

## REVIEW OF SHING-ALABU CHIKITSA AND CUPPING THERAPY

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda says that blood vitiated by vata, pitta and kapha should be removed from the body, by using sringa (horn of animal), jaloka (leeches), and alabu (pitcher guard) respectively. Blood vitiated by all the doshas by using all these things, for removal of more blood using either horn, leeches, or pitcher guard is especially suitable. Here we discussed about sringa and alabu chikitsa. Shring and Alabu Therapy can be correlated with cupping therapy which is a modified form of shring and alabu therapy. Cupping therapy is a form of alternative medicine in which cups are placed on the skin to create suction.

**Keywords:** Shinga, Alabu, Cupping

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda says that blood vitiated by vata, pitta and kapha should be removed from the body, by using sringa (horn of animal), jaloka (leeches), and alabu (pitcher guard) respectively. Blood vitiated by all the doshas by using all these things, for removal of more blood using either horn, leeches, or pitcher guard is especially suitable. Here we discussed about sringa and alabu chikitsa.<sup>1</sup>

Shringa is hot in potency, sweet in taste and unctuous, hence its ideal to remove blood vitiated by vata.<sup>2</sup>

Alabu (pitcher gourd) is considered bitter, dry and penetrating, hence it is ideal to remove blood vitiated by kapha.<sup>3</sup>

Shringa shall be slender and straight, 18 angula (36 cm.) in length, 12 angul in circumference (24 cm) in middle, have an orifice of three angul (6cm) (in diameter) at its base and another orifice of the size of a mustard at its tip, which resemble its nipple and covered with alayer of thin leather.<sup>4</sup>

Alabu (cups) shall be 12 angul (24 cm) long, 18 angula (36cm) in circumference, its mouth (orifice) being 3-4 angul (6 to 8 cm) wide, with a burning lamp kept inside.<sup>5</sup>

#### Method Of Using Shringa & Alabu[6]

After scratching or incision (by sharp instrument) the place (site selected for drawing blood) and covering the horn with a thin layer of cloth the blood should be removed by sucking, while using a alabu for removing blood a burning lamp should be kept inside.

After making small cut the base of horn is placed over the site and held firmly by hand, then the physician puts his mouth over the small orifice and begin to suck by force. By this act, fluid like blood, pus comes out and get collected at the same place within the edges of the horn, sucking may have to be done more than once to draw out the accumulated fluid. The physician need not be afraid of getting blood, pus etc. into his mouth since the horn is long enough and the fluid coming out will be little in quantity.

Regarding Alabu, a medium sized ripe fruit is brought, its internal contents removed by making a wide opening at its top, the empty shell is dried in sun till it becomes hard, it is then cleaned inside and outside, and brought in use. At the time of using it a small cotton wick dipped in oil is kept straight on the affected area on which some incision have been made. The wick is lit with help of match stick and made as a lamp.

### Modern Review Of Cupping Therapy[7]

Shring and Alabu Therapy can be correlated with cupping therapy which is a modified form of shring and alabu. Cupping therapy is a form of alternative medicine in which cups are placed on the skin to create suction. The cups can be made of a variety of materials, including

- Glass
- Bamboo
- Earthenware

#### Types of Cupping Therapy[8]

There are various types of cupping therapy, including:

- Dry cupping (suction only)
- Wet cupping (combination of suction and controlled medicinal bleeding)

#### METHOD

During both types of cupping, a flammable substance such as alcohol, herbs, or paper is placed in a cup and set on fire. As the fire goes out, the cup is placed upside down on the patient's skin.

As the air inside the cup cools, it creates a vacuum. This causes the skin to rise and redden as blood vessels expand. The cup is generally left in place for five to 10 minutes.

A more modern version of cupping uses a rubber pump to create the vacuum inside the cup. Sometimes practitioners use medical-grade silicone cups. These are pliable enough to be moved from place to place on the skin and produce a massage-like effect. During wet cupping, a mild suction is created using a cup that is left in place for about three minutes. The practitioner then removes the cup and uses a small scalpel to make superficial skin incisions. Then he or she performs a second suction to draw out a small quantity of blood.

Patients should be properly informed (before treatment) about the potential for cup marks...temporary discoloration of the skin that may range from pale brown to darker red/purple depending on level of stagnation and whether the condition is of a deficient or excess, hot or cold nature. Patients should also be informed that the areas of cupping should be protected from cold, wind, or water for the rest of the day after treatment.

Cup marks usually fade within a day or two. Keep in mind that the length of time that cup marks persist usually reflects the level of circulation of blood in each patient's system and the ability of their body to properly detoxify. Remember also that patients whose skin is congenitally thin or has thinned due to advanced age require a much gentler application of cupping

After the procedure, the site may be covered with an antibiotic ointment and bandage to prevent infection. The skin's appearance generally returns to normal within 10 days. wet cupping removes harmful substances and toxins from the body to promote healing.

Cupping is a very effective but under-utilized healing technique. It is quick and simple to administer (once you get the hang of it), promotes detoxification, invigorates body fluid and blood, clears wind/damp/cold/heat stagnation in local skin and muscle tissue, regulates various aspects of the autonomic nervous system...and patients usually enjoy the experience of tension melting away under warm cups.

#### Benefits Of Cupping Therapy[8]

- Promotes deep relaxation of muscles and fascia, locally and peripherally
- Stimulates whole-system system relaxation response
- Regulates peristalsis and relieves intestinal spasms
- Regulates vaso-dilation/constriction of blood vessels throughout the body
- Encourages the proper circulation, oxygenation, and detoxification of blood
- Detoxifies metabolic residue in muscle tissue, fascia and skin by bringing toxins up into the circulatory system to be cleansed and safely excreted.

Cupping is very effective applied locally to promote proper circulation of body fluid and blood and reduce swelling at or near the site of an acute injury (ankle, shoulder, back strain/sprain). It can also be used to relieve stagnation of body fluid and blood in areas that chronically "hold" pain, like old injury sites, areas around surgical scars, or areas of occupational overuse. Sliding cups are very well tolerated (and usually enjoyed) by patients, since the movement along long muscles. The warmth and suction of the cups helps instantly relax muscles as blood is perfused through tissue, fascia and tendons. Apply a light layer of massage oil or cream to the skin and use long, continuous strokes of the cups over tensed areas. Focus repeat passes over areas that become brighter or more intensely colored than other nearby tissue. There are of course areas that should not be cupped, most often due to the fact that it is difficult to safely cup the surface due to the topography or the structures of the body.

#### Contraindications[9]

- Basic contraindications also include: do not cup directly over broken skin, purulent/damp skin rashes, hematomas or cysts.
- Current general opinion is that cupping should not be used to treat the abdomen of pregnant women, due to the possibility

that through its actions on regulating the autonomic nervous system, cupping may stimulate uterine contractions, which may potentially negatively influence a high-risk pregnancy.

- There are plenty of reputable sources on the Web to further research different applications and contraindications of cupping therapy, as well as making sure that using the safest materials and practice. Gaining more confidence in cupping can only be achieved through more practice...take every opportunity you can to practice and refine your technique.

#### CONCLUSION

Supporters of cupping therapy believe the suction of the cups mobilizes blood flow to promote the healing of a broad range of medical ailments. But the researchers acknowledge that many of the studies in their review may have contained some bias. They say better studies are needed to draw a definite conclusion.<sup>10</sup>

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