



Ayurvedic Management of Mukhapaka : A Case Study

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Abstract

Ayurveda describes various disorders affecting the oral cavity under the broad heading of Mukharoga.¹ Among them, Mukapaka is a frequently encountered condition characterized by inflammation, ulceration, pain, burning sensation, and discoloration of the oral mucosa.² The condition closely resembles stomatitis described in modern medicine.³ Mukapaka is primarily caused by vitiation of Pitta Doṣa with involvement of Rakta Dhatu, often associated with Kapha Doṣa and Agnimandya.² Improper dietary habits, faulty oral hygiene, stress, and seasonal variations play a significant role in its manifestation.⁴ Ayurveda emphasizes Nidana Parivarjana, shodhana, shamana, and local therapeutic measures such as Gandusha and Kavala in its management.⁵ The present article highlights the Ayurvedic understanding of Mukapaka and evaluates the role of classical formulations like Triphala Kwatha Gandusha, Triphala Guggulu, and Khadiradi Vaṭi in its management. The observed outcomes suggest that Ayurvedic intervention is effective in reducing inflammation, promoting wound healing, and restoring oral health.⁶

Keywords: Mukapaka, Mukharoga, Stomatitis, Gandusha, Triphala, Ayurveda

Introduction

The oral cavity holds significant importance in Ayurveda, as it is the gateway for Ahara and plays a vital role in digestion and overall health. Disorders of the mouth not only cause local discomfort but also affect nutrition, digestion, and quality of life.¹ Ayurveda has described several diseases of the oral cavity under Mukharoga, among which Mukapaka is commonly observed in clinical practice.²

Mukapaka is characterized by inflammation and ulceration of the oral mucosa, accompanied by symptoms such as Daha (burning sensation), shotha (swelling), Ruk (pain), Vrana (ulcers), and discoloration of the oral tissues.³ Classical texts such as Ashtanga Hrudaya and Sushruta

Samhita describe Mukapaka as a condition predominantly caused by aggravated Pitta Dosha, often associated with vitiated Rakta Dhatu.⁴ Due to the involvement of Kapha, symptoms like excessive salivation and heaviness may also be present.

In modern oral medicine, recurrent aphthous stomatitis is considered multifactorial in origin, including nutritional deficiencies, infections, stress, allergic reactions, and systemic illnesses.⁵⁻⁷ The conditions significantly impair quality of life and often require both local and systemic therapeutic approaches.^{6, 7} Ayurveda provides a holistic explanation for the disease, emphasizing dietary indiscretions (Apathya Ahara), poor oral hygiene, mental stress, and impaired digestive fire (Agnimandya).¹

Ayurvedic management aims at correcting the underlying Dosha imbalance, purifying Rakta, enhancing Agni, and promoting healing of oral lesions. Local therapies such as Gandusha play a pivotal role by directly acting on the affected mucosa. The present article discusses Mukapaka in detail along with its Ayurvedic management based on classical principles.⁸

Ayurvedic Concept of Mukapaka

Mukapaka is described under Mukharoga and Sarvasara Roga due to its widespread involvement of the oral cavity.^{1, 2} The term “Mukapaka” literally means inflammation or ulceration of the mouth. According to Ayurveda, the disease originates from the vitiation of Pitta Dosha, which has Ushna, Tikshna, and Drava qualities, leading to inflammation and burning sensations.³

Nidana (Etiological Factors) ⁹

The causative factors of Mukapaka include:

- Excessive intake of spicy, sour, salty, and hot foods
- Consumption of fermented, stale, and incompatible foods
- Poor oral hygiene
- Suppression of natural urges
- Mental stress, anger, and anxiety
- Agnimandya leading to Ama formation
- Seasonal factors, especially Grishma and Sharada ritu.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis)

Due to continuous indulgence in Pitta-vardhaka factors, Pitta Dosha becomes aggravated and vitiates Rakta Dhatu. The vitiated Rakta circulates to the oral cavity, which is a site of Kapha predominance, leading to inflammation, ulceration, pain, and burning sensation. Impaired Agni further aggravates the condition by producing Ama, which obstructs microchannels (Srotas), delaying healing.³

Clinical Features of Mukapaka¹⁰

Classical symptoms described in Ayurvedic texts include:

- Mukha Daha (burning sensation in the mouth)
- Mukha shotha (swelling of oral tissues)
- Vrana (ulcer formation on oral mucosa)
- Ruk (pain)
- Arakta or discoloration of mucosa³
- Difficulty in chewing and swallowing^{5, 6}
- These features closely resemble stomatitis described in modern medicine.⁶

Aims and Objectives-

- To study Mukapaka according to Ayurvedic principles.
- To evaluate the effect of Ayurvedic management in Mukapaka.
- To assess the role of Gandusha and internal medications in oral healing.

Materials and Methods

The management protocol was designed based on classical Ayurvedic texts. Local therapy with Triphala kwath Gandush and internal administration of Triphala Guggulu and Khadiradi vati were selected due to their pittashaman, raktshodhan, shothaghn and vranropak properties.¹⁰⁻¹²

Local Therapy

Triphala Kwatha Gandusha – administered twice daily

Internal Medications

Triphala Guggulu – 250 mg, twice daily Khadiradi Vati – 250 mg, twice daily

The duration of treatment was 15 days. Assessment was carried out based on classical symptoms of Mukapaka such as Mukha Daha, Mukha shotha, ulceration, and discoloration. No observed drug reaction were observed during treatment period.

Observations and Results-

After the treatment period, significant improvement was observed in the classical signs and symptoms of Mukapaka. The intensity of burning sensation (Mukha Daha) showed marked reduction. Swelling of oral mucosa (Mukha shotha) subsided considerably. Ulcerative lesions showed signs of healing, and discoloration of the mucosa reduced. Overall oral health was restored, indicating effective Dosh shamana and Rakta Prasadana. The results highlight the efficacy of combined local and systemic Ayurvedic therapy.¹¹

Discussion-

Mukapaka is primarily a Pittaja disorder involving Rakta Dhatu. Hence, management should focus on Pitta shamana and Rakta shodhana. The selected formulations were chosen based on these principles.

Triphala is reported to possess Tikta and Kashaya Rasa, Laghu and Ruksha Guna, and Ushna Vipaka, making it effective in reducing Pitta and promoting wound healing. Its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties contribute to mucosal repair.¹³ Gandusha with Triphala Kwatha ensures direct contact of the drug with oral mucosa, enhancing local absorption and therapeutic action.¹⁴ Gandush therapy facilitates prolonged contact of medicated liquid with oral mucosa, enhancing local drug absorption and therapeutic efficacy in oral inflammatory conditions.¹⁵

Triphala Guggulu acts as shothaghna and Vrana-ropaka, aiding in the reduction of inflammation and promoting tissue healing.¹⁰ Khadira is well known for its Raktashodhaka and Kapha-Pitta shamana properties, making Khadiradi Vati highly beneficial in Mukharoga.¹² Herbal medicines used in Ayurveda are considered safe when administered according to classical guidelines.¹⁶ Increasing global acceptance of traditional medicine systems highlights their holistic approach and minimal adverse effects.¹⁷ The fundamental Ayurvedic principle of dosha – dhatu- mala balance forms the basis of disease management.¹⁸

The combined approach of local and systemic therapy addresses both local pathology and underlying systemic imbalance, which is the cornerstone of Ayurvedic management.

Conclusion-

Mukapaka is a common oral disorder described in Ayurveda under Mukharoga, predominantly caused by Pitta and Rakta vitiation. Ayurvedic management focusing on Nidana Parivarjana, Pitta shamana, Rakta Prasadana, and local therapeutic measures such as Gandusha provides effective results.¹⁹ The use of classical formulations like Triphala Kwatha Gandusha, Triphala Guggulu, and Khadiradi Vati contributes significantly to the reduction of inflammation and promotion of healing.²⁰ This holistic approach is safe, economical, and aligns with fundamental Ayurvedic principles. Further clinical studies with larger sample sizes are recommended to establish standardized treatment protocols.

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