

KSHAR KARMA OF AYURVEDA IN GYNAECOLOGY: AN AVENUE OF CONTINGENCIES

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ABSTRACT

Kshar Karma is one of the best para-surgical procedures described in *Ayurveda*. Acharya Sushruta described it in detail in Sutra Sthana declaring it best among the surgical and para-surgical instruments due to its *chhedya* (excisive), *bhedya* (incisive), *lekhya* (scrapping) and other medicinal properties. Owing to these, it is thus, widely used in wound healing, fistulae, haemorrhoids and anorectal diseases, to name a few. However, *Kshar Karma* has a wide range of diseases, forms and variety in which it can be used in different modalities. It is time to extend the horizons of *Kshar Karma* in other avenues as well. It is *tridoshaghna* and can be used orally in various diseases. In

Gynaecology, *Kshar Karma* has been with limited use. There are, however, a few researches of *Kshar* application on cervical erosion available. This paper therefore, explores the scope and rationale of *Kshar Karma* in Gynaecology including cervical erosion and tubal blockage. It can provide with a cost- efficient and time saving mode of treatment with least adverse effects.

KEYWORDS: *Kshar Karma*, Gynaecology, cervical erosion, tubal blockage.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has been a science of healing since ages. Ayurveda follows a non-invasive approach as a treatment protocol until and unless otherwise is the only option. Thus, there are procedures told by the *Acharyas* not only medicinal but also para-surgical to reduce the agony and pain of the sufferer and avoid invasive surgeries without compromising with the

effects. One such procedure is *Kshar Karma* which is considered one of the best among all surgical or parasurgical modalities^[1] due to properties favouring early healing. It has *chhedya* (excisive), *bhedya* (incisive), *lekhyā* (scrapping) and medicinal properties such as *tridoshaghata* (vitiates the three *doshas*) and its effectiveness in difficult regions and diseases of the body. It is *katu*, hot and pungent and possesses digestive and dissolving properties along with cleansing and healing. Due to these properties it has been indicated in various diseases including local application in skin disorders, fistula, haemorrhoids, sinus, growths and tumours, over granulation, certain oral-cavity disorders and internal use in digestive disorders, internal abscess, worms etc. Thus, it can have varied use in different gynaecological disorders and provides safe, effective and inexpensive management modality.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Material and Methods mainly includes *kshar* which is an alkali obtained from plants. *Kshar* is prepared by taking the whole plant which is selected based on its qualities and required properties according to the disease. It is then burnt to ashes and then by following specific procedures, water, oil or thread is treated with the *kshar* powder and used conveniently, or the powder itself may be used. All these forms should be used only after proper sterilization.

Plant may be chosen according to disease and required properties for desired therapeutic effect as explained in classical texts. Its use been classified into two types:

- *Paniya* (Internal use) and
- *Pratisarniya* (Local application).

Out of these two, *pratisarniya* specially finds a wide range of application in Gynaecology.

Kshar can be used in following various forms:

- *Kshar* – Powder.
- *Kshar Sutra* (*Kshar* treated thread).
- *Kshar Taila* (Oil prepared from *Kshar*).
- *Kshar Jala* (*Kshar* treated water).

Kshar in Gynaecology

Kshar in various forms may be used for various diseases in Gynaecology from cervical erosion to tubal blockage described as follows:

Cervical Erosion

Cervical erosion is a common gynaecological problem of reproductive life and its prevalence ranges from 17% to 50%.^[2] It occurs due to replacement of squamous epithelium by columnar epithelium and gets troublesome due to chronicity and recurrence. It occurs due to cervical infection and has been associated with development of subsequent cancer.^[3] Conventional treatment includes Cryotherapy, ablation therapy or CO₂ laser vaporation.

Here, *kshar* powder is used. It is applied on the eroded area and kept for 60-120 seconds and should be removed using sterile water and usually followed by keeping a medicated oil tampon inside vagina. It is widely in use by Ayurvedic Gynaecologists in practice with mild variations. It has proved better than electric cautery as it causes vaso-constriction and death of superficial cells and early epithelization in comparison to electric cautery.^[4] Usually only 2 or 3 sittings (alternate day) required and post application- no hyperaemia, vaginal discharge or ulceration are noticed.

Cervical polyps

These are small, elongated tumours that grow on the cervix due to chronic inflammation of cervix and clogged blood vessels. These are seen mostly in women their 40s and 50s. It occurs. These may present with inter-menstrual bleeding, post-coital bleeding, colicky abdominal pain and excessive vaginal discharge in parous women or may be asymptomatic while it presents with symptoms in postmenopausal women.^[5] Conventional treatment is surgical removal. Its recurrence rate was found to be 12.6% and such women were more prone to its removal under general anaesthesia (GA).^[6]

Kshar sutra can be used here for polypectomy or removal of the polyp. *Kshar sutra* may be tied at the base of the polyp. And if the base is large cauterization with *Kshar* powder may be done. Usually, anaesthesia may not be required and owing to *kshar's* properties, recurrence is prevented.

Endometrial Polyp

It is a benign growth of the endometrial glands stroma tissue and is a common cause for abnormal uterine bleeding. However, no definitive cause is known and is often associated with obesity, hypertension, history of cervical polyp, Hormonal Replacement Therapy, tamoxifen etc. It may be solitary or with others and sessile or pedunculated. Polypectomy is

the popular management using hysteroscopy for small polyps and resectoscope for larger ones.^[7]

Kshar Taila as *Uttar Basti*, wherein kshar treated oil is inserted into the uterus through cervix. *Uttarbasti* for three consecutive months with three days in each month may be given. In a Hysteroscope Guided Polypectomy ***Kshar Sutra*** may be used for a pedunculated endometrial polyp and *Kshar* powder may be applied for sessile polyps and cauterisation, if base is large.

Tubal Blockage

Tubal factor accounts for 25-35% of subfertility in the west but it's even higher in India due to undetected tuberculosis and pelvic inflammatory diseases' cases.^[8] It may also cause ectopic pregnancy. Conventional treatment mainly includes surgical procedures.

Kshar Taila Uttar Basti in a dosage of 3-5ml for three cycles with three consecutive days in each cycle is quite effective. It has proved to be greatly effective in removal of blockage and conception of patients within the follow up period in various studies.^[9,10]

Over-Granulation

In cases of over-Granulation as seen Post-Hysterectomy, applying ***kshar*** powder yields great results with first application itself.

Genital Warts

These are benign skin growths caused by Human Papilloma Virus. It may be treated with topical medication or surgical removal.

Kshar application may be helpful and *Kshar Sutra* ligation may be done if the base is large enough.

DISCUSSION

Kshar is obtained from medicinal plants which may be chosen according to their properties required for various diseases. Its local application causes chemical cauterization and has better results than electric cauterization.^[11] Its *dahan* (burning) action causes vasoconstriction, *pachan* (digestive) causes death of superficial cells and *daran* leads to shedding off the cells while *shodhan* and *ropan* properties lead to cleansing-healing and regeneration of basal layer and growth of squamous epithelium explaining its effect in

cervical erosion. Its *chhedya* (excisive), *bhedya* (incisive) and *lekhyā* (scrapping) properties help in slow cutting of polyps, warts and its *vilayan* (dissolving) and *pachan* properties aid removal of blockage along with healing. Its *tridoshaghna* (vitiates-*vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*) property ensures healthy healing of the wound. *Uttar Basti* given with hot and pungent drugs is helpful in removal of fibrosis and also simulates endometrial receptors along with hypothalamo-pituitary-ovarian-uterine axis restoring normal hormonal functioning.^[12] Thus, *Uttar Basti* given with *kshar taila* is beneficial in tubal blockage and facilitates pregnancy.

CONCLUSION

Kshar Karma is safe and easy to apply and doesn't require special skills unlike other parasurgical procedures. It is less painful with less recurrence and easily available. It's highly effective and cost-efficient with reduced hospital stay which is suitable for developing country like ours.

Limitation

More researches need to be done to further strengthen the faith.

More emphasis and researches required on *Paniya Kshar*.

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