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A review article on *Vedanasthapan Mahakashaya*, a Potent Ayurvedic Analgesic

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ABSTRACT

Pain is experienced as a subjective feeling. Several words such as *Vedana*, *Shoola*, *Dukha*, *Ruja* and *Pida* have been employed to describe pain. Due to its subjective nature, the intensity of pain varies from individual to individual, time to time, and site to site. Pain, predominantly caused by *Vata*, is a pathological symptom. Therefore, while screening the drug for this problem, it should be kept in mind and outstanding drugs that may prove useful in this regard should be selected. Within the *Vedanasthapan Mahakashaya*, mentioned in Charaka Samhita, certain medicinal compounds exhibit remarkable abilities to alleviate pain, regardless of its cause. A closer examination of these compounds has been studied in this paper which reveals their distinct pharmacological properties. These compounds display analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and mild sedative attributes, which collectively contribute to pain relief. This paper aims to scrutinize the pharmacological properties of compounds within the *Vedana Sthapana Mahakashaya* which display valuable insights into the multifaceted mechanisms through which pain can be effectively alleviated.

Key words: *Vedana*, Pain management, Ayurvedic analgesic

INTRODUCTION

Pain, predominantly caused by *Vata*, is a pathological symptom. Therefore, while screening the drug for this problem, it should be kept in mind and outstanding drugs that may prove useful in this regard should be selected. However, there may be other drugs that might be effective due to their *Prabhava*, i.e., specific action that cannot be explained based on *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*. The classification of drugs and the

creation of the group *Vedanasthapaniya* were done by Acharya Charak.^[1] The word "*Vedana*" can be interpreted in two ways. It may denote pain and sensation in general, indicating that the problem of pain was equally troubling the minds of ancient sages, just as we are currently eager to discover some effective drugs.

It is clearly stated by Charaka that health is happiness and disease is pain. Based on the same principle, life has also been divided into two broad categories: *Sukha* (happiness) and *Dukha* (pain). To address this issue, various remedies were discovered and attempts were made to prevent and treat painful situations when they arise. In their respective fields, all branches of Ayurveda have been involved in fulfilling these responsibilities. In Shalya Tantra, this problem has gained prominence due to the traumatic nature of ailments that inflict severe pain on the body and mind. Urgent management of these problems is required, and the surgeons apply the necessary methodology to effectively handle the situation.

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Concept of pain in Ayurveda

Pain is experienced as a subjective feeling. Several words such as *Vedana*, *Shoola*, *Dukha*, *Ruja* and *Pida* have been employed to describe pain. Due to its subjective nature, the intensity of pain varies from individual to individual, time to time, and site to site. It is greatly influenced by the sensitivity of the mind. In *Vataja Prakriti* patients and individuals with *Vata* vitiation, the prominence of pain sensation is observed.^[10-11]

Mechanism of pain in Ayurveda

Vitiated *Vata*, among the *Tridosha*, stands as the primary causative factor for all pain conditions. The manifestation of pain is significantly influenced by *Vata's Rooksha* and *Chala Guna*. The nature and attributes of pain differ based on the accompanying *Dosha* with *Vata*. The manifestation of *Vedana* varies in the body due to the distinct expressions of *Vata* associated with *Kapha* and *Pitta*.^[10-11]

Mythological description of Shoola in Ayurveda

The mythological origin of *Shoola* is mentioned in *Harita Samhita*. It is mentioned that Lord Shiva, who was disturbed by *Kamadeva* during meditation, became angry. *Kamadeva*, in fear, took refuge in the body of God Vishnu. Lord Shiva, in his anger, threw his *Trishula*, which was diverted by God Vishnu towards *Prithivi* (earth). As a result, *Shoola* arose in human beings from the *Trishula*. It came to be known as *Soola* due to its origin from the *Trishula*.^[10-11]

Sites of Vedana / Pain

The manifestation of happiness and miseries primarily occurs in the sense organs, which are considered the most important sites. In Ayurvedic literature, focus has been directed towards the origin, nature, and classification of pain. The term "*Shoola*" is utilized to denote painful sensation. *Shoola* is not regarded as a symptom or an independent disease entity in Ayurveda, but a more comprehensive perspective is taken regarding the etiopathology and management of pain. *Shoola* is described as the outcome of *Vata Vyadhi*.

The involvement of *Vata* is deemed essential for the presence of pain (*Shoola*), as stated in *Sushrut*

Samhita.^[4] However, both *Pitta* and *Kapha* influence the nature and intensity of pain. Therefore, all three *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) collectively bear responsibility for the origin, development, and perception of Pain.^[4] *Shoola* is described by *Susruta* as *Shankha Sphotanavat Teevra Vedana*. Focal symptoms in the body are produced by *Shoola*. In *Stree Roga*, *Shoola* in the *Yoni* (reproductive system) is considered a symptom of *Vatala Yoni*. Thus, it is evident that in Ayurveda, *Shoola* is regarded both as a symptom and a disease. Consequently, the perception of a painful stimulus, ranging from negligible to severe pain, depends on the predominance of *Vayu* (*Vata*) in an individual at that given time. Pain is felt throughout the body in the *Manas* (brain), except in hairs, small hairs, tip of nails, ingested food, excreta, and urine.^[3]

Types of Vedana/Pain

The exact nature of pain experienced by the individual is vividly described in Ayurveda, leaving little room for additional adjectives and adverbs. Detailed descriptions are provided regarding various methods, including the use of drugs, vomiting, fasting, and more, for the alleviation of all types of pain. *Vedana* is classified into five types based on the predominance of *Dosha* in relation to *Vrana* (wound).^[5]

1. Pain of *Vatik Vrana*: When pin pricking, stabbing, staffing, beating, cutting, girdling, stirring, throwing, irritating, burning, bursting, tearing or dividing type of pain is experienced in a *Vrana*, or when there is cramp, radiating, filling type of pain, rigidity, numbness, penetrating pain, or various types of non-specific pain that occur repeatedly, it should be recognized as *Vedana* resulting from excessive vitiation or predominance of *Vata*. A similar concept is found in *Sushrut Samhita*.^[6]
2. Pain of *Paittik Vrana*: When the pain of *Vrana* cause local, regional or generalized burning sensation it appears as if smoke coming out of wound or sensation of burning charcoal covered all over the body, with rise of temperature and pain as if *Kshar* has been applied on the cut, wound, predominance of *Pitta* should be concluded. Same idea exists in *Sushrut Samhita*.^[6]

3. Pain of *Raktaja Vrana*: The pain caused by the predominance of vitiated blood (*Shonita Rakta*) is similar to that caused by the vitiation of *Pitta*.
4. Pain of *Kaphaja Vrana*: When a *Vrana* exhibits itching sensation, heaviness, numbness, a sensation of being covered with paste, mild pain, rigidity, and a feeling of coldness, it is presumed to be caused by the vitiation of *Sleshma* or *Kapha*. A similar concept is found in Sushrut Samhita.^[6]
5. Pain in *Sannipataja Vrana*: When there is a mixed sense of all the types of pain described above, it should be deemed to be due to the vitiation of all three *Doshas*. The same description is found in Sushrut Samhita.^[6]

Contents of Vedanasthapan Mahakashay^[1]

1. *Sala* (*Shorea robusta* Gaertn.f)
2. *Katphala* (*Myrica esculenta* Buch-Ham.)
3. *Kadamba* (*Anthocephalus indicus* A. Rich)
4. *Padmaka* (*Prunus cerasoides* D. Don)
5. *Tumba* (*Zanthoxylum armatum* Roxb)
6. *Mocarasa* (Resin of *Salimalia malabarica* Schott and Endl)
7. *Sirisa* (*Albizzia lebbeck* Benth)
8. *Vanjula* (*Salix caprea* Linn)
9. *Elavaluka* (*Prunus cerasus* Linn)
10. *Asoka* (*Saraca asoca*)

Properties of Vedanasthapan Mahakashay^[7]

Name	Chemical Composition	Pharmacodynamics	Part used
<i>Sala</i>	Bark- tannin 7-12% w Tree trunk- deo-gum resin commonly known as 'ral' (sala niryasa).	<i>Rasa - Kashaya, Madhura</i> <i>Guna - Ruksha</i> <i>Virya - Sita</i> <i>Vipak - Katu</i> <i>Prabhav - Vedanasthapan</i>	Resin, Stem Bark, leaf, heart wood, fruit, flower.

		<i>Doshakarma - Pittakapha Samak</i>	
<i>Katphala</i>	Bark- tannin (32.1%), myricetin (hexahydroxy flavone), glycoside myricitrin, aglycone, quercetrin.	<i>Rasa - Kasaya, Tikta, Katu</i> <i>Guna - Laghu, Tikshna</i> <i>Virya - Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka - Katu</i> <i>Doshkarma - Kaphavata Samak</i>	Bark, flowers.
<i>Kadamba</i>	Cinchotannic acid, steroids and reducing sugars.	<i>Rasa - Kashaya, Madhura, Lavana.</i> <i>Guna - Ruksha</i> <i>Virya - Sita</i> <i>Vipak - Katu</i> <i>Prabhava - Vedanasthapan</i> <i>Doshakarma - Vatapittasamak</i>	Bank, leaf, fruits, root.
<i>Padmaka</i>	Flavonoid Sakuranetin (1%), flavone genkwanin, isoflavone prunerin, isoflavone, padmakastin, glycosides sakuranin, padmakastin, taxifolin.	<i>Rasa - Kasaya, Tikta</i> <i>Guna - Laghu</i> <i>Virya - Sita</i> <i>Vipaka - Katu</i> <i>Dosakarma - Kaphapitta Samaka</i>	Bark, seeds (kernel)
<i>Tumba</i>	Linalocol, dipentene, cinamic methyl ester, fragramie, berberine, dictamine, mangofluorine, xanthoplanine, skimmianine, volatile oil and resin.	<i>Rasa - Katu, Tikta.</i> <i>Guna - Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna</i> <i>Virya - Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka - Katu</i> <i>Dosakarma - Kaphavatasamak, Pittavardhaka</i>	Bark, fruits
<i>Mocarasa</i>	mineral matter, tannin, tannic acid, gallic acid.	<i>Rasa - Madhura, Kasaya</i>	Exudate (gum resin)

		<p><i>Guna - Laghu, Snigdha, Picchila</i></p> <p><i>Virya - Sita</i></p> <p><i>Vipaka - Katu</i></p> <p><i>Dosakarma - Khapittasamak</i></p>	
Sirisa	Tannin 7-11% and saponin. Bark also yields gun-resin	<p><i>Rasa - Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya</i></p> <p><i>Guna - Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna</i></p> <p><i>Virya - Sita</i></p> <p><i>Vipak - Katu</i></p> <p><i>Dashakarma - Tridoshasamak</i></p>	Bark, flower, seed, leaf
Vanjula	Cyanidin, pipercolic acid, phenol glycosides, fragilin, picein, salicin, salicortin, salireproside, triandrin, vimalin.	<p><i>Rasa - Kasay, Tikta</i></p> <p><i>Guna - Laghu</i></p> <p><i>Virya - Sita</i></p> <p><i>Vipaka - Katu</i></p> <p><i>Dosakarma - Kaphapitta Samaka</i></p>	Bark, flowers, roots, leaves
Elavaluka	Polyphenol, phenolic acids(3-caffeoylquinic, 5-caffeoylquinic and p-coumaric acids), Flavanols (catechin and epicatechin derivatives), flavonols (glycosides of quercetin and kaempferol), Phytoconstituent (arabinose, galactose, xylose, mannose, and rhamnose)	<p><i>Rasa - Kashay</i></p> <p><i>Guna - Laghu</i></p> <p><i>Virya - Sita</i></p> <p><i>Vipaka - Katu</i></p> <p><i>Dosakarma - Kaphavata Samak</i></p>	Bark, fruit
Asoka	Tannins (0.57%–7.85%), ash (2.43%–6.69%), and other	<p><i>Rasa- Kashya, Tikta</i></p> <p><i>Guna- Laghu, Ruksha.</i></p> <p><i>Virya- Sita</i></p>	Stem bark, Flowers seeds

	extracts (5.74%–14.07%)	<p><i>Vipak- Katu</i></p> <p><i>Doshakarma- Kaphapitta Samak</i></p>	
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Probable mode of action of each drug^[9]

Shaal - Shaal brings soothing relief to aggravated Pitta caused by its naturally Madhura Rasa and Shita Virya. Its Madhura Anurasa help in Anulomana of Vata. Moreover, its composition rich in nor-triterpenes, tannic acid, and tri-terpenic acid grants it anti-inflammatory, bactericidal, and analgesic properties.

Katphala - With its Tikshna, Laghu Guna and Ushna Virya, Katphala harmonizes imbalanced Kapha and other Doshas. Its Ushna Virya alleviates pain by easing Vata blockages due to Kapha or other Doshas, while its potent warmth aids in this process.

Kadamba – Kadamba is Tikta and Kashaya Rasa, along with its Shita Virya, possesses potent anti-inflammatory abilities. By taming aggravated Pitta, it naturally relieves discomfort. The presence of cinchotannic acid further enhances its anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving characteristics.

Padmaka - Embracing a blend of Kasaya, Tikta Rasa, Shita Virya and Laghu Guna, Padmaka specifically soothes aggravated pitta. Remarkably, it balances Vata and kapha, offering comprehensive pain relief. Notably, constituents such as prunetin, padmakastein, sacchuranin, and taxifolin contribute to its CNS-acting analgesic potential.

Tumba – Tumba is Katu, Tikshna, and Ushna Guna attributes dissolve Vata obstructions caused by Kapha imbalance.

Mocharasa - Easing discomfort by calming elevated Pitta and Rakta through its Kashaya Rasa, Shita Virya, and Snigdha Guna. Notably, berberine, dictamine, and xanthoplanin lend antipyretic properties.

Shirisha - Its combination of Kashaya, Madhura, and Tikta Rasa works to balance Pitta and Rakta. This also indirectly soothes Vata, Pitta and Rakta, ultimately providing pain relief.

Vanjula - Vanjula effectively alleviates pain resulting from Pitta and Rakta issues like burning sensations and

inflammation. Its blend of *Kashaya* and *Tikta Rasa*, combined with its *Shita Virya*, facilitates this relief. Additionally, the presence of salicylic acid imbues it with analgesic, antipyretic, and anti-inflammatory potential.

Elavaluka – *Elavaluka* is *Kasaya Rasa* and *Shita Virya* specifically pacify provoked *Rakta Dosh*, diminishing discomfort. It also exhibits antipyretic qualities.

Ashoka - With its *Tikta, Kashaya Rasa*, coupled with a *Shita Virya*, *Ashoka* reduces *Pitta*-related concerns. By harmonizing *Pitta*, it effectively diminishes pain. Additionally, its content of tannic acid and gallic acid contribute to its analgesic and anticoagulant effects.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Pain, regardless of its origin, is a universal challenge that people worldwide grapple with. The sensation of pain serves as a protective mechanism, alerting individuals to potential harm or adverse conditions within their bodies. In *Ayurveda*, *Vata Dosh* emerges as the underlying source of various types of pain. The convection and the enforcement of all the sensations of the body are enforced by *Vata*.^[2] Remarkably, within the *Vedana Sthapana Mahakashaya*, certain medicinal compounds exhibit remarkable abilities to alleviate pain, regardless of its cause. A closer examination of these compounds reveals their distinct pharmacological properties. Initially, specific substances within the *Vedana Sthapana Mahakashaya* mitigate pain by appeasing *Vata Dosh* through their lubricating qualities (*Snigdha Guna*) and warming potency (*Ushna Virya*). Subsequently, the same compounds, due to their lubricating properties, foster an increase in *Kapha Dosh*, inducing restful sleep and further reducing pain through their sedative effects.^[8] Among the compounds, *Shaal*, *Mocharasa*, and *Jalvetas* exhibit pain-alleviating properties by pacifying *Vata Dosh*, owing to their heavy (*Guru*) and slimy (*Pichchhila*) attributes. Additionally, *Ashoka*, *Mocharasa*, *Shirisha*, and *Kadamba* demonstrate efficacy in managing hemorrhagic pain through their capacity to constrict blood vessels (*Rakta-Stambhana*) and mitigate blood-related imbalances (*Rakta-Pitta Shamana*). From a contemporary perspective, several

compounds in this context contain gallic acid, salicylic acid, hydrocyanic acid, and cinchotannic acid. These compounds display analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and mild sedative attributes, which collectively contribute to pain relief. Notably, their sedative effects extend to the nervous system, further substantiating their role in pain reduction. In summary, this discourse delves into the intricate world of pain management within Ayurvedic principles and modern pharmacology. By scrutinizing the pharmacological properties of compounds within the *Vedana Sthapana Mahakashaya*, we gain valuable insights into the multifaceted mechanisms through which pain can be effectively alleviated.

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