

**EFFECT OF SHATAVARI (*Asparagus racemosus*) IN THE MANAGMENT OF EPILEPSY-
A REVIEW**

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ABSTRACT

Asparagus racemosus is the botanical name of *Shatavari* belongs to *Asparagaceae* family. *shatavari* is one among the most commonly used medicinal plants. Ayurvedic classical texts recognize it as a major and highly potent drug. The root of *Shatavari* is *Agnivardaka*, *Balya*, *Vrishya* and *Sthanyajanana*. Traditionally it is used in nervous disorder, hypertension and treatment of epilepsy. Current epilepsy therapy is symptomatic using antiepileptic drugs. This therapy suppresses seizures but does not prevent or cure epilepsy. Therefore, new drug therapies preferably mono drug therapy, which facilitates drug compliance, with efficacy against drug-resistant seizures, associated with lower risk of toxicity, affordability and favourable adverse events profiles, especially in regard to neurological and psychiatric effects, and, if possible, low costs to patients and high worldwide availability are clearly needed. Theoretically, herbal therapies could also be investigated for their potential to prevent epilepsy, seizure worsening, or progressive psychological changes. Very few herbal drugs namely *Vacha*, *Shatavari*, *Brahmi*, *Kustha*, *Rason*, etc. are mentioned in Samhitas as *Apasmara*.

KEYWORDS: *Asparagus racemosus*, Epilepsy, Ayurveda, Herbal medicine.

INTRODUCTION

Shatavari is one among the most commonly used medicinal plants in Ayurveda. Ayurvedic classical texts quoted it as a major and highly potent drug. Humanity is suffering from various psychological disorders inspite of great advances in the field of medical sciences. These disorders include anxiety, depression, dementia, epilepsy, cognitive disorder and neurodegenerative disease. According to an estimate there is a prevalence level of 22%

individual developing one or more mental or behavioural disorder in their lifetime¹. Rasayana drugs are specially advised for the treatment of *Apasmara*. It has been well established that oxidative stress may be both an important cause and a consequence of seizures; it can be assumed that the antioxidant compounds present in these species may be responsible for their therapeutic uses. In Classics, under the context of *apasmara chikitsa*, we find

reference where Shatavari with milk is indicated²⁻³

EXPLANATION OF PLANT⁴

Habit and leaf form: Shrubs, or lianas, or herbs. Switch-plants; with the principal photosynthesizing function transferred to stems. Leaves much reduced. The herbs perennial; self supporting, or climbing.

Roots: Perennial, many, fascicled, 30cms., to about one metre or more in length, smooth tapering at both ends, succulent and tuberous.

Stem: Scandent twining armed with strong straight spines at the nodes, woody when mature. Branchlets angular.

Leaves: reduced to minute chaffy scale and subtending leaf like cladodes. Cladodes dark green divaricated very slightly compressed and channelled beneath, 10 to 25 mm. long and about 2 mm. wide, borne in axillary clusters of 2-6.

Flowers: usually numerous and bracteates, small 3-4 mm. across. They are bisexual whitish and very strongly and sharply scented, permeating the atmosphere with their rather irritating odour. Stamens: six; filaments free, are globular or more often obscurely three lobed pulpy berries 4 to 6 or 7mm. in diameter. They are greenish or light rose when young but turn purplish black when ripe and contain 2 or 3 hard seeds.

Seeds: with a thin but hard and brittle black testa and horny or cartilaginous endosperm. Embryo - dorsal transverse and curved in a serpentine manner in the back of the endosperm, and nearly opposite to the umbilicus or funiculus.

CHEMICAL COMPOSITION⁵

Shatavari is known to possess a wide range of phytochemical constituents. The major bioactive constituents are a group of steroidal saponins. Other primary chemical constituents are essential oils, asparagine, arginine, tyrosine, flavonoids (kaempferol, quercetin, and rutin), resin, and tannin. The powdered root contains 2.95% protein, 5.44% saponins, 52.89% carbohydrate, 17.93% crude fiber, 4.18% inorganic matter, and 5% oil.

THERAPEUTICAL INDICATION

Atisara (Diarrhoea)

In vataja atisara one should take Shatavari-ghrita.⁶

In diarrhoea with blood, paste of Shatavari should be taken with milk keeping on milk-diet⁷.

Arshas (Piles)

Paste of Shatavari root should be taken with milk⁸

Swarasada (Hoarseness of voice)

The patient should take powder of kakolyadi drugs or Shatavari or bala mixed with honey and ghee.⁹

Kasa (Cough)

For the well-being of those suffering from cough ghee cooked with Shatavari and Nagabala should be administered.¹⁰ Shatavari juice mixed with honey should be taken in morning. It alleviates burning and pain and all disorders of pitta.¹¹

DISCUSSION

Probable Mode of Action

Shatavari is *tikta* rasa and is said to possess *rasayana* property. It is *vatapitta* shamana and *madhura vipaka*. *Madura rasa* promotes formation of *daatu Bala* and *ojus*. It alleviates *vata* and *pitta*. *Tikta rasa* is having *Agni Vardana* and *sroto shodhana* properties. *Madura vipaka* acts similarly that of *Madura rasa*. *Sheeta veerya* and *snigdha guna* does the function of *dhaatu bala vardaka*. *Medhya* property indicates the action of a drug on brain. The main seat of pathogenesis of *Apasmara* (epilepsy) can be considered as brain. *Medhya rasayana* drugs are rich sources of antioxidants, which are very good for the prevention of nerve cell damage and preservation of cell health. Since *Apasmara* is produced by both *Shareera* and *Manasa Doshas* being located in the important vital point it is difficult to

be treated. Hence it should be treated with *Rasayana* therapies. The drug *Shatavari* possess *Rasayana* properties. Properties of cow milk mentioned in Ayurvedic are *Madura rasa*, *guru*, *seta snigdha Guna* *Madura vipaka*. It has *vata pitta hara* property. In *Charaka Samhita* specific actions of milk are given as *preenana*, *brimhan*, *medhya balya* and *manaskara*¹². *Shatavari* with milk may help to get optimum medicinal values for its easy absorption. Milk is one of the best *Rasayana* and is congenial for persons of all ages. It could work as adjuent with *Shatavari*. *Shatavri* along with *Ksheera* is indicated as *rasayana* by *Charka* and *Sushruta* in *apasmara*, *rakta atisara*, *rakta pitta* and *arshas*¹³⁻¹⁴ Milk is having similar property like that of *Shatavari* and facilitates and enhances the effect of *Shatavari*.

CONCLUSION

In Ayurvedic classic text books the use of *Shatavari* with milk is indicated for *apasmara chikitsa*. *Rasa* of *Shatavari* is *Tikta* rasa with *Madhura* anurasa. The phytochemical content in the drug Proteins, carbohydrates tannins, saponins and flavonoids. *Charka Acharya* and *Acharya Sushruta* indicated *Shatavari* along with *ksheera* as *rasayana*. *Apasmara* is treated with *rasayana* therapy hence, *Shatavari* with

milk will give good result. For better understanding of probable mode of action further clinical study can be done.

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