

Exploring the Pharmacodynamic Potential of Amrutottaram Kashaya: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Amrutottara Kaṣayam, also known as Nagaradi Kaṣhayam, is a classical Ayurvedic formulation composed of Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*), Sunṭhi (*Zingiber officinale*), and Guḍuci (*Tinospora cordifolia*) in the ratio of 6 : 4 : 2, respectively. As Guḍuci (Amṛuta) is present in a relatively higher proportion, the formulation is named Amrutottara. It is indicated in a wide range of disease conditions and exhibits enhanced therapeutic efficacy when administered with appropriate Anupana based on the disease state. Described under Kaṣhaya-prayoga-prakarāṇa in classical texts, its action is attributed to the combined effect of Rasapanchaka and the synergistic interaction of its ingredients, leading to Amapachana and Agnidipana. Classical Anupanas include Saindhava lavaṇa and Guḍa. Its efficacy can be enhanced with formulations such as Hinguvachadi Curṇa in conditions like Anaha and Gulma. Due to its Amapachaka nature, co-administration with Ghṛita and heavy Avarti tailas is contraindicated. Amrutottara Kaṣhayam is widely used as a stand-alone formulation with consistent clinical benefits.

Keywords: Amrutottaram Kashaya, jwara, Nagaradi Kashaya

INTRODUCTION

Amrutottaram Kaṣhayam, also known as Nagaradi Kaṣhayam, is a well-known traditional Ayurvedic herbal decoction extensively used in clinical practice for the management of digestive disorders, febrile conditions, inflammatory states, and for enhancing immunity. Though this formulation is not described in the classical *Bṛihatrayi* texts, it holds a prominent place in traditional Kerala *Ayurveda* and is clearly documented in authoritative regional treatises such as *Chikitsamanjari*, *Sahasrayogam*, and *Sarvaroga Chikitsaratnam*. Amrutottaram Kaṣayam is a simple yet potent combination of three herbs Guḍuci (Amṛuta), Haritaki, and Nagara each renowned for their *deepana-pacana* (digestive stimulant), *jwaraghna* (antipyretic), *Sothahara* (anti-inflammatory), and *rasayana* (rejuvenative) properties. The synergistic action of these ingredients makes the formulation effective in correcting *agnimandya*, ama accumulation, and *doṣha* imbalance, particularly involving *Pitta* and *Kapha*.

The ingredients are easily procurable, economical, and the preparation method is straightforward, contributing to its wide acceptability and frequent prescription in day-to-day practice. Owing to its immunomodulatory and detoxifying potential, Amrutottaram Kaṣhayam gained renewed clinical relevance during epidemic outbreaks such as chikungunya and COVID-19. Thus, it continues to be valued as a versatile, safe, and effective formulation in both preventive and curative Ayurvedic therapeutics.

Amrithotharam Kashayam

Nagaramritha harithaki kramat
Nagahastham nayananghri bhaghasaha
Saadhusiddhamudhakam sa sarkaram
Nasayathyakhila doshajam jwaram

Sahasrayogam -Jwara chikitsa

The proportion of ingredients in this formulation is explained through an interesting symbolic method.

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Nagara (*Suṇṭhi*), *Amṛta* (*Guḍuci*), and *Haritaki* are prescribed in terms of *anghribhaga* (one-fourth part) of *Naga*, *Nagahasta*, and *Naganayana*, respectively. Here, *Naga* symbolically denotes the eight elephants representing the *Aṣṭa-digpalakas* (guardians of the eight directions). Accordingly, *Nagara* corresponds to *Nagabhaga*, that is, 8 parts. *Amṛta* is taken as *Nagahastabhaga*, where *hasta* signifies three limbs (two forelimbs and the trunk), giving $8 \times 3 = 24$ parts. *Haritaki* is represented by *Naganayana*, where *nayana* denotes two eyes, resulting in $8 \times 2 = 16$ parts. All three ingredients are finally reduced to their *anghribhaga* (one-fourth). Thus, *Nagara* becomes $8 \times \frac{1}{4} = 2$ parts, *Amṛta* $24 \times \frac{1}{4} = 6$ parts, and *Haritaki* $16 \times \frac{1}{4} = 4$ parts, *Anupanam-Sarkara*,

Indication: All types of *Jwara*(fever).^[1]

Acc to (*Sarvaroga chikitsaratnam*)

Amritharukazhanjaakku
Naal Kazhanju Kadukkayum
Chukku Randum Kashayathaal
Virechichozhiyum jwaram

Amritu-6 Kazhanju=32.4gm, Kadukka-4,
Kazhanju=21.6gm, Chukku-2 Kazhanju=10.8gm

Indication-Virechanam Jvaram^[2]

Acc to (*Chikitsa Manjari*)

Amritumaarukazhanjay, Rechaki Naal Kazhanjay Akhilamirukazhanjaay,

Kondu Pakwam Kashayam Gulalavana Sametham Tat Pibetaasutheerum

Paniyodu Malasangham Veeckavum Kamila Cha.

In this formulation, *Rechaki* denotes *Haritaki*, highlighting its purgative action, while *Akhilam* refers to *Nagara*. *Gudam* (jaggery) and *Lavanam* (*Saindhavam*) are mentioned as the *Anupana*. **Indications:** *Jwaram*, *Malabhandham*, *Sopham*, and *Kamala*.^[3]

Therapeutic Actions:

Doṣhakarma includes *Kaphavata-samanam*, *Tridoṣha-haram*, and *Vatanulomanam*, thereby pacifying *Kapha* and *Vata*, balancing all three *doṣhas*, and promoting the normal downward movement of *Vata*. *Dhatukarma* involves *Rakta-prasadanam*, contributing to the purification and nourishment of the blood tissue. *Agnikarma* comprises *Dipanam* and *Pacanam*, enhancing digestive fire and facilitating proper digestion and metabolism. *Malakarmam* is characterized by *Virechanam*, producing a mild purgative effect and aiding in the elimination of waste products. *Srotokarmam* includes *Srotovishodhanam* and *Lekhanam*, which help in cleansing the bodily channels and reducing pathological accumulations.^[4]

Rasa panchaka and Dosha karma^[5]

Drug	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Doshakarma
<i>Nagara</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu snigdha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vatakapasamakam</i>
<i>Haritaki</i>	<i>Madhura Amla Katu Tikta Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridoshahara</i>
<i>Amritu</i>	<i>Tikta Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu snigdha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridoshahara</i>

Integrated action

Through their combined and mutually reinforcing action, the formulation regulates bowel movement and enhances metabolic activity. *Amṛta* facilitates *Ama-pacana*, thereby correcting impaired *Agni*, reducing body temperature in *Jwara*, and alleviating tissue swelling, edema, inflammation, and pain. *Haritaki* acts as *Anulomana*, while *Nagara* exhibits *Grahi* properties; together, they stimulate and support

Jaṭharagni, promoting efficient digestion and overall gastrointestinal health. This combination effectively relieves abdominal flatulence and colic resulting from indigestion, rectifies metabolic disturbances, and improves liver function. Additionally, *Haritaki*, a constituent of *Triphala*, possesses anti-aging and rejuvenative properties and acts as a mild laxative. Since *Ama*, primarily caused by *Jaṭharagni-mandya*, is considered the root cause of several disorders such as *Amavata*, *Grahaṇi Doṣha*, and *Tamaka Swasa*, the

formulation plays a crucial role in disease prevention and management by correcting digestive and metabolic dysfunction.^[6]

Role of Anupana:^[7]

Generally, *Guḍa* is used as the *Anupana* for this formulation. *Guḍa* facilitates the elimination of feces and urine without excessively aggravating *Kapha*, thereby enhancing the therapeutic efficacy of the *Kaṣhaya*. Thus, it is presumed to potentiate the overall action of the formulation. *Lavaṇa* possesses *Vṛṣya* and *Hṛudya* properties and pacifies the *Tridoṣhas*. It exhibits a mild *Madhura rasa*, acts as *Dipana*, does not cause *Vidaha* during digestion, is not excessively *Uṣhṇa*, and is beneficial for ocular health. Therefore, the addition of *Lavaṇa* further augments and complements the therapeutic effects of the *Kaṣhaya*.

Alternative Anupanas used in practice:

- In *Jwara*, the *Kaṣhaya* is administered along with *Veṭṭumaran Guṭika* or *Cukkum Tippalyadi Guṭika*.
- In conditions such as *Anaha* and *Gulma*, it is prescribed with *Hinguvacadi Curṇa*.
- In *Prameha*, *Nisamalaki Curṇa* is used as an adjuvant, while in *Yakṛit-Pliha roga*, it is administered with *Navayasa Guṭika*.^[8]
- When increased bowel movements are required in the above conditions, *Eraṇḍa taila* (castor oil) may be added, as it possesses natural laxative properties that help promote regular bowel evacuation and relieve constipation.^[9]
- As described in *Kriyakoumudi*, under *Akhuviṣha Prakaraṇa*, this *Kaṣhaya* is also beneficial in conditions such as *Pratisyaya* and *Twakroga*.^[10] The consumption of *Ghṛita* is strictly contraindicated, as *Amṛtottara Kaṣhaya* possesses strong *Ama-pacana* properties.

Topical administration:

The internal administration of *Amṛtottara Kaṣhaya* in combination with *Suryaprabha Guṭika*, along with the topical application of *Rasnadi Curṇa*, exhibits pronounced *Kapha-hara* properties. This therapeutic combination offers multiple health benefits, particularly in the management and correction of *Kapha doṣha* imbalance. In routine *Ayurvedic*

practice, *Amṛtottara Kaṣhaya* is commonly prescribed as an independent formulation for a wide range of disorders. However, the judicious addition of suitable medicines either during preparation or through the administration of appropriate *Anupana* enhances its therapeutic efficacy and improves patient compliance, thereby reducing the need for multiple separate medications.^[11]

DISCUSSION

Amṛtottara Kaṣhaya is an internally administered formulation described under the *Kaṣhaya Prayoga Prakaraṇa* of *Sahasrayogam*. When used in combination with other medicines, it can be employed in a wide range of clinical conditions based on the *Yukti* (rational judgment) of the physician. According to *Ayurvedic* principles, the therapeutic application of any drug is determined by a comprehensive evaluation of its *Rasapancaka*, namely *Rasa*, *Guṇa*, *Vipaka*, *Virya*, and *Prabhava*. Therefore, a proper assessment of *Rasapancaka* is essential for a thorough understanding of individual drugs as well as their formulations.

CONCLUSION

Amṛtottara Kaṣhaya is a classical *Ayurvedic* formulation prepared from easily available ingredients, making it cost-effective and suitable for routine clinical practice. Its simple method of preparation enhances its applicability in both institutional and community healthcare settings. The formulation exhibits broad therapeutic utility in various types of *Jwara*, inflammatory conditions, rheumatoid arthritis, and certain dermatological disorders, highlighting its relevance in managing both acute and chronic diseases. The efficacy of *Amṛtottara Kaṣhaya* is attributed to its balanced *Rasapanchaka* properties and the synergistic action of its ingredients, which promote *Ama-pachana*, restore the normal functioning of *Agni*, and correct metabolic disturbances. By addressing *Jatharagni-mandya*, it helps interrupt the pathogenesis of several *Ama-janya vyadhis*, considered fundamental in many systemic disorders in *Ayurveda*. Moreover, the administration of *Amṛtottara Kaṣhaya* with appropriate *Anupana*, selected according to disease condition and patient constitution, enhances its therapeutic effectiveness and patient compliance. Owing to its safety,

affordability, and wide spectrum of action, it remains a valuable and relevant formulation in contemporary Ayurvedic practice.

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