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A CRITICAL REVIEW ON RAKTAPITTANTAKA LOHA W.S.R TO BHAISHAJYA RATNAVALI

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ABSTRACT

Raktapittantaka Loha[1] is a classical herbo-mineral formulation described in Bhaishajya Ratnavali under Raktapittachikitsaprakaranam, indicated for the management of various types of Raktapitta. It is a Loha Kalpana primarily containing Loha Bhasma along with Amalaki, Pippali, Sita, possessing pitta-shamaka, rakta-stambhaka and rakta-prasadaka properties. The formulation is also indicated in Vata-pittavikara, Amlapitta.

Classical Ayurvedic texts describe Raktapitta as a Mahāgada[2] (Grave disease) due to its severity, rapid progression and potential fatality if not managed properly. It is primarily caused by the aggravation of Pitta dosa, which vitiates Rakta dhātu.

Raktapittantaka Loha, by virtue of its rasa, guna, virya, vipaka, pacifies pitta dosha, strengthens rakta dhatu, while loha bhasma contributes to rakta vardhana and rasayana properties, making formulation effective in restoring hematological balance & controlling hemorrhagic manifestation. This critical review aims to compile and analyze Raktapittantaka loha with special emphasis on its composition, pharmacological properties, therapeutic utility and probable mode of action. The study highlights the relevance of Raktapittaka loha as a potent ayurvedic intervention in the management of raktapitta.

KEY WORDS: *Raktapittantaka loha, Raktapitta, Bhaishajya Ratnavali, Pitta dosha, Rakta dhatu, Loha Bhasma*

INTRODUCTION

Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana represent an advanced pharmaceutical discipline of ayurveda emphasizing the therapeutic application of herbs, metals and minerals. Raktapitta is well described serious disease entity in ayurveda, characterized by spontaneous bleeding due to vitiation of pitta dosha leading to rakta dhatu dushti. The intimate relationship between pitta and rakta is explained through Ashraya - Ashrayi Bhava, where aggravated pitta imparts ushna, teekshna, drava guna to rakta, resulting in bleeding through Urdhwaga, Adhoga, Ubhayaga Marga.

Charaka Samhita elaborates the Nidana, Lakshana, and Chikitsa principles of Raktapitta[3], while Sushruta and Vagbhata have also emphasized Rakta-Stambhana and Pitta-Shamana as the main therapeutic approaches.

Bhaishajya Ratnavali, describes several formulations for the management of raktapitta. Among them Raktapittantaka loha, mentioned in Raktapittachikitsaprakaranam, is a significant loha kalpana. Where Loha bhasma is processed with Amalaki, Pippali, Sita having Pitta shamaka, Rakta stambhaka, Rakta prasadaka properties. Loha Bhasma is described in classical texts as Raktavardhaka, Balya, Rasayana, and Tridoshahara. When used in Raktapitta, it helps to normalize Dushita Rakta Dhatu, improves hematological parameters, and supports tissue regeneration. The herbal components present in it predominantly possesses Tikta, Kashaya rasa, Madhura vipaka, Sheeta virya, Deepana, Balya, Yogavahi properties, which help in reducing excessive bleeding.

Despite its classical indication and long-standing use, systematic documentation and critical analysis of Raktapittantaka loha with respect to its classical reference, pharmacological rationale, and therapeutic utility remain limited. Therefore, a critical review of Raktapittantaka Loha with special reference to Bhaishajya Ratnavali is essential to establish its relevance, safety, and scope in contemporary Ayurvedic practice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This conceptual review is based on classical Ayurvedic literature. Raktapittantaka Loha was studied exclusively from Bhaishajya Ratnavali. References of Raktapitta were collected from Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya. Data were critically analyzed to evaluate the formulation in relation to Raktapitta Samprapti.

Review of Raktapitta

NIRUKTI[4]

Raktapitta is a pathological condition produced due to the samyoga (association) and dushana (vitiation) of Pitta dosa with Rakta dhātu. Because of their sāmānya in gandha and varna (similarity in smell and colour), aggravated Pitta easily contaminates Rakta, and this combined vitiation is recognized as Raktapitta.

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NIDANA[5,6,7]

Nidāna of Raktapitta primarily includes excessive intake of Pitta-vardhaka āhāra and vihāra such as ushna, teekshna, amla, lavaṇa, kaṭu, kshara dravya's, atividahi ahara, viruddhāhāra, excessive intake of alcohol, exposure to heat and sun, krodha, shoka, bhaya, vegadharana, seasonal factors like Śarada ritu also predispose to the aggravation of Pitta leading to Raktapitta.

SAMPRAPTI[8]

Due to the above-mentioned hetus, Pitta dosha becomes samutklishta (highly aggravated) and leaves its sthāna. This aggravated Pitta then enters the blood. Since Pitta is rakta-yonī (originated from blood), after entering Rakta, it undergoes further vṛddhi and pradūṣaṇa of the blood. Because of the ushnatā of aggravated Pitta, the dravatva of the dhātus increases, and drava-dhātu is expressed from dhātu to dhātu. As a result, the Rakta circulating in the raktavāhinīs increases further. Thus, through Pitta-prakopa, Rakta-dūṣaṇa, dhātu-dravatva and Rakta-pravrutti the complete samprāpti of Raktapitta is established.

BHEDA[9]

Classical texts classify Raktapitta based on the route of bleeding:

- Urdhwaga Raktapitta
- Adhoga Rakttapitta
- Ubhayaga Raktapitta

LAKSHANA[10,11]

Rakta-srava, Neela-pita-harita-krishna-raktavarna srava, Daha, Trishna, Murcha, Jwara, Moha, Lohagandhi rakta, Bhrama, Swedadhikya, Phenila-ushna-durgandhi raktaswarupa, Klama.

CHIKITSA

The general line of treatment is, Nidāna-parivarjana, langhana, tarpana, samshodhana, samshamana, Pitta-śamana, Rakta-Stambhana, and Rakta-prasādana. The treatment includes use of madhura, śīta, and tikta dravyas, sheetopachara. Rasāyana and Loha kalpanā are recommended in chronic conditions associated with Rakta-kshaya.

RAKTAPITTANTAKA LOHA IN BHAISHAJYA RATNAVALI

आमला-पिप्पली-चूर्ण तुल्यया सितया सह। रक्तपित्तहरं लौहं योगराजमिदं स्मृतम्।।

वृष्याग्निदीपनं बल्यमम्लपित्तविनाशनम् । पित्तोत्थानपि वातोत्थानिहन्ति विविधान् गदान् । ।

Ingredients of Raktapittantaka Loha

- Amalaki
- Pippali
- Sita
- Loha Bhasma

Method of preperation

Take dried fruits of Āmalakī and Pippali. Powder them separately and sieve finely. Mix Āmalakī and Pippali powders in equal proportion. Add equal quantity of finely powdered śīta (sugar) and Lauha Bhasma. Mix thoroughly to obtain a homogeneous fine powder. And is known as yoga raja.

Karma: It acts as Vrushya, Balya, Agni Deepana

Indication: Raktapitta, Amlapitta, Vatavikara, Pittavikara

Rasapanchaka analysis of ingredients

Ingredients	RASA	GUNA	VIRYA	VIPAKA	PRABHAVA
Amalaki	Amla pradhana, lavaṇa varjita pancharasa	Guru, ruksha	Sheeta	Madhura	Raktapittahara, rasayana, balya, deepana
Pippali	Katu	Laghu, snigdha, teekshna	Anushna Sheeta	Madhura	Deepana, rasayana, Yogavahi
Sita	Madhura	Guru, snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	Raktapittahara, daha-prashamana
Loha bhasma	Tikta, Kashaya	Guru, ruksha	Sheeta	Madhura	Rakta vardhaka, balya, rasayana

Probable mode of action Raktapittantaka loha in Raktapitta

The chikitsa mainly include

- Pitta shamana
- Rakta Stambhana
- Rakta prasādana
- Dhatu Pushti and Bala- vardhana

Dosha-level action (pitta shamana)

Raktapittantaka Loha predominantly contains drugs having tikta, madhura and kashaya rasa, which are classical antagonists of Pitta dosha.

Tikta rasa reduces uṣṇatā and tīkṣṇatā of Pitta and purifies Rakta. Madhura rasa pacifies Pitta, stabilizes Rakta and prevents further dhātu-kṣaya. Kashaya rasa mitigates drava and sara guṇa of pitta, thereby controlling rakta pravrutti. Thus, at the dosha level, the formulation normalizes prakupita pitta, the primary causative factor of Raktapitta.

Rakta Dhatu-level Action (Rakta-prasādana and Rakta - stambhana)

Rakta Dhātu is the main dūṣya in Raktapitta. Kaṣāya rasa-pradhāna dravyas cause saṅkocana of raktavaha srotas, leading to

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stambhana of excessive Rakta pravrutti. Tikta rasa corrects Rakta dushti, restoring its normal guṇa such as prasannatā and sthiratā. Madhura rasa nourishes Rakta and prevents chronic blood loss. Hence, the formulation simultaneously performs Raktastambhana without causing shosha, which is essential in Raktapitta management.

Action on Srotorodha (Raktavaha srotas)
Though Raktapitta is predominantly an ati-pravṛtti vyadhi, srotorodha occurs due to āma, duṣhṭa rakta and mandāgni. Tikta rasa performs āma-lekhana, laghu guṇa clears subtle obstructions, and Loha enhances raktadhātvagni, restoring unobstructed flow of rakta without abnormal bleeding.

Role of loha Bhasma (Dhatu-pushti and Bala vardhana)
Loha Bhasma pacifies vitiated Pitta and stabilizes Rakta dhatu by its sheeta virya, tikta, kashaya rasa[12], raktastambhaka properties. While its deepana property improves agni, preventing further rakta dushti. Additionally, its balya and rasayana actions restore haemoglobin, strengthen tissues and promote rakta dhatu poshana, making it a key drug in Raktapitta chikitsa.
Samprapti- vighatana

Samprapti ghataka	Action of Raktapittantaka loha
Pitta prakopa	Tikta-Madhura rasa
Rakta dushti	Rakta prasadaka
Ati-pravrutti	Kashaya rasa – Rakta-stambhana
Rakta-kshaya	Loha Bhasma – Rakta vardhana
Agnimandya	Agni Deepana
Bala-hani	Oja and Bala vardhana

DISCUSSION

This article critically reviews Raktapittantaka Loha described in Bhaishajya Ratnavali for the management of Raktapitta, which is caused by Rakta dushti due to aggravated Pitta. Owing to its severe and recurrent nature, effective therapy must arrest bleeding while restoring Rakta dhātu. Although this formulation is widely used in clinicals, the classical rationale is not well consolidated.

The review highlights that Raktapittantaka Loha is a samprāpti-based formulation containing drugs with Tikta–Kaṣāya rasa, Śīta virya, and Madhura vipaka, which aid Pitta śamana and Rakta stambhana. Loha Bhasma acts as Rakta-vardhaka, Balya, and Rasāyana, making the formulation useful in chronic and recurrent Pitta-dominant Raktapitta. In conclusion, Raktapittantaka Loha emerges as a rational formulation for Raktapitta, addressing both symptom control and Rakta dhātu restoration. Further clinical and pharmaceutical studies are needed to substantiate its efficacy and ensure standardized application.

Strengths of the article
The primary strength of the article lies in its classical authenticity, as a reference is from Bhaishajya Ratnavali. The formulation has been evaluated through Ayurvedic samprāpti, integrating doṣa, dūṣya, srotas involvement. Systematic analysis based on rasa-guṇa-virya-vipāka-prabhava enhances clarity regarding therapeutic action.
Focus on Herbo-Mineral Rationality – The article highlights the importance of Loha Bhasma based formulation in rakta-pradushaja vikara's.

Limitations of the article
Being a literary and conceptual review, the article lacks clinical validation. Variability in Loha Bhasma preparation and limited contemporary experimental studies also restrict objective correlation.

CONCLUSION

Raktapittantaka Loha, as described in Bhaishajya Ratnavali, emerges as a rational and time-tested herbo-mineral formulation for the management of Raktapitta. Its composition reflects a balanced approach towards Pitta-Shamana, Rakta-Stambhana, and Agni-Deepana actions, addressing both the root pathology and associated symptoms. The inclusion of Loha Bhasma enhances Rakta-Dhatu poshana. A critical review highlights its therapeutic relevance, classical justification, and scope for clinical application. However, systematic pharmacological and clinical studies are essential to validate its safety, efficacy, and standardized usage in contemporary practice.

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