

A literary survey on therapeutic formulations used in *Nasya Karma* (inhalation therapy) and their properties with special reference to *Carakasamhita*

Ranasinghe RLDS¹, Ediriweera ERHSS², Wijesiriwardhana HGSG¹

¹Department of Desheeya Chikitsa, Institute of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

²Department of Nidana Chikitsa, Institute of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Abstract

Nasya Karma (inhalation therapy) is one of the procedures of *Pancha Karma* where instillation of medicine is done through the nasal route. It is considered as the best treatment for diseases above the clavicle. Despite the extensive use of *Nasya* prescribed in authentic texts for various ailments, only a very limited number of formulations are being used today. The aim of the study was to explore the knowledge on therapeutic formulations of *Nasya*, taking *Carakasamhita* as the source material. The formulae were collected and their Ayurveda pharmacodynamic properties and bioactivities were analyzed. In the present study, 150 formulations consisting of 210 ingredients were found. The majority of the ingredients originate from plants (84%), 14% of the ingredients are from animal sources while 2% are from minerals. On the basis of usable parts, the herbal ingredients can be categorized into seven types viz. *Phala*, *Patra*, *Mula*, *Pushpa*, *Niryasa*, *Tvak* and *Kandha*. These formulations can be used in the form of *Navana* (6%), *Avapeeda* (80%), *Dhmapana* (5%), *Dhuma* (4%) and *Pratimarsha* (5%). These formulations are indicated for *Urdhvajatrugata Roga* (diseases above the clavicle) as well as other systemic diseases. According to *Caraka*, most prominent *Rasa* of the ingredients used in *Nasya Karma* is *Katu* (70%), followed by *Tikta* (68%). The ingredients predominantly exhibit *Ruksha* (78%) and *Laghu* (62%) attributes. These ingredients are mostly of *Ushna Veerya* (70%), *Katu Vipaka* (75%) and *Kapha Vata Shamaka* (79%). Anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antimicrobial, hypoglycemic and antioxidant properties of some of the ingredients are scientifically proven. Ayurveda pharmacodynamic properties of collected ingredients indicate that *Nasya Karma* is most suitable in the treatment of *Kapha Vata Janya* diseases. It is concluded that a wide range of therapeutic formulae is mentioned in *Carakasamhita* for *Nasya Karma* that can be administered differently according to the nature of the disease and the strength of the patient.

Keywords: Ayurveda, *Nasya Karma*, inhalation therapy

Corresponding Email: rlsandu@gmail.com