



An Ayurvedic review on clinical utility of Ghrita w.s.r. to cholesterol

Nigam A¹, Sharma RK², Pramar T^{3*}

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¹ Ayushi Nigam, PhD Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharira, PGIA, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Rajasthan Ayurveda University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India.

² Rajesh Kumar Sharma, Professor and HOD, Department of Kriya Sharira, PGIA, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Rajasthan Ayurveda University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India.

^{3*} Twinkal Pramar, Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharira, MMM Govt Ayurveda College, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Introduction: Ghrita, also known as Ghee, is a unique natural product highly valued in Ayurveda for its numerous health benefits. It is considered the best among the four types of Sneha (fats) due to its ability to assimilate the properties of added ingredients without losing its own characteristics.

Health Benefits: Ghrita is known for its ability to prevent and treat various illnesses. It is highly digestible and does not negatively impact cholesterol levels. In fact, daily consumption of Goghrita has been shown to reduce cholesterol levels. Ghrita also contains essential vitamins and antioxidants that promote overall health.

Clinical Utility: Ghrita plays a significant role in Ayurvedic treatments, particularly in internal oleation. Its lipophilic nature facilitates the absorption and delivery of active ingredients to target organs, enhancing the efficacy of Ayurvedic formulations. Ghrita's unique properties make it an ideal medium for delivering herbal compounds in the treatment of various diseases.

Conclusion: Ghrita, or Ghee, is a highly beneficial natural product with significant clinical utility in Ayurveda. Its ability to reduce cholesterol levels and enhance the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatments makes it a valuable addition to one's daily diet. Regular consumption of Ghrita can contribute to overall health and well-being.

Keywords: Hyperlipidemia, Cholesterol, Goghrita, Agnivardhaka, Balya

Corresponding Author

Twinkal Pramar, Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharira, MMM Govt Ayurveda College, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.
Email: twinkalparmar1399@gmail.com

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Introduction

Clarified milk fat or butter is known as Ghee. Ghee contains approximately 8% lower saturated fatty acids which makes it easily digestible. These lower saturated fatty acids are the most edible fat and which are not found in any other edible oil or fat. Ghee also contains vitamins A, D, E & K. Vit. A & E are anti-oxidant. Digestion, Absorption and delivery to a target organ system is important in obtaining the maximum benefit from any formulation. This is facilitated by Ghee. Lipophilic action of ghee facilitates transportation to a target organ and final delivery inside the cell, because cell membrane also contain lipid. In *Ayurveda* there are eight kinds of *Ghrita* / Ghee which are obtained from milk of eight different animals. Among all, *Goghrita* (Cow's ghee) is considered best.[1] *Goghrita* is best for balancing *Vata* and *Pitta* related *Doshas*. [2] Ghee has some different ability to reach each and every body parts with in short period, which help to transport medicine without any change called as *Yogawahi* action in *Ayurveda*.

Aim and Objectives

1. To study literature view on *Goghrita*
2. To recognize the importance of *Goghrita* in cholesterol level.

Materials and Methods

The literature review collected from *Ayurvedic* classical texts as *Brihatrayi*, *Laghutrayi* and other reference book of Modern, websites, review articles and journals.

Literature study of *Goghrita* and cholesterol

Etymology of *Goghrita*

The word *Goghrita* is evolved from Sanskrit word *Ghrita*. *Goghrita* is a common Indian name for clarified butter fat. The word itself stems from the old Sanskrit "घृ- *Ghr*" which means bright or to make bright.

Pharmacodynamics

Gana: *Madhura Skandha*

Yoni (Source): *Jangama Sneha*

Rasa: *Madhura*

Guna: *Snigdha, Guru*

Veerya: *Sheeta*

Vipaka: *Madhura*

Karma: *Medhya, Agnivardhak, Rasayana, Vajikarana, Rasavardhaka, Swarya, Varnya, Balya, Oja Vardhaka, Medha, Smruti, Agni and Indriyabala*. Ghee is considered as best among all fats because it is sweet in taste and hence liked by many people. It does not cause burning sensation (For example, oils like sesame oil or mustard oil can cause burning sensation). Ghee is naturally compatible to the body right from the time of birth.

"संस्कारस्य अनुवर्तनात्"[3] (Cha. Su. 13/14). *Samskarasya Anuvartanat* - Ghee has a very unique capability to absorb the active of an herb into it without leaving out ghee's inherent quality. This quality of ghee is called as "*Yogavahi*".

Benefits of *Goghrit* / *Cow's Ghee*[4]

1. It is good for the brain, eyes and skin.
2. It is full of essential nutrients and fatty acids.
3. It is antibacterial, antiviral, anti-fungal.
4. It is anti-aging and anti-oxidant.
5. It has cooling effect on the body.
6. It detoxifies the body and is good for the skin.
7. It increases energy, weight and strength.
8. It is easily digested by body compared to other ghee.
9. It can stimulate secretion of stomach acids, and thus helping in the digestive process.
10. Since it increases the secretion of biliary lipids, it can help in reducing cholesterol level in intestine and serum.
11. It increases the absorbability of vitamins and minerals thus help to improve overall health.
12. It balances all *Agnis* (digestive fires).

Goghrita has power to cross blood brain barrier so helpful in treating many mental disorders. It promotes longevity and reproductive fluid and is good for children and the elderly. In therapeutic doses *Goghrita* increases appetite, and gives relief from abdominal discomfort and constipation. It also reduces the burning sensation and redness of eyes significantly.

Effect of *Ghee* on *Doshas* and body tissues

Ghee is sweet, soft, cold in potency, slightly coating, brings about oleation, effective in flatulence, psychiatric disorders, epilepsy, abdominal colic and *Jirna Jwara*. [5]

It mitigates *Vata* and *Pitta*. It Improves digestive fire, memory, intelligence, voice, luster, skin softness, immunity, strength, lifespan, eye strength. It acts as an aphrodisiac, relieves sins, poverty, toxicity and evil spirits. In conditions involving *Vata* vitiation, Ghee is to be drunk.

Table 1: Characteristics of Goghrita and its effect on Doshas[6]

Characteristics	Effect on Dosha
Due to Sheeta Guna	Mitigates Pitta
Due to Snigdha Guna	Mitigates Vata
Due to Samskara (processing with other medicinal herbs)	Mitigates Kapha

Among all the medicines to mitigate aggravated *Vata* and *Pitta*, *Ghee* is best. Upon consuming *Ghee* routinely, ghee wins over *Pitta* due to sweet, cold and mildness, which are against the qualities of *Pitta*. Drinking ghee relieves the colic pain of *Pitta* origin. *Ghee* suits to those, aspiring intelligence and good memory power. *Ghee* is a great antitoxic substance.

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs for good health, but in the right amounts. Unhealthy levels of cholesterol can lead to a condition called high blood cholesterol. Cholesterol in your blood is carried on lipoproteins: Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), sometimes called “bad” cholesterol.

In *Ayurveda*, high cholesterol is considered as the *Medoroga* which includes in the *Medovaha Srtoas Vyadhi*. Now a days, each and every person wants luxurious lifestyle that leads to lifestyle disorders. Due to this lifestyle, no one prefers to do exercise or any physical activity and eating imbalanced diet or junk food. Because of this, one can suffer from high cholesterol level. High cholesterol is one of the most potential risk factors for cardiovascular diseases. As per the study, high prevalence of atherogenic lipid profile (the one that causes heart attacks and stroke), notably low HDL levels (good cholesterol), and high BMI has been seen in the Indian adolescent population. Recent studies have reported that high cholesterol is present in 25-30% of urban and 15-20% rural subjects. This prevalence is lower than high-income countries. The most common dyslipidemia in India is borderline high LDL cholesterol, low HDL cholesterol and high triglycerides.

The luxurious lifestyle that youth is leading currently is one of major reasons behind premature cardiovascular diseases and high cholesterol. As per *Ayurveda*, *Medovaha Srotas* vitiates and leads to high cholesterol level. There is following causes responsible for *Medovaha Srotas Dushti*:[7]

Avyayama - Lack of exercise

Diva Swapna - Sleeping during day time

Medhyanama Cha Ati Sevanama - Eating luxurious, fat rich, fried and caloric food in excess

Varuni - Excessive consumption of an alcoholic product called *Varuni*

The main line of treatment for *Medovaha Srotas Vyadhi* is the *Deepan-Pachana*. [8] As we all know that *Jatharagni Mandya* that leads to *Dhatu Agnimandya* (depletion of tissue fire and metabolism) are the principle cause of hypercholesterol i.e., *Medoroga*. By addressing the *Agni* and balancing it we would have balanced at the fat metabolism. *Deepana-Pachana* is the main line of treatment for *Medovaha Srotas Vyadhi*.

Acharya Caraka says that “घृतमग्निकरम्” means *Ghrita* is responsible for *Agni Vardhana*. [9] Here *Ghrita* is considered as *Goghrita*. The *Ghrita* has *Agni Vardhan* qualities as per *Chakrapani* & it increases *Agni* & affects metabolic activity because of *Goghrita* decreases amount of fat in body and preventing hyperlipidemia. At present people are scared of high incidence of hyperlipidemia, particularly due to intake of fatty foods, which also include ‘*Ghrita*’. Therefore, people now days usually try to avoid taking ‘*Ghrita*’ in their daily diet. But *Ghrita* is not responsible for hyperlipidemia. Scientific Facts About *Goghrita* Cholesterol does not increase by intake of Cow ghee. It has not bad for heart. Recent studies have shown that Omega 6 & Omega 3 fatty acids are present in ideal ratio in *Goghrita* so it is healthier than other cooking fats. Absorption of *Goghrita* increases high-density lipoproteins (HDL), which is good cholesterol, & since it contains Vitamin E, it prevents oxidation of low-density lipoproteins (LDL) also known as bad cholesterol.

Conclusion

The purpose of the literature study was to dispel the myth and debate about *Ghrita*, namely the idea that consuming it could lead to hyperlipidemia.

This study makes it abundantly evident that *Goghrita* prepared using an indigenous traditional method does not cause hyperlipidemia; therefore, it can be regarded so it can be considered as an option of *Goghrita* in every age and every day of life. Taking this hypothetical mode of action in view, we conclude that the *Ghrita* prepared by indigenous method is safe & does not increase lipid profile. It is an essential part of food, which is responsible for *Snehan Karma* of the body and thus, prevents from *Rukshan Karma*.

This has been observed in this study that the *Ghrita* commonly available in the market does not fulfill all the *Karma* of *Ghrita* described in all the *Ayurvedic* Texts. Thus, this review proves that the *Goghrita* prepared by Indigenous method is not the cause for hyperlipidemia, but safe & also enhances life, health & immunity. So, it should be made a part of food, which does not create any hazards in human body, if taken according to *Ayurvedic* Principles. That's why *Ayurveda* suggest regular intake of *Ghrita* for maintenance & promotion of health.

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