

A REVIEW ON SHUSHKAAKSHIPAKA (DRY EYE SYNDROME)

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the science of healthful living, is the most rational and scientific among the ancient systems of medicine, which has struck deep and permanent roots in the minds of the people of the country about its capacity to provide effective cure for all types of diseases. *Shushkaakshipaka* is a disease which is described elaborately in *Ayurveda* under the heading of *Sarvakshiroga*. Descriptions of *Sushruta Samhita* details the early phase of the disease, while the descriptions of *Vagbhata* point towards the advanced phase of the disease with preponderance of *Paka* (inflammation). The word '*Shushkaakshipaka*' means eye wherein *Ashru* has depleted or dried resulting in inflammation of the eye. Is there any formulation available in *Ayurveda* which can control Inflammation, give lubrication, promotes immune-modulation of ocular surface and cost effective? Thus the literary evidences regarding the prophylactic as well as therapeutic potentials of *Shushkaakshipaka* have been delineated in classical texts of Ayurveda.

KEYWORDS: *Shushkaakshipaka, Sarvakshiroga, Ashru*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science of holistic approach. Drastic change in day by day activities including life style, food habits, environmental pollution, industrial and occupational hazards and increased use of systemic medicines have resulted into increased prevalence of many ophthalmic diseases. The diseases of the eye are much more important than any other physical disability since the loss of vision completely disables the patient. The eyes are said to be most important than all other *Indriyas* and considered as the reflectors of the mind¹. *Acharya Sushruta* clearly mentioned that prevention of eye diseases should be the utmost aim rather than its curative aspect and if neglected or improperly treated, these

diseases may ultimately lead to the total loss of vision. So, to protect this organ is not only a necessity but also a responsibility of every individual. *Shushkaakshipaka* is a disease which is described elaborately in *Ayurveda* under the heading of *Sarvakshiroga*². Descriptions of *Sushruta Samhita* details the early phase of the disease, while the descriptions of *Vagbhata* point towards the advanced phase of the disease with preponderance of *Paka* (inflammation)³. Dry eye syndrome is a similar entity in the modern ophthalmology which is recognized as clinical disorder in 1920 and described clinically in early 1930's, the greatest amount of information both from an epidemiological and pathogenetic

perspective has accrued during the last 10 years, which indicates that the awareness and incidence of this disease is increasing in recent times⁴. Prevalence of dry eye syndrome is estimated to be 14 to 33% worldwide i.e. 1 out of every 3 to 7 patients could have this condition⁵. A recent survey conducted in year 2002, based upon a well characterized population of adult men and women in USA identified a prevalence of 6.7% in women over the age of 50 and 2.3% in men over the age of 55. These rates extrapolate to potentially 9.1 million dry eye patients in USA alone. Even though no authentic prevalence survey has been carried out in India, it is estimated that 45% of patients older than 40 years may have this problem i.e. one out of every 5 above 30 years attending OPD could have this condition⁶.

It is anticipated that burden of dry eye is highly significant similar to angina or disabling hip fractures in old age. Approximately 25% of patients visit to ophthalmologists are due to problems related to dry eyes. Many patients are presenting with night driving problems, reading problems, problems with computer and problems during watching television. If this condition is not properly diagnosed and treated in time, it may lead to various complications like keratitis, iridocyclitis, glaucoma, endophthalmitis etc. New concept of preservatives free eye drops came into existence to overcome these problems, but unfortunately these are very difficult to manufacture, frequent contamination on storage and microbial keratitis in many patients are reported due to use of this drops. The main problem is the expense of these

medicines and one should remember that these medicines are prescribed as lifelong therapy and many of the patients are not in a position to afford these drops due to the high cost of this drugs.

Concept of *Shushka akshi paka*:

The word *Shushkaakshipaka* is composed from three words i.e. *Shushka*, *Akshi* and *Paka*.

→The word ***Shushka*** is derived from the word *Shush* suffixed by *Ktah* Pratyaya meaning dried, dry, arid, parched, useless, fruitless etc.

→The word ***Akshi*** is derived from the root word *Asu* meaning stuck together, contiguous, coherent, accomplishment, spread through or covered with etc., suffixed by *kisi*. The word '*Akshi*' means the structure to which '*Ashru*' remains adhered to or spread over ("*Ashrute anena; ashru Vyapthou Sanghate Cha*") i.e. Eyeball.

→The word ***Paka*** is derived from the root word *pak* suffixed by *Ghana Bhava* indicating inflammation, suppuration, cooking, burning etc.

The word '*Shushkaakshipaka*' means eye wherein *Ashru* has depleted or dried resulting in inflammation of the eye. In other words inflammation in the eye due to decreased/depleted or dried *Ashru* or *Ashru* has depleted due to inflammation in the eye.

***Nidana of Shushkaakshipaka*:**

Different *Acharyas* have propounded the *Nidanas* for the *Netra Rogas* (ocular diseases). All aetiological factors categorized, *Vata* and *Pitta* provoking factors responsible for manifestation of disease *Shushkaakshipaka* can be summarized as follow:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prasakta Samrodana • Shoka • Abhighata (Shiro-Abhighata) • Ati-Maithuna • Vega-Vinighraha • Chardi-Vighata • Sukshma Nireekshana • Ati-Sheeghra-Yanat
Pitta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ushnabhitaptasya Jale Praveshat • Kopa • Rajodhuma Nishevanat • Atimadyapanat • Jwarabhitapa • Excessive intake of Ushna, Kshara, Katu Rasa
Vata-Pitta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swapna Viparyayata • Klesha • Shukta, Arnala and Amla Nishevana • Dhoom Nishevana

Samprapti:

The *Doshas* vitiated by indulgence in foods and habits particularly harmful to the eyes (*Achaksusya Ahara-Vihara*) propagates through the channels (*Sira*) towards head

(*Uttamanga*) and enter the parts of the eye to produce diseases. In traumatic lesions, vitiation of *Doshas* succeeds the disease

Samprapti Ghatakas:

• Dosh	:	Vata (Prana, Udana & Vyana), Pitta (Pachaka & Bhrajaka)
• Dushya	:	Kaphashrayi Dhatus (Rasa, Meda and Majja)
• Agni	:	Mandagni or Vishamagni leading to Aama formation
• Srotas	:	Rasa-Rakta Vahi Siras
• Sroto-dushti	:	Sanga
• Roga Marga	:	Madhyama
• Adhishthana	:	Sarvagata (Netra)
• Sadhyasadhyata:	:	Sadhya

Purvarupa of Shushkaakshipaka:

The *Samanya Purva Rupa* of *Netra Rogas* can be considered here, which is given below:

Sr. No.	Purvarupa	Features
1.	Avilata	Dirty eyes with discharges (<i>Malayuktam</i>)
2.	Sasarambha	Angry look
3.	Kandu	Itching
4.	Upadeha	Stickiness

5.	<i>Usha</i>	Burning sensation
6.	<i>Toda</i>	Pricking pain
7.	<i>Raga</i>	Redness
8.	<i>Vartma Kosha Shoola</i>	Pain in the fornices
9.	<i>Vartma Kosha Shookapurnabha</i>	Foreign body sensation in the fornices
10.	<i>Vihanyamana Rupa</i>	Visual disturbances
11.	<i>Vihanyamana Kriya</i>	Subnormal functions of the eye
12.	<i>Kriyaswakshi Yathapura</i>	Reduced activities/movements e.g. blinking

Rupa:

Full expression of the disease with all signs and symptoms after the *Dosha-Dushya-Sammurchna* denote the *Vyakta* stage of the disease. *Acharya Sushruta* has described it as

a *Vataja* disorder; *Acharya Vagbhata* describes it as a *Vata-Pittaja* condition whereas *Acharya Karala* states it to be a *Sarakta-Vataja* disease.

The *Rupa* as described by different *Acharyas* are as follows:

Sr. No.	<i>Rupa</i>
1.	<i>Kunita-Vartma</i> (Narrowing of palpebral aperture)
2.	<i>Daruna Ruksha Vartma</i> (hard and rough lids)
3.	<i>Aavila Darshanam</i> (Blurred vision)
4.	<i>Sudarunam Yat Pratibodhane/Kricchronmeela</i> (difficulty in opening the lids)
5.	<i>Gharsha</i> (Foreign body sensation)
6.	<i>Toda</i> (Pricking pain)
7.	<i>Bheda</i> (Tearing pain)
8.	<i>Upadeha</i> (Mucoid discharge)
9.	<i>Vishushkatva</i> (Dryness)
10.	<i>Shula</i> (Crucifying pain)
11.	<i>Paka</i> (Inflammation)
12.	<i>Daha</i> (Burning sensation)

Variability in Clinical Features as per the disease pathology viz. *Vata*, *Pitta*, or *Vata-Pitta* dominance:

<i>Vata</i>	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Vata-Pitta</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kunita Vartma</i> • <i>Daruna Ruksha Vartma</i> • <i>Aavila Darshanam</i> • <i>Sudarunam Yat Pratibodhane/ Kricchronmeela</i> • <i>Toda</i> • <i>Vishushkatva</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Upadeha</i> • <i>Sheeteccha</i> • <i>Paka</i> • <i>Daha</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aavila Darshana</i> • <i>Gharsha</i> • <i>Toda</i> • <i>Bheda</i> • <i>Upadeha</i> • <i>Paka</i> • <i>Daha</i>

Sadhya-Asadhyata of Shushkaakshipaka⁷:

Shushkaakshipaka is a *Sarvagata*, *Sadhya* (Curable) disease. All the *Acharyas* have

described it to be an *Aushadha* (*Ashastrakruta*) *Sadhya Vyadhi*.

Updrava⁸:

Acharya Vagbhata has enumerated the *Shushkaakshipaka* in 18 diseases which can acquire chronicity and termed as '*Pilla*.'

Chikitsa of *Shushkaakshipaka*:

The *Chikitsa* should be adopted by considering the *Aama* or *Pakwa* stage.

***Sama Dosha Avastha*:** Following methods should be used for *Aama-Pachana*:

**Sweda*

**Seka*

**Pralepa*

**Dina Chatushtya*

**Tikta Anna Sevana*

**Langhana*

***Nirama Dosha Avastha*:** After *Aama-Pachana* has occurred, following *Sthanika* and *Sarvdaihika* measures are indicated:

***Sthanika* measures:** These include *Tarpana*, *Putpaka*, *Seka*, *Ashchyotana*, *Anjana* and *Nasya*.

DISCUSSION

Dry eye, either alone or in combination with other conditions, is a frequent cause of ocular irritation that leads patients to seek ophthalmologic care. While these symptoms often improve with treatment, the disease usually is not curable, which may be a source of patient and physician frustration. Dry eye can be a cause of visual morbidity and may compromise results of corneal, cataract, and refractive surgery. Conventional approach in treating dry eye is to lubricate the ocular surface by artificial tear drops. The goal of artificial tears is to increase humidity at the ocular surface and to improve lubrication but it fails to correct the underlying pathology. The preservative in these preparations again are the proven causes of inducing dry eye.

The cost of these medications is also one of the issues. By considering all these limitations of modern science, the discussion pointed toward *Ayurveda*. Is there any formulation available in *Ayurveda* which can control Inflammation, give lubrication, promotes immune-modulation of ocular surface and cost effective. This thought lead to this clinical study to find out an *Ayurveda* formulation which can manage the dry eye effectively by curing the underlying pathology and improving the ocular surface defence mechanism.

CONCLUSION

The disease *Shushkaakshipaka* described in *Ayurveda* classics can be correlated with the diseases Dry Eye Syndrome on the basis of similar clinical features. *Shushkaakshipaka* is described as *Vata - Pitta* disease. It is classified under *Sarvagata Sadhya Netra Roga*. Thus the literary evidences regarding the prophylactic as well as therapeutic potentials of *Shushkaakshipaka* have been delineated in classical texts of *Ayurveda*. Which will be further beneficial for planning of new research works regarding *Shushkaakshipaka*.

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