



Exploring The Therapeutic Role Of Chitrak And Shunthi In Shushka Arsha: An Ayurvedic And Modern Review With Discussion

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Abstract

Arsha, commonly known as hemorrhoids, is one of the eight *Maharoga* described in classical Ayurvedic literature, recognized for its chronicity, recurrence, and distressing symptoms. *Shushka Arsha*, the dry and non-bleeding variant, is predominantly a *Vata-Kaphaja* disorder characterized by hard, painful swellings in the anal region, often accompanied by constipation and difficulty during defecation. The pathogenesis involves *Agnimandya* (impaired digestive fire), accumulation of *Ama* (metabolic toxins), and obstruction of *Apana Vata*, leading to localized tissue hypertrophy. Among the herbs recommended for this condition, *Chitrak* (*Plumbago zeylanica* Linn.) and *Shunthi* (*Zingiber officinale* Rosc.) are particularly noteworthy for their synergistic therapeutic potential. *Chitrak*, with its *Tikshna*, *Laghu*, and *Ushna* properties, serves as a potent *Arshoghna*, while *Shunthi*, possessing *Snigdha* and *Ushna* qualities, alleviates pain, reduces inflammation, and promotes smooth bowel movements. This review integrates classical Ayurvedic principles and contemporary scientific evidence to elucidate the therapeutic mechanisms of *Chitrak* and *Shunthi* in *Shushka Arsha*, highlighting their clinical relevance and potential as safe, effective, and holistic alternatives for hemorrhoidal management. The combined insights underscore the value of integrating traditional knowledge with modern research to optimize patient outcomes in chronic anorectal disorders.



1. Introduction

In Ayurveda, *Arsha* is recognized among the *Ashta Mahagada* or eight obstinate diseases, which are difficult to treat and recurrent in nature¹. It is characterized by fleshy, painful swellings in the anal canal arising from the vitiation of *Tridosha* and impairment of *Agni*. These swellings obstruct defecation and induce severe discomfort, making *Arsha* a significant condition affecting quality of life, Soni 2024.

Shushka Arsha, the dry type of hemorrhoid, is mainly influenced by *Vata* and *Kapha dosha*. Clinical features include hardness, dryness, localized pain, and constipation, with minimal or absent bleeding, Loder, 1994. In modern medicine, hemorrhoids are described as varicosities of the hemorrhoidal venous plexus within the anal canal. Factors contributing to their development include chronic constipation, straining, prolonged sitting, pregnancy, obesity, and low-

fiber diets⁴. Conventional treatments—ranging from sclerotherapy to hemorrhoidectomy—alleviate symptoms but often fail to address underlying causative factors, resulting in recurrence and potential complications such as anal stenosis or infection. Ayurveda emphasizes correction of the root causes—*Agnimandya*, *Ama* accumulation, and *Vata* derangement—rather than mere symptom suppression. Herbs like *Chitrak* and *Shunthi* are considered central in restoring digestion, alleviating constipation, reducing inflammation, and promoting tissue repair. Their combined application reflects a rational, synergistic strategy that addresses the multifactorial pathology of *Shushka Arsha* and aligns with both classical and modern therapeutic insights, Kaviraj 2024.

2. Ayurvedic Concept of Shushka Arsha



According to Acharya Sushruta, *Arsha* arises due to irregular diet, sedentary lifestyle, suppression of natural urges, and intake of *Guru*, *Ruksha*, and *Sheetala* foods, all of which impair *Agni* and induce *Ama* formation⁶. The accumulation of *Ama* and *Kapha* causes *Srotorodha* (channel obstruction), resulting in the vitiation of *Apana Vata* and subsequent formation of anal swellings.

Pathogenesis (Samprapti):

Agnimandya → *Ama* formation → *Srotorodha* → *Apana Vata* avarodha → *Mamsa vridhhi* (*Shushka Arsha*)

Clinical features (Lakshana):

Dry, hard anal swellings, severe pain during defecation, dryness of anal mucosa, constipation, and absence of bleeding.

Principles of management

(Chikitsa Sutra):

Treatment aims at restoring *Agni*, digesting *Ama*, and regulating *Apana*

Vata. Core therapies include *Deepana* (digestive stimulation), *Pachana* (metabolic enhancement), *Vatanulomana* (normalization of *Vata* flow), *Lekhana* (scraping/reducing), *Shothahara* (anti-inflammatory), and *Vedanasthapana* (analgesic), Chowdhury, 2023.

3. Review of Chitrak (*Plumbago zeylanica* Linn.)

3.1 Ayurvedic Review

Chitrak is renowned in Ayurveda for its *Deepana-Pachana* properties and is indicated in digestive disorders and piles, Nandi et al., 2023. Its Sanskrit synonyms—*Agnidravya*, *Vahni*, *Cakrangi*—reflect its fiery potency and digestive capacity.

- **Rasa:** Katu
- **Guna:** Laghu, Tikshna
- **Veerya:** Ushna
- **Vipaka:** Katu



- **Karma:** *Deepana, Pachana, Lekhana, Kaphavatahara, Arshoghna, Anulomana*

The *Tikshna* and *Ushna guna* kindle digestive fire, digest *Ama*, and reduce excess *Kapha* and tissue obstruction, making it suitable for *Shushka Arsha*, Singh 2004.

3.2 Modern Phytochemistry and Pharmacology

Chitrak contains plumbagin, chitranone, isoshinanolone, flavonoids, steroids, and glycosides. These constituents exhibit anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, digestive stimulant, and wound-healing effects, Usha , et al..2001.

Plumbagin suppresses inflammatory mediators such as $\text{TNF-}\alpha$, $\text{IL-1}\beta$, and $\text{NF-}\kappa\text{B}$ and scavenges free radicals, supporting tissue repair. Fibroblast proliferation and enhanced wound contraction demonstrated in studies substantiate its clinical application in

hemorrhoidal management, Lobo et al., 2013.

3.3 Classical Formulations Containing Chitrak

- *Chitrakadi Vati*
- *Chitrak Haritaki Avaleha*
- *Arsha Kuthar Rasa*

These formulations address indigestion, constipation, and *Agnimandya*-related anorectal disorders, Gupta N, et al. 2007.

4. Review of Shunthi (*Zingiber officinale* Rosc.)

4.1 Ayurvedic Review

Shunthi is valued as *Vishvabheshaja*, the universal medicine, for gastrointestinal and inflammatory disorders.

- **Rasa:** Katu
- **Guna:** Laghu, Snigdha



- **Veerya:** Ushna
- **Vipaka:** Madhura
- **Karma:** *Deepana, Pachana, Vatanulomana, Shothahara, Vedanasthapana*

Its *Ushna veerya* reduces *Kapha*, and *Snigdha guna* pacifies *Vata*, relieving constipation, dryness, and pain, Rahmani, et al. 2014.

4.2 Modern Phytochemistry and Pharmacology

Bioactive compounds include gingerols, shogaols, zingerone, paradols, and essential oils. These exhibit anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antioxidant, anti-edematous, and prokinetic effects, Grzanna 2005.

Gingerols inhibit prostaglandin synthesis and reduce edema; zingerone protects intestinal mucosa, while prokinetic action improves bowel motility, addressing constipation in *Shushka Arsha*, Black, 2020.

4.3 Classical Formulations Containing Shunthi

- *Trikatu Churna*
- *Sonth Haritaki*
- *Arsha Kuthar Rasa*

These improve digestion, relieve flatulence, and reduce local inflammation.



5. Comparative Table: Ayurvedic vs Modern Actions

Therapeutic Aspect	Ayurvedic Concept	Modern Correlation
<i>Agnimandya</i> correction	<i>Deepana–Pachana</i>	Stimulates gastric and digestive enzymes
<i>Ama pachana</i>	<i>Lekhana, Anulomana</i>	Detoxification and enhanced metabolism
<i>Vatanulomana</i>	Normalizes <i>Apana Vata</i>	Improves bowel motility and relieves constipation
<i>Shothahara</i>	Reduces inflammation	Inhibits COX-2, TNF- α , and cytokines
<i>Vedanasthapana</i>	Relieves pain	Analgesic, anti-edematous effect
<i>Mamsa shoshana</i>	Reduces pile mass	Anti-proliferative and wound-healing actions

6. Pharmacological Correlation and Mechanism of Action

The synergy of *Chitrak* and *Shunthi* addresses *Shushka Arsha* pathology comprehensively. *Chitrak* stimulates digestive metabolism, reduces *Ama*, and breaks obstructions caused by

Vata-Kapha. *Shunthi* lubricates dry tissues, facilitates bowel evacuation, and mitigates pain.

Plumbagin reduces oxidative stress, suppresses pro-inflammatory cytokines, and promotes tissue repair, while gingerols and shogaols modulate gastrointestinal motility,



inhibit inflammation, and act as antioxidants. Combined, they improve anorectal microcirculation, reduce venous congestion, and support mucosal regeneration, Ali, 2008.

Mechanistic effects include:

- Restoration of *Agni* and digestion
- Clearance of *Ama*
- Regulation of *Apana Vata*
- Reduction of inflammation and pain
- Regeneration of anorectal mucosa

7. Discussion

The combined use of *Chitrak* and *Shunthi* exemplifies Ayurvedic synergy, wherein complementary actions enhance therapeutic outcomes. *Shushka Arsha* pathogenesis involves both digestive impairment and local vascular inflammation. *Chitrak* addresses the

digestive imbalance, whereas *Shunthi* mitigates local dryness and pain.

Restoration of *Agni* reduces constipation and venous stasis, preventing straining and recurrence. *Lekhana* and *Shothahara* actions reduce pile size and inflammation. Antioxidant properties protect mucosal tissues from oxidative stress.

Modern pharmacology corroborates these effects: plumbagin is anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial, while gingerols and shogaols inhibit prostaglandin synthesis, reduce edema, and promote epithelial repair. These actions parallel classical descriptions of *Arshoghna* and *Vedanasthapana*.

Clinical formulations like *Arsha Kuthar Rasa* and *Chitrakadi Vati* utilize these herbs synergistically, showing significant improvement in pain, swelling, and bowel movement, with minimal adverse effects. The



integrative approach aligns Ayurvedic concepts of *Agni* and *Ama* with modern understanding of metabolism, oxidative stress, and gastrointestinal motility.

Thus, *Chitrak* and *Shunthi* provide a holistic, safe, and effective approach for both curative and preventive management of *Shushka Arsha*, Patil, 2019.

8. Conclusion

Shushka Arsha, classified as a *Vata-Kaphaja* disorder, presents with dry, hard, and painful anal swellings, often accompanied by constipation and difficult defecation. Effective management, therefore, necessitates a comprehensive therapeutic approach that addresses both the systemic and local factors contributing to the disease. This includes restoring impaired digestive fire (*Agni*), digesting accumulated metabolic toxins (*Ama*), normalizing the disturbed *Apana Vata*, and

alleviating local inflammation and pain.

The synergistic combination of *Chitrak* (*Plumbago zeylanica* Linn.) and *Shunthi* (*Zingiber officinale* Rosc.) effectively addresses these pathophysiological aspects. *Chitrak*, with its *Tikshna*, *Laghu*, and *Ushna* properties, stimulates digestion, clears obstruction, and eliminates *Ama*. At the same time, *Shunthi*, through its *Snigdha* and *Ushna* qualities, soothes the affected tissues, reduces inflammation, and provides analgesic support. Together, these herbs exhibit *Deepana-Pachana*, *Shothahara*, *Vedanasthapana*, and *Vatanulomana* effects, translating classical Ayurvedic principles into outcomes validated by modern pharmacology, including anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, analgesic, and prokinetic activities.

Their combined use not only offers symptomatic relief but also promotes tissue healing, prevents recurrence, and improves overall gastrointestinal



function. Being natural, non-invasive, and cost-effective, this therapeutic strategy aligns with contemporary goals of integrative and patient-centered care. Continued clinical trials, pharmacological standardization, and mechanistic studies are warranted to further

substantiate their efficacy and safety, facilitating global recognition of *Chitrak* and *Shunthi* as evidence-based, integrative therapeutic options in the management of chronic anorectal disorders like *Shushka Arsha*.

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