



*Corresponding author:

kailashrana14@gmail.com

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Evaluation of the Clinical Efficacy of *Rumex vesicarius* Linn. (*Chukrika*) in *Arochak*: A Pharmacognostical and Clinical Study

Kailash Rana¹ Navneet Sharma² Ashwani Upadhyaya³ Rashmi Srivastava⁴

¹Post Graduate Scholar, Post Graduate Department of Dravyaguna Vigyan, Rajiv Gandhi Government P.G. Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Paprola, Himachal Pradesh, India 176115

^{2,3,4}Professor, Post Graduate Department of Dravyaguna Vigyan, Rajiv Gandhi Government P.G. Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Paprola, Himachal Pradesh 176115

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ABSTRACT

Background - *Arochak* (anorexia) is a common gastrointestinal disorder described in Ayurveda, resulting from vitiated *Kapha* and *Vata doshas* and impaired *Agni* (digestive fire). Traditional texts mention *Chukrika* (*Rumex vesicarius* Linn.) as *Deepana* (appetizer), *Pachana* (digestive stimulant), and *Ruchya* (taste enhancer), but its clinical efficacy has been inadequately studied.

Objectives - To identify the correct botanical species used as *Chukrika* and to evaluate the clinical efficacy of *Rumex vesicarius* Linn. in managing *Arochak*.

Materials and Methods - Three species of *Rumex*—*R. vesicarius*, *R. hastatus*, and *R. nepalensis*—were collected from Baijnath region, Himachal Pradesh, and pharmacognostically authenticated. A single-arm clinical trial was conducted on 30 patients diagnosed with *Arochak* at RGGPG Ayurvedic College, Paprola. Patients received 5g of *Chukrika Patra Churna* twice daily with lukewarm water for 15 days. Clinical symptoms such as *Ananabhilasha*, *Kashaya Asyata*, and *Picchilita* were assessed using a subjective grading scale. Statistical analysis was performed using paired t-test.

Results - Significant improvement was observed across major symptoms as follows:

- *Ananabhilasha*: 80.4% relief ($p < 0.001$)
- *Kashaya Asyata*: 86.6% relief ($p < 0.001$)
- *Picchilita*: 73.07% relief ($p < 0.001$)
- Clinically, 50% of patients were cured, 33% markedly improved, and 10% moderately improved. No adverse effects were reported.

Conclusion - *Rumex vesicarius* Linn. was confirmed as the most effective *Chukrika* species for *Arochak*. The herb demonstrated significant clinical efficacy and safety, validating its traditional use and suggesting potential for broader therapeutic application in digestive disorders.

Keywords: *Arochak*, *Chukrika*, *Rumex vesicarius* Linn., Anorexia

1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda emphasizes a preventive and promotive approach to health, aiming to maintain the well-being of the healthy and treat the diseased. Rooted in the principles of holistic wellness, Ayurveda considers balance among the body's *Doshas* (biological energies), *Agni* (digestive fire), and *Srotas* (bodily channels) essential for maintaining health and combating disease [1]. Among the three fundamental pillars—*Ahara* (diet), *Nidra* (sleep), and *Brahmacharya* (regulated conduct)—*Ahara* is considered the most significant. The *Charaka Samhita*, a foundational Ayurvedic text, underscores the importance of food, emphasizing that its quality, quantity, and compatibility with *Agni* are pivotal in determining health outcomes [2]. Food not only sustains life but also serves as a potent therapeutic tool when consumed judiciously [3].

The concept of *Agni* is central to Ayurvedic understanding, as it governs the processes of digestion, absorption, and assimilation [4]. Proper functioning of *Agni* is necessary to maintain the equilibrium of *Doshas*, tissues, and waste products. Impaired *Agni* leads to the accumulation of *Ama* (toxins), which is implicated in the genesis of disorders such as *Arochak* [5]. The *Annavaha Srotas*, described in *Sushruta Samhita*, are responsible for transporting and transforming food and are said to originate in the stomach and related vessels (*Annavahini Dhamanis*) [6]. Disruption of

these channels—due to improper diet, stress, or weak *Agni*—leads to gastrointestinal issues, including *Arochak* [7].

Arochak is characterized by a lack of desire to eat, even in the absence of major illness, and is linked to Kapha and Vata imbalance. It is further classified into *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, and *Kaphaja Arochak*, each showing specific symptoms such as taste aversion or heaviness [8]. Classical Ayurvedic management focuses on correcting dosha imbalances and improving *Agni* using dietary regulations, detox therapies (*Shodhana*), and herbal medications [9].

Traditional healers in the Baijnath region of Himachal Pradesh have long used local herbs to manage digestive ailments. One such herb is *Chukrika*, botanically identified as *Rumex vesicarius* Linn., known for its sour taste and carminative properties. It is mentioned in *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* and *Priya Nighantu* with *Deepana*, *Pachana*, and *Ruchya* effects [10]. These properties align with pharmacological actions such as hepatoprotective, antimicrobial, and antioxidant activity [11]. Despite its documented use in traditional medicine and classical Ayurvedic references, scientific validation in clinical settings remains limited [12].

This study was undertaken to fill this research gap by pharmacognostically identifying local species referred to as *Chukrika* and clinically evaluating the efficacy of *Rumex vesicarius* Linn. in *Arochak*. It attempts to integrate

traditional Ayurvedic wisdom with modern clinical methodology, reaffirming Ayurveda's relevance in current healthcare [13].

Aim of the Study - To evaluate the clinical efficacy of *Rumex vesicarius* Linn. in managing *Arochak*.

2. Materials and Methods

Sample Collection - Three species of *Rumex* - *R. vesicarius*, *R. hastatus*, and *R. nepalensis* - were collected from the mid-hill zones of Tehsil Baijnath, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, including areas around Tashi Jong and the RGGPG Ayurvedic College campus. Collected samples were authenticated using regional floras and herbarium references [14].

Processing and Preservation - Samples were washed, shade-dried, pulverized, and stored in airtight containers for pharmacognostical study and clinical use [15].

Ethical Clearance - The clinical trial was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee (certificate no. Ayu./IEC/2022/1339) and registered with the Clinical Trial Registry of India under CTRI/2024/01/061414 [16].

Study Design - A single-arm, open-label clinical trial was conducted on 30 patients diagnosed with *Arochak*. Participants were selected from the outpatient department (OPD) of RGGPG Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Paprola.

Inclusion Criteria

- Age > 18 years
- Both sexes

- Diagnosis of *Arochak* based on classical symptoms such as *Ananabhilasha*, *Kashaya Asyata*, and *Picchilita*

Exclusion Criteria

- Patients <18 years of age
- Known gastrointestinal or liver disease
- Unwillingness to participate

Intervention

- Drug: *Chukrika Patra Churna* (*Rumex vesicarius* Linn.)
- Dose: 5 g twice daily
- *Anupana*: Lukewarm water
- Duration: 15 days

Follow-up - Patients were assessed on the 5th, 10th, and 15th days. Clinical assessment was based on subjective grading of symptoms [17].

Assessment Criteria - Symptoms such as *Ananabhilasha*, *Kashaya Asyata*, *Picchilita*, and *Gourav* were graded on a 0–3 scale.

Outcome categories were -

- **Cured**: 100% relief
- **Markedly improved**: 76–99%
- **Moderately improved**: 51–75%
- **Mildly improved**: 26–50%
- **Unchanged**: <25%

Statistical Analysis - Data were analyzed using paired Student's t-test with significance levels: $p > 0.05$ (insignificant), $p < 0.05$ (significant), $p < 0.01$ (moderately significant), $p < 0.001$ (highly significant) [18].

3. Results

Demographics

- 48% of patients were aged 18–30 years.
- Gender distribution: 50% male, 50% female
- 53% were on a mixed diet.
- 70% had *Mridu Agni*, and 77% showed *Avara Jarana Shakti*.

Efficacy of Therapy

Significant symptomatic relief was observed:

- *Ananabhilasha*: 80.4% relief ($p < 0.001$)
- *Kashaya Asyata*: 86.6% relief ($p < 0.001$)
- *Picchilita*: 73.07% relief ($p < 0.001$)

Outcomes:

- 50% of patients cured
- 33% markedly improved
- 10% moderately improved
- No adverse effects reported

4. Discussion

This study, titled “Identification of Different Species Used as *Chukrika* and Evaluation of the Clinical Efficacy of *Rumex vesicarius* Linn. in *Arochak*” validates the clinical utility of a traditionally used herb.

Conceptual Framework - Review of classical Ayurvedic and ethnobotanical texts confirmed that *R. vesicarius* is the most authentic source for *Chukrika*, identified for its *Kapha-Vata* pacifying, *Ruchya*, and *Deepana* properties [10][11].

Pharmacological Insights - The herb's *Amla Rasa* (sour taste) and *Ushna Veerya* (hot potency) stimulate *Jatharagni* and clear *Annavaha Srotas*, thereby reducing symptoms

like *Ananabhilasha* and *Kashaya Asyata* [12][13].

Clinical Observations - Clinical improvements in all key symptoms were statistically significant. The subjective relief of >70% in major parameters support its *Kapha*-pacifying effect [17][18].

Comparative Evaluation of Species - Among three *Rumex* species studied, only *R. vesicarius* was traditionally and pharmacognostically consistent with the Ayurvedic description of *Chukrika*. *R. hastatus* showed some culinary use, while *R. nepalensis* lacked relevant medicinal utility [14][15].

Probable Mechanism of Action

- *Amla Rasa* enhances salivation and taste perception.
- *Ushna Veerya* stimulates *Agni*.
- *Laghu Guna* helps in clearing *Kapha*.
- Acts through *Annavaha* and *Rasavaha Srotas* [19]

Safety Profile

No adverse effects were observed, confirming the herb's safety when used appropriately [16].

Implications and Future Research - Further phytochemical analysis and multicentric clinical trials on a larger cohort are suggested to strengthen the evidence base [20].

5. Conclusion

This study successfully demonstrated that *Rumex vesicarius* Linn. (*Chukrika*) is clinically effective in managing *Arochak*. Supported by Ayurvedic pharmacology and confirmed through clinical trials, it serves as a reliable herbal intervention for appetite loss and related digestive issues. The integration of traditional knowledge with modern clinical methods paves the way for future research and formulation development in integrative medicine.

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