

International Meeting on

TRADITIONAL & ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

July 23-24, 2018 | Osaka, Japan

Jalauka (*Medicinal Leeches*), its related facts in ayurveda and their effect in Raynaud's disease- A single case report

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In Ayurveda, Sushruta has been described the uses of Jalauka (medicinal leech) for the treatment of various medico-surgical disorders. About 700 leech species are identified and only 5 leeches are used in medicinal purpose. In Ayurveda, 2 varieties of Jalauka are found i.e. one poisonous group (Savisha) and another one non-poisonous group (Nirvisha) while in modern science, poisonous leeches are known as stinging land leeches (*Hemadipsapicta* and *Hemadipsa ornate*). The species *Hirudo medicinalis* is commonly used for therapeutic purpose which is *Nirvisha Jalauka*. During the process of sucking, leeches secrete various biological enzymes into the blood stream through its saliva. Hirudin is one important component which acts as anti-coagulant. In addition to that several other properties are found in leech saliva like anesthetic, antibiotic, analgesic etc. Therefore it is advised to use in ischemic, inflammatory

conditions, skin grafting, chronic fatigue, pain, non-healing ulcers etc. In this case report, female patient of 80 years was diagnosed as Raynaud's disease with complaints of gangrenous changes in left digital phalanges (three fingers), swelling in forearms and pain in forearm since 20 days. Three leeches were applied in each digit of gangrenous part. Total three sitting one in every week leeches were applied. After 1st sitting of Jalauka application pain and swelling was got reduced. After second sitting line of demarcation was developed and dried up the necrosed part. Lastly after third sitting all necrosed part was sloughed out without surgical debridement. This single case manifests that gangrenous digit due to Raynaud's disease can be managed with jalkauka application.

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