ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 7| July 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

REVIEW ON THE USE OF KUKKUTA(HEN) IN SARPAVISHA (SNAKE POISON) CHIKITSA AS FOLKLORE MEDICINE

Dr. Rajath M[1*], Dr. AshwinKumar S. Bharathi[2], Dr. Akbersha. A[3]

[1]PG Scholar, Dept. of Agada Tantra, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara college of Ayurveda and Hospital, Hassan-573201

[2]Professor, Dept. of Agada Tantra, Sri Dharmasthala ManjunateshwaraCollege of Ayurveda and Hospital, Hassan -573201

[3]PG Scholar, Dept of Agada Tantra,Sri Dharmasthala Manjunateshwara, College of Ayurveda and Hospital Hassan -573201

Corresponding Author*

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra17844
DOI No: 10.36713/epra17844

ABSTRACT

Snake bites are a major public health concern in India, particularly in rural areas where they are one of the leading causes of death. Despite advancements in medical treatments such as specific anti-venoms tailored to various snake venoms, about 70% of the rural Indian population continues to rely on traditional Folk Medicine practices. These practices, which vary significantly across different regions, often involve unique and localized methods to address snake envenomation.

One such distinctive practice involves the use of live hens in a treatment known as "Kukkuta" or "Hen Therapy" for snake bite management, particularly for cases involving "Sarpa visha" (snake venom). In this traditional method, the folklore practitioner places the anal region of a hen over the bite site. It is believed that the suction action of the hen's anal muscles extracts the venom from the bite. This process may involve using several hens depending on the perceived quantity and type of venom. After the procedure, the hens, now assumed to be venom-laden, are sacrificed and buried.

This practice, while deeply rooted in cultural traditions and local beliefs, underscores the significant gap between modern medical solutions and the reliance on traditional methods in rural India. Addressing this gap requires not only the provision of accessible medical care but also educational efforts to dispel myths and misconceptions about snake bites and their treatments.

The information for the present article has been collected from folklore practitioner Mr Thippeswamy from Sangenahalli village of Hiriyur Taluk Chitradurga district of Karnataka State.

INTRODUCTION

Snake bites constitute a significant health crisis in India, ranking among the leading causes of death, especially in rural areas. Each year, thousands of people fall victim to snake envenomation, with a disproportionately high number of fatalities occurring in rural regions. This alarming mortality rate can be attributed to several factors, including limited access to advanced medical care, a lack of first aid knowledge, and widespread panic driven by myths and misconceptions about snakes and their bites.

In contrast to the advanced medical treatments available today, such as specific anti-venoms that neutralize particular snake venoms, a substantial portion of the rural population approximately 85% continues to seek treatment from Folk Medicine practitioners[1]. These traditional healers employ a variety of methods that are tailored to the local fauna and the types of poisonous creatures prevalent in their regions. The diversity in these practices reflects the rich cultural heritage and the deep-rooted beliefs in local healing techniques across different parts of India.

Among these traditional practices is the unique use of live hens in what is known as *"Kukkuta"* or "Hen Therapy" for treating snake bites. This method is particularly utilized for cases of "*Sarpa visha*" or snake venom. The practice involves placing the anal region of a hen close to the bite site, with the belief that the suction action of the hen's anal muscles can draw out the venom. Depending on the severity of the envenomation and the type of venom involved, multiple hens may be used during the treatment. Once the hens are believed to have absorbed the venom, they are sacrificed and buried to prevent any potential further contamination.

PROCEDURE

Procedure for *Kukkuta* (Hen Therapy) in Snake Bite Treatment

1. **Position the Victim**
   - Place the victim in a horizontal position to help stabilize them and reduce the spread of venom by limiting movement and maintaining calm.
2. **Gather Medical History**
   - Take a detailed history from the victim or their attendants to identify the type of snake

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 7| July 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

and confirm the specifics of the bite. This step is critical for understanding the nature of the venom and tailoring the treatment accordingly.

3. **Prepare Hens**
   - Request the victim's attendants to bring at least 10 hens, preferably of a wild and native breed. These breeds are chosen for their greater vigour and robust physiological responses, which are believed to enhance the effectiveness of the suction process.
4. **Make an Incision**
   - Use a clean blade to make a small incision at the bite site. This incision is intended to facilitate the extraction of venom from beneath the skin.
5. **Position the Hen**
   - Place a hen so that its anal region (anus sphincter) is directly over the incision on the bite site. The correct placement is crucial to ensure that the hen's suction action can effectively draw out the venom.
6. **Initiate Suction**
   - Allow the hen's natural suction action, driven by the elastic nature of its anal muscles, to begin drawing venom from the bite site into its body. This suction effect is believed to create a vacuum that pulls the venom out.
7. **Monitor the Procedure**
   - Repeat the procedure with successive hens, each placed at the bite site, until a hen survives the process, indicating that most of the venom has been extracted. The death of each hen is taken as a sign that it has absorbed a substantial amount of venom.
8. **Sacrifice and Dispose of the Hens**
   - After each hen is used and subsequently dies, it is sacrificed and buried separately to prevent any potential risk of contamination.
9. **Duration and Repetition**
   - Continue the procedure, using as many hens as necessary, until a hen remains alive after being placed at the bite site. This final hen's survival suggests that the maximum venom has been sucked out.
10. **Incorporate "*Mantra Chikitsa*"**
    - Throughout the procedure, the practitioner may perform "*Mantra Chikitsa*," reciting specific mantras believed to enhance the healing process and aid in venom extraction[2].
11. **Administer Internal Medication**
    - Following the external treatment, administer prescribed internal medications. These are traditional remedies designed to support the body's recovery and counteract any remaining venom.
12. **Provide Dietary and Lifestyle Guidance**
    - Advise the patient on "*Pathya*" (recommended practices and diet) and "*Apathya*" (practices and diet to avoid).This guidance helps in managing the patient's recovery and preventing further complications.

This comprehensive approach, combining traditional techniques and cultural practices, reflects the deep-rooted reliance on indigenous healing methods in rural India. Integrating these practices with modern medical care and educational initiatives could potentially improve outcomes for snake bite victims in these communities.

Scientific Explanation of the *Kukkuta* (Hen Therapy) in Snake Bite Treatment

1. Suction Mechanism of Anal Sphincter Muscles:

- Biological Basis

The anal sphincter muscles in hens, much like in other animals, naturally exhibit rhythmic tightening and relaxing actions. This muscle activity can create a suction effect, which is similar to the peristaltic movements that push food through the digestive tract.

- Venom Extraction Hypothesis

When the hen's anal region is placed over the snake bite site, the rhythmic contractions of the anal sphincter muscles may generate a negative pressure environment. This negative pressure could theoretically draw out venom from the bite wound into the hen's body, acting as a biological suction device.

2. Utilization by Folklore Practitioners

- Traditional Knowledge Application:

Folklore practitioners leverage this natural suction mechanism of the hen's anal muscles to extract venom from the snake bite. This approach aligns with their empirical understanding of animal physiology and their need to use locally available resources for medical treatment.

- Practical Advantage

The use of hens capitalizes on a natural and passive form of suction that does not require complex equipment or extensive intervention, making it a practical choice in rural settings where access to advanced medical technology is limited and hens are available abundantly.

3. Alternative to Mouth Suction (*Achoosana*):

Traditional Sucking Methods

In traditional practices, "*Achoosana*" involves the healer using their mouth to suck out venom from a wound, often combined with applying substances like *mirth* (resin), *basma* (ash), *agada* (herbal antidote), or *gomaya* (cow dung) to the bite site. These substances are believed to have protective or absorptive properties[3].

Risks of Mouth Suction

Sucking venom with the mouth poses significant health risks, including the possibility of the healer ingesting the venom and suffering systemic envenomation. Additionally, there is a high risk of infection from direct oral contact with the wound[4].

Safe Alternative

By using the hen's anal sphincter muscles instead, practitioners avoid these risks. The hen acts as a surrogate for the healer, performing the suction action without direct human contact

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 7| July 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

with the venom, thereby protecting both the healer (*Vaidya*) and the patient from potential harm and complications.

4. Advantages of Hen Therapy Over Traditional Coatings
Efficacy of Mechanical Suction

The mechanical suction provided by the hen's anal muscles could be more effective at removing venom compared to applying traditional coatings like *mirth, basma, agada, or gomaya*, which rely on their supposed absorbent or neutralizing properties but do not actively remove venom from the body[3].

Minimizing Complications

Traditional coatings can introduce additional complications such as infection or local irritation, especially if the materials are not sterile. Hen therapy avoids these issues by focusing on a mechanical extraction method that doesn't rely on applying potentially harmful substances to the wound.

Logical and Scientific Considerations

Rationale for Muscle Use:

The cyclic nature of muscle contractions in the hen's anal sphincter could provide a repetitive suction effect, potentially aiding in drawing out venom from the wound. This is a plausible explanation based on basic principles of fluid dynamics and pressure differentials.

Practicality in Resource-Limited Settings

This method makes use of readily available resources (hens) in rural areas, where advanced medical care might be inaccessible. It represents an ingenious use of local knowledge and resources to address a critical health issue.

Avoidance of Direct Human Risk

By substituting the hen's suction action for direct mouth suction, the practice minimizes the risk to humans. This aligns with modern safety principles of avoiding direct contact with toxins whenever possible.

DISCUSSION

- The use of hen has been a unique way of treating of *visha*.
- Though there is no much research background to the practice still it has been helpful in effectively treating many snake bite cases and thus saving so many lives
- Since-pre-historical times animals, their parts, and products have created of an inventory of medicinal substances used in numerous cultures.[5]
- While the scientific validity of *Kukkuta* therapy needs rigorous testing and evidence-based evaluation, the practice itself offers insight into how traditional knowledge and natural behaviours of animals are harnessed in folk medicine. Understanding these methods can provide valuable perspectives for integrating traditional and modern medical practices in a culturally sensitive manner.

CONCLUSION

- The folklore medicine has been the main medical services for rural area since time immemorial.
- It varies from geographical area and cultural belief of the region.
- The use of hen in has been a unique way of treating of visha.it is primarily practised in rural areas of Chitrdurga, Davanagere and Tumkuru districts of Karnataka State.
- It is important to collect and document the folklore practices so that the unique practices can be researched ,explored and can be presented to the world with enough scientific evidences.



Figure1

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 7| July 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188



Figure2[6]

REFERENCES

1. *https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2025076*
2. *Shastri kaviraj Ambikadutta sushruta samhita(Kalpasthan).Varanasi:Chaukhambha Sanskritsansthan2012, ch.5, verse 13*
3. *Acharya YT Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Deepika Commentary ofChakrapanidatta, Reprint ed: Varanasi:Chaukhambha Orientalia, 2015; chikitsasthaan p573*
4. *https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/15647-snake-bites*
5. *Lev E. Traditional healing with animals (zootherapy): medieval to present-day Levantine practice. J Ethnopharmacol. 2003;85:107–18. doi: 10.1016/S0378-8741(02)00377-X. [PubMed] [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]*
6. *Figure-1.MrThippeswamsy Folklore Practioner Figure 2.depticitng the procedure*