

Asuri chikitsā in Arshas: An Ayurvedic perspective with modern correlations: A review

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Abstract

Asuri Chikitsa, an esoteric branch of *Ayurveda*, involves mystical and ritualistic therapies used primarily for diseases of divine or supernatural origin. This review examines the application of *Asuri Chikitsa* in the management of *Arshas* (haemorrhoids), an ailment described in Ayurvedic texts as a condition arising from imbalances in the body's *Doshas*, particularly *Vata*. The article explores the historical and cultural significance of *Asuri Chikitsa*, with a focus on its use in *Arshas* when conventional treatments failed. It details the therapeutic methods, including the use of *Mantras*, *Yantras*, herbal combinations, and rituals, all aimed at restoring balance in the body and mind. Additionally, the review draws parallels between traditional Ayurvedic surgical procedures (*Chedana Karma*, *Kṣārakarma*, and *Agnikarma*) and their modern counterparts in proctology, such as haemorrhoidectomy, sclerotherapy, and infrared coagulation. The article also highlights how modern technological advancements, such as laser therapy and Doppler-guided haemorrhoidal artery ligation, are aligning with *Ayurvedic* principles. The integration of modern techniques with *Ayurvedic* wisdom underscores the relevance of *Asuri Chikitsa* in contemporary healthcare, offering a holistic approach to treating *Arshas*. Further research is essential to validate the efficacy of *Ayurvedic* treatments in modern medical practice.

Keywords: *Arshas*; *Ashuri Chikista*; Advanced Technology; Hemorrhoids; Ayurvedic principles

1. Introduction

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, encompasses a wide range of treatment modalities, including *Daivavyapāśraya* (divine therapies), *Yuktivyapāśraya* (rational therapies), and *Satvāvajaya* (psychological therapies). Among these, *Asuri Chikitsa* is a less explored branch that primarily deals with ritualistic, occult, or esoteric healing methods. This method was often applied when conventional therapeutic measures failed or when a condition was considered to have a divine or supernatural origin.

Arshas (hemorrhoids) is a condition well-documented in *Ayurvedic* classics, described as a fleshy growth that obstructs the anal channel and eliminates the existence like enemy¹ While modern medicine categorizes haemorrhoids as vascular structures^{2,3} in the anal canal that become swollen due to various reasons, The primary causes of *Arshas* are binge eating and a sedentary lifestyle, which decreases the activity of digestive enzymes and causes constipation, itchiness, burning, and pain near the *Guda*, which eventually results in bleeding⁴ (*Guda* area), which is unquestionably a *Marma* (essential portion), is where *Arshas* takes place. The disease manifest because of a variety of circumstances, such as an incorrect diet, prolonged standing or sitting, bad defecation habits, etc., which deranges the *Jatharagni* and vitiates the *Tridosha*, primarily the *Vata dosha*. The localisation of these vitiated *Doshas* in *Gudavali* and *Pradhana Dhamani* further vitiates *Twak*. Due to *Annavahasrotodushti*, *Mansa*, and *Meda Dhatus* result in the creation of *Arshas*⁵ Among the various treatments available for *Arshas*, surgical interventions (*Śastrakarma*) and para-surgical measures (*Kṣharakarma* and *Agnikarma*) hold a crucial place, which can be linked to modern advancements in proctology.

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2. Materials and methods

All sorts of references have been collected from our ancient Ayurvedic texts viz., *Sushruta Samhita*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Bhaisajya Ratnavali*. Modern books like Bailey and Love's, *Short Practice of Surgery*, *Surgery of the Anus Rectum and Colon*, *Atlas of General Surgery* Jaypee Brothers medical publishers etc are used as literary source.

Aim

To explore the role and relevance of *Asuri Chikitsa* in the management of *Arshas* from an Ayurvedic perspective, and to correlate its traditional therapeutic approaches with modern surgical and technological advancements.

Objectives

- To review the concepts, principles, and historical applications of *Asuri Chikitsa*, with a specific focus on its role in the treatment of *Arshas* as described in classical *Ayurvedic* texts.
- To identify and analyze the *Ayurvedic* surgical and para-surgical procedures such as *Chedana Karma*, *Ksharakarma*, and *Agnikarma* in the management of *Arshas*.
- To correlate traditional *Ayurvedic* approaches for *Arshas* with modern proctological techniques like haemorrhoidectomy, sclerotherapy, and infrared coagulation.
- To explore the integration of advanced medical technologies (e.g., laser therapy, Doppler-guided procedures) with *Ayurvedic* principles, and to highlight the need for further research in combining traditional and modern practices for enhanced clinical outcomes.

2.1. Definition of *Asuri chikitsa*

Asuri Chikitsa refers to a specialized form of therapy involving mystical, ritualistic, and supernatural elements, often performed to remove or alleviate diseases believed to have a divine, *karmic*, or metaphysical origin. The word *Asuri* is derived from *Asura*, signifying a connection to spiritual forces that are beyond human control. *Asuri Chikitsa* involves the use of *Mantras*, *Yantras*, Herbs, and rituals to neutralize negative influences affecting the body and mind.

आसुरीमानुषीदैवीचिकित्सात्रिविधामता । शत्रैः कषायैर्लोहाद्यैः क्रमेणान्त्यः सुपूजिताः ॥२३ ॥

Types of *chikista*⁶

Chikista is of three types viz. *Asuri*, *Manusi* and *Daivi*. The treatment with surgery is known as *Asuri*.

2.2. Application of *asuri chikitsa* in *arshas*

In the context of *Arshas*, *Asuri Chikitsa* was employed when conventional treatments failed. Various *Ayurvedic* texts mention the use of:

- *Mantras* (Sacred chants) to reduce pain and inflammation.
- Herbal combinations to counteract supernatural influences.
- *Yantras* and *talismans* to ward off negative energies.
- Rituals and oblations to pacify *Doshic* imbalances believed to be influenced by planetary forces.

Although such practices might not align with modern scientific principles, their psychological impact on the patient cannot be ignored, as belief and faith play an essential role in healing.

2.3. Historical significance

The use of *Asuri Chikitsa* is rooted in the *Atharva Veda*, which describes various esoteric therapies⁷ for different ailments. *Ayurvedic* texts like *Susruta Samhita* and *Caraka Samhita* mention divine and mystical interventions when describing treatment approaches.

*Caraka Samhita*⁸ emphasizes *Daivavyaprasraya Chikitsa*, which includes *Asuri Chikitsa*, for diseases where the cause is uncertain or spiritual factors are suspected.

*Susruta Samhita*⁹ highlights certain offerings in treating of *Arshas*.

Aṣṭanga Hṛdaya highlights the importance of rituals and chants in specific cases where diseases do not respond to traditional therapies.

This suggests that *Asuri Chikitsa* was an integral part of disease management in ancient times, particularly for conditions perceived as having metaphysical causes.

2.4. Surgical interventions for *Arshas*

When non-surgical measures failed, *Sastrakarma* (surgical procedures) were performed. *Susruta*, the father of surgery, describes the following surgical techniques for *Arshas*:

- *Chedana Karma* (Excision) – Surgical removal of haemorrhoidal masses using specialized instruments.
- *Kshara Karma* (Caustic Therapy)¹⁰ – Application of alkaline preparations (*Kṣhara*) to burn and shrink the haemorrhoidal tissue.
- *Agnikarma* (Cauterization)¹¹ – Use of heat or fire-based instruments to coagulate and destroy pathological tissue.

2.5. Modern correlation of surgical methods

The ancient methods of treating *Arshas* correlate closely with modern proctology:

- *Chedana Karma* → Haemorrhoidectomy (Surgical removal of haemorrhoids)
- *Kshara karma* → Chemical Cauterization (Sclerotherapy using chemical agents)
- *Agnikarma* → Infrared Coagulation (Infrared or laser therapy for haemorrhoid shrinkage)

These interventions highlight how ancient Ayurveda's surgical wisdom finds application in modern medical advancements.

2.6. Advanced technology and Ayurveda

With technological evolution, *Ayurveda* has adapted to modern innovations, enhancing treatment outcomes for *Arshas*. Some notable advancements include:

- Laser Haemorrhoidoplasty (LHP) – A modern equivalent of *Agnikarma*, utilizing laser beams for precise coagulation and tissue removal.
- Doppler-Guided Haemorrhoidal Artery Ligation (DG-HAL) – Advanced diagnostic tools combined with targeted intervention, aligning with *Ayurveda*'s principles of pinpointing *Doshic* imbalance.
- *Kṣhara Sutra* Therapy with Standardized Techniques – Integration of scientific precision in herbal caustic therapy to enhance efficacy and minimize complications.
- Biofeedback and Neuromodulation¹² – These modern techniques resemble ancient Ayurvedic approaches focusing on the nervous system's role in anorectal disorders.

The fusion of *Ayurveda* with Biotechnology, Artificial intelligence (AI), and advanced diagnostics continues to refine treatment protocols, making them more effective and accessible.

3. Discussion

The management of *Arshas* through *Asuri Chikitsa* reflects a unique blend of spiritual healing, ritual practices, and therapeutic intervention rooted in *Ayurveda*. Traditionally part of *Daivavyaprasraya Chikitsa*, it was employed in cases believed to have metaphysical causes or where conventional treatments failed. Ancient texts like the *Atharva Veda*, *Caraka Saṃhita*, and *Susruta Saṃhita* describe the use of mantras, yantras, and rituals—methods that may offer psychosomatic benefits even today. When such divine methods proved insufficient, Ayurvedic surgeons utilized *Sastrakarma*, *Kṣharakarma*, and *Agnikarma*, which correlate closely with modern proctological procedures like haemorrhoidectomy, sclerotherapy, and infrared coagulation. Recent innovations such as laser therapy and Doppler-guided interventions align with Ayurvedic principles, demonstrating the system's adaptability. However, the mystical basis of *Asuri Chikitsa* lacks empirical validation, limiting its acceptance in modern medicine. Further interdisciplinary research is essential to integrate its psychosomatic strengths with contemporary clinical protocols, enriching holistic care.

4. Conclusion

Asuri Chikitsa in *Arshas* represents an intersection of spiritual, ritualistic, and therapeutic interventions in *Ayurveda*. While modern medicine has moved away from mystical approaches, the psychological and faith-based impact of such treatments cannot be disregarded. The surgical principles outlined in ancient texts continue to inspire contemporary proctology, demonstrating *Ayurveda*'s timeless relevance.

With the integration of modern technology and scientific validation, *Ayurvedic* principles for *Arshas* management are undergoing a transformation, making them more evidence-based and patient-friendly. Future research and clinical trials will further solidify *Ayurveda*'s role in holistic proctology, ensuring a balance between tradition and innovation in healthcare.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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