

WOUND-HEALING IN HORSES USING AYURVEDA/SIDDHA DRUGS:

[2004-2008]

Wound healing is a process which requires special treatment and care. Ayurveda treats wounds effectively. In the modern allopathic medical system wound healing, both surgical as well as non surgical, is a difficult task. In the allopathic system of medicine, wounds getting infected and non healing of wounds are a common occurrence despite treating with antibiotics. So it did not come as a surprise when Dr.Karthikeyan, Director and Senior Veterinary Officer of the Madras Race Club, Equine Hospital approached us to help him with Ayurvedic medicines for healing wounds in horses. He was not satisfied with the Allopathic medicines he was using till then. Thus what started as an alternative suggestion to the regular antibiotic and antiseptic drugs in wound healing in horses, has over the five years led to a regular practice of replacing allopathic medicines by ayurvedic medicines in treatment of wounds in this hospital. The following is a brief summary of the result of the treatments of wounds with Ayurveda and Siddha medicines followed by an interview with Dr.Karthikeyan.

CHOICE OF DRUGS

The following Ayurveda/Siddha drugs REPLACED the Allopathic drugs. (1)Triphala Churnam (2) Kungiliya Bhasmam (Barajas) (3) Padiga Linga Senduram and (4) Padikara Bhasmam (Sphatikam).

The above drugs were chosen, as they are very effective in cleansing and healing wounds. They are also easily available as they are manufactured at the Indian Medical Practitioners' Cooperative Society (IMPCOPS) in Chennai.

- (1) Triphala Churnam: This consists of 3 fruits – Hareetaki (Terminalia Chebula), Amalaki (Embilica Officinalis) and Vibhitaki (Terminalia Belerica). The powder (churnam) of these three herbs is known as Triphala Churnam. This powder possesses the properties of cleansing and healing wounds and so it was recommended for washing wounds as well as for healing.
- (2) Kungiliya Bhasmam: This is a Bhasmam (ash) made from the resin of the Sal tree. This resin is known as Sarja Rasa in Ayurveda and Kungiliyam in the Siddha pharmacopea. This resin possesses the property of healing all types of wounds. The medicine used here, Kungiliya Bhasmam is made according to the Siddha tradition.
- (3) & (4) Padiga Lingam and Padikara Bhasmam: The medicinal substance in both these is a stone called Sphatika in the Ayurvedic and Padikara in the

Siddha tradition. Spatika is an excellent healer of all types of wounds and therefore the two drugs were chosen. [Here, 2, 3 and 4 together are referred to as KPP powder]

By using only these four drugs, various types of wounds – both surgical and non-surgical – were treated. Totally 350 horses were treated (only external treatment) during the four years, 2004-2008. The following interview with Dr.Karthikeyan gives us some details of the approach and the treatment.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR.KARTHIKEYAN

Dr.Girija: What is the usual procedure followed in Allopathic tradition for surgery and wound healing?

Dr.Karthikeyan: The usual Allopathic practice is to clean the wound with antiseptic and use antibiotic ointments. Even if they have no infection, we still use the antiseptic and antibiotic. Any surgery we do, nobody can do without antibiotics and antiseptic medicines.

Now after I started using Ayurvedic medicines, I don't use antiseptic after surgery. I only use Triphala Churnam for cleaning the wound and use the powder (Kungiliya Parpam, Padiga Lingam and Padikara Parpam mixed in equal quantities) for dressing. At least locally (in the area where surgery has been done) I don't use the antiseptics or antibiotics.

Dr.G : Why did you want an alternative to Allopathic drugs? What was the problem in using conventional drugs, i.e., antibiotics etc.? Based on your experience, can you make a comparison between the Allopathic drugs and the Ayurvedic/Siddha medicines, from the point of view of wound healing, duration etc.?

Dr.K: **Allopathic drugs are not quick enough in healing. It was taking a very long time, so I wanted an alternative.** We only handle racehorses. And these horses have to get back to racing as soon as possible after an injury.

For example, on Vinayaka Chaturthi day, a horse put his leg into some metal sheet and tore the leg behind the hoof. It was bleeding profusely. They brought the horse to me. I tranquilized the horse with Allopathic medicines and washed the wound with Triphala Churnam, blocked the area with a nerve block and sutured it. I only used Triphala Churnam for dressing. Four days later, another (similar) dressing and another four days later, one more dressing and I sent the horse back. They told me the wound had healed completely. It was a jumping horse. This happened very recently. (He showed us the photographs).

One advantage in Ayurvedic powder is that there is hardly any scar. Even when the wound looks ghastly and scary, there is no scar. It's really amazing!

In our hospital Triphala Churnam is the only medicine we buy for cleaning wounds these days. We do stock antibiotics but Triphala Churnam is the only medicine we use.

Even for surgical wounds when horses are castrated (race horses are castrated), earlier, with Allopathic drugs, after the surgery it used to take a long time, up to 3-4 weeks, for the wound to heal. Now after removing the testicles, we squirt the Triphala Churnam solution with a syringe into the scrotal sac. With this the wound heals very fast. Now there is also no pus or any smelly fluid from this wound, which we used to have earlier. An extensively damaged bad wound, which may take 3 months to heal with Allopathic medicines, heals in a month's time, which itself is a big bonus for me.

When we used the Allopathic medicines, from the wound there used to be more oozing and the bandage becomes wet. But while using the Triphala Churnam, there is no oozing and the bandage does not become wet – seldom it becomes wet.

Dr.G: What procedure did you adopt while using Ayurvedic/Siddha medicines? How often is the dressing changed?

Dr.K: We mix the powder (Kungiliyam etc.), make a paste with distilled water and apply this paste on the wound. We change the dressing every 3 days. We don't want to change it everyday, we want to give it some time for healing.

Dr.G: Where did you get the medicines?

Dr.K: From IMPCOPS (The Indian Medical Practitioners' Cooperative Society, Adyar, Chennai).

Dr.G: Describe the types of wounds treated. Did you use these medicines only on fresh wounds or also on old wounds?

Dr.K: Anything from a skin wound to a surgical wound, sutured wound, sinus wounds (Nadi Vranam), lacerated wound etc. – this is my choice of medicine. I have no restrictions, any wound, sinus wounds also.

Two weeks ago, (2nd week of September) I was in Sri Lanka. I removed the eye of a horse, because it had a cancerous growth in the eye and the eye had to be removed. We sutured the eye to cover it. We washed the wound with

Triphala and on that wound I applied the usual powder (KPP). Two weeks later they called me and said the wound had healed completely and the horse was all right. It can go back to racing now.

Before



After



Three days ago, a horse was brought and it was wounded. We stitched it up, and the used the usual dressing (KPP powder). The wound healed in three days.

What we call the lower limb of a horse is below the hock. This area is so vascular; there is a lot of blood supply. If there is any injury in this area, it takes a long time to heal, because of the increased blood supply to this area. This is the area we need to heal very quickly in racehorses.

A horse (Head for heights) before going for show jumping, got a cut in the tendon. So they called me and said they could not bring the horse. So I told them to apply the (KPP) powder and bring it. It not only came without any problem, the wound healed in 4-5 days and the horse took part in the horse show also. So that powder worked wonders.

We use the Indian medicines on old wounds also. We don't use Nitroferozone, Neurosporin, nothing.

Only if it is an eye injury I am afraid to use this (KPP) powder, because I don't know if it can be used in the eye, cornea etc. safely.

Dr.G: Did you use any other Allopathic/solutions for washing the wounds etc.?

Dr.K: No. Only Triphala Churnam for washing wounds.

Dr.G: What are the results of using Indian (Ayurvedic/Siddha) medicines? What is the success rate?

Dr.K: **I have 100% success with Indian medicines.**

Dr.G: Did you suggest these (Indian) medicines to any of your colleagues? What is their experience in using these medicines?

Dr.K: All over India (veterinary) doctors are using these medicines. My friends say that the (KPP) powder really helps even for chronic wounds also. Only problem is that they (my friends) don't make any attempt to get the medicines by themselves. I have to supply the medicines to them. I have told them the ingredients also. (We may have to provide the Sanskrit names of the medicines). I have also made copies of this book [IMPCOPS Siddha medicine book] for all my friends and even to friends in Switzerland and USA.

No one has any complaint; they are all satisfied with the results.

Dr.G: Did these horses get back to racing after being treated with these medicines?

Dr.K: I only treat racehorses. They all get back to racing after being treated here. **There has not been a single failure.**

10. Can you make a comparison between the two medicines (Allopathic and Indian) based on their costs?

We have to work out the costs. I am not worried so much about the costs; I only want the wound to heal quickly and the horse to get back to racing. My expenses on (Allopathic medicines) ointments etc. have come down a lot, and I am very happy about this. **The cost of using the Indian medicines may be about 1/3rd of the cost of Allopathic medicines.**

11. Based on your experience, can you suggest some recommendations, which others (doctors) can follow?

Wherever I go, I tell them not to waste money on Allopathic medicines (antiseptics, antibiotics etc.). I tell them to wash all wounds with Triphala Churnam, and if they don't have anything else, to use the same Triphala Churnam as a dressing for healing the wound also. Change the bandage once in 3 days, don't disturb it everyday. This advice is working well; there are no complaints so far.

One of my friends, a vet in a stud farm, his wife had a diabetic wound on the toe. She was advised amputation. She said she didn't want amputation. I asked her to use this (KPP) powder on the wound and it healed. It didn't give any trouble for the next five years till she passed away.

Dr.P.L.T.Girija