



KARKADAKA CHIKITSA – A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

¹Dr.Rahul H,² Dr.Silpa O.S.

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Panchakarma, Vaidyaratnam Ayurveda College, Ollur, Thrissur, Kerala, India.

²House Surgeon, Vaidyaratnam Ayurveda College Ollur, Thrissur, Kerala, India.

ABSTRACT

Karkadaka masam is last month of malayalam calender which extends from mid of july to mid of august (Shravana and Bhadrpada masa) which is Varsha ritu according to ayurveda. Kerala by its increased rain during Karkadaka masam, the people are more prone to water bone diseases. Karkadaka is a difficult period for people of kerala as heavy floods may destroy the crops and most of people are mainly depending on farming for their livelihood. It is also called Panjamasam meaning month of poverty. In the month of Karkadaka the sareera bala and agni bala decreases. It is a shift from Adhana to Visarga kala .There will be vata kopa and pitta sanchaya. The 6th day of Karkadaka is more prone to disease. The varsha ritu charya should be practiced so as to detoxify body and prevent from diseases.Karkadaka chikilsa is a rejuvenation therapy done in the month of Karkadaka every year.

KEYWORDS: Karkadaka chikitsa, Ayurveda, Karkadaka kanji, Varsharithucharya, Panchakarma

INTRODUCTION

Karkadaka Chikitsa is a traditional Ayurvedic practice in Kerala during the monsoon season, particularly in the month of Karkadakam (July-August). This period is marked by heavy rainfall and increased humidity, so there is increased chance of diseases. In olden times, when people of Kerala depend mainly on agriculture for living, Karkadaka masa is a period where the crops get damaged due to heavy rain and flood. There is an ancient saying 'Karkadakam durghatam' It is a month of poverty, so there is a need to protect the health at that period. The practice of Karkadaka chikilsa includes ahara and viharas. The practice emphasizes detoxification and rejuvenation, leveraging the natural healing properties of herbs and oils native to the region.

Karkadaka Chikitsa is rooted in ancient Ayurvedic principles, focusing on the balance of doshas and the restoration of physical and mental well-being. It incorporates a variety of treatments, including therapeutic massages, herbal baths, and dietary modifications, tailored to individual health needs. This holistic approach not only addresses specific ailments but also promotes overall health, making it an essential aspect of Kerala's rich cultural and medicinal heritage.

Karkadaka masam is also called as Ramayana masam, which is a holy month for Hindus. The people read Adyatma ramayana in their homes, wear dasapushpas, clean their homes, wear mukutti kuri etc. There are many cultural practices related to the month of Karkadaka. The Karkadaka chikitsa is done mainly by adopting varsha rithu charya. The weak digestive power of adhana kala further worsens by varsha rithu. Thus the body becomes more weak and vitiates tridoshas. The heavy rain, economic problems in agriculture, tridosha vitiation, transition from adhana to visarga kala etc. makes the month of Karkadaka more vulnerable to diseases.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Varsha rithu charya^[1]

In varsha rithu, agni is weak. The agni which is already debilitated by greeshma rithu undergoes further decrease and get vitiated by doshas which leads to diseases. The treatment should be done to increase agni and balance mitigated doshas.

Panchakarma therapies are advised. Asthapana vasthis are to be administered. The aharas include old grains, meat processed with spices, meat of desert animals, soup of pulses, wine, fermented decoctions, masthu processed with souvarchala lavana and panchakola. Water used should be either rainwater or water from deep wells that are boiled. Food are amla, lavana, asneha, suskha, kshoudravath (with honey) and laghu. Person should not move about on foot (move only on vehicles) should use perfumes, expose his clothes to fragrant fumes, dwell in upper stories of the house, devoid of heat, cold and snow. Avoid drinking River water, udamantha (beverage prepared with flour of corns mixed with ghee), Sleeping at daytime, exertion and exposure to Sun

Special Preparations for Karkadaka masam

Karkadaka kanji^[3]

Karkadaka kanji is a preparation consumed by people during the Karkadaka masa to protect their health. It is a yavagu preparation. It increases the digestive capacity. It has more water content and it can compensate the water loss from the body.

Ingredients

- Shashtika shali 100 g
- Mudga (green gram) 10 g.
- Chandrasoora (garden cress) 10 g
- Jeeraka (cumin seed) 10 g
- Medhika (fenugreek seed) 10 g
- Dasamula churna/bala churna 10 g.
- Panchakola churna/Trikadu churna 5 g
- Dasapushpa swarasa Q. S
- Coconut milk Q. S
- Water Q. S
- Jaggery Q. S
- Saindhava lavana

Method of preparation

Take adequate quantity of water and boil with 10 g of bala churna/dasamoola churna. Then, add 100 g of shashtikashali and 10 g of mudga (green gram) to it after proper washing. Continue the boiling by adding jeera, medhika, chandrasoora, and panchakola churna. When the rice is cooked well, add the dasapushpa swarasa, coconut milk, and jaggery in sufficient quantity. Lastly, add the saindhava for taste.

Adminstration

This porridge should be consumed fresh and lukewarm on all days of Karkadaka or for 7, 14, or 21 days continuously, as per one's need. This should be consumed either the morning after an oil bath or in the evening as dinner, or at both times if possible. However, it must be consumed for a minimum of seven days in a row. It is best to avoid tea, coffee, oily foods, and non-vegetarian foods while taking this kanji to avoid deterioration of digestive fire and to reap the most benefits.

In diabetic patients jaggery can be avoided and cherupayar can be used. In patients with renal complaints thazuthama (punarnava) is used. In the case of patients who are hyperlipidaemic, ghee is avoided and malli leaves (Dhanyaka), Uluva (Methika), curry leaves (Kaidarya), thazhuthama (Punarnava), and muthira (Kulatha) are added. In case of hypertensive patients, thazhuthama (Punarnava), and muringa ela

(Moringa oleifera in asthmatic patients, putharichunda (Vyaghri), Jeerakam (Jeeraka), chukku (Sunti), kurunthotti(Bala) are selected.

Ingredients andaction ^[4]

Table1 : Dasapushpas and their properties

Sl.no	Dasapushpas	Properties
1	Bhadra(cherula)	Antimicrobial, Antidiabetic
2	Vipareetalajjalu(mukkutti)	Antipyretic,Antioxidant,Antibacterial,Antiinflammatory
3	Indravalli (valli uzhinja)	Antioxidant, Antiarthritic
4	Musali (nilapana)	Antioxidant, Hepatoprotective, Anti cancerous
5	Durva (karuka)	Anti oxidant, Immunomodulatory, Hepatoprotective
6	Bringaraja (kayyuni)	Anti inflammatory, Anti microbial, Hepatoprotective
7	Akhukarni (muyal cheviyan)	Antimicrobial, Analgesic and anti-inflammatory, Anti viral,Antioxidant
8	Vishnukranta (vishnukranti)	Antiinflammatory, Antioxidant, Antimicrobial, Nootropic
9	Lakshmana (tirutali)	Antifungal,Anticancer,Anti diabetic
10	Sahadevi (poovankurunnal)	Cytoprotective,Antioxidant, Neuroprotective

Pathila curry^{[7][3]}

The oushadha peya is usually served along with this pathila (10 leaves) curry. They are highly affordable and are very good for health and longevity. These leafy vegetables, abounding in anti-oxidants, mineral salts, iron, vitamins, and proteins which will revive immune system. This pathila (10 leaves) may be differently known in different places. The 10 leaves are-

Table 2: Ingredients and properties of Pathila curry

Sl.no	Name	Properties
1	Aaluki	Antimicrobial, Antifungal, Anti-metastatic, Anti inflammatory
2	Chakramarda	Anticancerous
3	Punarnava	Antibacterial, Antinociceptive, Hepatoprotective, Anti inflammatory, Anti -viral
4	Masha	Anti-oxidant, Antiinflammatory, Hepatoprotective
5	Sooranakanda	Anti bacterial, Antihelminthic, Hepatoprotective, Anti diabetic
6	Kooshmanda	Gastroprotective
7	Kooshmandi	Antimicrobial, Antioxidant, Antitumor
8	Thanduleeya	Gutmodulatory&Bronchodilator, Antidiabetic&Anticholestrolemic
9	Dusparsha	Anti inflammatory, Analgesic
10	Shivalingi	Antiinflammatory,Antimicrobial, Antiasthmatic,Analgesic,Antipyretic

Method of preparation

Wash and finely chop the tender leaves and drain water from the chopped leaves. Grind the grated coconut and chilly and heat oil in a pan and splutter mustard seeds. Add chopped leaves, turmeric powder, salt and the grounded mixture. Cook in low flame for 2 mins and should stir until the water content gets fully absorbed.

Here, sigru (Moringa Oleifera) is not using in this season because there is a belief that roots of sigru helps to absorb toxicity from soil and is removed through its leaves during this time of Karkadaka.

Oushada seva^[7]

It is done on the 16th day of KarkadakaChitraka paste and cows ghee mixture is admin byistered.Dose is one bindu. It is done after bath and rituals.This is given as a prasada in temples.It is restricted to take non veg during that day and day before.

Mukkudi seva^[7]

It is a kind of medicated buttermilk made by adding medicinal herbs.

Ingredients-pippali,sunti,Krishna,danyaka, ajamoda,jeera, suganda moola, dadima fruit peel,chitraka,musta-1gm

These are added to buttermilk and boiled.

Duration-1day, 7day, whole month.

Panchagavya sevana^[7]

Prepared by mixing 5 ingredients (cow's milk, ghee, urine, dung,curd). It is taken in the early morning.

Nadee kashaya seva^[9]

This is medicated decoction consumed during the month for 7days, 21 days or for the whole month. A cloth packet filled with crushed medicine and kept immersed in water. This is boiled continuously. This packet is discarded only on 3rd or 4th day. This decoction is consumed once or twice daily. One should follow strict vegetarian diet during this period.

Marunnu unda/ uluva unda seva^[9]

This is a preparation made with a large amount of uluva and other 10-24 ingredients. This is prepared by adding Jaggery and consumed as post partum care also. This is taken for a period of 7 days, twice daily

Chuvannaratha kashaya^[9]

Rasnerandadi kashaya also called as *Chuvannaratha kashaya* is taken along with buffalo ghee fortified with jeera, for 7 or 14 or 21 days. Another form of using this kashaya is by adding goat's legs or head into this kashaya. According to the logical thinking of physician.

External therapies^[7]**Abhyangam**

Oil is applied on body and head during this month. Abhyangam is done on Tuesday and Friday for females and Wednesday and Saturday for males.

Swedana

Kizhi (potali sweda) , Pizhichil (kayaseka) are also done during this period. Sirodhara is usually contraindicated due to excessive cold of varsha rithu. A course of pizhichil and njavara kizhi (shashtika pinda sweda) is done every year during this time. Commonly used tailas are dhanwantharam taila, kethakimooladi taila for body and Asanavilwadi taila, balaguduchyadi taila ,kera taila for head according to prakrithi. In osteoarthritis cases – Dhanwantaram taila + kethakeemooladi taila+ panchatiktakam gritha. In taken in 3:2:1 ratio can be used for pizhichil/kizhi/ abhyanga (for body). Kuzhambu (yamaka preparation) is used in patients who are weak and emaciated. Thalakenna (head oil) is prescribed in evening.

Vasthi

Vasthi is the most preferred sodhana therapy in varsha rithu. In swastha, madhutailika vasthi is practiced and in rogavasta dwipanchamoola vasthi, vaitarana vasthi, rajayapana vasthi and lekhana vasthis are practiced. Usually vasti is practised as yoga vasti krama. It includes 8 vasti format- five anuvasana vasthis/ mathra vasthis and three kashaya vastis.

DISCUSSION

The month of Karkadaka is a month of poverty and diseases. If good care is not taken during this period, the chance of getting diseases is high. To maintain good health and to prevent diseases the Karkadaka chikitsa should be adopted every year. This includes ahara and vihara. The ahara includes consuming Karkadaka kanji, pathila thoran,mukkudi seva, nadi kashaya sevana, chuvanna ratha kashaya sevana, oushada seva, panchagavya sevana,,uluva unda etc. The viharas includes abhyangam , kizhi, pizhichil, head oil and vasthi.

REFERENCES

1. Prof.KR.Srikantamurthy. Vagbhata's Ashtanga hridayam, edition 5, Krishnadas academy, Varanasi, 2001. Sutrastanamchapter 3,Rithucharya ,page number:40.
2. Jose Paikkada. Ayurvedavum Arogyavum ,first edition Mathrubhumi books 2016
3. Dr. Sneha Shaji, Dr. Namita D.K. Karkadaka Chikitsa – Rejuvenation through herbs. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci [Internet]. 2020Dec.31 [cited 2024Sep.15];5(06):290-6. Available from: <https://jaims.in/jaims/article/view/1158>
4. Vijaya Lekshmi R, M. A. Shajahan, V.C. Indulekha. ETHNOBOTANY OF KERALA'S KARKADAKA KANJI (MEDICATED GRUEL). Int J Ayu Pharm Res [Internet]. 2019Oct.18 [cited 2024Sep.15];7(8):58-2. Available from: <https://ijapr.in/index.php/ijapr/article/view/1278>
5. Sayujya.PS,Waheeda Banu. "Karkkidaka Kanji- A Health Tradition Of Kerala", International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT), ISSN:2320-2882, Volume.11, Issue 7, pp.b116-b121, July 2023, Available at :<http://www.ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2307132.pdf>
6. Divya Ramachandran, & Shreevathsa: Karkadaka Masa Charya: An Analytical Study in The Light of Varsha Rtu Charya. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2022 {cited July 2022} Available from: http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/1649_1657.pdf
7. Dr Navaneeth Krishnan N, Dr Radhika Satheesan. "KERALEEYA KARKADAKA MASA CHARYA- TRADITIONAL PRACICES AND ITS CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE", International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (www.jetir.org), ISSN:2349-5162, Vol.8, Issue 7, page no.d586-d588, July-2021, Available :<http://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR2107466.pdf>
8. Mohan Deepa, & Sajeevan Aiswaraya. (2021). A STUDY ON MEDICINAL PLANTS USED IN KARKADAKA KANJI: A HEALTH TRADITION OF KERALA. International Journal of Ayurveda and Pharma Research, 9(4), 82-89. <https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v9i4.1883>
9. Raghi RG, Krishna Raob & Indu Sb. Ethnonutritional, ethnomedicinal and sacred religious rites of “Karkadaka charya” A traditional seasonal practice of Kerala , Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge, October 2023,Availiable from: <https://doi.org?10.56042?ijtk.v22i4.7186>