



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Role Of Narach Churna In The Management Of Purishaja Anaha (Functional Constipation): A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

Background: Purishaja Anaha, correlated with functional constipation, is a prevalent gastrointestinal disorder in infants and toddlers. Ayurveda attributes the condition to Apana Vata vitiation leading to Purisha Sanga (fecal retention). Narach Churna, a classical Ayurvedic formulation containing Triyrit, Pippali Moola, Khanda, and Madhu, is traditionally used for gentle bowel cleansing.

Objective: To critically review the therapeutic relevance, pharmacological properties, mechanisms of action, and clinical applicability of Narach Churna in managing Purishaja Anaha, based on Ayurvedic principles and modern pediatric gastroenterology.

Methods: A narrative review of classical Ayurvedic texts, modern literature on pediatric constipation, pharmacological studies of ingredients, and data extracted from the thesis was performed. Evidence from pharmacognosy, pharmacology, and available clinical findings was synthesized.

Conclusion: Narach Churna acts through Rechana, Anulomana, Deepana, and Mridu Shodhana mechanisms and demonstrates significant potential as a safe, effective, and child-friendly formulation for functional constipation. It addresses both root causes and symptomatic manifestations of Purishaja Anaha.

Keywords: Narach Churna, Purishaja Anaha, Functional Constipation, Ayurveda, Apana Vata, Pediatric Gastroenterology.

1. Introduction

Functional constipation is one of the most common gastrointestinal disorders in early childhood, accounting for almost 90–95% of cases¹. It is associated with decreased stool frequency, hard stools, painful defecation, and abdominal distension. Ayurveda identifies this condition as **Purishaja Anaha**, resulting from **Vata vitiation**, particularly **Apana Vata**, causing obstruction of feces, urine, and flatus².

Modern medicine explains functional constipation through stool withholding, reduced dietary fiber, dehydration, and altered colonic motility³. Rome III/IV criteria provide objective diagnostic guidelines for childhood constipation⁴.

Ayurveda describes numerous herbal formulations for constipation. Among them, **Narach Churna**, mentioned in *Bhaishajya Ratnavali* (31/5–6), is notable for its **safe, gentle, and effective laxative action**, especially suitable for children.

This review explores the role of Narach Churna in Purishaja Anaha, integrating classical knowledge, pharmacology, safety data, and clinical relevance.

2. Methods

A comprehensive literature review was conducted from:

- Classical Ayurvedic texts (*Charaka, Sushruta, Ashtanga Hridaya, Kashyapa Samhita*)
- Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India (API)
- National Formulary of Ayurveda
- Modern pediatric gastroenterology guidelines
- Research databases (Google Scholar, PubMed)
- Insights and data extracted from the provided thesis

Keywords used included: Purishaja Anaha, functional constipation, Narach Churna, Trivrit, Pippali Moola, Apana Vata, Ayurvedic laxatives.

3. Review Findings

3.1 Purishaja Anaha: Ayurvedic Concept

Purishaja Anaha is a Vata-dominant disorder caused by:

- Dry, rough, light food (Katu–Tikta–Kashaya)⁵
- Suppression of natural urges (Vega-dharana)²
- Mandagni (weak digestion)⁶
- Dehydration and Ruksha ahara⁵

Pathogenesis:

1. Agni dushti → incomplete digestion
2. Vata aggravation → drying of feces
3. Purisha Sanga → accumulation and obstruction
4. Symptoms: distension, constipation, straining, hard stools²

This mirrors modern descriptions of functional constipation, characterized by retained stool, excess water absorption in colon, and painful defecation³.

3.2 Ingredients of Narach Churna

Narach Churna comprises four key components:

1. Trivrit (*Operculina turpethum*)

- Strong Rechana drug
- Removes accumulated feces⁷
- Contains turpethin (potent purgative resin)

2. Pippali Moola (Root of *Piper longum*)

- Deepana & Pachana: stimulates Agni⁸
- Improves peristalsis
- Enhances bioavailability of other herbs

3. Khanda (Sugar)

- Provides Mridu Rechana
- Softens stools
- Supports pediatric palatability

4. Madhu (Honey)

- Yogavahi: improves drug assimilation
- Soothes intestinal mucosa
- Mild laxative action⁹

These ingredients make the formulation uniquely gentle and pediatric-friendly.

3.3 Ayurvedic Mode of Action of Narach Churna

Narach Churna acts through:

- ✓ **Rechana Karma** – evacuates stagnant feces⁷
- ✓ **Anulomana Karma** – normalizes Apana Vata flow⁶
- ✓ **Deepana–Pachana Karma** – improves digestion⁸
- ✓ **Mridu Shodhana** – gentle cleansing ideal for children
- ✓ **Srotoshodhana** – clears obstructed pathways

Thus, it treats **both root cause and symptoms** of Purishaja Anaha.

3.4 Modern Pharmacological Interpretation

Based on phytochemical studies:

- **Turpethin (Trivrit)** → stimulant laxative, increases intestinal motility¹⁰
- **Piperine (Pippali Moola)** → enhances digestive secretion and gut motility¹¹
- **Honey** → mild osmotic laxative¹²

Combined effects:

- Faster colonic transit
- Softer stools
- Improved peristaltic activity
- Reduced abdominal distension

This correlates with modern management goals of functional constipation.

3.5 Safety Profile of Narach Churna

Ayurvedic Safety Indicators

- Pitta-Vata balancing
- Mridu (gentle) cleansing suitable for children
- No harmful irritant ingredients

Modern Safety Findings (from thesis):

- No adverse effects reported
- Mild and safe for pediatric gut
- Standardization confirmed:
 - Acceptable ash values
 - Correct phytochemical markers (piperine, turpethin)
 - Absence of heavy metals
 - Microbial safety compliant with AYUSH limits

Compared with Lactulose, Narach Churna shows **better tolerance and fewer side effects**.

3.6 Clinical Relevance (Insights from Thesis)

The study underlying the thesis demonstrated:

- Faster improvement in stool frequency
- Earlier softening of stool
- Reduction in abdominal distension
- Reduced straining
- Improvement in appetite
- No adverse reactions

These findings highlight Narach Churna as a promising therapy for pediatric constipation.

3.7 Advantages of Narach Churna

- Natural & gentle
- Safe for children
- Addresses root cause (Agni & Vata)
- Improves digestion & bowel habits
- Palatable and easy to administer
- No dependency, unlike chronic laxatives

3.8 Limitations in Current Evidence

- Limited clinical studies
- Small sample sizes
- Lack of long-term follow-up
- No large-scale comparative trials

Further research is needed.

4. Discussion

Narach Churna represents a scientifically and traditionally validated remedy for Purishaja Anaha. Its formulation, combining Rechana, Deepana, and Anulomana actions, aligns with both Ayurvedic and modern understandings of constipation.

Trivrit provides strong laxative action⁷, while Pippali Moola improves digestion and motility⁸. The presence of Khanda and Madhu moderates the purgative intensity, making it suitable for children. These ingredients together create a balanced formulation that addresses stool hardness, reduced motility, and impaired digestion.

Functional constipation in children often arises from behavioral withholding, dietary issues, and reduced physical activity¹. Narach Churna addresses the physiological and digestive aspects, unlike modern laxatives, which focus largely on stool softening or colonic water retention⁶.

Safety, palatability, and lack of dependency make Narach Churna superior to several modern laxatives for long-term use in mild to moderate constipation.

5. Conclusion

Narach Churna is a potent, safe, and child-friendly Ayurvedic formulation for managing Purishaja Anaha. Its multifaceted actions—Rechana, Deepana, and Anulomana—address both symptoms and root causes of functional constipation. Modern pharmacological understanding supports its efficacy and safety.

Its integration into pediatric care may offer a holistic alternative to conventional laxatives, particularly in recurrent or chronic functional constipation.

Further clinical trials with larger sample sizes and standardized outcome measures are recommended.

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