis Eranda oil with Guggul formulations is a prototype of Ayurvedic therapeutics.

In Kamala (Jaundice)

In obstructive pathology E recommended to relieve and to maintain the flow of components. In Liver diseases where the jaundice appears, the Eranda oil is used as a 'Sneha Virechana'.

Nityam Enam Virechayet

Udar (Ascites) is the condition where the fluid retention is present in the peritoneum. It is generally secondary to Liver diseases. The leaves of Eranda are utilized locally to reduce the abdominal girth in ascites.

Eranda Tail for Prana Vaha Srotas

In the respiratory conditions like Shwasa (asthma) & Kasa (cough) where the channels are clogged with mucoid & sticky secretions. Erand oil is used to relieve the obstructions from the channels.

Eranda Tail in Avarana

In condition where Kapha is afflicted with morbid Vata and Pitta or where Vata is overlaid by Kapha and Pitta, it should be treated by oral medication of Eranda Tail

**DISCUSSION**

**Eranda Taila** is highly useful in the treatment of a variety of common and chronic disorders. Moreover, the plant is very common and can be seen wildly growing in forests. **Eranda Taila** being a simple harmless purgative can be prescribed after considering the strength of the disease, digestive fire and strength of the body of the patient.

**Avoid root cause of disease**

Indigestion is the root cause of many diseases. Ama, endogenous toxin is the main culprit in the pathogenesis of many diseases. Use of Ricinuss oil can prevent these conditions. Pakvashaya (Large intestine) is the main site of Vata. When we control Vata from this site, it is easier to control Vata from all other places. Hence, it is recommended in Vataj Gulma, Vataj Grahani, Vata Udara and in other Vatavyadhi i.e., Deep-seated Vatarakta (gout), Sciatica, Hemiplegia etc.

**Eranda Tail on Purishdharma Kala**

Ayurveda has mentioned the co-relation of Purishdharma Kala and Asthidhama Kala. Vitiated Vata causes Prushthashula (backache), Sandhivata (Arthritis), Asthi Shul (Bony pains), crackling sounds at joints in this pathology castor oil recommended. By action of Ushna, Guru, Snigdha, Tkshna, Sukshma Guna of castor oil Malapaka at the level of Purishdharma Kala.
(oil of Ricinus communis) processed with relevant herbs that cure the morbid Dosha.

**Mridu Samshodhana (Mild purgation)**

The oleation and sudation procedures should be repeatedly administered so that the disorders of Vata may not stay in the viscera softened by oleation procedure. If due to residual morbidity, the symptoms did not subside with the above procedures, then the patient should be cleansed by means of mild drugs mixed with unctuous articles.

For this purpose, the patient may take the medicated ghee prepared with Tilvaka or Satala, or castor oil with milk; all of these are auspicious and expel the morbid humors.

By excessive use of unctuous, sour, salty and hot articles of diet, the excretory matter gets accumulated and occluding the alimentary passage, obstructs the Vata, hence *Anuloman* of Vata should be done by castor oil.

Due to its *Sukshma Guna*, it can enter into minute pores, and *Srotovishodhana* property enables it to cleanse the channels. It enhances Medha Kanti Bala Arogya Smriti (improve cognitive and memory functions and augment general health and heartiness).

**CONCLUSION**

*Ricinus communis* or castor plant is a widely traditionally used and potent medicinal plant amongst all the thousands of medicinal plants. The approved FDA condition for which castor oil may be useful as a stimulant laxative, which can be beneficial in constipation and medical procedures. With chronic idiopathic constipation being one of the most common GI complaints, castor oil can be of great benefit. *Mridu Samshodhana* (Mild purgation) or *Anuloman* action occur by *Eranda Tail* in all over the indications mentioned above. A systematic review of *Eranda Tail* provides information about its properties, qualities, Indication, Contraindication, Mode of action, administration, dose, adverse effects of castor oil and common ayurvedic formulation of *Eranda Tail* etc. *Srotorodha* is a main cause for disease generation. It has wide range of indications and is an ingredient in various potent formulations. It is a conventional laxative with less adverse effect and is inexpensive. It pacifies Vata and Kapha Dosa, is *Sukshma, Srotosodhsana and Rasayana* in property. The therapeutic aspect of *Eranda Tail* is much more and can be given in various disorders.

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How to cite this article: Ramraj Singh, Rupali Kakade, Jayant Gulhane. Therapeutic aspects of Eranda Tail (Oil of Ricinus Communis). J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2023;04:158-165.

http://dx.doi.org/10.21760/jaims.8.4.27

Source of Support: Nil, Conflict of Interest: None declared.

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