



Case Study

A CASE STUDY ON KARNA SRAVA: CLINICAL INSIGHTS AND TREATMENT APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

Karna is an essential sensory organ associated with *Shravana*-hearing and is considered one of the *Navadwaras*, majorly influenced by the *Akasha Mahabhuta*. Acharya Sushruta has explained 28 ear diseases and *Karnasrava* is one among them. This article highlights the significance of local therapeutic interventions (*Sthanika Chikitsopakramas*) in the effective treatment of *Karna Srava*. A 34-year-old male patient visited the *Shalaky Tantra* Outpatient Department (OPD) at JJAMC, Aligarh, complaining of left ear pain for four days, along with itching. On examination, pus and fungal mass were found in the left ear canal and the tympanic membrane was not visible. The patient was treated using *Karna Sthanika Chikitsopakramas*, including *Karna Prakshalana* (ear irrigation) and *Karna Dhupana* (fumigation), along with *Shaman aushadhis* (internal medicines). These treatments resulted in complete recovery from the disease. The signs and symptoms seen in this case align with those of otomycosis, a fungal infection of the ear canal, which typically presents with pain, itching, discharge and ear blockage. Sincere immediate treatment of ear-related conditions is crucial due to the delicate nature of the ear and the importance of hearing. Early intervention helps to prevent complications and ensures early optimal recovery.

INTRODUCTION

Shalaky Tantra^[1] is one of the specialized branches of Ayurveda focused on the diagnosis and treatment of diseases affecting the *Urdhwajatrugata* (upper body organs). It encompasses disorders related to the *Netra* (eyes), *Karna* (ears), *Nasa* (nose), *Asya* (mouth), and *Kanta* (throat), as well as the relevant therapeutic approaches, including *Shastra Chikitsa* (surgical treatments). The ear (*Karna*), one of the five sensory organs (*Panchendriya*)^[2], is essential for *shabdagrahana* (hearing)^[3] and is classified as a *bahyasrotas* (external channel)^[4]. Acharya Sushruta has detailed 28 different ear-related disorders (*Karna Rogas*)^[5], which include signs, symptoms, and treatment protocols. Among these, *Karna Srava* (ear discharge) is recognized as a significant condition. Acharya

Vagbhata, however, describes only 25 ear disorders^[6] and does not include *Karna Srava* specifically. *Karna Srava* is caused by either *Agantuja* (external) or *Nija* (internal) factors, leading to the vitiation of *Kapha Dosha* and formation of pus in the ear canal. Due to the action of *Pittadosha* there will be liquefaction of the pus and by the influence of *Vatadosha* this liquefied pus comes out of the ear canal. *Karna Srava* is commonly associated with several conditions such as otitis externa, otomycosis, chronic suppurative otitis media, furunculosis of the external ear, and diffuse otitis externa. The treatment principles for *Karna Srava* are similar to those for *Krimikarna* (infestation of the ear) and *Putikarna* (foul-smelling ear discharge), primarily involving local treatments like *Karna Prakshalana* (ear irrigation), *Karna Dhupana* (fumigation), *Karna Pramarjana* (cleansing), *Karna Pichu* (ear wick therapy), *Shirovirechana* (head purgation), and *Shvasa* therapies, based on the specific signs and symptoms.^[7]

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Otomycosis: It is a fungal infection of the ear canal, commonly caused by fungi such as *Aspergillus Niger*, *A. fumigatus*, and *Candida albicans*. The symptoms include intense itching, ear discomfort, pain, watery discharge with a musty odor and a feeling of ear blockage. The fungal growth in the ear canal may appear as white, brown, or black masses. Upon otoscopic examination, *A. Niger* presents as black-headed filamentous growth, *A. fumigatus* appears as pale blue or green, and *Candida* presents as a white or creamy deposit. The skin of the ear canal may appear red, swollen. Treatment involves thorough cleaning of the ear to remove debris and discharge which promote fungal growth and it involves syringing, suction, or mopping. Specific antifungal medications are used, and treatment is continued for a week after apparent cure to prevent recurrence. Keeping the ear dry is essential.^[8]

Case Report

Treatment of Otomycosis in 34-Year - Old Male Patient

A 34-year-old male patient presented to the *Shalaky Tantra* OPD of JJAMC, Aligarh (OPD No.7449), with complaints of left ear pain and itching for four days. He noticed mild pain on waking in the morning, which gradually worsened as the day advances. Despite his negligence, the pain intensified, insisting him to seek medical attention. He reported a similar episode of ear discharge 4 months earlier. He actually has a history of swimming often in swimming pool. On examination, the external auditory canal of the left ear was filled with purulent discharge and *Karna Pramajana*, fungal moulds were found adhering to the tympanic membrane. The right ear canal appeared normal, with a visible tympanic membrane.

Treatment Protocol

- 1. Karna Pramajana:** The purulent discharge was first removed by wiping using sterile cotton dipped in *Gomutra*, followed by aural syringing (*Karna Prakshalana*) with *Triphala Kashaya*.
- 2. Karna Prakshalana:** The patient continued ear irrigation for five days using *Gomutrarka Pichu* to control discharge and cleanse the ear canal.
- 3. Karna Dhupana:** The patient underwent *Karna Dhupana* (fumigation) using *Haridradi Varti* for two consecutive days.
- 4. Internal Medications**
 - *Triphala Guggulu*: 1 tablet twice daily for 7 days.
 - *Tab. Septillin*: 1 tablet twice daily for 15 days.

Specific Advice: The patient was advised to avoid head baths, consumption of cold/refrigerated foods and exposure to cold winds. He was also instructed to keep the ear canal dry always.

Karna Prakshalana Procedure

- The patient sat in a comfortable chair with his head tilted over a kidney tray to collect the return fluid.
- Lukewarm *Triphala Kashaya* was drawn into a 10ml syringe.
- The ear pinna was gently pulled upwards and backwards and a stream of the *Kashaya* or any *dravadravya* specified for the disease was directed along the posterosuperior wall of the ear canal.
- After the procedure, the ear canal and tympanic membrane were checked and dried using a cotton pledget.

Karna Pichu

- After *Karna Pramajana*, moisture was removed from the ear canal.
- A cotton wick soaked in *Gomutrarka* was placed in the ear for three hours, and then replaced with fresh cotton plugs.

Haridradi Dhuma

Haridradi Varti was burned, and the fumes were directed into both ears, followed by the insertion of cotton plugs after the fumigation.

OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

The patient's mucopurulent discharge in the ear was attributed to fungal infection. After three days of *Karna Prakshalana*, the ear pain decreased significantly. By the fifth day, ear itching had subsided, and discharge was greatly reduced by the fifth day following *Karna Prakshalana*, *Karna Pramajana*, and *Pichu Dharana* treatments. After two days of *Karna Dhupana*, all the symptoms were resolved completely. Follow-up were done on the 15th and 30th days which revealed no recurrence and the patient was free from all the symptoms.

DISCUSSION

The *Samanya karna roga chikitsa* includes a holistic approach, which includes oral intake of *Ghruta*, *Rasayanas* (rejuvenating therapies) and lifestyle modifications such as avoiding strenuous physical activities, protecting the head from water during bathing or swimming, maintaining celibacy and vocal rest. These measures help to promote healing and prevent aggravation of the condition anytime.

In the present case, the treatment protocol followed is a systematic approach to treat the fungal infection causing *Karna Srava*. The first step was *Karna Prakshalana*, using *Triphala Kashaya*, to cleanse the infected ear canal. *Triphala* is known for their anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties, which help to reduce the infection and also alleviates the pain.^[9]

After cleaning the ear by *Karna prakshalana*, *Gomutrarka Pramajana* was performed to further cleanse the area. This was followed by *Karna Pichu*, wherein a cotton wick soaked in *Gomutrarka* was placed in the ear to control the discharge and provide additional antifungal benefits. *Gomutrarka* has demonstrated fungicidal properties against various fungal strains like *Aspergillus fumigatus*, *A. flavus*, *A. Niger*, and *Candida* species, making it an effective treatment for fungal infections of the ear.^[10]

As the infection began to heal, *Haridradi Dhupa* was administered. The primary purpose of the *Dhupa* therapy was to balance the vitiated *Vata Dosh*, which is the primary cause behind the discomfort and pain associated in ear infections. *Haridra* is well-known for its anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and antifungal properties, which helps to normalize the ear canal environment and relieve the pain.^[11] The additional components in the *Haridradi Varti* such as *Triphala* and *Trikatu* further enhanced its therapeutic effects.

The internal medicines advised are *Triphala Guggulu*, *Tab. Septilin* in a specified quantity. These medications are known for their potent anti-allergic, anti-inflammatory and anti-infective properties, contributing to the overall healing process and helping to prevent recurrence of the infection. Together, the local treatments and internal medicines supported steady wound healing and prevented further complications.

CONCLUSION

In this case, the management of *Karna Srava* through Ayurvedic *Sthanika Chikitsopakramas* and internal medicines proved highly effective in addressing the fungal infection of the ear canal. The fungal mass was carefully removed by *Karna pramarjana*, preventing any damage to the delicate ear structures such as the tympanic membrane and ear ossicles. It is important to note that unskilled attempts at removing the fungal mass can result in complications like lacerations of the ear canal lining or damage to the tympanic membrane. This

underscores the importance of skilled medical intervention.

The primary objective in treating this condition is to balance the aggravated *Kapha* and *Vata doshas*. The combination of appropriate local therapies and internal medicines successfully restored balance in the ear, healed the infection and alleviated symptoms of pain, itching, and discharge and also reduced the chances of recurrence which is very common in ear infections. This case highlights the effectiveness of Ayurvedic management in treating ear disorders, particularly *Karna Srava* and explains the importance of a holistic approach to treatment that combines traditional therapies with modern diagnostic understanding in a elaborative manner.

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