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RESEARCH ARTICLE

AYURVEDIC DENTISTRY: A DOCTRINE CONCEPT

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ABSTRACT

Mouth is considered as the mirror of general health. For good oral and systemic health, proper maintenance of good oral hygiene is very important. The standard Western medicine has had only limited success in the prevention and treatment of a variety of oral diseases. Ayurveda is considered as the most ancient indigenous medical system of India. Ayurveda includes therapies for treatment of these Orofacial Diseases such as oral cleansing, extractions, excisions, flap surgeries etc. Ayurveda also recommends daily use of therapeutic procedures as preventive measures such as Dant dhavani, Jivha lekhan, Gandoosha or oil pulling and tissue regeneration therapies. In this article, an attempt has been made to review various herbal plants mentioned in Ayurveda and therapeutic procedures that can be used as an adjunct for the maintenance of oral health.

INTRODUCTION

During the Vedic period in India, the earliest literature on the practice of Indian system of medicine had appeared. The Sushruta samhita and Charak samhita are the two earliest authoritative texts in ancient Indian medicine (Bhardwaj, 2015). Ayurvedic treatment is aimed at patient as an organic whole. So the treatment consists of salubrious use of drugs, diets and certain practices to treat the patients (Torwane et al., 2014). Over the centuries, massive numbers of meditative preparations and surgical procedures for the treatment of varied ailments and diseases has been developed by ayurvedic practitioners. Albeit dental medicine wasn't a specialized branch of Ayurveda, it's enclosed in its Shalaky Tantra (system of surgery) (Turagam and Mudrakola, 2017). There is a long history regarding use of plants for improving dental health and oral hygiene of patients (Gupta et al., 2015). In Ayurveda, various herbal combinations for the maintenance of oral hygiene had been briefly described (Bangar and Wagh, 2015). Plants and natural products has been used since long time for their pharmacological applications, viz., anti-inflammatory, antiulcerogenic, wound healing, antimicrobial, and antioxidant properties (Singhai et al., 2017). In ancient India, various oral problems such as deformities of the oral cavity, plaques and infections could be managed and even cured with the help of ayurvedic medicine (Sangeetha et al., 2015). As dental health care professionals need to put home oral hygiene at the priority of their advice on preventive

practice to maintain good oral health. There are too many numbers of indigenous natural medicinal products which deserve recognition for their contribution in the improvement of oro-dental health (Bhardwaj, 2015).

Plants with their oral health related indications

The literature showed that there are numerous Ayurvedic drugs, which can be commonly used in prevention as well as management of oral diseases. Some commonly using plants along with their properties are listed here (Ahuja and Ahuja, 2014)-

Amala: Amala has an antioxidant as well as astringent property. It has been proven to be effective in the treatment of toothache, gingival inflammations and aphthous stomatitis.

Launga oil: Launga oil is commonly used to relieve in toothache. Eugenol is the active component of Launga oil. Eugenol is widely used in root canal therapy, dental abscess, temporary fillings and several gum diseases.

Grita kumari: Grita kumari has property of dentin formation.

Nimbu/ Lemon: Nimbu/ Lemon solution is the natural source of citric acid with PH 1.68. A freshly prepared lemon solution is recommended as a root canal medicament because of its antibacterial efficacy.

Amra leaf: Amra leaf contains ascorbic and phenolic acid. Mango leaves possess antibacterial property against anaerobic

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micro flora. They can be used as an effective adjuvant in maintaining oral hygiene.

Neem: Antibacterial, Antifungal, Antiviral, analgesic, immunostimulator and antioxidant properties of Neem are well established. It has both mechanical as well as chemotherapeutic antiplaque agents. Mouth rinse using Neem leaves is very effective in the treatment of periodontitis.

Triphala: Triphala has shown anticaries and antiplaque property. It is also used for strengthening the gums and root canal irrigant.

Tulsi: Tulsi extract as 4% mouth rinse effectively reduces salivary streptococcal mutant counts.

Turmeric: Turmeric extract can be used in the treatment of potentially malignant lesions in oral cavity. It effectively inhibits metastasis of melanoma cells. Because of these properties it may be used in deactivating carcinogens in cigarette smoke and tobacco chewing.

Kantakari: A Kantakari seed Dhoopan has been used in dental caries due to its chemical constituents like olanocarpine, carpesterol, solanocarpine, solasonine and solasodine.

Tila/ Sesame oil: Tila/ Sesame oil is used in the treatment of plaque induced gingivitis. For the management of these diseases ayurveda recommends daily use of therapeutic procedures for the prevention and maintenance of oral health. These includes: the three main procedures in day to day life are Tooth brushing (Dant dhavani), Tongue scrapping (Jivha Lekhana) and Oil pulling or gargling (Gandusha) as well tissue regeneration therapies (Bhukya and Maloth, 2017).

Tooth brushing (Dant dhavani)

The use of chewing sticks has been documented since ancient times. The choice of stick depends largely on traditional preference rather than clinical effectiveness. It is an affordable oral hygiene device and additional benefits are derived from its functional aspect of chewing as jaw exerciser as well as reflex induction of saliva which is beneficial to the oral hygiene. Popular plants which are fascinated into chewing and/or tooth brushing sticks include *Salvadora persica* (miswak from arak tree) and *Azadirachta indica* (Neem) (Hooda *et al.*, 2009). Chewing on these stems is believed to cause attrition and leveling of biting surfaces, facilitate salivary secretion and, possibly, help in plaque control, while some stems have an anti-bacterial action (Telles *et al.*, 2009).

Tongue scrapping (Jivha Lekhana)

Tongue scrapping on a regular basis stimulates the reflex points of the tongue. It removes microorganism growth followed by bad odor or halitosis. Also tongue scrapping improves the sense of taste and stimulates the secretion of digestive enzymes. Gold, silver, copper, stainless steel products can be used as an ideal for the scrapping of the tongue (Bhukya and Maloth, 2017).

Oil pulling or Gargling (Gandusha)

Oil pulling or oil swishing is an ancient natural healing practice originated in India. It has been described as Kavala

graha or Gandhoosha in the ayurvedic texts of Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita. It is the act of simply holding or swishing comfortable quantity of oil in the mouth for 10–20 min and spits it out without swallowing. It is believed that the act of swishing oil draws out microbes from various parts of the mouth and detoxifies the toxins (Kaliamoorthy *et al.*, 2018).

Tissue Regeneration Therapies

In written material, an herb, Amla (*Phyllanthus emblica*) known as the fruit of a tree, is considered as a general builder of oral health. Amla is used as a mouth rinse as a stewing. For the semipermanent profit to the teeth and gums one to two grams per day may be taken orally in capsules. Amla supports the healing and development of animal tissue once taken internally and conjointly profit the gums. Regular use of Bilberry and shrub berry fruits stabilizes albuminoid and strengthens the gum tissue. Liquorice root promotes anti-cavity action and also reduces plaque associated degree has an anti-bacterial impact. Herbs like *Rumex obtusifolius* root, alfalfa leaf, cinnamon bark and turmeric root area unit taken internally to strengthen Astidharu, as an example, the skeleton and therefore the joints, have tried to be sensible for long run health of teeth. Outstanding examples contain *Rumex obtusifolius* root, alfalfa leaf, cinnamon bark, and herbaceous plant (Turagam and Mudrakola, 2017).

Efficacy and safety

Many people believe that because medicines are herbal (natural) or traditional they are safe (or carry no risk for harm) to use over modern medicine. However these traditional medicines and practices sometimes cause harmful, adverse reactions if the product or therapy is

- Of poor quality
- Taken in appropriately
- Taken in conjunction with other medicines.

So patient awareness, knowledge about safe usage of ayurvedic medicines is important, as well as more training, collaboration and communication among providers of traditional and other medicines is necessary⁷.

Conclusion

As the oral cavity reflects the health of the whole body, mouth is often referred to as the mirror of the whole body. So the every oral clinician should be aware of the various oral lesions and their management using various traditional herbal medicinal products over the allopathic medicines⁹. Indian subcontinent is the treasure house of numerous plants. Medicinal properties of these plants have been assigned to several thousands (Ahmed *et al.*, 2014). In ayurveda, dental health is very individualist and varies with each person's constitution and climatic change (Digra *et al.*, 2014). Concept of dentistry was well practiced and fully developed in ancient Ayurveda. Acharya Kashyapa has given the detailed explanation on anatomical and clinical aspects of dentistry such as dentition, types of teeth, structure of teeth, and significance of them along with non-occurrence of teeth (Madhukar *et al.*, 2018). So the integration of traditional knowledge of Ayurveda with the modern dentistry should be done. For this, studies should be done on the active principles

of plants into modern oral health-care practices and dentists should be encouraged to use Ayurvedic remedies in various oral health treatments (Ahuja and Ahuja, 2014).

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