



Review Article

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SHATAVARI GHRITA CONTRIBUTION TO FEMALE HEALTH: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Every phase of a woman's life is marked with a range of health issues right from menarche to her postmenopausal years. The medical science has come up with solution for all of the problems but there is no denial to the accompanying side effects and adverse reactions. This is the reason the world is looking towards Ayurveda for a natural, cost effective, safe and efficacious solution. Shatavari is a wonderful drug having innumerable benefits for females. It is beneficial to maintain normal reproductive health. It is used either alone in extract form or most commonly is an important ingredient of many compound formulations. Shatavari Ghrita comes under Sneha kalpana which is prepared by using 1 part of Kalka dravya (drugs in paste form), 4 parts of Sneha dravya (Sneha may be Ghrita/ Taila/ Vasa/ Majja. Out of these, Ghrita is the best due to Sanskaranuvartan property. It effectively assimilates the properties of other drugs without losing its own) and 16 parts of Drava dravya (drugs in decoction form). Ghrita can be used in the form of Pravicharana (preparation) as Pana, Abhyanga, Nasya, Basti and Uttarbasti. Shatavari being a Rasayana, this Ghrita is useful in many other gynecological disorders like Oligomenorrhea, Amenorrhea, Infertility, Post menopausal symptoms etc.

Keywords: Shatavari ghrita, Menstrual disorders, Infertility, Post menopausal symptoms

INTRODUCTION

Shatavari is a drug which works wonders not only during a woman's reproductive years but even during her postmenopausal life. As the name itself suggests it has immense benefits for a woman's fertility and rejuvenation. Ayurvedic texts describe it as having Madhura- Tikta rasa, Madhur vipaka and Shita virya.¹ It is used to treat diseases and disorders of different systems ranging from gastrointestinal to nervous system not excluding its role in soothing dermal problems. It is an important ingredient of almost all the uterine tonics available in the market. Shatavari can be used in either powder form or extract and more commonly used in compound formulations. Shatavari ghrita is Sneha kalpana which is prepared by using 1 part of Kalka dravya (drugs in paste form), 4 parts of Sneha dravya (Sneha may be Ghrita/ Taila/ Vasa/ Majja. Out of these ghrita is the best due to Sanskaranuvartan property.² It effectively assimilates the properties of other drugs without losing its own) and 16 parts of Drava Dravya³ (drugs in decoction form). Ghrita can be used in Achchh form⁴ (alone and in large quantity) or in the form of Pravicharana (along with various preparations) as Pana, Abhyanga, Nasya, Basti and Uttarbasti⁵. It can also be used for Shodhana (purification) or

Shamana (pacification) purpose depending on the level of vitiation of Dosha involved.⁶ Ghrita is indicated for prajakama (desirous for progeny). Shatavari is balya (strength), stanyajanan (galactagogue), shukrajanan (improves sperm quality) and vrishya (aphrodisiac)⁷, so the ghrita prepared by Shatavari acquires these properties along with retaining its own properties. Hereby, beneficial in menstrual disorders, infertility and menopausal symptoms.

Description

Latin name: *Asparagus racemosus* Willd. Family: Liliaceae⁸
Synonyms: Bahusuta, Vari, Shatavirya, Narayani, Bhiru
Gana: Charaka- Balya, Vayasthapana, Madhura Skandha⁹
Sushruta-Vidarigandhadi, Kantakapanchamula, Pittaprashmana¹⁰

Chemical Constitution

The principal bioactive constituents of Shatavari root are steroidal saponins known as Shatavarins I-IV. It also contains antioxidants like racemosides, racemosol, racemofuran and asparagamine A. Other phytoconstituents like 8-methoxy-5,6,4-trihydroxyisoflavone 7-O-beta-D-glucopyranoside, Shatavaroside, Beta- Sitosterl and Stigmaterol.¹¹

Table 1: Pharmacological properties (Rasa Panchak) of Shatavari

Reference	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Doshagnata
Bhavaprakash ¹²	Madhur, Tikta	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Tridoshaghna
Raj Nighantu ¹³	Madhur	Hima	Sheeta	Vata-pittahara
Kaidev Nighantu ¹⁴	Tikta, Madhur	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Vata-pitta shamak
Dhanwantari Nighantu ¹⁵	Tikta, Madhur	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Vata-pittahara
Madanpala Nighantu ¹⁶	Madhur	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Vata-pittahara

Table 2: Pharmacological actions of Shatavari and its interpretation⁴⁻⁶

Vrishya ¹⁷ , Shatavirya ¹⁷ , Retodosahara ²⁰	Promotes sperm count and improves semen quality, Aphrodisiac
Rasayami ¹⁷ , Balya ^{18,20} , Varnojobalavardhini ¹⁷ , Vayasanstapani param ²⁰ , Khalityanashini ²⁰	Rejuvenative action, Nutritive value leading to Strength, Vigour, Complexion. Prevents hair fall.
Vibandhaghi ¹⁷	Prevents constipation
Smritimedhamatikari ¹⁷ , Medhya ¹⁸	Promotes memory and intellect
Pathya ¹⁷	Having beneficial effect on body and mind.
Pushpaprajakari ¹⁷	Initiates menstrual flow or ovulation, resulting in conception
Bhootaghi ¹⁷	Antimicrobial action
Artavam ya na pashyanti, pashyanti vifalam cha ya ¹⁹	Either irregular or absence of menstruation or anovulatory cycles
Atiprabhutam atyalpam ¹⁹	Regulates quantity of menstrual flow
Atikrantam anagatam ¹⁹	Effective in prolonged menses, delayed menopause or delay in onset of menarche
Durbala adridha putrashcha ¹⁹	Having children who are weak or lacking in strength
Sparsham ya na vindanti, Shushkayonayah ¹⁹	Numbness or dryness of vagina
Pumanapi upyunjano ¹⁹	Equally beneficial for male
Stanyakari ¹⁸	Excellent galactagogue
Shothajit ¹⁸	Anti-inflammatory action
Garbhaprada ²⁰	Helpful in achieving conception
Doshatraya pranut ²⁰	Pacifies Tridosha

Preparation of Shatavari Ghrita

Shatavari Ghrita preparation as per reference of Sahasrayoga Ghrita Prakarana²¹
 Shatavari mula (juice extract)- 3.072 litres
 Gokshura kwatha- 3.072 litres
 Water for decoction- 12.288 litres, boiled and reduced to 3.072 litres
 Goghrita- 3.072 litres
 Godugdha- 1.536 litres

Administration of Shatavari Ghrita

For the treatment of gynecological diseases seka [affusion], abhyanga [massage], pichu [insertion of tampon soaked in medicated oil in genital tract] are mentioned²³. Shatavari Ghrita can be used both externally and internally in the form of either Nasya, Pana, Abhyang or Basti²⁴. Even Uttarbasti with Shatavari Ghrita is highly efficacious in certain conditions²⁵. (Table 4)

Table 3: Prakshepa dravyas used in preparation of Shatavari Ghrita²²

S. No	Prakshepa Dravya	Latin Name	Quantity
1	Vidari	<i>Pueraria tuberosa</i>	768 gm
2	Chandan	<i>Santalum album</i>	768 gm
3	Tugakshiri	<i>Bambusa bambos</i>	768 gm
4	Mridwika	<i>Vitis vinifera</i>	768 gm
5	Yashti	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>	768 gm
6	Kasheruka	<i>Scirpus grossus</i>	768 gm
7	Ervaru	<i>Cucumis melo</i>	768 gm
8	Truti	<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>	768 gm
9	Adrika	<i>Asphaltum</i>	768 gm
10	Kana	<i>Piper longum</i>	768 gm
11	Utpala	<i>Nymphaea stellata</i>	768 gm
12	Kamala	<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>	768 gm
13	Musta	<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>	768 gm
14	Kakoli	<i>Fritillaria roylei</i>	768 gm
15	Kshirakakoli	<i>Roscoea purpurea</i>	768 gm
16	Jivaka	<i>Malaxis acuminata</i>	768 gm
17	Rishabhaka	<i>Manilkara hexandra</i>	768 gm
18	Mudgaparni	<i>Phaseolus trilobus</i>	768 gm
19	Mashaparni	<i>Teramnus labialis</i>	768 gm
20	Meda	<i>Litsea monopetala</i>	768 gm
21	Mahameda	<i>Polygonatum verticillatum</i>	768 gm
22	Chhinaruha	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>	768 gm
23	Karkatashringi	<i>Citrullus colocynthis</i>	768 gm
24	Padmak	<i>Prunus cerasoides</i>	768 gm
25	Riddhi	<i>Vigna cylindrica</i>	768 gm
26	Vridhhi	<i>Habenaria intermedia</i>	768 gm
27	Jivanti	<i>Leptadenia reticulata</i>	768 gm
29	Madhu	Honey	768 gm
30	Sharkara	Sugar	384 gm

Table 4: Administration of Shatavari Ghrita in various forms in different conditions and its effect

Form	Disease/ Condition	Properties probably contributing
Nasya ²⁶	Menopausal symptoms, DUB, Infertility, Menstrual disorders, PCOD, Stress, Anxiety	Phytoestrogenic, nervine tonic, coolant, Anti-inflammatory, antistress, Antidepressant
Pana ^{27,28}	Infertility, Menstrual irregularities, Urinary tract infections, Recurrent abortion, During lactation, Post hysterectomy, Premature Ovarian Failure	Aphrodisiac, antistress, galactagogue, nutritive, digestive, rejuvenative, antimicrobial, diuretic, phytoestrogenic, intellect promoting
Abhyanga ²⁹	Reduces signs of ageing, increases breast size, Reduces pregnancy related itching and stretch marks	Rejuvenating, coolant, antioxidant, free radical scavenger
Basti ³⁰	Infertility, Menstrual disorders, Prolapse, Dysmenorrhea	Aphrodisiac, Shukrala, Balya, Vata shamana
Uttarbasti ³¹	Infertility, Urethral caruncle, Recurrent abortions	Brinhana, Phytoestrogenic property, nutritive
Yoni Pichu ³²	Vandhyatva, Dyspareunia, Vaginal infections, Cervical erosion, Dryness of vagina, Prolapse or laxity	Phytoestrogenic, balances vaginal pH, antimicrobial, nutritive, brinhana

DISCUSSION

Shatavari is a miraculous drug which is equally beneficial for both males and females and finds utility in a range of physiological and pathological conditions. It is used either alone in the form of churna or extract and is often an important ingredient of various compound formulations. Shatavari Ghrita is one such formulation which is used through various administration routes and imparts different effects accordingly. Shatavari has Vata -Pitta shamaka³³ property and so is particularly effective in diseases or conditions where vitiated Vata and Pitta are involved.

Nasya: ‘Nasa hi Shiraso dwara’³⁴ asserts that anything instilled through the nose readily crosses the microchannels and reaches upto brain. It means it can directly affect the neuroendocrinology and stimulate the HPOU axis. This virtue makes Shatavari ghrita Nasya highly efficacious in irregular menses, PCOD, anovulation and infertility. Shatavari is an adaptogenic drug which helps body cope with physical and emotional stress. This makes it a perfect drug to pacify post-menopausal symptoms like anxiety, depression and mood swings.

Pana: Shatavari due to its aphrodisiac property promotes sperm count and improves semen quality, thus normalizing the male factor infertility³⁵. Its nutritive and anti-inflammatory action lead to strength and vigour making it useful in conditions like general weakness, infertility, recurrent abortions, menstrual disorders and sexual dysfunction. Galactagogue³⁶ activity makes it a routinely used formulation for lactating women. Shatavari also has phytoestrogenic and anti-depressant effect. It becomes highly efficacious in post hysterectomy and premature ovarian failure cases where it compensates for the low levels of estrogens and the resulting discomforts by virtue of its rejuvenative, antimicrobial, diuretic, phytoestrogenic and intellect promoting properties³⁷. As such Shatavari ghrita is an excellent medicine.

Abhyanga: Shatavari Ghrita when applied to body or scalp prevents premature ageing³⁸. It is rich in saponins like racemofuran, asparagamine A and racemosol which are compounds having antioxidant potential. Antioxidants prevent free radical cell damage and fight oxidative stress which is the main reason for ageing. It also prevents collagen breakdown which maintains skin’s elasticity and prevents wrinkles and fine lines. Its regular application during pregnancy reduces pregnancy related itching and stretch marks. It also prevents premature greying or hairfall³⁹.

Basti: No gynecological disorder can happen without the vitiation of Vata⁴⁰. Basti is the ultimate choice for the pacification of Vata⁴¹. So use of Shatavari Ghrita in the form of basti not only pacifies Vata but also imparts all the above discussed properties of Shatavari in the process. The normalization of Vata can cure diseases or conditions like menstrual disorders, dysmenorrhea

and infertility especially due to irregular cycles or anovulation. Its nutritive and balya property can bring significant relief in symptoms arising due to laxity of vaginal walls or genital prolapse.

Uttarbasti: Shatavari Ghrita can be used in the form of Uttarbasti especially in cases of infertility or recurrent abortion where the underlying cause is the fault in endometrium. This fault may be either the inadequate thickness of endometrium or the failure of implantation despite the normal endometrial thickness. It is an excellent way to achieve desirable therapeutic drug concentration at the target tissue. The nutritive and brinhana property helps in attaining the adequate endometrial thickness and the pacification of Vata leads to the proper implantation of the embryo.

Mutramargagata Uttarbasti of Shatavari Ghrita due to its anti-inflammatory and phytoestrogenic property can be used in case of urinary tract infections or urethral caruncle arising generally in post-menopausal women.

Yoni Pichu: Shatavari Ghrita Yoni pichu can be used in conditions of numbness or dryness⁴² of vagina. So, it is effective in relieving dyspareunia which can sometimes be the chief cause of infertility. Shatavari Ghrita can balance the vaginal pH and can be helpful in treating vaginal infections and cervical erosion as Ghrita itself is an excellent healing agent. The use of Shatavari Ghrita pichu alongwith Basti can probably increase the effect in case of prolapse.

CONCLUSION

Shatavari is a herb which has wide range of medicinal and nutritional properties. It is used singly or in various compound formulations. Shatavari Ghrita is one such formulation which is used through various administration routes and imparts different effects accordingly. It is used in the form of Nasya, Pana, Abhyanga, Basti, Uttar Basti or Yoni Pichu. Its use is equally beneficial for males and females. Shatavari Ghrita has excellent results in menstrual disorders, infertility, inadequate lactation, prolapse, stress, anxiety, sexual dysfunction and post-menopausal symptoms. Its use is highly recommended for lactating women, and it is effective in preventing premature ageing. Shatavari Ghrita can be a natural, cost effective, safe and efficacious solution to almost all conditions and phases of female life.

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