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Review Article

TAKRA A NECTAR ON EARTH

Hegde Gajanana¹, S Supriya^{2*}

¹Professor, Department of Kayachikitsa, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Mysore, Karnataka, India

²PG Scholar, Department of Kayachikitsa, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Mysore, Karnataka, India

*Corresponding Author Email: supriya.kundapur@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda gives great importance to Takra (Buttermilk) as diet and as medicine. Since buttermilk contains various vitamins, minerals, energy, protein, it is considered as a wholesome diet to maintain health. As it contains probiotic which facilitates proper digestion and absorption process, it maintains proper metabolism. It is indicated in various disorders related to gastrointestinal system and in metabolic disorders. Explanation regarding preparation method, properties, formulations and indication of Takra (Buttermilk) in various disorders are available in classical text books of Ayurveda. Hence here an attempt has been made to analyse the importance of Takra (Buttermilk) in the maintenance of health.

Keywords: Takra, Health, Buttermilk

INTRODUCTION

Takra (Buttermilk) has a great nutritional value. Its importance has been highlighted in Bhavaprakasha Uttarakanda that- There is AMRUTA for the well-being of devatas in swarga, like-wise Takra for the wellness of human beings on earth¹. Daily intake of Takra (Buttermilk) keeps the person healthy by the virtue of its agni deepaka and tridosha shamaka property. In combination with different drugs Takra is indicated in various disorders. Various formulations of Takra has been described in classical text books of Ayurveda, in different disease conditions. Different treatment modalities by using Takra, like Takradhara, Takrabasti and Takrapana can be adopted in clinical practice to obtain desired benefits.

Definition of Takra

Takra (Buttermilk) is a fermented milk product, refers to the liquid left over after extracting butter (navaneeta) from churned Curd (dadhi).

Takrapra bheda

Classification of Takra has been done based on the quantity of water added and method of preparation. It is of 4 types according to the classical text book Bhavaprakasha. They are Gholā, Mathita, Takra and Udashwith. Gholā refers to the variety of Takra where in curd is churned without addition of water and butter (sara) is not removed from it. Mathita is churned curd without addition of water but the cream or butter (sara) is removed. Takra variety is prepared with addition of ¼th part of water and cream is removed after churning. To prepare Udash with equal amount of water (1/2part)

should be added to curd. The mixture should be churned and cream has to be removed.²

Qualities according to prabheda

Gholā is considered as vatapittahara, Mathita is kaphapittahara, Udashwit is kaphaprada, balya (strengthens), shramaghna (relieves tired).³ Takra is kashaya (astringent), amla (sour), madhura (sweet) in rasa (tastes) and possessed with laghu (light for digestion) guna, ushna veerya (potency) and madhura vipaka. Takra does deepana (carminative), balya (strengthening), vrishya (aphrodesiac) and preenana (nourishing) action. It is best in grahani roga (mal absorption) because of sangrahi (anti-diarrhoeal) and laghu (light for digestion) guna.⁴

Nutritional facts of buttermilk

Buttermilk has a great nutritional value. It provides regular nutritional supply to the body through its components such as energy, carbohydrates, fat, protein, calcium. Nutritional value is assessed for 100 g of buttermilk in below mentioned Table. It is considered that every 100 g of buttermilk contains 40 kilo calorie of energy, 4.8 g of carbohydrate, 0.9 g of fat, 3.3 g of proteins and 116 microgram of calcium, Vitamin A 1 %, Vitamin C 4 % and iron 1 %⁵. (Table 1)

Tridoshashamakatakra

Takra is considered as tridoshashamaka by its properties such as rasa, guna, veerya, vipaka. It acts as vataghna due to its amla (sour), sandraguna. It does not vitiate Pitta dosha because of its swaduvipaka. Act as kaphahara by its kashaya (astringent), ushna, vikasi (spreading to minute pores) and roukshya qualities.

Indication of Takra in combination with different drugs

Even though Takra is considered as tridosahara it can be used along with combination of different drugs to enhance its doshahara property.

- In Vataja disorders Takra along with saindhalavana (rock salt).
- In pittaja disorders Takra along with sharkara (sugar).
- In kaphaja conditions Takra with kshara (alkali) and trikatu (pippali, shunti, maricha).
- Along with hingu (asafoetida), jeeraka (cumin seeds), saindhalavana (rock salt) in grahani (mal absorption syndrome), arshas (haemorrhoids), atisara (diarrhoea), rochana, pustiprada, balya, bastishulavinishana.⁶

Contraindication for Takrasevana

Even though takra is considered as tridoshashamaka and amrutasamana, it is contraindicated in few conditions. It is mainly contra indicated in pitta and vata associated conditions. Few contraindications mentioned in classics are, Kshata which refers to urakshata, Ushnakala referring to greeshmartu, Durbala, Murcha, Bhrama, Daha and Raktapitta.⁷

DISCUSSION

Buttermilk has characteristically sour taste. Increased acidity of buttermilk is primarily due to lactic acid produced by lactic acid bacteria; while fermenting lactose, the primary sugar in milk. The tartness of buttermilk is due to acid in the milk. As the bacteria produces lactic acid, the pH of the milk decreases and casein, the primary milk protein, precipitates, causing the curdling or clabbering of milk. This process makes buttermilk thicker than plain milk. Probiotics and Prebiotics combined maintain growth of bacteria in the colon. Prebiotics refers to the indigestible food which passes into the colon unabsorbed by the upper intestinal tract where they act as a medium for growth of the good bacteria. Probiotics refers to the good bacteria living in the colon and their helpful activities often leading to the good health of the intestine. Buttermilk has probiotic qualities that help to regulate the functions of gastrointestinal system. This is because probiotics introduce healthy bacteria into body, particularly into the digestive tract, where bacteria are essential for the breakdown and absorption of foods and their nutrients. Factors like unhealthy food habit, repeated intake of antibiotics can decimate the healthy bacteria in the

intestines, allowing unhealthy bacteria to flourish. A regular source of probiotics like buttermilk is important, as it will help to maintain normal gut flora to support optimal digestion and overall health.⁸

CONCLUSION

As Takra has deepana (Carminative), pachana (digestive), sangrahi and tridosahara property it is mainly indicated in disorders related to gastrointestinal tract. Since buttermilk contains almost all vitamins, minerals, energy, protein, it can be considered as a wholesome diet to maintain the health. As it contains probiotic which facilitates proper digestion and absorption process, it maintains proper metabolism to keep the person free from diseases.

Table 1: The nutritional value of buttermilk

Nutritional value per 100 gram	
Energy	40 kilo calorie
Carbohydrates	4.8 gram
Fat	0.9 gram
Protein	3.3 gram
Calcium	116 mg (12 %)
Vitamin A 1 %, Vitamin C 4 %, Iron 1 %	
*Percent daily value or based on 200 calories diet.	

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