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Ayurvedic Understanding and Management of Tamaka Shwasa: A Comprehensive

Review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction:

Bronchial asthma is a prevalent chronic inflammatory disorder in children, marked by episodic bronchoconstriction, airway hyperresponsiveness, and mucus hypersecretion. It significantly impacts quality of life, school performance, and immunity. In Ayurveda, it closely correlates with *Tamaka Shwasa*, a subtype of *Shwasa Roga*, primarily involving *Vata* and *Kapha* Doshas. Understanding its Ayurvedic perspective may offer a holistic and individualized treatment approach, especially in paediatric care.

Methods:

A comprehensive literary review was conducted using classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, along with modern scientific literature from PubMed, AYUSH Research Portal, and Google Scholar. Emphasis was placed on identifying Ayurvedic etiopathogenesis, doshic involvement, and practical formulations relevant to paediatric management.

Results:

Ayurveda explains *Tamaka Shwasa* as a disease of chronic *Vata-Kapha* imbalance, aggravated by factors like impaired *Agni*, accumulation of *Aam*, obstruction in *Pranavaha Srotas*, and *Rasa Dhatu Dushti*. Immune compromise (*Vyadhikshamatva*) plays a central role in recurrence. Specific Ayurvedic formulations such as *Gudadyavaleha*, *Vasa Avaleha*, *Kantakari Ghrita*, and *Swarna Prashana* are highlighted for their bronchodilatory, Rasayana, and immunomodulatory actions.

Discussion:

This review bridges Ayurvedic and biomedical perspectives of paediatric bronchial

asthma. Ayurvedic management focuses not only on symptomatic relief but also on long-term immune enhancement and recurrence prevention. An integrative approach may offer promising outcomes in paediatric asthma care, with emphasis on diet, lifestyle, and seasonal regimens. **Keywords:** Tamaka Shwasa, Ayurveda, Bronchial Asthma, Vyadhikshamatva, Agni Dushti, Srotorodha.

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Introduction

Asthma is a prevalent chronic disease among children, respiratory affecting nearly 14% of the global paediatric population (GINA, 2023). It manifests with wheezing, dyspnoea, cough, and tightness of chest, particularly at night or early morning, disrupting sleep and daily activities. While modern medicine addresses the inflammatory and allergic components using bronchodilators and corticosteroids, these treatments often come with side effects and do not provide a approach. In Ayurveda, curative strikingly similar clinical entity exists in the form of Tamaka Shwasa, a condition described under Shwasa Roga in texts like Acharya Carakaa Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya.[1] The episodic and chronic nature, involvement of Vata and Kapha, seasonal variation, and hereditary links make Tamaka Shwasa a compelling Ayurvedic correlate of bronchial asthma. This review presents a consolidated literary view of asthma through Ayurvedic perspective with emphasis on disease pathogenesis, treatment principles, and practical formulations.

Tamaka Shwasa is a type of Shwasa in which patient feels excessive difficulty and drowning in dark is known as Tamaka Shwasa. Tamaka Shwasa is a disease in which patient experience severe

symptoms of respiratory distress with extreme weakness, fatigue and mental glooming. The name of Tamaka Shwasa is due to the fact that, the symptoms or attack of this disease precipitates at night and also during the time of attack, the breathing difficulty is so severe that patient feels entering into the darkness (Tama Pravesh). Both the Vata and Kapha have been considered to be the chief Doshas involved in the pathogenesis of Tamaka Shwasa. Among the five types of Sharira Vayu - prana Vayu get vitiated during this disease,[2]

When Vata is obstructed by vitiated Kapha, it gets reverses and affect the and Pranavaha **Srotas** producing Dyspnoea associated with wheezing sound, Cough, laboured breathing etc. Due to constant coughing patient become unconscious, greatly distressed and feels comfort for a while when the sputum being expectorated.[3] Throat of the patient is severely affected, and speaks hardly. He feels discomfort in lying down position, so unable to get a sleep. He feels comfort in sitting or in propped up posture. He likes to take hot things only. His eyes are protruded, forehead is covered with sweat and he feels a great distress all the times. His mouth becomes dry. These symptoms are intensified by cloudy, humid and cold weather, easterly winds, foul smelling and by taking Kapha increasing things. The *Tamaka Shwasa* (Bronchial Asthma) is *Yapya*. It is curable if it is of recent origin.

SanTamaka Shwasa [4]

This subtype of *Shwasa* worsens during nighttime but shows improvement upon exposure to cool environments- unlike Tamaka Shwasa, which typically aggravates with cold and early morning hours. The condition is named "SanTamaka" due to the patient's perception of being engulfed in darkness during the episodes, evoking a sense of drowning. The predominance of Pitta Dosha makes cooling therapies (Sheetopachara) beneficial in managing symptoms.

Pratamaka Shwasa[5]

This clinical condition is characterized by high fever and episodes of unconsciousness in addition to *Tamaka Shwasa*-like symptoms. According to *Acharya Chakrapani*, while *Vata* and *Kapha* are the dominant doshas in *Tamaka Shwasa*, in *PraTamaka Shwasa*, *Pitta* is also significantly involved.

Nidana Panchaka of Tamaka Shwasa (Fivefold Diagnostic Approach) [6]

Classical texts delineate both internal and external causative factors (*Nidana*), such as exposure to allergens (smoke, dust), dietary incompatibilities (*Guru, Snigdha Ahara*), emotional triggers

(Shoka, Bhaya), and misuse of senses (Asatmendriyartha Samyoga). The pathogenesis initiates with Agnimandya (weak digestion) and formation of Aam (metabolic toxins), which obstructs the respiratory tract. The vitiated Kapha accumulates in Pranavaha Srotas, provoking Vata, spasmodic causing episodes and disturbed breathing. The gradually disease involves multiple systems-Annavaha, Udakavaha, and Rasavaha Srotas, establishing a complex multisystem pathology akin to systemic inflammation seen in modern asthma.

Purvarupa of Shwasa [7-9]

- Anaha-Refers to the restriction of Vata and mala movement, leading to constipation and absence of abdominal sounds. It results from improper diet (Guru, Sheeta, Vistambhi) causing Agnimandya, Aam formation, and obstruction.
- 2. Parshvashoola -Pain in the flanks or ribs, caused by aggravated Vata due to Kapha covering in alveoli and disturbance in Annavaha Srotas.
- 3. Hrit Peeda- Discomfort or pain in the chest region due to obstructed and aggravated Vata in the heart. Seen in Apatarpana conditions leading to respiratory muscle fatigue.
- 4. *Prana Vilomata*-Reversed or disturbed flow of *Prana Vayu* due to *Kapha*-induced inflammation and digestive impairment, leading to breathlessness and discomfort.

- 5. Bhaktadwesha Aversion to food caused by Kapha accumulation and indigestion; natural suppression of hunger due to toxin overload.
- 6. *Arati*-Restlessness and disinterest, stemming from *Prana Vilomata* and respiratory obstruction.
- 7. Aasya Vairasya -Altered taste in the mouth due to Rasadhatu disturbance caused by heavy and unwholesome diet.
- 8. Adhmana Abdominal distension from vitiated Apana Vayu and constipation, leading to gaseous swelling and obstruction.
- 9. Shankha Nistoda Pricking pain in temporal region caused by Vata entering the mastoid area, commonly seen in Vatik Pratishyaya.
- 10. Shoola Severe colicky pain in the abdomen due to aggravated Vata in Koshtha, hampering respiration and causing distress during breathing.

Rupa (Signs and Symptoms of Tamaka Shwasa) [10,11]

The manifestation of disease-specific symptoms appears during the *Vyaktavastha*, the fourth stage of disease progression (*Kriyakala*). Key clinical features of *Tamaka Shwasa* include:

1. *Greevashirashcha Sangrahya*-Vitiated *Vata* leads to muscular stiffness and discomfort in the head and neck region, creating a sensation of being tightly held or constrained.

- 2. *Ghurghurakam*-Characteristic wheezing sounds result from *Kapha* blocking the respiratory channels, particularly in the throat.
- 3. **Peenasa** Excessive mucosal secretion in the nasal tract occurs due to aggravated *Vata* and *Kapha*, corresponding to modern rhinitis.
- 4. **Asino Labhate Saukhyam** Patients experience symptomatic relief in a seated posture, as it facilitates diaphragmatic movement and optimal air exchange. This parallels orthopnoea in contemporary medicine.
- 5. *Ushnabhinandati* Due to the *Sheeta* (cold) quality of *Vata* and *Kapha*, patients seek warmth (e.g., hot drinks), which pacifies these doshas.
- 6. *Kantodhvansa* -Hoarseness and speech difficulty arise when *Kapha* accumulates in the throat, obstructing phonation.
- 7. Ati Teevra Vega Shwasa Acute episodes of breathlessness occur suddenly and severely, reflecting the hallmark paroxysmal attacks of asthma. Expiration is typically prolonged.
- 8. **Shwasa Krichhrata** Laboured breathing results as the body attempts to compensate for reduced oxygen supply through increased respiratory rate.
- Pratamyati Ativegatah Severe attacks lead to mucus plugs and airway obstruction, creating a sense of suffocation

- and visual darkness (*Andhakara*), often causing panic.
- 10. **Prana Prapidakam**-The cardiovascular system is burdened due to increased respiratory effort, manifesting as chest pain and palpitations.
- 11. Nachapi Nidra Labhate Shayane
 Shwasa Piditam -Lying down
 aggravates symptoms due to secretion
 pooling and airway blockage, causing sleep
 disturbances.
- 12. **Shayanah Parshva Peeda**-In a recumbent position, diaphragmatic pressure and trapped air in the lungs produce pleural discomfort and lateral chest pain.
- 13. **Shleshma Vimoksante Sukham**-Expectoration of thick sputum provides temporary relief by clearing the airways.
- 14. *Shleshma* Samuchyajanya

 Dukham- Difficulty in expectoration of viscous mucus triggers persistent coughing and patient exhaustion.
- 15. **Krichhrachhaknoti Bhashitum** Hoarseness and speech difficulty arise due to mucus accumulation around the vocal cords.
- 16. *Kasate Sannirudhyate* -Episodes of coughing can become so intense that momentary cessation of breathing occurs.
- 17. *Kasate Muhurmuhu Pramohanam* Repeated, violent coughing may lead to transient loss of consciousness due to hypoxia and fatigue.

- 18. *Ucchritakhsa* -The patient may raise their head and look upwards in an attempt to ease airflow, a reflex to overcome airway restriction.
- 19. **Aruchi**-Anorexia results from impaired digestion (*Agni Dushti*) due to *Pitta* involvement, leading to diminished desire for food.
- 20. *Vishushkasyata*, *Trisha* Dry mouth and increased thirst arise from water loss during rapid breathing episodes.
- 21. *Lalatasveda* Sweating on the forehead is a sign of respiratory distress and increased cardiac workload.
- 22. *Urahpeeda*-Pain in the chest occurs when aggravated Vata affects the thoracic region, indicating underlying respiratory effort and inflammation.

UPASHAYA AND ANUPASHAYA [12] Upashaya

- Shleshma Vimokshante Sukham
 [Feeling better after expectoration]
- 2. Aseenolabhate Saukhyam [Feeling comfort in sitting position] -The patient feels better in sitting position as compared in lying down position.
- 3. *UshnaAhara Vihara* [Relief by taking hot things] *Tamakashvasa* patient gets relief by those things which are *ushna* in *guna*. Due to *ushna guna kaphavilayan* occurs.

Anupashaya

- Sleshma Amuchyamana Bhrisham
 Dukhitaha [Owing to inability to expectorate he feels greatly disturbed]
- 2. Durdina [Cloudy climate]
- 3. Meghambuna [Rainy Season]
- 4. Sheeta Ritu [Winter]
- 5. Sheetambu [Cold water]
- 6. Pragvaten [(Eastern wind]
- 7. Sayanaha Shwasa Piditam [Aggravated in lying posture]
- 8. Shleshma Vardhaka Aushadhahar Viharadibhi Vridhi

SAMPRAPTI (Pathology of Tamaka Shwasa) [13]

Samanya Samprapti (General Pathogenesis)

The foundational pathogenesis of Tamaka Shwasa begins with the vitiation of Kapha dosha, which accumulates in the Pranavaha Srotas (respiratory passages), thereby obstructing the natural flow of Vata. According to Acharya Chraraka's Chikitsa Sthana, exposure to causative factors (Nidana) leads Vata to invade the respiratory system and provoke chestresiding Kapha. This disturbed Kapha, in turn, blocks the airway and results in various forms of *Hikka* and *Shwasa*.[14] Vagbhata elaborates that the obstructive role of Kapha is primary in triggering Vata vitiation. The characteristics of vitiated Vata-dryness (Ruksha), roughness (Shushka), and lightness (Laghu)-cause constriction and rigidity within the respiratory system. Additionally, disruptions are noted in associated systems like the *Udakavaha* (watercarrying) and *Annavaha* (digestive) channels.[15]

Vishisht Samprapti of Tamaka Shwasa

Acharya Caraka further details the disease-specific mechanism of Tamaka Shwasa, highlighting that the condition often originates in the Pittasthana (lower region), where stomach Kapha accumulates in the form of Ama (toxic metabolites). This Ama-Kapha complex circulates throughout the particularly after conditions like Jwara, Agnimandya, Amatisara, or Visuchika. Simultaneously, Vata is exacerbated by inappropriate diet, lifestyle, or systemic illnesses such as Kshaya, Urahkshata, Pandu, or Pratishyaya. Suppression of natural urges (e.g., belching, vomiting) or excessive physical exertion also contribute to dysfunction in the Pranavaha When Srotas. such dysfunction triggering occurs, any environmental factor-such as dust, smoke, cold air, trauma, or cold water - can transform functional impairment into structural damage (Srotodushti). This results becoming in Prana Vayu misdirected (Vimargagamana) and obstructed (Sanga), manifesting as

Shwasa Roga. Specifically in Tamaka Shwasa, Prana Vayu moves in a reverse direction (Pratiloma Gati) within the respiratory tract, leading to bronchial constriction, excessive mucus secretion, and airway blockage, collectively giving rise to Ghurghuraka (wheezing).

The ancient *Ayurvedic* model of *Tamaka Shwasa* remarkably parallels modern descriptions of asthma, where bronchospasm, mucosal inflammation, and excessive secretion culminate in reversible airflow obstruction. This synthesis provides a robust framework for integrative paediatric respiratory care.

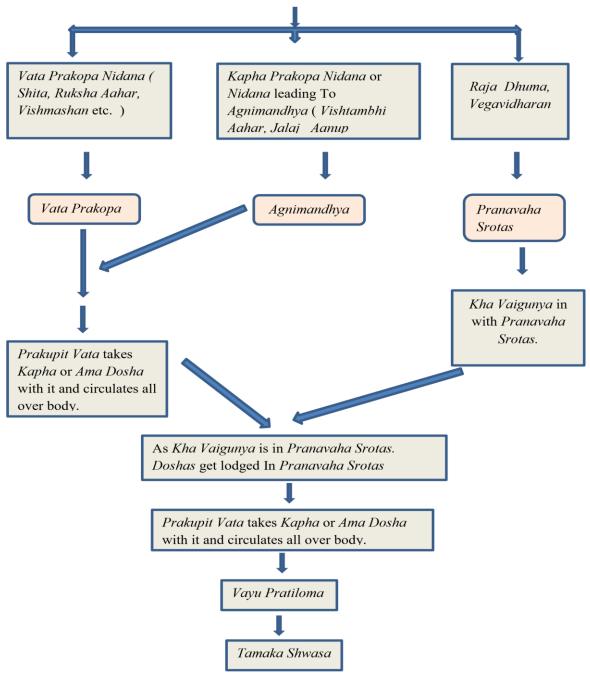


Fig.no. 1 Showing Samprapti of Tamaka Shwas

Sadhyasadhyata (Prognosis of Tamaka Shwasa)

Acharya Acharya Caraka described it as most fatal disease and no other disease are capable of taking away life as quickly as Hikka and Shwasa. Acharya Caraka says that all Shwasa are Sadhya, if their Rupa are not clearly and totally manifested and also if they occur in Balwan person. Tamaka Shwasa is Yapya(under control only during the treatment) but in early stages it is Sadhya. Tamaka Shwasa is Krichrasadhya or is curable when it is having less duration of onset and in weak patient with chronic type of Tamaka Shwasa becomes Yapya (incurable).

Chikitsa Siddhant of Tamaka Shwasa [16]

According to Acharya Acharya Caraka following three basic steps should be adopt while treating any disease i.e. Nidana Parivarjana, Samshamana and Samshodhana.

Nidana Parivarjana

First line of treatment is to avoid the causative factors. If the precipitating or predisposing factors are not avoided, the *Doshas* involved in the pathogenesis will further be aggravated and the prognosis will be worse. In treatment of *Tamaka Shwasa* (Bronchial Asthma) avoidance of causative factors or triggering factors play a very important role.

Samshaman and Samshodhana Chikitsa

The line of treatment based on these therapies described by *Acharya Acharya Carakaa* can be subdivided as:

- 1. Samanya Chikitsa Krama (General principles of treatment)
- 2. Vishisht Chikitsa Krama (Specific treatment)

1) Samanya Chikitsa Krama (General principles of treatment)

Acharya Caraka mentioned the treatment of *Tamaka Shvasa* as per *Doshic* status.

- 1. Vata-kaphanashak chikitsa
- 2. Vata Karak & kaphanashak chikitsa
- 3. Kaphakarak & vatanashak chikitsa
 When Vata & Kapha are equally vitiated
 then Vata Kaphanashaka Chikitsa is
 useful. When Kapha causing obstruction of
 Vayu then Kaphnashak & Vatakarak
 Chikitsa is useful out of all these
 "Anilapaham" Chikitsa is considered to be
 superior one. Brihan Chikitsa has been
 indicated in Shwasa Roga.

2) Vishisht Chikitsa Krama (Specific treatment principle)

According to predominance of Dosha the patient of Shwasa can be divided into two groups:

- 1. Vata predominant
- 2. Kapha predominant

According to body built the patient of *Shwasa* can be divided into two groups:

- 1. Balvana (with good body built)
- 2. Durbala (with poor body built)

If Kapha is predominant and the patients have strength then he or she should be given Vamana and Virechana with wholesome food followed by other therapies like Dhoomapana, Leha and Doshashamak Chikitsa. If Vayu is aggravated and patient is weak and if patient is either infant or old, then he or she should be administered Vata nashak drugs and nourishing recipes prepared from Sneha. Yusha and Mansarasa.

Samshodhana Chikitsa

- Snehana: In Tamaka Shwasa both external and internal Snehan can be done with the help of various medicated oil and Ghrit. For external Snehan, Tila taila mixed with lavana should be gently massaged on the chest to lose the tenacious sputum in the channels.[17]
- **Swedana:** After Snehana Nadi, Prastara and Sankara type of Swedana may be applied. By these processes Kapha which has dissolved in the patient's body, gets dissolved in the body Srotas, the body

- Srotas becomes softened and as a result, the movement of Vata is restored to normal condition.[18]
- Vamana: After proper Swedana, Snigdha food may be given to the patients for the Utkleshana of Kapha. Thereafter, Vamana should be performed with the help of Madanaphala pippali, mixed with Saindhava and Madhu (honey).[19]
- Dhumapana: If some pathogenic material is still hidden, it should be eliminated by Dhumapana (smoking)-Haridrapatra, Eranda moola, Lakhsha, Haritala, Devadaru, Manahshila and Mamsi should be powdered together and made in to sticks. Such stick smeared with Ghee should be smoked. [20]

Samshaman Chikitsa- Shamana Chikitsa is based on following principles[21]

- i. Ama Nashaka Chikitsa and Agnivardhak Chikitsa Langhan, Deepana, Pachana.
- ii. Kapha Vata Shamak Chikitsa
- iii. Ushna Ahara Vihara
- iv. Vatanulomaka Chiktsa

Table No. 1 Showing Common Ayurvedic Formulations Used in *Tamaka*Shwasa

| Formulation | Examples | | Dose | | Anupana |
|-------------|---|-------------|---------|----|------------|
| Туре | | | | | (Vehicle) |
| Kwatha | Dashmoola, | Shirishadi, | 40-60 r | nl | Warm water |
| (Decoction) | Pushkarmuladi, Bharangyadi, Vasadi, Shwasahara Mahakashaya | | BD | | |

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| Churna (Powder) | Shatyadi, Pushkarmuladi, | 3-5 gm BD | Honey or warm |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| | Shringadi, Talishadi, Karpuradi, | | water |
| | Muktadi, Ajmodadi | | |
| Vati (Tablets) | Eladi, Lavangadi, Vyoshadi, | 1–2 tab BD | Warm water |
| | Marichyadi | | |
| Avaleha (Linctus) | Chyavanprasha, Haridra Khanda, | 5-10 gm | Warm milk or |
| | Bharangi Haritaki, Vasavaleha, | BD | water |
| | Bharangi Guda, Vyaghri-Haritaki | | |
| Asava/Arishta | Kanakasava, Dashmularishta, | 10-15 ml | Equal water |
| | Draksharishta | BD | |
| Ghrita (Medicated | Manahshiladi, Vasa, Dashmuladi, | 20-40 ml | Warm |
| Ghee) | Tejovatyadi | | milk/water |
| Bhasma (Oxides) | Abhraka, Shringa | 125-250 | Pippali with |
| | | mg | honey |
| Kshara (Alkaline | Apamarga, Ashwagandha Kshara | 250-500 | Honey |
| Prep) | | mg | |
| Rasaushadhi | Shwasa Kuthara Rasa, Shwasa Kasa | 250-500 | Honey |
| | Chintamani, Shwasa Chintamani, | mg | |
| | Chandramrita Rasa | | |

Discussion

Asthma is one of the most prevalent chronic health conditions among children and adults. It is really curse for human being as it is a chronic disorder with longstanding duration requiring lifelong management. *Tamaka Shwasa*, as described in classical *Ayurvedic* texts, presents a clinical profile that closely resembles bronchial asthma. The detailed understanding of *Nidana Panchaka*, including *Agnimandya*, *Ama* formation, and *Srotorodha*, highlights a systemic etiology rooted in impaired digestion and

metabolism. Tamaka Shwasa is categorized as Yapya Vyadhia manageable but not fully curable-much like chronic asthma. The disease progresses through vitiation of Kapha and Vata Doshas, leading to Pranavaha Srotas obstruction, causing hallmark symptoms such as Shwasa Krichhrata, Ghurghuraka, and Asino Labhate Saukhyam.[22] In modern terms, this corresponds to bronchospasm, mucosal edema, and airway obstruction-hallmarks of asthma pathophysiology.[23]

The Ayurvedic framework extends to include Rasa, Udaka, and Annavaha indicating a multisystem Srotas, pathology and systemic inflammatory processes, akin to asthma's pulmonary impacts.[24] The early signs such (Purvarupa) as Anaha, Parshvashoola, and Hrit Peeda, provide a unique opportunity for early diagnosis and intervention-an aspect often lacking in conventional diagnosis. The Chikitsa Siddhanta principles) (therapeutic of Nidana Parivarjana, consists Samshodhana, and Samshamana. echoing modern notions of prevention, detoxification, and maintenance Personalized therapy.[25] treatment based on Dosha predominance and patient Bala (strength) ensures individualized care, similar to precision medicine.[26] Samshodhana therapies like Snehana, Swedana, Vamana, and Dhumapana are designed to expel vitiated Kapha and normalize Vata movement.[27] In Samshamana Chikitsa contrast, incorporates Deepana, Pachana, and Vatanulomana, which restore Agni, reduce Ama. and balance Doshas. **Formulations** such as Dashmoola Kwatha, Pushkarmooladi Churna, Vyoshadi Vati, Vasavaleha, and Kanakasava demonstrated have symptomatic efficacy.[28] Moreover, Swarna Prashana and Rasayana therapy promote *Vyadhikshamatva*, showing immunomodulatory benefits-a domain that aligns with modern immune-boosting interventions.[29]

According to modern medical science Bronchial Asthma is mainly a chronic inflammatory disease, affecting the air tubes leading to laboured The breathing. main cause of inflammation is chronic irritation because of hyperreactivity of lung immune system induced by different kinds of external and internal allergens. According to modern medical science Bronchial Asthma is mainly a chronic inflammatory disease, affecting the air tubes leading to laboured breathing. The main cause inflammation is chronic irritation due to hyper-reactivity of lung immune system induced by different kinds of external and internal allergens. The aetiology, pathogenesis, clinical features and prognosis of Tamaka Shwasa coincide very much with bronchial asthma.

Conclusion

Tamaka Shwasa, described in Ayurvedic literature, correlates well with the modern concept of childhood bronchial asthma. Ayurvedic diagnosis based on Dosha Dushya Sammurchana, Agni-Ama status, and Srotas involvement offers a multidimensional approach that addresses both root cause and symptoms. The treatment regimens, including bio-

purification (Shodhana) and palliative care (Shamana), supported by formulations like Gudadyavaleha, Vasavaleha, and Swarna Prashana, offer long-term control, symptom reduction, and immune support. These approaches hold promise especially in children, for whom long-term corticosteroid use in modern medicine raises safety concerns. Ayurveda's strength lies in its preventive and promotive aspects, reflected in Rasayana and daily-regimen-based interventions. The concept of *Upashaya Anupashaya* is valuable in assessing individualized

therapeutic responses. When integrated thoughtfully with modern understanding, *Ayurveda* can contribute significantly to comprehensive, low-toxicity asthma management, especially in paediatrics. Future clinical research incorporating standardized trials, microbiome studies, and immune profiling will further validate the *Ayurvedic* model and help bridge traditional and contemporary asthma care paradigms.

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