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Classical uses of *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa*)

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ABSTRACT

Haridra is used in the traditional system of medicine. It is used as an antioxidant and possesses various beneficial properties such as anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic, antiseptic, blood cleansing etc. It is widely prescribed *Ayurvedic* drug and is used in various diseases. *Haridra* has been described in the ancient *Ayurvedic* text as a *Rasayana*. *Haridra* is a vital herb in *Ayurvedic* medicine, whose spice form can be recognized by its dazzling yellow colour. The rhizome of the herb, used either fresh or dried, has a host of medicinal benefits. *Haridra* is *Lekhaneeya*, *Kushthaghna* and *Vishaghna*. *Haridra*'s principal constituent, curcumin, has been extensively studied by western researchers and scientists for its antioxidant activity. *Haridra* is *Katu* and *Tikta* in taste. It is *Ushna* in quality. It is used in many forms and through many routes of administration such as nasal, oral, over the skin etc.

Key words: *Haridra*, *Ayurveda*, *Turmeric*, *Curcuma longa*.

INTRODUCTION

In prehistoric age, man started to use plants growing around in various ways as diet and drug. Later on when the concepts were developed their possible mode of action was studied and their properties were defined scientifically. The object of this scientific knowledge was again to enable physician to make judicious use in a more effective way. Looking to the prime importance of *Prayoga* (use), *Acharya Charaka* has said that real expert of medicinal plants is he who is well versed in their use besides their names and forms.^[1] The present article deals with classical use of *Haridra* recorded right from the *Charak Samhita* to the various available *Ayurveda* texts. Various drugs like *Haridra* are very popular in society. Now a large

number of people are using *Haridra* for being fit and healthy and to cure diseases. Therefore a classical analysis of *Haridra* is needed through various available *Ayurvedic* texts.

Piles

Paste of *Haridra* powder mixed with latex of *Snuhi* or *Pippali* pounded with ox-bile and *Haridra* should be applied.^[2]

Anaemia

One should take *Haridra* mixed with *Triphala*, *Ghee* and honey.^[3]

Jaundice

1. *Haridradi Ghrita*^[4]
2. *Haridra*, red ochre and *Amalaka* used as collyrium alleviate jaundice.^[5]

Bronchial asthma

The patient should inhale smoke of the wick made of *Haridra*, *Patra*, *Eranda* root, lac, realgar, *Devadaru*, orpiment and *Mamsi* pounded together.^[6]

Thirst

In thirst caused by cough, one should take water processed with *Haridra* and mixed with honey and sugar.^[7]

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Prameha

1. *Haridra* powder mixed with honey should be taken with the juice of *Amalaka*.^[8]
2. There is no *Prameha* incurable for *Haridra*.^[9]
3. Decoction of *Haridra* and *Daruharidra* is specific remedy for *Pistameha*.^[10]

Kustha

One crosses over the sinful disease by taking *Haridra* with urine for a month.^[11]

Pox

A piece of *Haridra* and *Tamarind* leaves taken with cold water alleviated pox.^[12]

Vatarakta

Decoction of *Haridra* and *Guduchi* mixed with honey should be taken in *Vatarakta* predominant in *Kapha*.^[13]

Poisoning

Ghee should be cooked separately with the paste of *Haridra*, *Nakuli* and *Jati*. It is efficacious in poisoning.^[21]

Freckles

The paste of *Haridra* and *Rakta Chandana* pounded with buffalo's milk should be applied on face. It removes the dark shade.^[15]

DISCUSSION

A diseased body is the biggest enemy of good health. A healthy body looks beautiful, attractive and remains active. Herbal drugs like *Haridra* has a lot of significance in our life. After reviewing various classical texts, it is clear that we can cure different diseases by using *Haridra*. *Haridra* has many medicinal properties such as *Lekhaniya*, *Kushathaghna*, *Krimighna* and *Sirovirechaniya* etc. In the *Ayurvedic* literature *Haridra* is extensively described. It is used internally and externally in various diseases. In the *Ayurvedic* literature it is one of the most important commonly used herb. Presently it is considered as an important anti-diabetic and anti-oxidant drug. Anti-oxidant scavenge molecules in the body known as free

radicals, which damage cell membranes, tamper with DNA, and even cause cell death. Most important thing about *Haridra* is that it is cultivated throughout India. *Haridra's* major constituents are curcumin, various curcuminoids and curcuma oil. Most important thing about *Haridra* is that it is cultivated throughout India.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the various classical texts, it is clear that *Haridra* is used in the traditional system of medicine extensively in various formulations. *Haridra* is a drug widely used in many disorders due to various pharmacological actions.

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