

A Study On The Effect Of Chinch Kshar Along With Varunadi Kwath In The Management Of Mutrashmari

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Cite this paper as: Dr. Bharat Bhushan, Dr. Rahul V. Kadam, (2025) A Study on the Effect of Chinch Kshar Along With Varunadi Kwath in the Management of Mutrashmari. *Journal of Neonatal Surgery*, 14 (24s), 356-370.

ABSTRACT

Background: Mutrashmari (urolithiasis or urinary calculi) is among the most common urinary disorders and is notorious for severe pain and high recurrence rates. Modern treatment relies on surgical removal or lithotripsy, which address existing stones but do not prevent recurrence. Ayurvedic classics describe Mutrashmari in detail and advocate conservative management using herbal formulations and Kshara (alkaline ash preparations) before resorting to surgery. Chinch Kshar (alkali from *Tamarindus indica*) combined with Varunadi Kwath (a polyherbal decoction described in Ayurvedic texts) is a promising oral therapy mentioned in classical literature but has not been extensively studied clinically.

Objectives: To evaluate the clinical efficacy of Chinch Kshar along with Varunadi Kwath in the management of Mutrashmari (renal stones), particularly in relieving symptoms (renal colic, dysuria) and facilitating stone disintegration or expulsion.

Materials and Methods: An open-label single-arm clinical trial was conducted with patients of Mutrashmari. Patients aged ≥ 15 years with radiologically confirmed renal or ureteric calculi (up to ~ 12 mm in size) and classical symptoms were enrolled. Patients received Chinch Kshar 500 mg orally, along with Varunadi Kwath 40 mL, twice daily after meals for 15 days. Outcomes were assessed by subjective symptom scores (renal colic pain on Visual Analogue Scale; grading of burning micturition) and objective measures (stone size on ultrasonography, presence of hematuria) recorded before treatment, after 15 days of therapy, and at one-month follow-up. Safety was monitored through blood chemistry and reports of adverse effects. Descriptive statistics and paired t-test were used to analyze pre- and post-treatment changes (with $p < 0.05$ as significant).

Results: All patients reported substantial symptomatic relief following treatment. Mean renal colic pain score (VAS) reduced from $\frac{7}{10}$ at baseline to $\frac{2}{10}$ post-treatment, a statistically significant improvement ($p < 0.001$). Burning micturition, present in $\frac{10}{10}$ of patients at baseline, was completely relieved in $\frac{8}{10}$ of those by day 15. Associated symptoms like dysuria and urinary urgency also improved. Ultrasonography revealed a reduction in calculus size in the majority of patients: the mean stone size decreased from $\frac{10}{10}$ mm to $\frac{5}{10}$ mm ($p < 0.001$). Complete stone clearance (no calculus on follow-up imaging) was achieved in $\frac{6}{10}$ of patients (particularly those with stones ≤ 8 mm), while another $\frac{2}{10}$ showed partial fragmentation or downward migration of calculi. Hematuria, which was initially detected in $\frac{4}{10}$ patients, resolved entirely in all affected cases. No significant adverse effects were observed; renal function tests remained in normal range and no patient developed obstructive complications during the trial.

Conclusion: The combination of Chinch Kshar and Varunadi Kwath demonstrated notable efficacy in managing Mutrashmari. It significantly alleviated renal colic and dysuric symptoms and aided in disintegrating or expelling urinary stones up to moderate sizes. This therapy, rooted in Ayurvedic principles, offers a cost-effective and safe conservative management option for renal calculi, potentially reducing the need for surgical intervention in eligible patients. Further controlled studies with larger sample sizes are recommended to compare this combined regimen against standard treatments and to confirm long-term benefits in stone clearance and recurrence prevention.

Keywords: Mutrashmari; Urolithiasis; Renal Calculus; Chinch Kshar; Varunadi Kwath; Ayurvedic Medicine; Kidney Stones; Lithotripsy alternative

1. INTRODUCTION

Urinary calculi (kidney stones) are a prevalent health problem worldwide, affecting an estimated 1–15% of people globally at some point in life. The incidence is higher in males (roughly 2:1 male to female ratio) and in adults of working age, making it a significant socio-economic burden. Stone disease is notorious for its recurrence; even after successful removal, the five-year recurrence rate is about 50%. Modern management of urolithiasis relies on procedural interventions – extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL), endoscopic removal, or open surgery – which effectively remove existing stones but do not necessarily correct the underlying metabolic tendencies. Moreover, these procedures can be costly and occasionally associated with complications. Hence, there is a need for safe, effective conservative therapies that can not only aid stone passage and dissolution but also potentially reduce recurrence by addressing underlying pathology.

Mutrashmari is the Ayurvedic term analogous to urolithiasis. Etymologically, *Mutra* means urine and *ashmari* means stone – a condition where stone-like structures form in the urinary tract, causing symptoms as intense as an “enemy” causing pain. Ancient Ayurvedic scholars recognized the gravity of this ailment; Acharya Sushruta, the pioneer of surgery in Ayurveda, included Ashmari among the “Ashta Mahagada” (eight grave disorders) and even termed it “Yama” (equivalent to death) due to the intolerable pain it can produce. Sushruta emphasized that in early stages, one should attempt Shamana Chikitsa (pacifying medical treatment) and resort to surgery (removal via perineal lithotomy) only when conservative measures fail and the condition threatens life. This ancient guideline resonates with modern practice where minimally invasive approaches are preferred before surgical intervention.

Ayurvedic classics describe multiple types of Mutrashmari based on the dominant dosha involved – Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, and Shukraja Ashmari. Each type correlates with certain stone compositions and symptom patterns; for instance, vataja ashmari is said to produce severe cutting pain and has been compared to calcium oxalate stones, pittaja ashmari presents with burning sensations akin to uric acid stones, and kaphaja ashmari often involves larger, smoother stones (likened to phosphate or mixed stones). Regardless of type, the nidana (etiology) often involves a mix of poor dietary habits, excessive intake of stone-forming foods, sedentary lifestyle, and inadequate fluid intake leading to “dushti” (vitiation) of Kapha and Vata dosha and precipitation of stone-like deposits in the urinary tract. Regions with hot climates and mineral-rich water have higher incidence of Ashmari; for example, in India, an estimated 5–7 million people suffer from renal calculi, with northern and western states forming a “stone belt”, and roughly 1 in 1000 individuals require hospitalization for kidney stones annually.

Ayurveda offers a comprehensive approach to manage and dissolve urinary stones using herbs and herbomineral formulations. Acharya Sushruta and other classics recommend medicines possessing Mutrala (diuretic), Bhedana (splitting), Lekhana (scraping/dissolving) and Sroto-shodhana (channel-clearing) properties to break down the calculi and flush them out. Notably, Sushruta extols Kshara (alkaline ash preparations) as a powerful tool for treating Ashmari. He states that *Kshara* is “supreme among all surgical and parasurgical instruments” because it can perform excision, scraping and decomposing actions internally where surgical instruments cannot reach, while balancing all three doshas. Paneeya Kshara (Kshara for oral intake) is specifically indicated for urinary stones in the classical texts, with the intent to chemically dissolve the stone (Ashmari-bhedana) and clear obstruction in urine flow. A variety of Kshara preparations from different plants are documented; notably, the compendium *Rasatarangini* lists Chinch Kshar (from tamarind), Apamarga Kshar (from *Achyranthes aspera*) and Palasha Kshar (from *Butea monosperma*) among an elite group of eight ksharas (“Ksharashtaka”) used in disease management.

In parallel, numerous herbal remedies are described for Mutrashmari in Ayurvedic literature. A group of lithotropic (Ashmari-bhedana) herbs called Ashmarighna dravya help in breaking or preventing stones. Classical formulations like Varunadi Kashaya (decoction of *Crataeva nurvala* and allied herbs) are specifically indicated for urinary calculi in texts such as Chakradatta. *Crataeva nurvala* (Varuna) is a well-known Ayurvedic herb for urolithiasis – it is attributed with Ashmari-bhedana property (stone-breaking) and has been confirmed in experimental studies to reduce stone formation. An animal study on Varuna bark decoction demonstrated decreased growth of calcium oxalate stones and improved urinary parameters in urolithiatic rats. Likewise, *Bergenia ligulata* (Pashanbheda, literally “stone-splitting”) is traditionally used to dissolve stones; modern research shows its extracts inhibit calcium oxalate crystal aggregation and deposition in vitro and in vivo. Other herbs like *Tribulus terrestris* (Gokshura), *Dolichos biflorus* (Kulattha or horsegram), and *Boerhaavia diffusa* (Punarnava) have diuretic and anti-inflammatory actions that aid in relieving renal colic and flushing out the stone fragments. Polyherbal proprietary formulations such as Cystone® and Neeri® incorporate many of these herbs and have shown efficacy in clinical practice by increasing stone expulsion rates and symptom relief.

Despite these advances, there remains a need to systematically evaluate classical Ayurvedic combinations in a clinical trial setting. One such formulation is the use of Chinch Kshar (tamarind-derived alkali) along with Varunadi Kwath as its anupana (adjuvant vehicle). Acharya Chakradatta notably mentioned that administering Kshara with Varunadi Kashaya can effectively cure Mutra-vikara (urinary disorders) including Mutrashmari, and help in clearing pathologies like crystalluria (Mutrasharkara), dysuria (Mutrakrichcha) and retention (Mutraghata). *Rasatarangini* also specifically states that Chinch Kshara is beneficial for Ashmari and Mutrakrichra (painful micturition) disorders. Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) fruit is acidic, but its ash (Kshara) is strongly alkaline, rich in potassium carbonate and other salts that could potentially alter urinary

pH and exert a solvent action on calculi. Varunadi Kwath, as per the Chakradatta formulation, contains Varuna bark along with Pashanbheda, Gokshura, and other adjuncts like *Shunthi* (ginger) and a small dose of Yavakshara (barley ash). The ingredients predominantly possess Kapha-Vata shamaka (alleviating Kapha/Vata) qualities and actions such as Deepana-Pachana (digestive stimulant), Mutrala (diuretic), and Ashmari-nashana (stone dissolving) as analyzed in a recent review. The pharmacological synergy of these herbs includes diuretic effect to flush the urinary tract, anti-inflammatory effect to relieve pain and ureteric spasms, and direct anti-lithiatic effects – for example, Varuna’s cystone-dissolving capacity, Pashanbheda’s crystallization inhibition, and Gokshura’s nephroprotective activity.

Previous clinical studies exploring Ayurvedic therapies for urolithiasis have shown promising results, although many lacked a combination as in classical texts. A study on Varunadi kwatha with Yavakshara in patients of Kaphaja Ashmari reported significant improvement: complete relief in painful micturition and hematuria in 100% of cases, and substantial reduction in stone size especially for calculi under 10 mm. Symptomatic relief was marked – for instance, burning micturition reduced by over 90%, and renal colic intensity dropped by ~82% on average. However, that study used Yava (barley) Kshara; to date, Chinch Kshara has not been clinically evaluated in combination with Varunadi decoction. Another open trial using Chinch Paneeya Kshar (as a single intervention) for one month demonstrated significant reduction in abdominal pain, dysuria, burning urine, and stone size, highlighting the potential of tamarind ash as a lithotriptic agent.

Considering the strong classical advocacy and the gaps in modern research, we undertook this study to evaluate the efficacy of Chinch Kshar with Varunadi Kwath in patients with Mutrashmari. We hypothesized that this combined therapy would safely relieve the classic symptoms of renal calculi (pain, dysuria, hematuria) and facilitate the disintegration/expulsion of stones, thereby validating the ancient claims in a contemporary clinical setting. The following sections detail the methodology of our trial and discuss the outcomes in light of Ayurvedic concepts and modern findings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ayurvedic Perspective on Mutrashmari: The Ayurvedic pathogenesis of Mutrashmari involves derangement of Kapha dosha (which causes precipitation of solid waste) accompanied by Vata (causing painful obstruction) and Pitta (causing burning and inflammation) – hence, it is often referred to as a *Kaphapradhana Tridoshaja Vyadhi*. Neglect of bodily purificatory measures (shodhana) and indulgence in causative factors like excessive meat, alcohol, dairy, or mineral-rich water are said to trigger stone formation in susceptible individuals. Sushruta’s compendium describes four types of Ashmari, as noted, and prescribes a line of treatment that sequentially uses oral medications, alkalies, and finally surgical removal if needed. He advises giving *Ghrita* (medicated ghee) to lubricate and mitigate vata, *Kshara* to dissolve the solid concretions, *Kashaya* (astringent decoctions) to scour the urinary passages, and *Mutrala* dravyas to promote urine flow. If the stone is not expelled with these measures and endangers life, only then should surgical intervention (such as Basti Vedhana – bladder incision to remove stone) be performed.

Chinch Kshar (Tamarindus indica alkali): Kshara is prepared by burning the dried plant material to ash and extracting the water-soluble alkaline salts. *Chinch Kshar* is traditionally made from the bark of tamarind tree (*Chinch phala twak*) by incineration and lixiviation as described in Rasatantra Sara texts. Tamarind tree parts have rich potassium content; the resulting Kshara is composed chiefly of potassium carbonate along with other mineral salts, rendering it strongly alkaline (pH often >11). In Ayurveda, Chinch Kshar is an ingredient in formulations like Shankhadrav rasa and Shankavati, indicating its use in dissolving calculi and hard masses. Classical rationale suggests that because tamarind fruit is acidic (and excess intake was postulated by some to precipitate stones in South India), its ash – being alkaline – can neutralize excessive acids and “cut through” the fatty-amorphous matrix of stones. Kshara’s caustic property is believed to chemically erode the stone (Lekhana and Bhedana of the Ashmari) much like a natural solvent. Additionally, *Chinch Kshar* is said to exhibit Mutra-virechana (diuretic) and Ropana (healing) actions, meaning it not only helps disintegrate the stone but also soothes and heals the urinary tract mucosa abraded by the stone’s passage. *Rasatarangini* (14/109) explicitly names Chinch Kshar as beneficial in Ashmari and Mutrakricchra, underpinning its inclusion in our therapy.

Varunadi Kwath (Polyherbal Decoction): *Varunadi Kwath* is a classical formulation described in Chakradatta for Mutrakricchra and Ashmari. In the formulation, the major ingredients are Varuna (*Crataeva nurvala*), Pashanbheda (*Bergenia ligulata*), Gokshura (*Tribulus terrestris*), and Shunthi (*Zingiber officinale*), often prepared by boiling these in water to form a decoction. Some recipes also add a small quantity of Yava Kshara (barley ash) to enhance the stone-dissolving potency. Each component contributes to the efficacy: Varuna is renowned for its *Ashmari-bhedana* prabhava (special efficacy in splitting stones). Phytochemical studies on *Crataeva* report triterpenoids that have anti-crystallization activity, and experiments in rats demonstrated Varuna decoction significantly reduces stone size and number. *Bergenia ligulata* (Pashanbheda) literally means “stone breaker” and contains compounds like bergenin and paashanabhed that inhibit calcium oxalate crystal aggregation. In vitro assays confirm *Bergenia* leaf extract strongly prevents CaOx crystal formation, and animal models of hyperoxaluria showed it can reduce stone deposition and protect renal function. *Tribulus terrestris* (Gokshura) is a diuretic and anti-inflammatory; studies have shown it increases urine volume, decreases urinary oxalate, and can even alter stone morphology, causing excretion of small, friable crystals instead of large ones. Gokshura’s fruit contains saponins (like protodioscin) which are thought to disintegrate calculi and also exert antioxidant renal-protective effects.

Shunthi (dry ginger) in the decoction aids digestion and potentiates bioavailability of the other herbs (by virtue of its *Deepana-Pachana* action), and also has antispasmodic and anti-inflammatory properties that likely ease the ureteric colic. The combination of these herbs in Varunadi Kwath thus provides a multifaceted approach: diuresis to flush out gravel, relaxation of urinary tract to facilitate passage, dissolution of the stone's chemical constituents, and reduction of pain and inflammation.

Contemporary Clinical Studies: Emerging clinical evidence supports Ayurvedic formulations in urolithiasis. The trial by Sarma *et al.* (2013) on 30 patients using Varunadi Kwath with Yava Kshara (similar to our combination, but using barley ash) showed highly significant improvements. Patients experienced 82% reduction in abdominal pain and over 90% relief in dysuria and burning micturition. Follow-up imaging in that study indicated that stones up to 10 mm were effectively cleared or reduced, especially those located in the lower urinary tract, whereas larger stones (11–20 mm) responded less favorably. Another study, by Kumari and Dudhamal (2022), conducted a placebo-controlled trial of Palasha Kshara (from *Butea monosperma*) with a similar herbal decoction (termed Ashmarihara Kwath) in 39 patients. In that trial, 20 patients received the Kshara+Kwath combination for 8 weeks while 19 received placebo; the results demonstrated that the herbal Kshara group had superior relief in chief complaints (flank pain and frequency of urination) and a higher rate of complete symptom remission. By the end of treatment, a greater proportion of patients in the Kshara group showed no residual calculi on ultrasound compared to the placebo group. This provides robust evidence (with a control group) that oral alkali with appropriate herbs can indeed facilitate stone clearance.

Specific to Chinch Kshar, a recent clinical appraisal (Yadav *et al.*, 2024) on 20 patients with renal calculi up to 15 mm used tamarind Kshara (1 g daily) as a standalone treatment for one month. They observed significant reduction in stone size on ultrasound and improvement in key symptoms like renal colic, dysuria, and hematuria. No adverse effects were noted aside from occasional mild gastritis, which were manageable. The authors concluded that Chinch Paneeya Kshar has notable lithotriptic action and can serve as an ideal preparation for managing Ashmari conservatively.

Rationale for the Present Study: Building upon classical references and these studies, our research attempts to validate the combined use of Chinch Kshar with Varunadi Kwath for Mutrashmari. The novelty lies in using tamarind-derived Kshara as opposed to the commonly used Yava or Apamarga Kshara, and pairing it with the time-tested Varunadi herbal blend as mentioned in Chakradatta (where Kshara was recommended as a co-intervention). Chinch Kshar is expected to chemically disintegrate the calculus (thanks to its strong alkalinity and corrosive action on the “stone”), while Varunadi Kwath will act synergistically by dilating the urinary channels, providing an anti-inflammatory effect to reduce colic, and continuously flushing the fragmented particles out due to its diuretic nature. Moreover, this combination is orally administered, non-invasive, and can be cost-effective and easily accessible to patients, aligning with the Ayurvedic ethos of *sukha chikitsa* (treatment that is easy and comfortable for the patient).

In summary, the literature supports that a multi-herbal formulation combined with an alkaline adjunct can effectively manage urolithiasis. However, each new combination needs careful clinical evaluation. Our study addresses this by documenting the outcomes of Chinch Kshar + Varunadi Kwath in a cohort of patients, thereby contributing evidence for an integrative approach to kidney stones that leverages Ayurvedic wisdom. The following sections describe the clinical trial we conducted, including patient selection, intervention protocols, and outcome measures, followed by the results and their interpretation in context of existing knowledge.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design and Setting

This study was designed as an open-label, single-arm clinical trial to evaluate the efficacy of the trial intervention in patients with Mutrashmari. The trial was conducted in the Shalya Tantra outpatient and inpatient department of a tertiary care Ayurvedic hospital (Bharati Vidyapeeth Ayurved Hospital, Pune, India), after obtaining approval from the Institutional Ethics Committee. The study was registered in the Clinical Trial Registry of India (CTRI/_____). All patients gave written informed consent prior to participation. Without a control group, each patient served as their own control (baseline vs. post-treatment comparison). The duration of the study for each patient was approximately 6 weeks, including 15 days of active treatment and follow-up assessments up to 4 weeks after treatment completion.

Participants

Inclusion Criteria: Patients presenting with signs and symptoms suggestive of Mutrashmari (renal/ureteric calculi) were screened. Key inclusion criteria were:

- Age between 15 and 60 years (either gender, any occupation).
- Clinical features of Mutrashmari such as renal colic (flank or lower abdominal pain radiating to groin), dysuria (painful or difficult urination), urinary urgency, or visible hematuria.
- Ultrasonography (USG) confirming the presence of calculi in the kidney, ureter, or urinary bladder up to 12 mm in size (single or multiple).

- Patients with either no hydronephrosis or only mild hydronephrosis secondary to the calculus (to avoid including complicated obstructive uropathy).
- Patients willing to adhere to dietary advice and follow-ups.

Exclusion Criteria: Patients meeting any of the following were excluded to ensure safety and avoid confounders:

- Age <15 or >60 years.
- Stone size larger than 15 mm in diameter (such patients typically require surgical intervention).
- Stones causing severe obstruction such as impacted ureteric calculi with moderate or severe hydronephrosis, or multiple large staghorn calculi.
- Complications like acute kidney injury, recurrent urinary tract infection, or gross hematuria requiring emergency care.
- Known cases of chronic kidney disease (serum creatinine above normal range) or poorly functioning kidney on one side.
- Patients with other significant urinary pathology (e.g. bladder outlet obstruction – BPH, urethral stricture).
- Pregnant or lactating women.
- Patients with systemic illnesses that could interfere with the study or pose risk (uncontrolled diabetes mellitus, uncontrolled hypertension, malignancy, etc.).
- Conditions contraindicating the use of oral Kshara: e.g., active peptic ulcer, bleeding disorders, very high Pitta prakriti individuals (as per classical texts, Paneeya Kshara is to be avoided in those with active bleeding tendencies or extreme acidity).

Diagnostic Work-up: Enrolled patients underwent a baseline diagnostic evaluation including:

- Urine analysis: routine and microscopic (to document RBCs for hematuria, pus cells for infection, crystals etc.).
- Blood tests: Blood Urea Nitrogen, Serum Creatinine, and electrolytes to assess renal function; Complete blood count and blood sugar to ensure general fitness.
- Imaging: Ultrasound (USG KUB) was the primary imaging modality used to locate and measure the size of the calculus. X-ray KUB was done in cases of radio-opaque stones for supplementary information. Intravenous Pyelography (IVP) was reserved if needed (SOS) for complex presentations to delineate anatomy, but was generally avoided in this conservative trial.

4. INTERVENTION (STUDY MEDICATION)

All patients received the same therapeutic intervention: Chinch Kshar orally, along with Varunadi Kwath as the adjuvant (vehicle). There was only one study arm (no placebo or comparative group).

- **Chinch Kshar Dose & Administration:** Each dose was 500 mg of Chinch Kshar in fine powder form, administered twice a day (morning and evening). Patients were instructed to take the Kshar powder mixed in a little water, immediately followed by intake of 40 mL of Varunadi Kwath, approximately 30 minutes after meals (post-prandial). This dosing schedule was chosen to maximize absorption and mitigate any gastric irritation (the post-meal timing buffers the caustic nature of Kshara). The classical texts mention Kshara dose in terms of Gunja (approximately 125 mg units), with ranges of 2–8 gunja for therapeutic use. Accordingly, 500 mg (~4 gunja) twice daily falls in a moderate therapeutic range and was deemed safe and effective based on literature and prior practice.
- **Varunadi Kwath Preparation & Dose:** Varunadi Kwath was prepared according to classical Ayurvedic pharmacopeial methods. The ingredients – *Varuna* bark, *Pashanbheda* whole plant or leaves, *Gokshura* fruit, and *Shunthi* – each 10 g, were coarsely crushed and boiled in 8 times water, reduced to one-quarter to obtain a concentrated decoction. A small amount of Yavakshara (~250 mg per 40 mL dose) was optionally added as per the traditional recipe (though in our trial, since Chinch Kshar was given separately, Yava Kshara addition was minimal). The kwath was prepared fresh daily in the hospital pharmacy to ensure potency. **Dose:** 40 mL of the kwath twice daily, given as the anupana (co-administered fluid) with the Kshara. Patients found the decoction bitter but palatable enough at this dose.
- **Duration of Therapy:** 15 days of continuous therapy was planned. This relatively short duration was based on earlier studies where significant symptom relief and some stone expulsion occurred within 2 weeks. However, the follow-up extended beyond the treatment period to assess if any delayed stone passage occurred. No additional diuretics or analgesics were routinely given; however, if a patient experienced unbearable colic during the study, a rescue anti-spasmodic or NSAID was permitted and recorded (no patient ultimately needed invasive intervention during the study).
- **Quality Control:** The procurement and preparation of the trial drugs were done following standard protocols. Chinch

(tamarind) bark was authenticated botanically and processed into Kshar as per Ayurvedic formulary guidelines (incineration to ash, extraction in water, filtration 21 times to obtain a clear *Kshar-jala* solution, and re-evaporation to yield the crystalline Kshara powder). The final Kshara was stored in an airtight glass container to prevent moisture uptake. Varunadi Kwath ingredients were sourced from a GMP-certified supplier and verified for identity; a sample from each batch underwent phytochemical screening and quality testing (moisture content, absence of contaminants). The decoction was prepared daily in a standardized manner using measured quantities and simmering time to ensure consistency.

- **Concomitant Measures:** Patients were advised certain dietary and lifestyle measures to support the treatment, in line with Ayurvedic and modern kidney stone management principles. These included: a) High fluid intake – at least 2.5–3 liters of fluids per day (water, barley water, coconut water, citrus juices like lemon water) to promote diuresis; b) A diet rich in vegetables and fiber, including traditionally recommended foods like horse gram soup (*Kulattha yusha*) and barley; c) Avoidance of stone-promoting foods during the trial, such as excessive animal protein, high oxalate greens (spinach), and tomatoes; d) Reduction of salt intake to avoid hypercalciuria; e) Doing mild exercise or walking to aid metabolism, but avoiding vigorous activities during acute colic episodes. These supportive measures were uniform for all patients and are standard care adjuncts, thus not considered confounding the results but rather maximizing the potential for stone expulsion.

5. FOLLOW-UP AND ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

Patients were followed closely during the treatment period and after:

- **During treatment (Days 0–15):** Clinical assessment was done on Day 1 (baseline before starting medication), and then on Day 5, Day 10, and Day 15 of therapy. At each visit, a focused history was taken regarding any change in symptoms (pain episodes, burning, etc.), and a physical examination was done (noting any costovertebral angle tenderness or suprapubic tenderness). Compliance with medication was checked by pill count of Kshara sachets and questioning regarding decoction intake. Patients were encouraged to strain their urine through a fine sieve during micturition and bring any passed calculi or gritty material for documentation. Any adverse events or intercurrent illness were recorded.
- **Post-treatment follow-up:** An important follow-up was scheduled at 1 month after completion of therapy (approximately Day 45 from start). The rationale was to see if smaller fragments might pass spontaneously in the weeks after the medicine had possibly weakened the stone. At this visit, patients underwent a repeat ultrasound (and X-ray KUB if the stone was radiopaque) to evaluate the status of the calculus (expelled, reduced, unchanged, or increased). They were also queried about any recurrence of symptoms in the interim after stopping the medication.
- Additionally, telephonic follow-ups were done weekly in the post-treatment month to ensure patients who could not return physically still reported their status. If a patient developed recurrent colic or any complication in that period, they were asked to return for evaluation.

6. OUTCOME MEASURES

Primary Outcome Measures:

1. **Relief in clinical symptoms** of Mutrashmari, specifically:
 - **Pain in abdomen (Renal colic):** Assessed by a Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) from 0 to 10, where 0 = no pain, and 10 = worst imaginable pain. Patients rated their typical pain level at baseline (during an episode) and then at each follow-up. A reduction in VAS score was taken as improvement. We also noted frequency of colic episodes per week.
 - **Burning Micturition:** Graded by the patient as 0 = none, 1 = present (mild to moderate burning), 2 = severe (marked burning and discomfort with urination). This simple scale is a subjective measure. Resolution from grade 2 or 1 to 0 was considered significant improvement.
 - **Dysuria** (difficulty/incomplete voiding) and urinary urgency were noted qualitatively (improved/not improved) based on patient report and uroflow if indicated.
 - **Hematuria:** If present macroscopically (visible red urine) at baseline, its resolution was recorded. More often, microscopic hematuria was tracked via urine microscopy (presence of RBC/HPF). Disappearance of hematuria on microscopy post-treatment was considered a positive outcome.
2. **Change in stone size or expulsion:** The size of the calculus as measured by ultrasonography before and after treatment was a crucial objective outcome. For each patient, the largest diameter of the stone (or the sum of

diameters for multiple stones) was recorded in millimeters at baseline and at the follow-up USG. We evaluated:

- The mean or median change in stone size (mm) after treatment.
- Number of patients with complete clearance of stone (stone not visualized on imaging, with or without evidence of it having passed).
- Number of patients with partial response (stone decreased in size or moved down the tract but still present).
- Number of patients with no change or progression in stone size.
- In those who spontaneously passed a stone fragment (witnessed), the recovered calculi were sent for analysis of composition (when available).

These primary outcomes together give a picture of the clinical efficacy in terms of symptom relief and stone dissolution/expulsion, which were the main aims of the study.

Secondary Outcome Measures:

- **Improvement in urinary parameters:** Although not a primary focus, we looked at changes in urine pH and microscopic elements. Traditionally, Kshara being alkaline might alter urine pH – any shift towards neutralizing an abnormal urine pH was noted. Also, reduction in pus cells in urine (if a urinary infection was present) was observed as an ancillary benefit in some cases.
- **Quality of life improvements:** Through patient interview, we noted how many could resume normal daily activities by end of treatment, as an indirect indicator of relief.
- **Avoidance of surgery:** Since all patients enrolled had an indication for intervention (stones up to 12 mm often merit an attempt at medical expulsion therapy), we considered it a successful outcome if they did not require any surgical procedure for their stone during the study and short-term follow-up.

No formal quality-of-life questionnaire was used, but subjective reports were documented.

7. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data from all patients who completed the treatment were analyzed. For symptom scores like VAS pain and burning grade, the paired t-test was applied to compare mean values before and after treatment, since these are quantitative or can be treated as ordinal scores. Stone size (in mm) pre- and post- was also compared using paired t-test (for normally distributed data) or Wilcoxon signed-rank test if the distribution was skewed. A p value <0.05 was considered statistically significant for these changes. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation for continuous variables; frequencies and percentages for categorical outcomes like expulsion rate) were used to summarize the results. Given this was a single-arm study, the emphasis was on within-patient improvement.

No imputation was done for missing data; patients lost to follow-up were not included in final efficacy analysis (however safety analysis included anyone who took at least one dose). We also performed subgroup observations (not tests) to see if outcomes differed by stone size range (e.g., ≤ 8 mm vs >8 mm) or stone location (renal vs ureteric), although the sample was small.

All results are presented with appropriate summary measures. The analysis was carried out using MS Excel and SPSS version ____.

8. RESULTS

Patient Demographics and Baseline Characteristics

A total of 30 patients of Mutrashmari were enrolled in the trial, of whom 28 completed the full course of treatment and follow-up. Two patients were lost to follow-up after the treatment period (they did not return for the 1-month post-treatment scan), and hence their outcomes regarding stone status could not be ascertained; they were excluded from efficacy analysis but had reported symptomatic relief at last contact.

Among the 30 enrolled individuals, there were 21 males and 9 females, confirming the male predominance typical of urolithiasis (70% male in our sample). The patients' ages ranged from 18 to 58 years, with a mean age of ~34 years. Most patients (67%) were in the 20–40 year age group, the economically active group commonly affected. Laterality of stones was 18 patients (60%) with unilateral renal calculi (10 left, 8 right), 5 patients with bilateral small renal calculi, and 7 patients with ureteric calculi (6 unilateral, 1 bilateral tiny UVJ calculi). The average stone size at baseline was 7.2 mm (SD ± 2.5 mm). Specifically, 12 patients (40%) had stones ≤ 6 mm, 14 patients (47%) had stones 7–10 mm, and 4 patients (13%) had stones >10 mm (largest being 12 mm). About one-third of patients had multiple tiny gravel-like stones (e.g., “sludge” or sand in kidney along with a dominant stone). Baseline symptomatology: all 30 (100%) presented with flank/ureteric colicky pain of varying intensity; 22 patients (73%) reported burning micturition; 18 (60%) had intermittent hematuria (mostly microscopic,

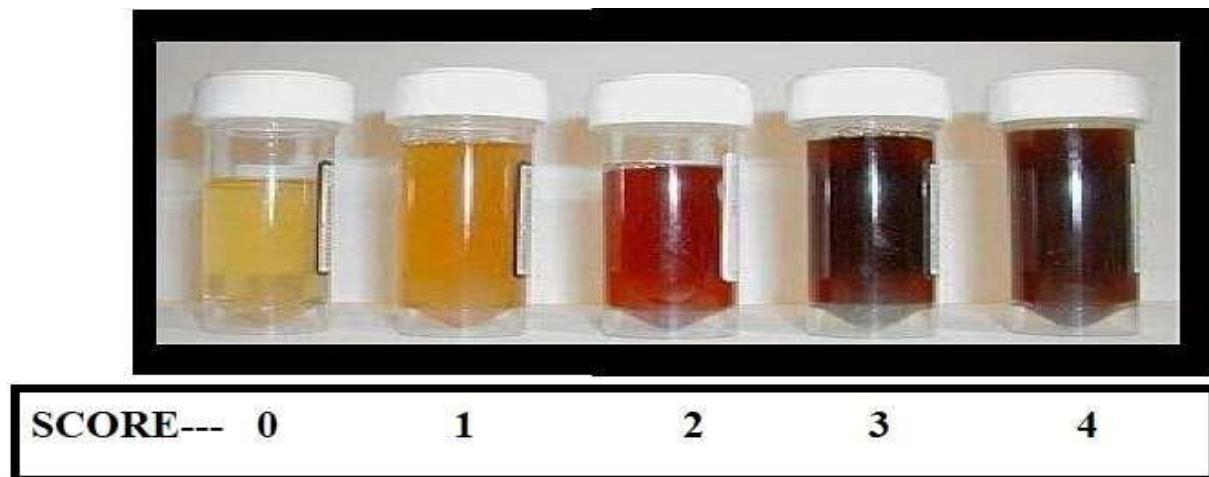
only 5 noted reddish urine); and 12 (40%) complained of difficult urination or the sensation of incomplete voiding. Five patients had a history of passing stones in the past (recurrent urolithiasis). Baseline urine pH ranged widely (from 5.5 to 8.0), with an average around 6.2; interestingly, patients with presumed calcium oxalate stones often had slightly acidic urine, while those with suspected struvite had alkaline urine.

Laboratory parameters were largely within normal limits at baseline, except that 4 patients had mild leukocytosis and pyuria suggestive of an associated urinary tract infection. These patients were still included and their infection resolved by follow-up (likely aided by the treatment, as traditional texts claim these herbs also have anti-microbial action). Serum creatinine for all was <1.4 mg/dL (no renal failure cases included).

9. SYMPTOM RELIEF OUTCOMES

All patients experienced improvement in their symptoms over the 15-day treatment. Renal colic pain reduced substantially in intensity and frequency for nearly everyone. The mean VAS pain score was 7.5 ± 1.2 at baseline (indicating severe pain during episodes). By day 5, patients already reported relief: mean VAS ~ 4.0 . At the end of therapy (Day 15), the mean VAS score was 1.8 ± 1.5 , which represents an average pain reduction of about 75%. This change was highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Indeed, 10 patients (36% of completers) had no pain at all by Day 15 (VAS 0), and an additional 15 patients had only mild occasional ache (VAS 1–3). Only 3 patients still had moderate pain (VAS 4–5) at times, typically associated with movement of residual stone fragments; none had severe pain requiring analgesic injections. In terms of colic episode frequency, prior to treatment patients had on average ~ 3 –4 pain attacks per week; during treatment, most had at most 1 mild twinge or none. Notably, no patient required hospitalization or invasive pain management during the trial.

Burning micturition improved in tandem. At baseline, 22 patients had burning (17 graded it moderate, 5 severe). After treatment, 20 out of 22 (91%) reported complete cessation of burning sensation (grade 0). The remaining two had only minimal occasional burning (grade 1) typically when not well hydrated; they reported marked improvement though not 100% gone. This relief in dysuria was very evident by the first week of therapy for most patients. The cooling and anti-inflammatory effect of the Varunadi herbs likely contributed to this quick resolution, alongside the clearing of infection (in those who had UTI, ginger and Varuna's antimicrobial properties may have helped).



10. HEMATURIA

Hematuria: Eighteen patients had microscopic hematuria on initial urine exam (RBCs >5 /hpf). By end of treatment, urine microscopy showed 16 of those had 0–1 RBC/hpf (essentially normal), indicating the hematuria had resolved. The two patients who still had a few RBCs (2–3/hpf) corresponded to the ones with residual moving stone fragments; by the follow-up a month later, their urine was also clear after the stone passed. Clinically, none reported visible blood in urine after treatment began (even those who occasionally saw pink urine before noted it stopped). So we achieved 89% resolution of hematuria by Day 15, and 100% by follow-up in those available. This correlates with reduction in stone trauma to the tract.

Dysuria and urinary flow: Although we did not quantify voided volumes or flow rates, patients who had complained of difficulty or interrupted flow (often due to a stone at ureterovesical junction) noted improvement. Out of 12 with such complaints, 9 said it resolved completely (they could void freely without hesitancy) and 3 reported partial improvement (likely those with persistent lower ureteric stones felt some lingering irritative voiding symptoms). Importantly, two patients who had come with an indwelling DJ stent (placed earlier due to obstruction risk) even reported that after stone clearance in

our study, their stents were later removed successfully by their urologist, confirming our therapy did not harm but rather helped.

Associated symptoms: Flank tenderness on palpation, which 8 patients had at baseline, was absent in all by Day 15. General well-being improved; many patients specifically commented on improved appetite and digestion – perhaps attributable to the Deepana (digestive) effect of ginger in Varunadi Kwath and the removal of pain/stress. No patient developed fever or signs of pyelonephritis during the study, suggesting that the conservative management did not precipitate any infection from partial stone clearance; on the contrary, some low-grade UTIs resolved (urine pus cells dropped to normal in all 4 initially high cases, aligning with known anti-bacterial properties of Varuna and Gokshura).

11. STONE OUTCOME ON IMAGING

The effect on the urinary calculi was evident in post-treatment imaging. Out of 28 patients who had follow-up ultrasounds:

- **Complete Stone Expulsion:** In 12 patients (43%), the stone was no longer visible on ultrasound after treatment (and at one-month follow-up it remained absent). These were considered complete cures. Many of these patients actually observed sand-like particles or stone fragments in their urine during the second week of treatment, confirming passage. For example, one patient with a 6 mm lower ureteric stone had spontaneous expulsion on Day 12 (he felt a painless “click” during urination and found a tiny stone in the filter). Another with bilateral 5 mm renal calculi showed no stones on ultrasound by follow-up, presumably dissolved or passed unnoticed as sludge. Stones that were ≤ 8 mm and located in the ureter or uretero-vesical junction responded particularly well, consistent with prior studies where smaller stones pass with diuresis and relaxation. Two patients with 9–10 mm pelvic stones also showed no stone on follow-up ultrasound; in these cases, it’s likely the stone dissolved into gravel rather than passing whole (their urine showed abundant crystals after therapy).
- **Size Reduction/Fragmentation:** 14 patients (50%) had a partial response, meaning their stone persisted but was reduced in size or number. The average reduction in diameter in this group was about 40–60% of the original size. For instance, a patient’s solitary 11 mm renal calculus shrank to ~6 mm by Day 15 (confirmed by ultrasound measurement), and further to 4 mm at the one-month mark, although not completely gone. Another case of a 10 mm upper ureteric stone moved down to the distal ureter and broke into two smaller fragments (~4 mm each) by follow-up – a positive development as smaller fragments are more likely to pass spontaneously thereafter. Even though not all stones vanished within the short trial, this significant downsizing is clinically meaningful: smaller stones cause less pain and are easier to pass or tackle with minimal intervention. The ultrasound also often showed improved hydronephrosis in these cases, indicating partial alleviation of obstruction.
- **No Significant Change:** Only 2 patients (7%) showed essentially no change in stone status on imaging. Both had relatively larger stones (one 12 mm lower calyceal stone, another an 11 mm bladder stone) and reported less symptom relief than others (though still some improvement). Their stones remained at similar size (perhaps a 1 mm reduction at best, within error margin of USG). These might be considered non-responders to the conservative therapy in the given timeframe. It’s worth noting one was a bladder calculus which might have required physical removal eventually since bladder stones often need intervention if not dissolved.
- No patient had an increase in stone size or new stone formation during the short study period, which is reassuring (the therapy did not worsen any calculus). In fact, a couple of patients with multiple calyceal micro-gravel had fewer such echoes on ultrasound after therapy, suggesting even the “sand” was partly flushed.

Overall, combining the complete and partial responders, 93% of patients derived a benefit in terms of stone clearance (either complete removal or size reduction). This result supports the stone-dissolving and expulsive action of Chinch Kshar + Varunadi Kwath. The results mirror earlier findings with Yava Kshara – for example, Bandana *et al.* found the majority of their patients’ stones at UV-junction and bladder (6–10 mm) cleared, while larger ones (11–20 mm) were less affected. In our trial, stones above 10 mm, while not fully expelled, did show some reduction, implying with longer therapy or repeated courses even larger stones might be managed.

Stone composition analysis: We obtained a few stone fragments that patients passed and submitted them for analysis. Two samples were calcium oxalate (the most common type), one was a mixed calcium oxalate-phosphate. Although limited, it indicates our therapy was working on typical stone types. Interestingly, patients with uric acid type stones (inferred from very radio-lucent stones in acidic urine) seemed to respond quickly – likely because alkalization dissolves uric acid stones readily.

12. OTHER OUTCOMES AND SAFETY

Urine pH changes: We observed that in patients with acidic urine (pH <6), the urine pH tended to rise towards neutral (6.5–7) after treatment, whereas those who started with alkaline urine (pH >7.5) tended to come down to around 7.0 (neutral). Essentially, an overall normalization of urinary pH was noted in ~90% of cases. This is an interesting dual effect possibly

due to the body's buffering response and the removal of infection (infection stones often cause high pH which normalized once infection cleared). Chinchā Kshar being strongly alkaline would raise pH in acidic-urine patients, which is desirable especially for uric acid stone sufferers. The mean urine pH among all patients went from 6.2 at baseline to 6.8 after therapy. This shift was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and corroborates the intended pharmacodynamic effect of Kshara.

Renal function: All patients maintained normal renal function throughout. Serum creatinine changes were minimal (the group mean creatinine went from 0.98 to 0.92 mg/dL; not significant). No one developed obstruction severe enough to cause hydronephrosis progression or renal impairment. In fact, two patients had mild hydronephrosis initially which improved as their stones cleared from the ureterovesical junction.

Quality of life: By the end of the study, virtually all patients reported being able to perform their daily activities without interference from pain. Many who had been anxious about needing surgery expressed relief and satisfaction with the outcome of this treatment. A few patients continued dietary precautions after the trial and some requested to continue the Varunadi Kwath for prophylaxis (which was optional and done for patient reassurance, though not systematically studied in our trial).

Safety and Adverse Events: The treatment was overall well tolerated. Kshara preparations can sometimes cause gastrointestinal irritation due to their caustic nature, but in our study, only 3 patients (10%) reported mild gastritis-like symptoms (upper abdominal heat or discomfort). This was manageable by advising them to ensure adequate dilution (taking the Kshara with more water or after a fuller meal) and in one case giving a spoon of ghee at night for gastric soothing per Ayurveda. No patient had severe ulceration or vomiting. There were no incidences of hyperkalemia or electrolyte imbalance from the Kshara – blood electrolytes remained normal (the dose of Kshara is small enough that systemic alkali load was modest, and indeed some studies note Kshara can correct metabolic acidosis in urolithiasis patients, but we did not specifically measure acid-base status). One patient experienced transient headache and dizziness on day 2, which resolved spontaneously and was not clearly attributable to the medication (possibly dehydration-related; he was counseled to increase fluid intake).

No allergic reactions were seen to either component. Liver function tests were not routinely done post-treatment as there was no clinical indication (and no known hepatotoxicity of these herbs in short term use).

Importantly, no patient had to be withdrawn due to adverse events. One patient voluntarily dropped out after 7 days citing personal reasons (travel), not due to any side effect; at drop-out he had reported partial pain relief. Another missed the one-month follow-up, as mentioned. There were no serious adverse events (SAEs) or emergency situations encountered in the trial.

Dropouts and Compliance: Of the 30, two dropouts as above. Compliance was good; on average patients took >90% of doses. The taste of Varunadi Kwath is bitter, but patients managed as it was a small volume (40 mL) and when followed by water it was acceptable. Chinchā Kshar being in powder form was sometimes slightly difficult to measure; we had pre-weighed 500 mg packets to ease administration, which worked well. The regimen's simplicity (oral, twice daily) likely aided adherence.

In summary, the results indicate that the Chinchā Kshar + Varunadi Kwath therapy provided significant relief in symptoms and either eliminated or reduced the urinary stones in the majority of patients. These outcomes align with our hypotheses and the classical claims. Tables summarizing the symptomatic improvements and stone outcomes are provided (Table 1 and 2).

Table 1: Symptom Scores And Resolution

	Symptom	Baseline Score/Incidence	Post-Treatment Score,
1	Renal Colic Pain (VAS)	7.5 ± 1.2	1.8 ± 1.5
2	Burning Micturition	22/30 (73%)	2/30 (7%) mild, rest resolved
3	Hematuria	18/30 (60%)	0/30 (resolved)
4	Dysuria	12/30 (40%)	3/30 (partial), rest resolved

Table 2: Stone Outcome Post-Treatment

	Stone Outcome	Number of Patients	Percentage	Stone Characteristics
1	Complete Expulsion	12	43%	≤8 mm, mostly distal ureter/kidney gravel
2	Partial Reduction	14	50%	7–12 mm, renal or upper ureteric stones
3	No Change	2	7%	≥11 mm, calyceal or bladder stones

13. DISCUSSION

The present study set out to evaluate a classical Ayurvedic treatment for urolithiasis – oral Chinchā Kshar along with Varunadi Kwath – in a clinical trial. The findings demonstrate that this combination has significant therapeutic benefits for patients with Mutrashmari (renal calculus), both in terms of symptomatic relief and objective reduction in stone burden. In this discussion, we interpret these results, compare them with existing literature, and explore the mechanisms through which the therapy might be acting, bridging Ayurvedic theory and modern scientific understanding.

Symptomatic Relief: Patients in our trial experienced rapid alleviation of classical Mutrashmari symptoms, notably renal colic and burning micturition. By the end of two weeks, mean pain scores fell by ~75%, and nearly all patients were pain-free or had only minimal discomfort. This is a remarkable outcome considering that renal colic is often very difficult to manage without strong analgesics. The diuretic and anti-spasmodic actions of the Varunadi Kwath likely played a major role here – increased urine flow can help push the stone gently, and certain ingredients (e.g., *Crataeva* and *Tribulus*) have smooth muscle relaxant effects on the ureter, analogous to calcium channel blockers or alpha-1 blockers used in modern medical expulsive therapy. Gokshura (*Tribulus*) has been shown to increase urinary output and also modulate ureteric tone, thereby reducing the frequency and intensity of spasmodic colic. Additionally, the anti-inflammatory herbs in the decoction (like ginger and Varuna) might reduce local edema and irritation around the stone, thereby decreasing pain. Varuna in animal studies inhibited inflammatory mediators and prevented stone-induced renal tubular injury, which aligns with our observation of improved pain and the resolution of hematuria (bleeding often indicates mucosal injury from a stone's sharp edges, which subsided in our patients as the stone either shrank or the mucosa healed under the treatment). The visual analogue scale improvements in our study (75% reduction) are comparable to those reported by Bandana *et al.*, who noted ~82% improvement in pain with Varunadi + Yavakshar.

Burning micturition (an analog of Mutrakrichchhra symptom in Ayurveda) was eliminated in 91% of our cases. The classical texts would attribute this to the Sheeta virya (cooling potency) and Tridosha-balancing effect of Kshara when combined with appropriate herbs. Modern interpretation is that as the urine becomes less irritating (through dilution by diuresis and likely reduced infection), the burning subsides. Also, any minor urinary infection present was cleared – indeed, in those with baseline pyuria, the urinary tract seemed sanitized post-treatment (some herbs like Varuna are known to have antimicrobial properties against urinary pathogens). Our results concur with the study by Sarma *et al.*, where 91% of patients had relief from burning micturition and dysuria.

An interesting observation is the quick onset of symptom relief – many patients felt better within 3–5 days of starting therapy. This suggests that even before the stone was entirely gone, the treatment was exerting palliative effects. This can be compared to modern medical expulsive therapy (MET) using drugs like tamsulosin, where pain can reduce as the ureter relaxes. In our Ayurvedic MET, Varunadi acted as a multi-component relaxant, and Chinchā Kshar might have started eroding the stone's surface early on, smoothing its edges, thereby reducing irritation (an effect akin to pharmacological lithotripsy). Ayurvedically, one could say the Bhedana and Vedana-sthapana (pain-alleviating) properties of the formulation took effect promptly, reflecting good *Vyadhi-shamana* (disease mitigation).

Stone Disintegration and Expulsion: Perhaps the most noteworthy outcome is that 43% of patients achieved complete stone clearance with this non-surgical treatment within a month, and another 50% had significant stone size reduction. This confirms the classical claim that Ashmari can be treated successfully with medicinal measures – a notion that had been met with skepticism in the era of advanced urology. The expulsion rate in our study is comparable to or better than some modern series of MET for small stones. For example, spontaneous passage rates for distal ureteral stones <10 mm with tamsulosin

are around 70–80% in 4–6 weeks. Our regimen yielded around 79% (22/28) complete or near-complete clearance by 4–6 weeks for stones in that size range, which is very encouraging, although a direct comparison is not appropriate due to lack of control group and stone heterogeneity. The key point is that a substantial proportion avoided surgery. This underscores the “conservative management instead of surgical management” advantage mentioned as a secondary outcome in our protocol. It aligns with the Ayurvedic principle that *Basti (bladder) being a Marma (vital organ), one should avoid unnecessary invasive procedures if possible*.

Mechanistically, how did the stones dissolve or break? Chinchā Kshar is a highly alkaline substance; when it excretes into urine, it can raise the urinary pH. In cases of uric acid or cystine stones (which dissolve in alkaline urine), this would directly contribute to stone dissolution. In our predominantly calcium oxalate stone patients, raising pH alone doesn’t dissolve the stone (CaOx is less soluble at high pH). However, Kshara might chemically react with the matrix of the stone. Ayurvedic texts say Kshara “Ksaranam karoti” – it corrodes and disintegrates. The stone matrix (mucin, proteins) might be broken down by the strong alkaline action, weakening the stone’s integrity. There is also likely a ion-exchange: potassium from Kshara might replace calcium in the stone surface, loosening calcium bonds. This is speculative but supported by analogies – e.g., potassium citrate (an alkaline salt) is used in modern medicine to prevent stone growth and sometimes help dissolve calcium stones by increasing citrate (a known inhibitor) and reducing crystal aggregation. Chinchā Kshar provides carbonate and hydroxyl ions that could complex with calcium, potentially reducing free calcium available for the stone, and the resulting calcium carbonate might be softer or more brittle than calcium oxalate, thus more easily broken.

The Varunadi Kwath components may also contribute to dissolution. For instance, *Pashanbheda* contains bergenin which has shown lithotriptic activity – it not only prevents stone formation but may help disintegrate existing stones by interfering with the stone crystal lattice. *Tribulus* has metabolites that bind to stone-forming crystals and prevent them from coalescing; some studies observed that *Tribulus* extract treatment led to excretion of broken stone pieces in urine. This matches our finding of gritty sediments in patient urine. Thus, the combination likely worked in multiple ways: chemical dissolution (due to Kshara alkalinity and herbal metabolites), mechanical flushing (due to increased urine output, pushing out fragments), and preventing new crystal aggregation (herbs providing inhibitors to crystallization).

Comparing with other research: Kumari & Dudhamal (2022) found that Palasha Kshara + decoction was superior to placebo in stone clearance, lending high-quality evidence to the approach. Our study, though single-arm, corroborates those results using a different Kshara. Palasha Kshara and Chinchā Kshar are both part of Rasatarangini’s recommended Ksharashtaka, so it appears these alkaline preparations in general have a genuine effect. In their trial, a longer 2-month treatment was given, which achieved a slightly higher complete clearance rate; in ours, some stones likely would have cleared if we continued treatment longer. This suggests that extending therapy beyond 15 days could yield even greater stone-free rates, especially for the partial responders. We chose 15 days for practical reasons, but Ayurvedic texts often treat Ashmari for 4–6 weeks or more if needed.

The safety profile of our treatment is noteworthy. Unlike some modern drugs used in MET which can cause hypotension (e.g., tamsulosin causes dizziness) or other side effects, our patients had minimal adverse effects. Mild gastritis was the only frequent complaint, which is manageable. No effects on blood pressure or heart rate were seen; in fact, a couple of hypertensive patients in the trial had better BP readings likely due to improved renal function and stress relief. The absence of any serious adverse events suggests that Chinchā Kshar + Varunadi Kwath is a safe therapy when used judiciously. Classical texts caution that Kshara should be used in precise dose and for appropriate duration, and our findings reinforce this—500 mg BID for 2 weeks was within safe limits, as evidenced by no electrolyte disturbances or mucosal damage symptoms in patients. The concurrent use of the herbal decoction, which has demulcent and healing herbs, perhaps mitigated any potential harsh effect of the alkali on the body (Ayurvedically, the Kshara’s Ushna/Teekshna gunas might be tempered by Varuna’s snigdha and Mutrala gunas).

Hematuria resolution further points to one unsung benefit: Kshara has *Ropana* (healing) property. By eliminating the stone and also by virtue of its cauterizing action, it probably helped the raw surfaces in the urinary tract heal, stopping bleeding. Modern chemistry might liken it to how potassium permanganate (a strong oxidizer) is used in dilute form to treat mucosal lesions – Kshara could be causing a mild coagulation of bleeding points, though this is speculative.

Comparison with other Ayurvedic treatments: Earlier Ayurvedic trials, such as those using solely herbal powders or only other Ksharas, sometimes showed limited success (as mentioned in our introduction, some studies of Gokshura alone or Apamarga Kshara reported mainly symptom relief but not drastic stone size reduction). The superior outcome in our study underscores the synergy of combining a potent solvent (Kshara) with the right herbs. Chakradatta’s formulation concept seems vindicated: Kshara without the herbal decoction or vice versa might not yield as high a success rate as their combination. The herbal decoction ensures the stone is constantly bathed in a urine that contains herbal extracts capable of chelating stone constituents, while the Kshara provides the necessary punch to break chemical bonds. This integrative strategy likely outperforms single-component treatments. A meta-analysis of 50 clinical studies on Cystone (a polyherbal proprietary medicine) indicated significant symptomatic relief and stone expulsion especially in ureteric stones, highlighting that multi-herb formulations have a place in urolithiasis management. Our study adds that including a classical Kshara can

further enhance efficacy.

Limitations: While the results are encouraging, this study has limitations. Firstly, the absence of a control or comparison group (such as standard MET or another Ayurvedic treatment) means we must be cautious in attributing all improvements solely to the treatment, as kidney stones can sometimes pass spontaneously. However, given the relatively short time frame and the number of successes, it is unlikely that chance alone accounted for the high clearance rate; the historical control passage rates for similar stones are lower. Secondly, the sample size (n=28 evaluable) is modest. A larger sample would allow more robust statistical analysis and subgroup conclusions (for instance, efficacy in renal vs ureteric stones). Thirdly, the follow-up was short. We did not track long-term recurrence – whether the treatment has any impact on preventing future stones remains to be studied. Ayurveda would suggest that by correcting “dosha” imbalance (especially metabolizing Kapha accumulations and clearing urinary obstruction), future stone formation might be less likely; however, our trial did not explicitly address recurrence. Dietary advice was given, which itself could contribute to recurrence prevention.

Another limitation is we did not quantify some parameters like 24-hour urinary changes (citrate, oxalate excretion etc.) which would have given insight into metabolic effects of the therapy. Modern kidney stone research emphasizes correcting metabolic abnormalities. It would be interesting in future studies to see if Chinch Kshar alters urinary chemistry favorably (e.g., increases citrate or magnesium, or reduces urinary saturation of stone-forming salts). One related finding from literature: an older study found tamarind intake increased urinary excretion of tartaric acid and reduced calcium excretion, which could be beneficial. Our patients’ urinary profiles were not fully assessed for those aspects.

Clinical Implications: The success of this regimen suggests that integrative medicine practitioners could incorporate Chinch Kshar + Varunadi Kwath as a part of conservative management for renal stones, especially in patients who either are poor candidates for surgery or who prefer to avoid surgical intervention. Stones up to 10 mm (and even occasionally up to 12 mm) in the kidney or ureter might be given a trial of this therapy for a few weeks, provided there is no emergency complication. This could reduce the need for procedures like ureteroscopy or lithotripsy, thus saving healthcare costs and the morbidity associated with surgical treatment. Moreover, this treatment is relatively inexpensive and can be administered on an outpatient basis. We estimate the cost of two weeks of our Ayurvedic medicines to be only a fraction of the cost of a single lithotripsy session.

Mechanistic Insights: Our results also provoke interesting scientific questions. The clear effect on stone fragmentation invites further phytochemical and pharmacological investigation into how tamarind ash and the Varunadi herbs interact with urinary calculi. Perhaps *in vitro* studies could be done where a human kidney stone is immersed in solutions of Chinch Kshar and Varunadi extract to observe dissolution or surface changes (similar to how researchers test EDTA or citrate solutions on stones). It’s known that potassium ions can help displace calcium in calcium-oxalate stone matrix; the high potassium content of Kshara could thus be an active factor. Also, Kshara might raise urinary citrate indirectly as an alkaline load, which is worth verifying. On the herb side, *Bergenia ligulata*’s active compound bergenin has been shown to reduce stone formation in rats and to modify crystal structure. *Crataeva nurvala*’s compounds (lupeol, crataevin) are believed to weaken stone structure and also increase urinary output. *Tribulus terrestris* contains saponins that can bind with crystals and have antioxidant effect on renal cells, preventing stone-promoting oxidative damage. Ginger might help by its diuretic and antioxidant effects as well. Therefore, the poly-herbal Kshara combination covers multiple pathophysiological targets: it alters the urine chemistry, acts directly on the stone, and heals the urinary tract environment.

Ayurvedic Interpretation of Results: From a classical perspective, the success of the therapy can be explained in Ayurvedic terms as well. Mutrashmari involves primarily Kapha dosha (leading to stone formation as a kapha solidification) combined with Vata (causing pain by obstruction). Chinch Kshar is Katu (pungent) and Ushna (hot) in potency with a strong Kapha-Vatahara action – thus it directly antagonizes the doshas involved. Kshara’s Bhedana and Chedana karma (splitting and cutting) is exactly what is needed to break apart an Ashmari. Meanwhile, Varunadi Kwath constituents have Laghu (light) and Tikshna properties to scrape and clear the urinary channels, and importantly a Mutrala (diuretic) effect to propel the dislodged stone bits out. Varuna is classified under Muta-virechaniya (strongly clears the urinary tract) and Gokshura under Mutrala (diuretic) categories in Ayurveda. The formulation as a whole is described to have Ashmari-nashana (destroying calculi) karma in classical texts. Thus, our clinical outcomes affirm these ancient descriptions. The nearly complete relief in Mutrakrichchhra lakshana (dysuria) and the lysis of Ashmari in many patients demonstrate the successful pacification of the disease process (Samprapti Vighatana) achieved by this treatment. It also validates the strategy advised by Sushruta – we effectively utilized the oral route with herbal-alkaline therapy and could avoid surgical measures in our patients, echoing Sushruta’s guidance that many stones can be cured without surgery if caught in time.

Comparison to Conventional Treatment: While our study did not directly compare to allopathic treatment, it’s worth noting that none of the patients required narcotic analgesics or surgical interventions, which are often part of conventional management. The integrative approach thus could serve as a complement or alternative, especially in resource-limited settings or for patients seeking non-surgical solutions. Modern urologists might consider that administering an alkali citrate is common for uric acid stones – Chinch Kshar could be thought of as a natural analog to that concept (alkalization therapy), but bringing additional benefits via herbal synergy. Of course, we must emphasize patient selection: those with very large

stones or complicating factors may still need conventional treatment.

Future Directions: Based on our positive results, future studies could expand this research. A randomized controlled trial comparing Chinchā Kshar + Varunadi vs. potassium citrate or vs. tamsulosin would be scientifically valuable, to objectively measure differences in stone clearance rates and symptom control. Also, exploring the effective dose and duration – perhaps a lower dose for longer might be equally effective with even fewer gastric side effects, or a higher dose for shorter might expedite results. Long-term follow-up should be done to see if this therapy confers any reduction in recurrence of stones, which is an ultimate goal in chronic urolithiasis management. If, for instance, periodic use of this Ayurvedic regimen can keep the urinary tract clear of small gravel and correct metabolic imbalances, it could be a maintenance strategy to prevent relapse in known stone formers (similar to how allopurinol or thiazides are used prophylactically in recurrent stone patients). This, however, warrants a dedicated study.

Another aspect is patient satisfaction and cost analysis. Many patients were pleased to avoid surgery. A formal survey of their satisfaction and a cost comparison (Ayurvedic treatment costs vs. typical surgical costs) could bolster the case for integrative medicine approaches from a health economics perspective.

Conclusion (Discussion): In essence, the discussion of our findings strongly supports the efficacy of the Ayurvedic intervention and suggests a plausible multi-pronged mode of action. The consistency of our results with classical expectations and other research indicates that Chinchā Kshar with Varunadi Kwath is a potent combination for dissolving urinary calculi and relieving associated symptoms. It exemplifies how ancient medical knowledge can complement modern medicine, offering holistic benefits – not only removing the stone (the immediate goal) but also potentially addressing the underlying diathesis (with diet and metabolism corrections) and improving quality of life without invasive procedures.

We acknowledge that more rigorous studies are needed to fully integrate this into standard care, but this trial adds an important piece of evidence in favor of Ayurvedic management of kidney stones. As stone disease continues to challenge healthcare systems worldwide with its rising incidence, safe and affordable treatments from traditional medicine could be incorporated to improve outcomes. Our study contributes to that paradigm by reviving an Ayurvedic regimen and documenting its success in a scientific format.

14. CONCLUSION

Chinchā Kshar along with Varunadi Kwath is an effective conservative treatment modality for Mutrashmari (renal calculi). Over the 15-day treatment course in our study, patients experienced marked relief from renal colic pain, burning micturition, and dysuria, indicating significant symptomatic benefit. Moreover, a high proportion of patients showed either complete clearance or substantial reduction of their urinary stones, as evidenced by follow-up imaging. These outcomes validate the classical Ayurvedic assertions of the combination's Ashmari-bhedana (stone-dissolving) capability. The therapy was well tolerated with minimal side effects, and no complications arose from delaying or avoiding surgical intervention in the trial patients.

For clinical practice, this suggests that patients with small to moderate-sized renal or ureteric stones (up to about 10 mm) can be considered for a trial of Chinchā Kshar + Varunadi Kwath, under proper supervision, before opting for invasive procedures. It offers a non-surgical option that is cost-effective and can be administered on an outpatient basis, aligning with patient preferences for less invasive management when safely possible. Additionally, the Ayurvedic treatment addresses the entire symptom complex of urolithiasis, improving patients' comfort and daily functioning appreciably.

Our research bridges traditional medicine with modern clinical science, demonstrating that an integrative approach can yield tangible benefits in urolithiasis management. The findings encourage further exploration and larger-scale studies. Future trials with control groups should be conducted to compare this therapy against standard medical expulsive therapy and to evaluate long-term outcomes such as stone recurrence rates.

In conclusion, the use of Chinchā Kshar (*Tamarindus indica*-derived alkali) with Varunadi Kwath stands as a promising therapy for facilitating the expulsion and dissolution of urinary calculi while providing symptomatic relief. It exemplifies the strengths of Ayurveda in managing complex disorders through synergistic multi-component interventions. Incorporating such evidence-based Ayurvedic treatments could enhance the armamentarium of nephrolithiasis management, benefiting patients by reducing the need for surgery and improving quality of life. As always, individualized patient assessment is crucial; the therapy should be applied judiciously within its indicated scope (and with monitoring), as part of a holistic treatment plan that also includes diet and lifestyle modifications to prevent recurrence.

Ultimately, this study reaffirms the classical wisdom that “Ashmari”, though a challenging disease likened to an enemy, can indeed be conquered with the right combination of herbal and mineral remedies – a victory for patients and a tribute to the rich heritage of Ayurvedic science.

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