

A Literature Review on Mai (Medicated Eye Salve) – An External Therapy in Siddha System of Medicine

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Abstract: Among various ancestral medicinal systems, siddha system of medicine is one of the ancient, conventional and ritualistic systems of medicine comprising different modulations of treatment procedures for a variety of diseases. Apart from many internal medications, external therapy is implemented for better progress of the patient in various diseases which is of 32 different types and Mai (Medicated eye salve) method is one of them, used for extensive ailments. The information's are collected from Siddha Classical Textbooks at Library of Government Siddha Medical College and Hospital, Palayamkottai.

Keywords: siddha medicine, external therapy, Mai, medicated eye salve.

1. Introduction

Mai (Medicated eye salve) is defined as a soft external application mostly lined on the eye lashes in smaller quantity to treat eye disease. Lining of eye lashes is usually performed by a specific probe known as Nayana kole or Anjana kole.

Synonyms:

Anjanam

Types:

Mai classified into 3 types.

- Semisolid in consistency
- Hard consistence in tablet form to be dissolved in liquids
- Soft fine powder form

2. Review of Literature

Preparation of Mai:

Purified the required drugs and crush into fine powder. Mix it with ghee or castor oil or coconut oil and grind well till the consistency. Atlast collect the preparation using a wooden or copper spoon.

Administration of Mai:

Mai is applied to the patient either in supine or sitting position by standing behind the head or lateral side of the patient. Use separate ophthalmic probe for lining the infected eyes. Gently wipe the eyelid by using cotton piece. Then hold the patient's cheek to restrict the movement. Apply the liner from inner edge to centre and stop for few seconds and apply

from centre to outer edge. Complete the lining or connect the dots uniformly and steadily and make sure the lining is done in an arch shape.

Removal of Mai:

Removal may done after 3 to 12 hours. Using coconut oil or olive oil break down the salve lining. Massage the oil smoothly over closed eyelids & wait for ten seconds. Then wipe the oil with wet sterile cotton pad and rinse the face to remove traces of oil & eyeliner.

Materials Required for Applying Mai:

- Bronze or Glass or Sangu (sea shell) vessels
- Ophthalmic probes (Anjana kole)
- Wet clothes
- Cloth piece or Cotton threads
- Tissue paper
- Surgical gloves
- Castor oil or Gingelly oil
- Cotton roll

Indications of Mai and its preparations:

Preparation 1:

Ingredients:

- 1) Ponankaani - *Alternanthera sessilis*
- 2) Musumuskai - *Melothria madaraspatana*
- 3) Seenthil - *Tinospora cordifolia*
- 4) Thurusu - Cupric acetate
- 5) Butter

Procedure:

Above mentioned drug is powdered and mixed with butter.

Indication:

All types of eye disease.

Preparation 2:

Ingredients:

1. Samudra pazham - *Barringtonia acutangula*
2. Cow milk

Procedure:

The above-mentioned drugs are grinded with cow milk and dried.

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Indication:

Eye diseases.

*Preparation 3:**Ingredients:*

1. Vilvam – Aegle marmelos
2. Nandiyavattai - Tabernaemontana coronaria

Procedure:

The seed of vilvam are grinded with juice of nandiyavattai.

Indications:

Eye diseases.

*Preparation 4:**Ingredients:*

1. Peetharohini
2. Cow butter

Procedure:

The cow butter is kept and washed on every day kept in a clay pot is hardened and then grinded with drug and soaked in lime juice for six hours and cleaned.

Indication:

Eye diseases.

*Preparation 5:**Ingredients:*

1. Nandiyavattai - Tabernaemontana coronaria.

Procedure:

On first day leaves of nandiyavattai and next day its flowers are subsequently grinded one by one and rolled into small pills.

Indication:

Eye diseases.

*Preparation 6:**Ingredients:*

1. Alum - Padikaram - 10.4g
2. Peetharohini - Thalictrum foliolosum - 20.8g
3. Buffalo's butter - 41.6g

Procedure:

The above drug is grinded for three hours and stored in small copper container.

Indication:

Ophthalmia, night blindness, staphyloma, corneal ulcer, blepharitis and cataract.

*Preparation 7:**Ingredients:*

1. Vilampazham - Feronia elephantum
2. Rasam - Mercury - 1 part
3. Nagam - Lead - 2 part
4. Thuthanagam - Zinc - 4 part
5. Chembu - Copper - 8 part
6. Calx of sangu - Conch shell - 16 part

Procedure:

All the drugs are grinded for three days and rolled into pills and shade dried then rubbed with lime juice.

Indication:

Corneal ulcer and staphyloma.

*Preparation 8:**Ingredients:*

1. Muyal Saanam- Feecal Pellets of the hare
2. Butter

Procedure:

The dried Muyal Saanam is burnt into ashes and mixed with clarified butter to paste and kept in a bronze vessel.

Indications:

Eye disease - presbyopia.

*Preparation 9:**Ingredients:*

1. Rasam - Mercury - 1.75 parts
2. Gandhagam - Sulphur - 5.25 parts
3. Saaranai - Trianthema decandra - 7 parts
4. Nervaalam - Croton tiglium.

Procedure:

The above-mentioned drug is grinded with lemon juice and stored in a deer horn container and applied with lemon juice.

Indications:

Night blindness, delirium. Psychiatric illness and poisonous bites.

*Preparation 10:**Ingredient:*

Thumbai - Leucas aspera

Procedure:

The leaves of thumbai is triturated and apply for 7 days.

Indication:

Night blindness.

*Preparation 11:**Ingredients:*

1. Chukku - Zingiber officinale
2. Palm sugar
3. Borneol

Procedure:

The above-mentioned drug is finely powdered are grinded with breast milk and rolled into pills and shade dried. The pill is rubbed in breast milk.

Indication:

Eye diseases.

*Preparation 12:**Ingredients:*

1. Pachai karpooram - Borneol
2. Egg albumin

Procedure:

Egg albumin is mixed with pachai karpooram and applied on a cloth.

Indication:

Eye diseases.

*Preparation 13:**Ingredients:*

1. Puli - Tamarindus indicus
2. Pachai karpooram - Borneol.

Procedure:

Puli leaves are gently stir fried and mixed with borneol. This mixture is triturated with egg albumin.

Indication:

Eye diseases.

*Preparation 14:**Ingredients:*

1. Leaves of Maadhulai - *Punica granatum*
2. Saute Elavangam - sugandha elai poo - *Szygium aromaticum*.

Procedure:

Leaves of madhulai is baked with cow's milk and applied around the orbit. Saute Elavangam leaves and flowers are apply around the orbit.

Indication:

Reducing the burning sensation.

*Preparation 15:**Ingredient:*

Pachai karpooram

Procedure:

Pachai karpooram is grinded and taken & stored in vazhai kuruthu.

Indication:

Cataract and pterygium.

3. Discussion

Though the herbal preparations for Mai are mentioned in Siddha literature, this therapy is considered as one of the important and best therapeutic procedure by our siddhars. Various siddha literatures describes about mai. In this external method of application of lining the eye lashes and eye lids using a thick black salve is named as mai(collyrium). It is also called as Anjanam. Mai has different variety of base such as cow's ghee, castor oil, or coconut oil. These oil helps in tonify the tissues in and around eyes. Pal thutham and mayil thutham are used in Mai for wound healing and growth corrosive. The

instrument for applying collyrium is prepared from lead, copper, bronze, and silver. These metals helps in local healing, disinfecting, and sterilizing actions. It has vast herbal and herbomineral preparations. Mai helps in control of infections in and around eyes, prevent fungal growth in superficial skin, prevent watering & dryness, remove blockage in lacrimal glands. It also used in medical cosmetology. Various preparations of mai helps to treat Presbyopia, Night blindness, Chronic eye diseases, Conjunctivities, Corneal ulcers, excessive watering in eye, delirium, fever, psychiatric diseases.

4. Conclusion

In this study, I explore the significance of mai and its therapeutic uses. The evidences related to mai in the Siddha literature were few, hence this procedure is considered to be very old and ancient traditional therapy. Since the standard methodology for this procedure is hardly seen in the literature evidences, the therapeutic procedure of this method differs from one literature to another. Despite the cons, this therapy is still considered to be effective for some diseases which are relevant through studies and clinical trials. Furthermore, research should be done on Mai for the efficacy of this method.

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