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REVIEW ON MADHU AND ITS CONTRIBUTORY ROLE IN SWARNA PRASHANA

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Abstract

Honey is a rich source of carbohydrate, vitamin, minerals and contain natural antibiotics. various studies revealed antibacterial, antifungal ,and antioxidant nature of honey. So all these results in stimulation of immune system. *Swarna prashana* is considered as the best move towards the better health achievement. *Swarna ,madhu and ghrita* are the basic ingredients of *swarna prashana. Yogavahi,lekhana, kashaya rasa, chedana, vishahara ,sookshma marganusari* such properties of *madhu* contributing to get the benefits of *swarna prashana*. Present paper is a review to update knowledge on *madhu* and how it aid to get the benefits of *swarna prashana.* concurrently,it opens up for further research on benefits of *madhu.*

Key words: Madhu, Honey, *Swarna prashana* , immune modulator, *Ayurveda*

Introduction

Honey – the natural substance, deposited in the honey comb by the hives bee Apis milifera and other species of Apis[1] is precious and well appreciated medicine since from the ancient time. Honey is used as a pleasant vehicle and ingredients in many Ayurveda medicine. *Swarna prashana* told by Acharya Kashyapa is one among them.

Swarna prashana provide benefits like improvement in intellect, digestion and metabolism ,physical strength ,immunity , complexion , fertility ,and life span[2] .so many research work conducted over it made utility of it in clinical practices. In formulations each ingredients will be having its own contributory role in its total benefits. As *madhu* is *yogavahi*[3] in nature ie, without changing its own properties, honey carries the effect of the drugs added to it . It means it enhances the properties and actions of the substance with which it combine. So in *swarna prashana* benefits *madhu* is having crucial role.

The aim of this study is to emphasize the knowledge on honey and how it contribute for the benefiter effect of swarna prashana.

Objectives

- To study in detail about *madhu*
- To study in detail the contributory role of *madhu* in the benefits of swarna prashana.

Materials and method

Various Ayurveda classics and studies published in journals related to *madhu,* honey , *swarna prashana* are reviewed and analyzed.

Nirukti (etymology) of madhu

The word *madhu* is said to be derived from *" manyat iti madhu "*[4] – meaning sweet ,delicious and pleasant.

Origin

Nanapushpa prakaranam rasa saratmakam madhu – Harita[5]

It originates from flowers having different taste, potency etc.

Synonyms of madhu in Ayurveda

Synonyms	Madanapal nighantu[6]	Kaideva nighantu[7]	Dhanvantari nighantu[8]	Raja nighantu[9]	Bhavaprakas ha nighantu[10]
Madhu	+	+	+	+	+
Kshaudra	-	-	+	+	+
Makshika	+	-	+	+	+
Madhvika	-	-	-	-	+
Kusumasava	-	-	+	+	-
Pushpasava	+	+	+	+	-
Pushparasa	+	+	+	+	+
Saragha	-	+	+	-	+
Makshikavanta	-	-	-	-	+
Bhrungavanta	-	-	-	-	+
Vartivanta	-	+	-	-	-
Makshikavita	-	-	-	-	+
Pushparasodbhava	-	-	-	-	-
Pavitra	-	-	-	+	-
Pitrya	-	-	-	+	-

Varieties of madhu

There are many types of honey is mentioned in Ayurvedic samhita[11-16] , *'Makshika'* is considered medicinally the best[17].

Charaka	4 varieties
Vridha vagbhata	1) Pauttika
Madanapala nighantu	2) Bhramara
	3)Kshaudra
	4) Makshika
Sushruta	8 varieties
Kaideva nighantu	above 4 +
Bhavaprakasha nighantu	5) Chhatra
	6) Chhatra
	7) Auddalaka
	8) Dala

Properties of madhu according to different Acharya

	Charaka [17]	**Sushruta[18]**	**Vridha vagbhata [19]**	**Laghu vagbhata[20]**
Rasa	**Madhuraashaya**	**Madhura**	**Madhura Kashaya**	**Kashaya Madhura**
Anurasa		**Kashaya**		
Guna	**Guru Ruksha**	**Laghu Ruksha**	**Guru Ruksha**	**Ruksha**
Veerya	**Seetha**	**Seetha**	Sheeta	**Seethe**
Vipaka			Katu	

Doshagna	**Vatala** **Pitta kaphahara**	**Tridoshahara**	Vata karak Kapha pitta nashak	**Vatala**
Rogagna		**Meda ,meha hikka ,swasa,kasa,atisara** **Chardhi,trishna, krimi, visha**		**Meha** **,kushta** **Krimi,chardi, swasa,kasa,atisara**
Karma	**Chedana** **Vishahara**	**Agni deepanam** **Varnyam, swaryam, sukumaram,** **Lekhanam, hridyam, vajikaranam, sandhanam shodanam, ropanam, chakshushya Prasadanam, sookshma marganusari**		**Chakshushya, chedi, vishahara, vrna sodana, sandana, ropana**

Honey a broad spectrum killer of bacteria

Honey itself is an antigenic material as it contains pollen[21]. It exhibit bactericidal activity against many organism including Salmonella,Shigella, Escherichia coli, Helicobacter pylori[22] etc.

Antibacterial activity of honey is mainly due to 4 properties of it ;

1) Honey is hygroscopic (*ruksha guna*) meaning it draws moisture out of the environment and thus dehydrates bacteria.[23]
2) Honey is acidic in nature, pH ranges from 3.2 to 4.5 ,and this acidity is low enough to inhibit the growth of micro rganism.[22]
3) Hydrogen peroxide , of which the concentration is determined by relative levels of glucose oxidase , synthesized by the bee and catalase originating from pollen[23].
4) Lastly , several phytochemical factors for antibacterial activity have been identified in honey[24] .

As madhu is *sookshma marganusari* ,it enters even minute channels and cleanses it*(sodhana)* . Dry *(ruksha)* , scraping *(lekhana*) , cutting *(chedana*) *kashaya rasa* properties of *madhu* is reason for it. Thus it helps to destroy the growth of microorganism.

Action on gastrointestinal system

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned *madhu* does *Agni deepana*, and it is indicated in *atisara.* Honey is a boon to those with weak digestion.

Haffejee and Moosa (1985) reported a clinical trial in which honey was used in place of glucose in a rehydration fluid (solution of electrolytes) given to infants and children admitted into hospital with gastroenteritis. The treatment with honey gives statistically significant reduction in the duration of diarrhea, caused by bacterial infection[25].

Honey contains oligosaccharides which promote the growth of lactobacilli and bifidobacteria (friendly bacteria. This may be the reason for the" mysterious therapeutic properties of honey"[26].

Use of madhu in prameha

Acharyas has indicated the use of *madhu* in the management of *prameha* . *Madhuasava*[27] told by *Charakacharya* is an example for it. *Kashaya rasa ,lekhana*, and *ruksha guna* of *madhu* helps to reduce the excess *kleda* from the body by the *shoshana effect*, thereby curing *prameha* . It is beneficial in diabetic ulcers too.

More than glucose honey contain fructose in it. Fructose and oligosaccharides present In honey may be responsible for its hypoglycemic effect. In addition to these honey is rich with antioxidants, so it repairs oxidative stress which in turn decreases the blood sugar[28,29].

Use of madhu in respiratory tract infection

Use of *madhu* is indicated in *swasa* and *kasa* , as *kashaya rasa ,lekhana,chedana, ruksha* qualities of *madhu* does *shoshana* of *kapha*.

"Use of honey first for cough ,new guidelines says" reports the BBC ,the guideline from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [NICE] and Public Health England [PHE] have been developed after looking at the best available scientific evidence[30].

Madhu is hridyam (good to heart)

Honey contain 0.3 – 25 mg/kg choline (nutrient) ,it is essential for the function of cardiovascular system[31]. Choline helps to convert the amino acid homocysteine to

methionine. So deficiency of this nutrient can results in an accumulation of homocysteine in blood, thus making high risk for heart disease.

Antioxidants present in honey include vitamin c, monophenolics, flavanoids and polyphenolics . Regular flavanoid intake is associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular diseases. The study conducted on chronic oral administration of natural honey in rat for 45 days showed anti arrhythmic and anti infarction effect[29].

Madhu is chakshushyam

chakshushya karma of *madhu* is mentioned by various Acharyas.

Madhur, kashaya rasa, *seetha veerya* properties make *madhu* as *chakshusya* . Use of honey in various opthalmological conditions like blepharitis, keratitis, conjunctivitis, corneal injuries ,chemical and thermal burns to eyes proved its efficacy. Honey is having most compounds like flavanoids, phenolic acids ,ascorbic acid ,tocopherols , catalase ,amino acids, vitamin B1, B2 &B6, minerals and enzymes which work together to give synergistic ,antioxidant , antibacterial and anti-inflammatory effect[26]. These may be the reason why honey is good to eyes.

Madhu in swarna prashana

Madhu being a basic ingredient of *swarna prashana*, it imparts its role in the benefits of *swarna prashana* .Charakacharya has mentioned *madhu* as best *yogavah*i drug. So in *swarna prashana madhu* carries the effect of ingredients added to it without loosing its own properties.

Since ancient era *madhu* is considered as auspicious things to start a new phase. Evidence of it is seen in *jatakarma samsakara*[32]. It poured over the deities because of its auspicious nature in a ritual called *madhu abhisheka*.

Sushruta acharya has mentioned madhu as *vajeekarana* and *varnya* . Also he has mentioned *agni deepana karma* of *madhu*. It balances *vahni* and aid in digestion. According to Bhojana Kutukala ,*madhu* removes j*adyata* from the body ,promote strength & intellect , improve mental stability & virility.

In Brihat trayis Acharyas has mentioned the *visha hara* nature of *madhu* . In present day scenario allergens, irritants ,noxious substance can be included under the term *visha* . Bacterial , fungal , stress related problem all can be considered under *graha rogas* .

Antibacterial , antifungal , antioxidant properties of *madhu* is revealed by various studies conducted over it. So these suggestive of *madhu* is having *grahapaham* effect. *Kashaya rasa, lekhana*, *chedana, sukshma marganusari*, *sroto sodana* properties of *madhu* helps for it.
Madhu itself auspicious , righteous , aphrodisiciac*,* it protects from microorganism , mental stress , improve intellect *(medha) .* Thus by these benefits it increases life span also.
So it is understood that *madhu* by its own effect and also by the effect of ingridients added to it *(yogavahi* nature of *madhu*) makes the *swarna prashana* formulation to provide benefits like improvement in intellect, digestion, metabolism , physical strength *(medha agni bala vardhanam*), life span*(ayushyam*), auspicious *(mangalam,punyam*), aphrodisiac*(vrushyam*),complexion (*varnyam)*,antifungal, antibacterial, antioxidant (*grahapaham*),immunity (*na vyadhi).*

Conclusion

Madhu can be used to boost our immune system as it proved its efficacy by scientific evidence *. Madhu* contribute a major role in *Swarna prashana* benefits by kindling the immune system and thereby promoting the well being. Even though *madhu* is having tremendous benefits, and high value in traditional medicine, it has limited use in modern medicine due to lack of scientific support. So further detailed knowledge, research works has to carry out on honey , thereby exploring maximum efficacy of *madhu.*

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