



Clinical indications of Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) an experiential and scientific view

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Abstract : In the practice of medicine, herbs are used as therapeutic agent since long time. In Ayurveda medicine, drugs are prepared from herbal, mineral and animal products. Prevention of disease and management of diseases are the main objective of Ayurveda medicine. Dinacharya (daily regimen) , Rutucharya (Seasonal regimen), and Sadvritta (following Codes of good conduct) are advised for the prevention of diseases. Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera)

is a drug which is commonly used in the management of neurological disorders and psychiatry. Since it is a Jivaniya, Ojaskara and Rasayana drug, it is commonly used in chronic and debilitating diseases. Especially in the management of various non communicable diseases, Ashwagandha is utilized in the treatment. Ashwagandha is having the actions like Rasayana, Jivaniya, Vayasthapana, Balya, Brimhana, Nidrakara, Poshaka, Vedanasthapana, Nadibalya, immunomodulator, immunity booster, antistress, adaptogenic, antioxidant, anticancer, antiaging and sedative actions. It is usually effective in diseases like insomnia, systemic hypertension, Polyneuritis Sciatica syndrome, Diabetic neuropathy, Cervical spondylosis, Lumbar Spondylosis, Osteoarthritis of the Knee joint Mania, Maniac depressive psychosis, epilepsy and brachial neuralgia.

The present paper highlights about the clinical indications of Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) in a scientific and experiential view.

Key words - Ashwagandha, Rasayana, immunomodulator, antioxidant.

Introduction

Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) is a drug used commonly in the management of chronic and debilitating disorders. It is Rasayana, Poshaka, Dhatuvardhaka, Jivaniya, immunomodulator, antioxidant, antistress, adaptogenic and antitumor in action. 1,2.

Synonyms - Ashwagandha Kushthagandhini, Hayahvaya, Vagigandha, Turagagandha, Varahakarni, Varada, Balada. English : Winter chery.

Hindi - Asagandh, Punir.

Kannada - Viremaddina gadde, Tiremaddina gadde.

Rasa - Tikta, Katu, Madhura.

Guna - Laghu Snigdha.

Virya - Ushna

Doshaghna - Kaphavata shamaka.

Rogagnata,- Dourbalya, Vatavyadhi, Raktabharadhikya, Shukradourbalya, Kshaya, Shotha, Bala shosha, Galaganda, Granthi shotha, Urustambha, Bhrama, Moorcha, Anidra, Udaravikara, Krimi, Kasa, Shwasa, Pradara, Yonishoola, Mootraghata, Kushtha, Shwitra, Raktavikara Shotha.3,4,5.

Karma - Vedanasthapana, Jivaniya, Ojaskara, Rasayana Raktashodhaka Nidrakara Balya Brimhana, Shothahara, Mastishkashamaka, Dipana, Anulomana, Shoolaprashamana, Krimighna, Kaphaghna, Raktashodhaka, Nadibalya, Shwasahara, Vajikara, Garbhashaya shothahara, Yonishoolahara, Mootrala, Kushthaghna.6,7,8.

Pharmacological actions

Hypnotic, Nutritive, Hypotensive, Bradycardiac respiratory stimulant immunomodulator, immunosuppressive, immunostimulatory, adaptogenic, antitumor, antistress, radiosensitising, anticonvulsant, psychotropic, CNS depressant, antiinflammatory, antioxidant antispasmodic, analgesic, antipyretic, antiarthritic, sedative, antiviral, cardiotropic, anticoagulant, cardioprotective.9,10,11.

Formulations - Ashwagandhadi choorna, Ashwagandhavaleha, Ashwagandharishta, Ashwagandha Rasayana, Madhyama narayana taila, Brihat Ashwagandha ghrita, Prameha mihira taila, Nagabala ghrita, Brihad chagaladya ghrita, Saraswata choorna, Ashwagandha taila.

Uses - The roots are astringent, bitter somniferous, acrid, thermogenic, alexiformic, stimulant aphrodisiac, deobstruent, diuretic and tonic. It is useful in insomnia, neurological disorders, lumbago, asthma, leukoderma, Psoriasis, cardiac disorders, consumption, carbuncles, ulcers, marasmus in children, Scabies and senile debility. Seeds are reported to be diuretic, hypnotic and used in coagulate milk.12,13.

Chemical constituents - The root contains 13 alkaloids including cuseohygrine anahygrine, tropine, anaferine. Total alkaloids 0.13 to 0.31 %. Apart from this, glycosides, acids, starch, sugar and amino acids are present.

Clinical indications 14.

1. Hypertension
2. Insomnia
3. Emaciation
4. Peripheral neuritis
5. Bala shosha
6. Cerebral atrophy
7. Parkinsonism
8. Hemiplegia
9. Paraplegia
10. Brachial neuralgia
11. Cervical spondylosis
12. Lumbar Spondylosis
13. Pulmonary tuberculosis
14. Frozen shoulder
15. Sciatica syndrome
16. Motor neuron disease
17. Osteoarthritis of the Knee joint
18. Diabetic neuropathy
19. Mania
20. Anxiety neurosis
21. Epilepsy
22. Non specific head ache
23. Irritable bowel syndrome

Amayika prayoga - When given with suitable disease specific adjuvant drugs, Ashwagandha shows desired results. It is known as Amayika prayoga of Ashwagandha.

Hypertension - Ashwagandharishta is given with Sarpagandha vati.

Insomnia - Ashwagandhadi choorna is given with Saraswatarishta.

Emaciation - Ashwagandhavaleha is given with Balarishta.

Peripheral neuritis - Ashwagandharishta is given with Visha tinduka vati and Yogaraja guggulu.

Bala shosha - Ajamamsa rasayana is given with Ashwagandharishta.

Cerebral atrophy - Swarna Malini vasanta rasa is given with Medhya vati and Ashwagandharishta.

Parkinsonism - In this disease, Ashwagandharishta is given with Vanari kalpa, Kapikachchu bija choorna and Danadanayanadi kashaya.

Hemiplegia - In Hemiplegia patients, Shashtika Shali Pinda Sweda is given with Maha narayana taila Abhyanga and Brihad vata chintamani and Ashwagandharishta.

Paraplegia - In these patients, Ashwagandharishta is given with Tapyadi loha and Dhanvantara taila matrabasti.

Brachial neuralgia - In these patients, Ashwagandharishta is given with Visha mushti vati, Trayodashanga guggulu and Brimhana nasya.

Cervical spondylosis - Ashwagandha choorna is given with Yogaraja guggulu, Visha tinduka vati, Griva basti and Matra basti.

Lumbar Spondylosis - Ashwagandharishta is given with Trayodashanga guggulu, Visha tinduka vati and Matra basti.

Pulmonary tuberculosis - In Pulmonary tuberculosis patients, Ashwagandhavaleha is given with AKT.

Frozen shoulder - In these patients, Nadi sweda is given to the shoulder joint along with Trayodashanga guggulu and Nava jivana rasa.

Sciatica syndrome - Ashwagandharishta is given with Visha tinduka vati and Yogaraja guggulu. Motor neuron disease - Ashwagandhadi choorna is given alongwith Brihad vata chintamani, Saraswatarishta and Tapyadi loha.

Osteoarthritis of the Knee joint - Ashwagandharishta is given with Yogaraja guggulu and Pravala panchamrita rasa.

Diabetic neuropathy - Ashwagandharishta is given with Ajamodadi choorna and Saptasaradi kashaya.

Mania - Ashwagandhadi choorna is given with Manasa mitra vataka, Sarpagandha ghana vati and Shirodhara.

Anxiety neurosis - Ashwagandhadi choorna is given with Saraswatarishta and Tagara tablets.

Epilepsy - Ashwagandhadi choorna is given with Maha vata vidhwamsa rasa and Saraswatarishta with gold.

Non specific head ache - Ashwagandha choorna is given with Pathyadi kadha and Laghu sootha shekhara vati.

Irritable bowel syndrome - Ashwagandhadi choorna is given with Kutaja ghana vati, Kutajarishta and Bilvavaleha.

Discussion

Herbs are used as medicine in the form of a single drug (Eka moolika prayoga) or in combination (Yougika). Ashwagandha is very commonly used in medicine. It is usually used as a tonic and in the management of chronic debilitating diseases and neurological disorders. There is least adverse drug reactions even after prolonged use of the drug. The body nourishment and immunity will increase after the administration of Ashwagandha. Usually the root of Ashwagandha is used to prepare the medicines. Since it is having CNS depressant, sedative, hypnotic, antistress and adaptogenic actions, it is used in the management of various psychosomatic diseases.

Conclusion

1. Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) is used in therapeutics as a single drug or in the form of combinations.
2. There are least adverse drug reactions after the administration of Ashwagandha in the patients.
3. When given with suitable disease specific adjuvant drugs, it shows desired outcomes in patients.

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