

Abstract No. 33

A comparative study of Ayurveda and traditional treatment (*Vedda* community) modalities of snake bite in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lanka has one of the world's highest death rates from snake bites. The current recommendation is to give anti-venom treatment only if the victim shows signs of envenoming and snake is highly venomous. *Vedda* people are the geography aborigines in Sri Lanka. They have their own treatment methods especially in snake bites. This study was conducted to identify the association between widely used common regimens among *Vedda* community and Ayurveda text to aid snake bite. The objectives were to compare Ayurveda and traditional treatment of snake bite in Sri Lanka, to identify the drugs used in the management of snake bites among indigenous people in Sri Lanka and to identify an immediate treatment for snake bite. Data were collected by a questionnaire, interview with the *Vedda* community and literary review. *Veddas* were selected from Dambana, Sri Lanka. Literary review was done by using only treatments which are mentioned in *Carakasamhitha*, *Susruthasamhitha* and *Ashtangahridaya samhitha*. According to the results obtained, there was evidence to confirm that the majority of medicinal plants mentioned in great treatise were used by *Veddas*. In addition to that some endemic plants are used by them for treatment of snake bite. Their main treatment is chewing bark of *Gmelina asiatica* (*Demata*). They used most common utterance for treatment of patient soon after a snake bite, whereas Ayurveda texts mentioned the same. Prepared drugs such as medicated oil, anti-poisonous stones are used by *Vedda* community. They do not have a long term management system due to their powerful emergency methods.

Keywords: Snake bite, *Vedda* community, *Gmelina asiatica*

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