Uniqueness of Puravaliyam remedies with special reference to authentic traditional texts

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Abstract

A wide range of distinctive treatment procedures have been used in the management of eye disorders in Sri Lankan traditional medicine. Among them, traditional Puravaliyam is a procedure where the medicated paste is applied externally around the closed eye except eye lids which is similar to Ayurvedic Bidalaka. The study aimed at identifying the materials, preparing methods and indications of various Puravaliyam formulas which are used in traditional medicine. A literary survey was carried out and the data were collected from authentic traditional medical texts such as, Yogarnavaya, Prayogarathnawali, Varayogasaraya and authentic Ayurvedic texts including Ashtanga Hradaya Samhita, Sharangadara Samhita. According to the data collected, 17 Bidalaka formulas were found from Ayurvedic texts and 101 puravaliam formulas were found from traditional texts. Among the puravaliam formulas, only one formula was mentioned in Ayurvedic texts. Although puravaliam formulas had been recommended for 30 eye disorders such as Timira, Kacha and Patala etc., there were only four eye disorders mentioned in Ayurvedic texts as indications of Bidalaka. There were 51 plant materials such as Strychnous potatorum, Tamarindus indica, 4 minerals like mercury, borax and 5 animal materials such as testicles of Vivera zivetta(Urule sattam), Cuttle fish bone which were not mentioned in Bidalaka remedies. The study revealed that there were 12 endemic plants mentioned in these formulas. The research also revealed that there were specific preparation methods which are not found in Ayurvedic Bidalaka, including the preparation of drugs on the heated blade of a hoe, tiding drugs inside a pottali and boiled under the hot ashes. Distinctive liquids were used as grinding agents of medications such as breast milk, lime juice etc. The present study contributes to identify specialty of drugs, preparation methods and indications of traditional Puravaliyam. It can be concluded that there were many traditional Puravaliyam remedies with specific features which need to be preserved.

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