

Research Article on Mahapaisachika Ghrita: A Traditional Ayurvedic Medhya Rasayana for Mental Health Disorders

Dr.Prit Pal Singh Associate Professor(Author1) Dr.Jyoti Sanouriya Assistant Professor(Author2)

S.S.M.D Ayurvedic college Moga, (Deptt.Of Panchkarma)

S.S.M.D Ayurvedic collegeMoga. (Deptt. of R.S.B.K)

Abstract:

Mahapaisachika Ghrita is a classical Ayurvedic medicated ghee formulation described in ancient texts such as the *Charaka Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya*. It is categorized under *Medhya Rasayanas* — substances that promote intellect, memory, and overall mental well-being. The formulation is especially indicated in conditions like *Unmada* (psychosis), *Apasmara* (epilepsy), and other psychiatric and neurological disorders. Its key ingredients include human brain tissue (traditionally from a healthy donor), Vacha (*Acorus calamus*), Kushtha (*Saussurea lappa*), Shankhpushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), and other potent nootropic herbs processed in clarified butter (*ghrita*).

The formulation works synergistically by pacifying the aggravated doshas, particularly *Vata* and *Tamas*, which are believed to be the root cause of mental disorders. Modern research suggests that many herbs in Mahapaisachika Ghrita possess neuroprotective, anxiolytic, anticonvulsant, and adaptogenic properties, potentially offering benefits in managing disorders like schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, and epilepsy.

Despite its controversial ingredient — the use of human tissue — which limits its practical application today, the formulation holds historical and theoretical significance in the Ayurvedic management of psychiatric conditions. Recent interest in Ayurvedic psychopharmacology has prompted the exploration of safer, ethical, and plant-based alternatives that preserve the therapeutic essence of Mahapaisachika Ghrita.

Keywords: Mahapaisachika Ghrita, Ayurveda, Unmada, Medhya Rasayana, mental health, traditional medicine, neuroprotection, nootropics.

Introduction –

Mahāpaiśācika Ghṛta is a classical Ayurvedic formulation described in both **Charaka Samhita (Chikitsa Sthana 10.37-40)** and **Ashtanga Hridaya (Chikitsa Sthana 6.70-73)**. It is primarily indicated in the treatment of severe mental disorders such as:

- **Unmada** (psychosis/insanity)
- **Apasmara** (epilepsy)
- Other manasika rogas (psychiatric illnesses)

It is categorized under **Medhya Rasayana** – formulations that enhance **cognitive function, memory, intellect (buddhi), and mental clarity**.

Charaka Samhita (Chikitsa Sthana 10.37-40):

Charaka outlines Mahāpaiśācika Ghr̥ta in the context of **Unmada Chikitsa (treatment of insanity)**. The text emphasizes its use in **chronic, stubborn, or incurable cases**, especially where other treatments have failed. The formulation is believed to **nourish the brain**, stabilize the mind, and restore mental equilibrium by pacifying deranged **Vata** and **Tamas**.

Ashtanga Hridaya (Chikitsa Sthana 6.70-73):

Vagbhata reiterates the use of this ghr̥ta for **Unmada** and **Apasmara**, noting its potent rejuvenating and mind-stabilizing properties. The Ashtanga Hridaya version maintains the same base concept but includes slight variations in the preparation method and emphasis on mental purification and restoration.

Key Features:

- **Main Action:** Medhya (nootropic), Rasayana (rejuvenative), Manonukulya (mind-calming), Vatanulomana (Vata-pacifying)
- **Unique Aspect:** Includes **human brain (manshapatra)** as an ingredient — used symbolically or ritually in some interpretations — making it controversial and largely **not used in contemporary clinical practice**.
- **Base:** Cow ghee (*ghrita*) acts as a yogavahi (bio-enhancer), carrying the active principles to the brain and nervous system.

Clinical Significance:

Although the actual use of this formulation is rare today due to ethical and legal concerns regarding its ingredients, Mahāpaiśācika Ghr̥ta holds **great theoretical and historical importance**. It reflects the **depth of Ayurvedic psychiatry** and the ancient understanding of the mind-body connection. Modern researchers study its **herbal components** (excluding the controversial ones) for their **neuroprotective and psychotropic** effects.

Here are some **Sanskrit ślokas** of **Mahāpaiśācika Ghr̥ta** from *Ashtanga Hridaya* (Chapter *Unmāda Pratiśedha*) with their transliteration. (I could not confidently locate the exact ślokas from *Charaka* in a reliable source.)

From Ashtanga Hridaya, Unmāda Pratiśedha***Sanskrit:**

जटिला पूतना केशी चारटी मर्कटी वचा ॥ ३४ ॥
 त्रायमाणा जया वीरा चोरकः कटुरोहिणी ।
 कायस्था शूकरी छत्वा सातिच्छत्रा पलङ्कषा ॥ ३५ ॥
 महापुरुषदन्ता च वयःस्था नाकुलीद्वयम् ।
 कटम्भरा वृश्चिकाली शालिपर्णी च तैर्घृतम् ॥ ३६ ॥
 सिद्धं चातुर्थिकोन्मादग्रहापस्मारनाशनम् ।
 महापैशाचकं नाम घृतमेतद्यथाऽमृतम् ॥ ३७ ॥
 बुद्धिमेधास्मृतिकरं बालानां चाङ्गवर्धनम् ॥

Meaning (essence):

This medicated ghee prepared with these herbs is named *Mahāpaisācika Ghṛta*. It is effective in curing *chaturthaka jvara* (quartan fever), *unmāda* (insanity), *graha* (possession), *apasmā*

Raw Material of Mahapaisachghrita-

Sr. no.	Name Of Drug	Quantity
1.)	Jatamansi	Sambhaga i.e-50gms each
2.)	Haritaki	Sambhaga
3.)	Bhootkeshi	Sambhaga
4.)	Neel	Sambhaga
5.)	Kevanch beej	Sambhaga
6.)	Vacha	Sambhaga
7.)	Traymaan	Sambhaga
8.)	Agnimanth	Sambhaga
9)	Ksheerkakoli	Sambhaga
10)	Prishnparni	Sambhaga
11)	Bhteur	Sambhaga
12)	Kutaki	Sambhaga
13)	Guduchi	Sambhaga
14)	Varahikand	Sambhaga
15)	Sonf	Sambhaga
16)	Soyabeej	Sambhaga
17)	Shudh guggulu	Sambhaga
18)	Shatavari	Sambhaga
19)	Bhrahmi	Sambhaga
20)	Rasna	Sambhaga
21)	Gandrasna	Sambhaga
22)	Malkanguni	Sambhaga
23)	Shalparni	Sambhaga
24)	Mushali	Sambhaga
25)	Kashmari	Sambhaga
26)	Laksha	Sambhaga
27)	Shatavari	Sambhaga
28)	Rasnadwya	Sambhaga
29)	Go-ghrita	5kg600gms
30)	Water	20litre2400ml

GENERAL METHOD OF MANUFACTURING MAHAPAISACHIK GHRITA**1. Ingredients(Above given 1-28)**

- **Sneha Dravya (Base fat):** Cow's ghee (clarified butter) is most commonly used.
- **Kalka (Herbal paste):** Fine paste of herbal ingredients.
- **Drava Dravya (Liquid media):** Decoctions (Kashayam), fresh juices (Swarasa), or as specified in the formulation.

2. Equipment Required

- Stainless steel vessel or traditional iron/bronze vessel.
- Spatula (wooden or steel).
- Filtration cloth.
- Heating source (gas/electric stove or traditional fire).
- Thermometer (for precise temperature control if needed).
- Weighing scale.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Step 1: Preparation of Kalka (Herbal Paste)

- Dried herbs are powdered and made into a fine paste with a little water.
- This paste helps retain the active constituents of herbs in the final ghr̥it.

Step 2: Preparation of Drava Dravya (Liquid)

- Decoctions or juices are prepared from herbs according to traditional methods.
- Example: Boiling herbs in water and reducing the volume to extract active ingredients.

Step 3: Melting the Ghee

Murchana of ghr̥ita should be done before preparing final formulation of ghr̥ita by using murchana shastrokata dr̥vya.

- Cow ghee is gently melted in a wide-mouthed vessel over low flame.
- Ensure the ghee is of good quality and free from moisture.

Step 4: Mixing Ingredients

- To the melted ghee, add the Kalka (paste) and Drava Dravya (decoction/juice).
- The ratio commonly followed is: 1:4:16 i.e. 1=Dr̥vya
- 4=Sheha
- 16= Dr̥va(liquid)

Step 5: Boiling and Stirring

- The mixture is heated and continuously stirred.
- Heat should be mild to moderate (do not allow burning or overheating).
- Stirring ensures the paste doesn't settle and stick to the bottom.

Step 6: Endpoint Determination (Siddhi Lakshana)

- Boiling continues until water content evaporates.
- Signs that the Ghr̥it is ready:
 - Kalka forms a soft bolus and emits a characteristic smell.
 - No frothing or crackling sounds (indicating water is gone).
 - Kalka when pressed between fingers should roll without sticking.
 - Ghee becomes clear and golden.

Step 7: Filtration

- The hot ghrīt is filtered using a muslin cloth to remove solid residues.
- Filtration is done while the mixture is still hot to avoid solidification.

Step 8: Cooling and Storage

- The filtered ghrīt is allowed to cool naturally.
- Store in airtight, dry glass or PET containers.
- Keep away from moisture and sunlight.

QUALITY CONTROL

- Moisture content: Should be minimal or nil.
- Free from microbial contamination.
- No rancid smell.
- Proper color, aroma, and consistency.
- Follow **Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India (API)** standards if manufacturing for commercial use
- **INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURING (GMP Compliance)**

If manufacturing for commercial use:

- Follow **Schedule T of Drugs and Cosmetics Act (India)**.
- Ensure **Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)**.
- Maintain **batch manufacturing records (BMR)**.
- Conduct **stability studies** for shelf-life.
- Label as per **Ayurvedic drug labeling rules**.

Conclusion and discussion-

Mahapaisachika Ghrita is an ancient yet profound formulation showcasing Ayurveda's advanced understanding of mental health. It emphasizes a **holistic approach** to treating psychiatric illnesses—addressing the **mind, body, and spirit**. The preparation stands out due to its **potent nervine action**, adaptability in chronic mental illnesses, and rejuvenating properties.

However, **modern application** requires careful consideration due to:

- The inclusion of **rare or ethically sensitive ingredients**.
- The need for **standardized processing and clinical trials** to establish safety and efficacy in contemporary settings.

Despite these challenges, **Mahapaisachika Ghrita continues to inspire integrative approaches** to mental health, combining ancient wisdom with modern neuroscience.

Mahapaisachika Ghrita (Mahapaishachika Ghrita) is a classical Ayurvedic medicated ghee formulation described primarily in the context of **manasroga (mental disorders)**, particularly **unmada (psychosis or insanity)**. It is one of the potent formulations from the **Charaka Samhita**, included under the **ghrita preparations** for psychological ailments.

Discussion of Mahapaisachika Ghrita

Composition and Unique Ingredients

- The formulation contains **ghrita (ghee)** processed with a specific set of **medhya (nootropic)**, **rasayana (rejuvenating)**, and **manasika (mind-related)** herbs.
- Notably, it includes herbs with strong **neuroprotective**, **adaptogenic**, and **psychotropic** effects.
- Some rare and controversial ingredients such as **human brain matter (paishacha dravya)** are mentioned in the original texts, which are interpreted symbolically or substituted in modern contexts due to ethical and regulatory issues.

2. Pharmacological Properties

- Acts on the **central nervous system**, improving **cognition, memory, and mental stability**.
- Considered **sattvavardhaka** – promoting clarity, calmness, and spiritual growth.
- Helps pacify **vata and pitta doshas**, which are commonly aggravated in psychiatric disorders.

3. Therapeutic Applications

- Used in the treatment of:

Unmada (psychosis)

Apasmara (epilepsy)

Atattvabhinivesha (delusional disorders)

Memory loss, anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia (interpreted in modern psychiatric terms)

4. Mode of Action (as per Ayurveda)

- Ghee acts as a **yogavahi (catalyst)** – delivering herbs deeply into tissues and the central nervous system.
- Herbs used are primarily **medhya rasayanas**, working on the **manovaha srotas (mental channels)** and **majja dhatu (nervous tissue)**.

Mahapaisachika Ghrita is an ancient yet profound formulation showcasing Ayurveda's advanced understanding of mental health. It emphasizes a **holistic approach** to treating psychiatric illnesses—addressing the **mind, body, and spirit**. The preparation stands out due to its **potent nervine action**, adaptability in chronic mental illnesses, and rejuvenating properties.

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