Pharmacological Study of Certain Ayurvedic Herbs WSR to Silicosis

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Abstract: This is twenty first century and in this era we all are depends on many kind of industries for our daily requirements and silica is very important ingredient of most of these industries, many workers who works in such kind of industries like mining, ceramic industry, construction and demolition, sand blasting etc. are with many respiratory problems and silicosis is one of them and one of biggest cause of death in developing countries and till date we are using many drugs with having a lot of side effects but there are so many ayurvedic herbs which are more effective in silicosis and symptoms associated with silicosis in this article I compiled some ayurvedic herbs effective in silicosis, so we can improve the life span of silicosis affected peoples and improve their quality of life.

Keywords: Silicosis, silica, respiratory disease, silica, Ayurvedic herbs etc

1. Introduction

Silicosis is the most common occupational lung disease worldwide; it occurs everywhere, but is especially common in developing countries. Silicosis is due to deposition of fine respirable dust (less than 10 micrometers in diameter) containing crystalline silicon dioxide in the form of alpha-quartz, cristobalite, or tridymite. Silica flour is nearly pure silica (SiO₂) finely ground. Silica flour has been used as a polishing agent, as a paint extender, abrasive, and filler for cosmetics. Silica flour has been associated with all types of silicosis, including acute silicosis.

2. Aims and Objectives

Ayurvedic herbal treatment for silicosis is aimed at reducing or reversing the damage to the lungs, which is caused by exposure to crystalline silica. Ayurvedic medicines which reduce inflammation and infection in the lungs form the mainstay of treatment in the management of this condition. Medicines which have a specific action on the lungs and which help to treat and normalise the mucosa lining the lungs and respiratory tract are important in the treatment of this condition.

To improve the life span and quality of life with minimum loss, Ayurvedic herbal medicines which have a specific immunomodulatory effect on the lungs as well as on the entire body are also used in the management of chronic silicosis. These medicines prevent or reduce damage to the lungs and body because of occupational exposure to silica. Depending upon the severity of the condition, individuals affected with silicosis require treatment ranging from 3 to 12 months, in order to improve significantly from the after-effects of this condition. Long-term treatment may also significantly reduce the possibility of cancer arising from silicosis. Ayurvedic herbal treatment thus has a significant role to play in the management and treatment of silicosis.

Association for Rural Advancement through Voluntary Action and Local Involvement (ARAVALI) Established by the Rajasthan government, ARAVALI is working in collaboration with the Dang Vikas Sansthan in the livelihood sector.

3. Causes

Silicosis is caused primarily due to a long-term exposure (usually 5–15 years) to silica. But a short-term exposure (for a few weeks or months) can also result in silicosis, which tends to worsen considerably as time progresses, if not diagnosed in its early stages. People who work in the following industries are particularly at risk:

- stone masonry and stone cutting – especially with sandstone
- construction and demolition – as a result of exposure to concrete and paving materials
- pottery, ceramics and glass manufacturing
- mining and quarrying
- Ceramic industry
- sand blasting
- Abrasives manufacturing
- Mining
- Quarrying
- Road and building construction
- Sand blasting

Prevalence

India has a large mining industry, concentrated in the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. In 1999, the Indian Council of Medical Research reported that around 3.0 million workers are at high risk of exposure to silica; of these, 1.7 million work in mining or quarrying activities, 0.6 million in the manufacture of non-metallic products (such as refractory products, structural clay, glass and mica) and 0.7 million in the metals industry. There are also around 5.3 million construction workers at risk of silica exposure.

Rajasthan has 32,000 mines where over two million labourers work and only seven Pneumoconiosis Board centres to diagnose silicosis. Located in seven state-run
medical colleges, each centre has a team of three doctors who examine the cases only on weekends.

According to TIO it has been reported that karoli, jaipur, kota, jalore, jodhpur, Udaipur etc parts of rajasthan, Khambat in gujrat some areas of Madhyapradesh, Delhi, Karnataka, Haryana, orissa and west bengol, maharastra, and koderma in Jharkhand, the prevalence rate of silicosis is very high due to large mining industry and badly affected by silicosis.

ICMR has reported about free 30 lacks workers pron to silicosis and around 50 lacks construction workers who are exposed to silica, they are also in risky zone although many Pneumoconiosis boards are examining the silicosis cases at rajasthan state level.

Industry-wise prevalence of silicosis in India- various industries play important role in silicosis for eg. Workers who are working in stone cutters industries, mica processing, slate and pencil industries they are more affected from silicosis rather then gold mines, magnaeze mine and glass factories.

SAMPRAPTI –VIGHTAN AS PER AYURVEDA-

4. Material and Methods

I compiled all classical and modern texts, newspapers, survey reports, blogs, hospitals records and conducted personal interviews regarding to silicosis at various cities of Rajasthan. Related workers may affect from silicosis after few weeks to five years exposure with crystalline silica dust (acute silicosis). After 5-10 years of expouser accelerated silicosis may develop. Chronic simple silicosis usually develops after 10 years or more expouser after that silicosis becomes more complicated like fibrosis, remodeling, lung cancer, certain auto- immune diseases and tuberculosis.

5. Sign and Symptopms

Silicosis is a progressive interstitial lung disease, characterized by Because chronic silicosis is slow to develop, signs and symptoms may not appear until years after exposure. Signs and symptoms include:
- Dyspnea (shortness of breath) exacerbated by exertion & Tachypnea (rapid breathing) which is often labored,
- Persistent cough, & Hoarseness of voice
- Fatigue & Malaise
- Rapid breathing & Shallow breathing
- Sleep problems
- Scarred & Inflamed lungs
- Fever & Chest pain
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Gradual darkening of skin (blue skin)
- Gradual dark shallow rifts in nails eventually leading to cracks as protein fibers within nail beds are destroyed.

**Symptoms in Advanced Stages of Silicosis:**
- Cyanosis, pallor along upper parts of body (blue skin)
- Cor pulmonale (right ventricle heart disease)
- Respiratory insufficiency

**Patho-Physiology of Silicosis**

**Figure 1:** Silicosis affected lung in autopsy

**Lungs:** Egg shell appearance in silicosis-

- Eggshell calcification - almost exclusively silicosis

**Figure 2:**

- Normal Lungs
- Lungs with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF)

**Figure 3:**

- Detained view of lung tissue
When small silica dust particles are inhaled, they can embed themselves deeply into the tiny alveolar sacs and ducts in the lungs, where oxygen and carbon dioxide gases are exchanged. There, the lungs cannot clear out the dust by mucous or coughing.

When fine particles of crystalline silica dust deposited in the lungs, macrophages that ingest the dust particles will set off an inflammation response by releasing tumor necrosis factors, interleukin-1, leukotriene B4 and other cytokines. In turn, these stimulate fibroblasts to proliferate and produce collagen around the silica particle, thus resulting in fibrosis and the formation of the nodular lesions. The inflammatory effects of crystalline silica are apparently mediated by the NALP3 inflammasome.\(^{[12]}\)

Characteristic lung tissue pathology in nodular silicosis consists of fibrotic nodules with concentric "onion-skinned" arrangement of collagen fibers, central hyalinization, and a cellular peripheral zone, with lightly birefringent particles seen under polarized light. The silicotic nodule represents a specific tissue response to crystalline silica. In acute silicosis, microscopic pathology shows a periodic acid-Schiff positive alveolar exudate (alveolar lipoproteinosis) and a cellular infiltrate of the alveolar walls.

**Diagnosis**

These are useful pathological tests should be done:-

- Chest X-Ray
- Computed tomography
- Pulmonary function tests
- Purified protein derivative (PPD) skin test (for tuberculosis)
- Serologic tests for connective tissue diseases

**Treatment**

Silicosis is a permanent disease with no cure. but treatment of silicosis should be started as soon as possible to avoid serious health hazards and complications and sometimes death of the patients. Treatment options currently available focus on alleviating symptoms and preventing any further progress of the condition. These include:

- Experimental treatments include:
  - Antibiotics
  - Corticosteroid therapy.
  - bronchodilators
  - palliative therapy

**Complications**

Patients with silicosis are particularly susceptible to tuberculosis (TB) infection—known as silicotuberculosis. The reason for the increased risk—3 fold increased incidence—is not well understood. It is thought that silica damages pulmonary macrophages, inhibiting their ability to kill mycobacteria. Even workers with prolonged silica exposure, but without silicosis, are at a similarly increased risk for TB.

Pulmonary complications of silicosis also include Chronic Bronchitis and airflow limitation (indistinguishable from that caused by smoking), non-tuberculous Mycobacterium infection, fungal lung infection, compensatory emphysema, and pneumothorax. There are some data revealing an association between silicosis and certain autoimmune diseases, including nephritis, Scleroderma, and Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, especially in acute or accelerated silicosis.

In 1996, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) reviewed the medical data and classified crystalline silica as "carcinogenic to humans." The risk was best seen in cases with underlying silicosis, with relative risks for lung cancer of 2-4. Numerous subsequent studies have been published confirming this risk. In 2006, Pelucchi et al. concluded, "The silicosis-cancer association is now established, in agreement with other studies and meta-analysis."

**Ayurvedic Herbs for Silicosis**

There are so many Ayurvedic herbs can be used for the silicosis few of them I am describing in this paper. These drugs can be used according to frequency of exposure and the severity of the patients as per need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ras</th>
<th>Guna</th>
<th>Vireeya</th>
<th>Vipaka</th>
<th>Prabhav</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>PIPALI</td>
<td>Katu</td>
<td>Laghu</td>
<td>Snigdha</td>
<td>Tiksha</td>
<td>Anushka</td>
<td>Madhur</td>
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<td>Guru</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>Vaat-Pitta shamak Glycyrizine, Phyto estrogen</td>
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<td>Rukash</td>
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<td>Ushana</td>
<td>Katu</td>
<td>Kaph – Vaat shamak Diosgenin &amp; Kno Solasooine</td>
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<td>Kaph –Vaat shamak Tanin &amp; volatile oil</td>
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<td>Katu</td>
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<td>Tikshana</td>
<td>Ushana</td>
<td>Katu</td>
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<td>Kaph – Vaat Alantolactone &amp; inulin</td>
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Prevention

- The best way to prevent silicosis is to identify work-place activities that produce respirable crystalline silica dust and then to eliminate or control the dust ("primary prevention"). Water spray is often used where dust emanates. Dust can also be controlled through dry air filtering.
- Keep away all the industries from city area.
- Dense layer plantation around the industrial area to prevent the silica dust.
- Controlling silica dust in the workplace is key to preventing silicosis.
- When dust cannot be controlled, as may be true in the sandblasting industry, workers should wear protective gear, such as hoods that supply clean external air or special masks that efficiently filter out tiny particles. Such protection may not be available to all people working in a dusty area (for example, painters and welders), so whenever possible abrasives other than sand should be used.
- Workers exposed to silica dust should have regular chest x-rays so that problems can be detected early.
- Workers who smoke should be encouraged to stop.
- Other preventive measures include pneumococcal vaccine and an annual influenza vaccination to help protect against infections to which workers may be more vulnerable.
- All workers should be treated with ayurvedic medicinpreparations such like balya rasayana and immune booster drugs.
- Prevent further exposure to silica dust.
- Strongly advise patients to quit smoking and provide help in smoking cessation efforts.

Regulation

In March 2016, OSHA (Occupational safety and health administration) officially mandated that companies must provide certain safety measures for silicosis and who work with or around silica, in order to prevent silicosis, lung cancer, and other silica-related diseases.

Immune Booster Drugs

These drugs can be used to boost the immune status of the body.

Prognosis

The prognosis of silicosis depends upon the chronicity and severity of lung damage caused by this condition. Prevention is a very important aspect of the management of this condition. Occupational safety standards need to be implemented rigorously.

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Key Provisions

- Reduce the permissible exposure limit (PEL) for respirable crystalline silica to 50 micrograms per cubic meter of air, averaged over an 8-hour shift.
- Use engineering controls (such as water or ventilation) to limit worker exposure to the PEL; provide respirators when engineering controls cannot adequately limit exposure; limit worker access to high exposure areas; develop a written exposure control plan, offer medical exams to highly exposed workers, and train workers on silica risks and how to limit exposures.
- Provide medical exams to monitor highly exposed workers and gives them information about their lung health.
- Provide flexibility to help employers — especially small businesses — protect workers from silica exposure.
- The main challenge of eliminating silicosis in India is in the informal, unregulated sectors of industry which do not fall under the control of statutory tools such as the Factory Act of India (1948). This Act mandates a well ventilated working environment, provisions for protection from dust, reduction of overcrowding and provision of basic occupational health care.
- The National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC) has directed the government of the states and union territories of India to provide complete information about all measures taken to prevent and eliminate the problem of silicosis.
- Silicosis is a notified disease under the Mines Act (1952) and the Factories Act (1948). It should also be made a notifiable disease under the Public Health Act (1875), so that reporting becomes mandatory. Awareness campaigns are needed to sensitize workers about their risk of silicosis, personal protective measures and early symptoms.
- Silicosis control programme should be integrated with the existing revised national tuberculosis control programme of India. District tuberculosis officers, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, must ensure documentation of workplaces and workers at risk from silica exposure, especially in the informal sector. Occupational history-taking must be mandatory to differentiate silicosis from pulmonary tuberculosis and hence avoid the risk of unnecessary anti-tubercular therapy for the former.
- The national health insurance programme in India for households below the poverty line (called Rashtriya Swasthia Bima Yojna, RSBY) uses an efficient, computerized network for tracking claims and for reimbursements through private health insurance or third-party administrators. The government may consider extending RSBY to poor workers who are at risk of contracting silicosis and to their families. Silicosis is a compensable injury under the Employees’ State Insurance Act (1948) and the Workmen’s Compensation Act (1923). If silicosis health boards were set up in every state of India they could carry out surveillance for silicosis cases and assessment of disability and loss of earnings resulting from silicosis so as to decide the level of compensation and rehabilitation.

7. Conclusion

Medicinal plants are useful in various ailments like bronchial asthma (tamak swas) Tuberculosis (kashaya) since centuries in rural areas. Now considerable evidences that ayurvedic herbs are very effective in inflammatory diseases. Not only medicinal plants but also jaggery had a preventive action against silicosis. Ayurvedic herbs prevents the lungs damage due to crystalline silica these herbs reduces inflammation and infections in lungs and manages the silicosis conditions, it resulting the normalize the mucosal lining of the lungs and respiratory tract. Ayurvedic immunomodulator herbs are useful in the management of chronic silicosis. Ayurvedic treatment should remains continues from 3 to 12 months, depending upon the severity of silicosis. Long term treatment may also reduces the possibilities of complicated diseases as such cancer arising from silicosis. Thus ayurvedic treatment can play significant role in the prevention and management of silicosis.

8. Interpretation

Ayurvedic drugs stimulates digestion, anti-inflammatory compounds that reduces swelling and pain, phenolic compounds that act as antioxidants and venotonics, antibacterial and antifungal tannins that act as natural antibiotics, diuretic substances that enhance the elimination of waste produce and toxins and alkaloids that enhance mood and give a sense of well being. the importance of plants lies on their chemotherapeutic effects but not in their role as a source of model compounds for drug development.