

Role of Ayurvedic Medicinal Plants in the Management of Ascites (Jalodara): A Review**Dr. K. L. Sharma, MD (Ay), PhD**

Professor & Head,

Department of Dravyaguna

Government Ayurved College

Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India

Dr. Astik Sharma (BAMS)

Ayurved Medical Officer

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Abstract

Ascites, characterized by pathological fluid accumulation in the peritoneal cavity, is a common complication of chronic liver diseases, especially cirrhosis. In Ayurveda, it is described under *Udara Roga*, particularly *Jalodara*, resulting from deranged *Tridosha*, impaired *Agni*, and obstruction of *Srotas*. Ayurvedic medicinal plants offer a holistic approach through *Mutrala* (diuretic), *Yakrit-uttejak* (hepatoprotective), *Deepana Pachana* (digestive correction), and *Shothahara* (anti-inflammatory) properties. This review highlights key medicinal plants such as *Boerhavia diffusa*, *Picrorhiza kurroa*, *Andrographis paniculata*, and *Tribulus terrestris*, along with their pharmacological actions and clinical relevance in ascites management. The integration of Ayurvedic therapy with modern understanding may provide effective, safe, and sustainable treatment strategies.

Keywords: Ascites, Jalodara, Ayurveda, Punarnava, Hepatoprotective, Diuretic, Medicinal Plants

1. Introduction

Ascites is a major clinical manifestation associated with liver cirrhosis, portal hypertension, and hypoalbuminemia. Despite advancements in modern medicine, recurrence and complications remain significant challenges.

In Ayurveda, ascites is described as *Jalodara*, a subtype of *Udara Roga*, caused by:

- *Mandagni* (digestive impairment)
- *Srotorodha* (channel obstruction)
- *Dosha imbalance* (predominantly Vata-Kapha)

Ayurvedic management focuses on:

- Eliminating accumulated fluid
- Restoring liver function
- Correcting metabolism

2. Aim and Objectives

- To review Ayurvedic medicinal plants used in ascites
- To analyze their pharmacological actions
- To correlate Ayurvedic principles with modern scientific evidence

3. Methodology

This is a narrative review based on:

- Classical Ayurvedic texts (*Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita*)
- Ethnomedicinal and pharmacological studies
- Modern research articles

4. Ayurvedic Pathogenesis of Ascites

According to Ayurveda:

- *Agnimandya* leads to improper digestion
- Formation of *Ama* causes obstruction of channels
- Fluid accumulation occurs in the abdominal cavity

Key factors:

- दोष: Vata + Kapha
- स्रोतसः: Udakavaha, Annavaha
- दुष्ट धातु: Rasa, Rakta

5. Important Ayurvedic Medicinal Plants

5.1 Punarnava (*Boerhavia diffusa*)

- **Properties:** Mutrala, Shothahara
- **Actions:**
 - Potent diuretic
 - Hepatoprotective
 - Anti-inflammatory
- **Clinical relevance:** Reduces ascitic fluid and edema

5.2 Kutki (*Picrorhiza kurroa*)

- **Properties:** Tikta, Pitta-shamak
- **Actions:**
 - Strong hepatoprotective
 - Improves bile secretion
- **Use:** Liver cirrhosis-associated ascites

5.3 Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*)

- **Properties:** Deepana, Pachana
- **Actions:**

- Enhances liver detoxification

- **Role:** Corrects Agnimandya

5.4 Gokshura (*Tribulus terrestris*)

- **Properties:** Mutrala, Balya
- **Actions:**
 - Diuretic
- **Use:** Fluid retention and urinary imbalance

- Anti-inflammatory

- Renal support

5.5 Bhumyamalaki (*Phyllanthus niruri*)

- **Actions:**
 - Hepatoprotective
- Antiviral (Hepatitis-related ascites)

5.6 Pippali (*Piper longum*)

- **Actions:**
 - Bioavailability enhancer
- Metabolic stimulant

5.7 Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*)

- **Actions:**
 - Mild laxative
- Vata anulomana

6. Mechanism of Action

Ayurvedic Perspective

- Mutrala → Fluid elimination
- Deepana-Pachana → Metabolic correction
- Yakrit-uttejaka → Liver rejuvenation
- Shothahara → Inflammation reduction

Modern Correlation

- Diuretic effect → Reduces ascitic fluid
- Hepatoprotective → Prevents liver damage
- Anti-inflammatory → Reduces fibrosis
- Antioxidant → Cellular protection

7. Classical Formulations

- Punarnavadi Kwath
- Punarnava Mandur
- Arogyavardhini Vati
- Gokshuradi Guggulu

8. Discussion

Ayurvedic medicinal plants offer a **multifactorial approach** in ascites management:

- Address root cause (*Agnimandya*)
- Improve liver function
- Reduce fluid accumulation
- Prevent recurrence

Punarnava acts as the **drug of choice**, while Kutki and Kalmegh target liver pathology.

Combined therapy enhances overall efficacy.

9. Conclusion

Ayurvedic medicinal plants play a significant role in the management of ascites by:

- Reducing fluid accumulation
- Enhancing liver function
- Correcting metabolic imbalance

Integration with modern medicine may improve patient outcomes and reduce complications.

10. Future Scope

- Clinical trials on herbal combinations
- Network pharmacology studies
- Standardization of formulations

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