



**Original Research Article**

**Volume 8, Issue 12 -2022**

**DOI:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.22192/ijcrms.2022.08.12.004>

## **Documentation of traditional health practices and rituals for Chinnammai (Chicken pox) in Paramathi Velur, Namakkal district, Tamilnadu.**

**Dr.P.Kiruthika**

PG Scholar, Department of Noi Naadal,  
Government Siddha Medical College, Palayamkottai.

Corresponding Author

**Dr. S. Priyadharshini**

[Kuzhanthai Maruthuvam], Ganapathy nagar, Metuppatty Gate, Pudukkottai, India.

E-mail: [spriyadharshini1221@gmail.com](mailto:spriyadharshini1221@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

Traditional health practices which are as old as human history plays an important role in protection of the human beings and prevention of various illness which draws an medical attention. It gives immense contribution to support medical system. The aim of this study is to document the traditional health practices and rituals followed during Chinnammai (Chicken pox) and to assess the pharmacological properties of materials which are used in this traditional health practices. The present study is effectively useful for the traditional practices for varicella.

**Keywords:** Chinnammai, pharmacological properties, traditional health practices

### **Introduction**

Varicella also known as chicken pox [rpd;dk;ik]<sup>[1]</sup> which is common and highly contagious and affects nearly all susceptible children before adolescence. It is a childhood exanthematic disease that develops as a result of primary infection and zoster (shingles), caused by reactivation of the virus persisting in a latent form in the dorsal sensory ganglia. Although, varicella is generally a mild self-limiting illness, in immunocompromised individuals and adults, it

can have a serious clinical course that can lead to permanent damage of the central nervous system and other complications.<sup>[2]</sup>

According to WHO in 2021, prevalence and global annual disease burden of varicella is estimated at 80 to 90 million cases. In developed countries, incidence of chicken pox is 16 cases per 1000 people annually.<sup>[3]</sup> In an epidemic of varicella investigated in rural southern India, an overall attack rate of 5.9% was observed.<sup>[4]</sup>

In Siddha system, classification of Ammai noi and medications are described in detail. So, this study is aimed to document the traditional health practices and care given to that highly contagious and globally burden varicella.

## Materials and methods:

### Study design:

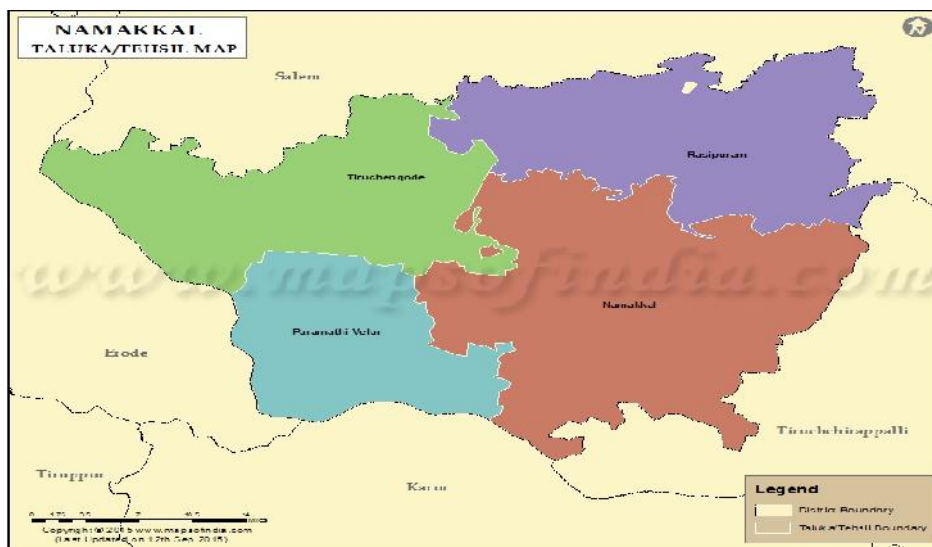
Qualitative study.

### Study period:

4 months

### Study area:

This research was conducted from key informers of Paramathi velur, Namakkal district, Tamilnadu



### Sample size:

30 individuals.

### Sampling procedure:

Convenient sampling.

### Methods of approach:

Face to face interview.

### Data collected:

Chinnammai (chicken pox) starts as a characteristic skin rash that forms small, itchy blisters and fever, tiredness and headache. The rashes start on the chest, back & face then spreads to the rest of the body. This disease is usually more severe in adults than in children.

### First day procedures:

On first day Chinnammai (Chicken pox) was confirmed by an elderly man or woman who

knew and have lots of experience about that disease in the village. They believe the superstition that Chinnammai (chicken pox) was due to the wrath of Goddess 'Mariyammal'. When the wrath of Goddess subsides, this disease will be cured.

### 1. Notification:

First the Neem leaf twigs were hanged over the roof of the four corners of the house which used as a notification for other people not to enter their house.

### 2. Isolation:

Affected individual was isolated at home and was not allowed to move out of the house.

### 3. Quarantine:

The family members of the affected individual also not allowed to move out of the house and contact with others unnecessarily.

#### 4. Other practices:

Bathing was withheld until the blister dries and crust develops.

Small Onion wreath were worn around their neck. Affected individuals should strictly follow the “pathiyam” (diet restrictions)

Keeping the finger nails short to decrease injury from scratching the itch. Do tap or pat with neem leaves over the itch.

In order to prevent itch, wear loose, soft & cotton clothes.

#### Neem leaf bed:

The affected individual was allowed to lie down on the cotton cloth spread out on the floor, neem leaves and small onions were kept in corners of the cloth.

#### Herbs given from first day to until chinnammai cures:

Fresh & healthy neem leaves [*Azadirachta indica*] and turmeric [*Curcuma longa*] grind into a paste & given with butter milk on empty stomach during morning and was provided daily until the disease cured.

Fresh leaves of Sodakuthakkali - wild cape gooseberry (*Physalis minima*) grind into a paste & given with buttermilk on empty stomach during morning & it was provided daily until the affected individual sneezes or the disease cured.

#### Herbs & foods given before traditional bath:

##### From 1<sup>st</sup> day to 5<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> day:

Athimathuram (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) powder were given with lukewarm water twice a day after food. Tender coconut water was given.

“Pachanadan Banana” was given.

Palm candy (Panangarkandu) given with milk or with tender coconut water.

Rice porridge with small onion was given.

Dal rasam was given.

Thaalampoo (*Pandanus odoratissimus*) was made into decoction and was given.

Grapes & cucumber was given.

These are all given to reduce the fever and body heat.

#### Diet restrictions:

Avoid Salty, spicy foods.

Avoid Hot foods.

Avoid Tea, coffee & other beverages.

All foods were given after cooled down.

Eat only Semi-solid & liquid foods.

Increased water intake to avoid dehydration. The water must be boiled & cooled down.

#### Traditional bathing procedure:

##### On 5<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> day:

Bath was given according to the traditional practice. Affected individual was allowed to take bath after the blisters dried and turn into Scab.

Neem leaves & turmeric powder Soaked water in huge 4 to 5 brass vessels which kept in sunlight for 3-4 hours from morning. Around 10-11 AM, taking bath 20 to 30 minutes needed to stay clean & soothe the itchy skin. Scrubbing the body was not advised. Soap and shampoo are not allowed to use.

This type of bathing procedure were taken furthermore 5 to 7 days.

#### Herbs & foods given during traditional bath: From 5<sup>th</sup> \7<sup>th</sup> day to 12<sup>th</sup> \14<sup>th</sup> day:

#### External procedures:

Immediately after bath, grind the neem leaves with turmeric rhizome and castor seeds then it made into a paste and applied topically over the lesion 3 to 4 times a day. This was given daily until the scabs were found to be dried.

Pig ghee or Lard were applied externally in lesions and all folds or joints of the body which helps in clearing up scars.

Cocount oil were applied externally to reduce itching.

Pure honey also applied topically over the lesion.

If Headache present, take 2-3 small onion bulbs grinded with little amount of crystal salt and applied externally on the forehead.

### **Pig ghee or lard preparation:**

It is the fat obtained from pigs. It is made by rendering fat from various parts like intestines, liver & meat that have fatty tissues. The fat is rendered by steaming, boiling or dry heating. In the rendering Process, the fatty parts are first cooked slowly until the fat is melted. This melted fat is then wholly separated from the meat & then cooled. Once it is cooled, the substance turns into a semi-solid form.

### **Internal procedures:**

Immediately after bath, well-cooked raw rice mixed with pig ghee and was given first mouth lentis. Then, raw rice with green gram was given.

“Panagaram or Panagam” was given for 3 days after bath. It was prepared by mixing of tamarind juice water with lemon juice, palm Jaggery, dried ginger and cardamom.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of bath, “ThulluMaavu” was given. It was prepared from raw rice grinded with cane Jaggery or Palm Jaggery.

Put some cumin seeds into boiled water & made as decoction and was given.

If Nausea present, mix lemon juice with honey and apply over the tongue.

If Aphthous ulcers were present, pure honey was applied over it and also Manaththakkali [*Solanum nigrum*] leaves were made into soup and was given.

Thaandrikai (*Terminalia bellerica*) powder was mixed with honey & given twice a day.

### **Foods given after traditional bath:**

Curd and butter milk was given often. Coriander seeds with palm Jaggery was made into decoction and given.

Garlic & turmeric were added more in food

Vegetables and Fruits were given.

Pomegranate juice and its flower was made into powder and then given. Millet gruel and Ragi porridge was given.

On 14<sup>th</sup> day, cotton seed milk was given And then, New born Kenda fish made into gravy and given without salty and spicy.

On 15<sup>th</sup> day, goat meat curry and dried fish was given.

### **Rituals Followed For Chinnammai (Chicken pox):**

Chinnammai mostly occurs after the Sudden onset of heavy rain in summer season. During that season, the villagers celebrate the Goddess “Mariyammal ” Festival which is a 15 days festival.

On 1<sup>st</sup> day of festival they do “Kaapu Kattuthal ” which is placing over the Neem leaf twigs over the roof of the corners of the house in entire village.

Fasting on these days and avoiding non - Vegetarian foods was followed by them. They drink holy water from the temple which is neem soaked water and also Millet gruel or Ragiporridge. It was believed that by doing these practices and festival, Goddess protects them from the disease and keeps them healthy and wealthy.

Holy water from the temple was given daily to the affected Person and sprinkled in their house.

After recovered from chinnammai (chicken pox) lemon was cut & apply with Kungumam, elder person in their home hold a lemon piece in each hand and wave them in a circular manner from the legs to the head in a clockwise direction and anti clock wise direction alternatively. Finally, lemon was thrown away where cross roads were join.

Affected person was made to sit on a wooden – seater outside the home. 10-15 Red chillies, some mustard seeds and crystal salt were put in the Rice\Arisipadi. Elder person in their home hold that Arisipadi and wave that in a circular manner over the head of affected person clockwise and

anti- clockwise direction alternatively. After that, affected person was asked to go home without looking back. After that, these things were thrown on fire and burnt.

It was believed that fear and disease are subsiding by doing these rituals it will ward off the sufferings caused by evil eye and evil spirits.

Finally, after recovered from chicken pox, affected individual allowed to go “ Goddess ” temple.

Atlast on 15<sup>th</sup> day, when scabs were found to be dried after that affected individual was allowed to go outside and do their regular work.

**Precautions taken by family members of affected individual:**

Wash their hands frequently with Neem leaves & turmeric Soaked water.

Often wash their house.

Eat nutritive, coolants and immunity booster foods.

They are not allowed to move out of the house & contact with other unnecessarily.

**Precautions & diets followed after recovered from chinnammai:**

Affected person’s immunity believed to be low for 2-4 months, So affected individual should take immunity booster foods.

Avoid activities which increase the body heat.

Avoid afternoon direct sunlight.

Avoid salty, spicy and oily foods.

Increased water intake.

Increased tender coconut, curd & buttermilk intake to avoid elevated body heat.

Eat vegetables, lettuce and fruits.

Apply pig ghee or Pure honey on the scabs which helps in clearing up scars.

Always eat foods after cooled down.

Eat fish & meat which must not be too much spicy or salty.

**Discussion**

Many internal herbs, foods and external medicines used as traditional health practices and also rituals for chinnammai (chicken pox) were collected from the local residents of Paramathi, Velur, Namakkal, Tamilnadu.

Still, these traditional practices were followed by them. 18 internal herbs and foods, 7 external medicines and 4 animal products used by them for chinnammai were collected. Some, informations of ritual practices also collected. They were mostly followed strict food restrictions for chinnammai (Chicken pox).

Here are some pharmacological actions behind the herbs used by them:

S.No.	Name of the Plant	Botonical name	Family	Parts used	Pharmacological action
1	Vembu (Neem)	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Meliaceae	Leaf	Neem extracts having antiviral activity used successfully to treat chicken pox.
2	Turmeric	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Zingiberacea e	Rhizome	Turmeric reduce itching, fight virus and provide effects in those diagnosed chicken pox due to its anti viral activity

3	Athimadhuram	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>	Fabaceae	Root & Rhizome	It has antiviral and disinfectant properties help in chicken pox.
4	Sodakkuthakkali [wild cape Gooseberry]	<i>Physalis minima</i>	Solonoceae	Leaf	It has antiviral, antioxidant activities.
5	Banana	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Musaceae	Fruit & leaf	Banana plant parts are used in traditional medicine for treating viral disease such as measles & chicken pox. It has anti viral activity but also cytotoxic properties
6	Onion	<i>Allium cepa</i> L.,	Liliaceae	Bulb	<sup>1</sup> Onion used in skin eruptions Such as chicken pox. This study shows that onion extract and quercetin play a role in antiviral & antibacterial activities.

**Schematic representation-charts:**

Chart 1: Schematic representation of percentage of internal & External medicines used.

S.No	Internal medicines	External medicines
1	18	6

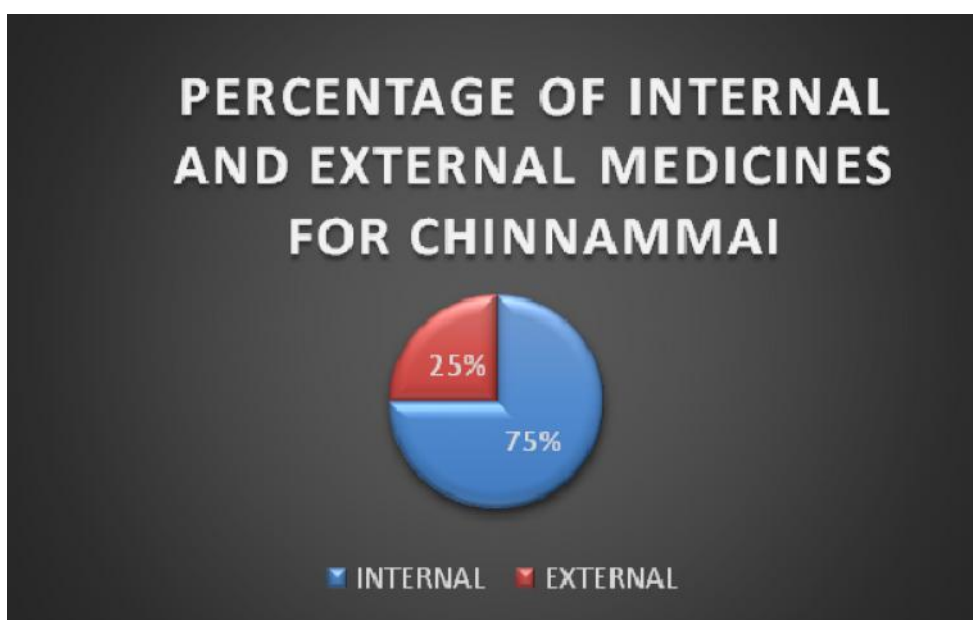
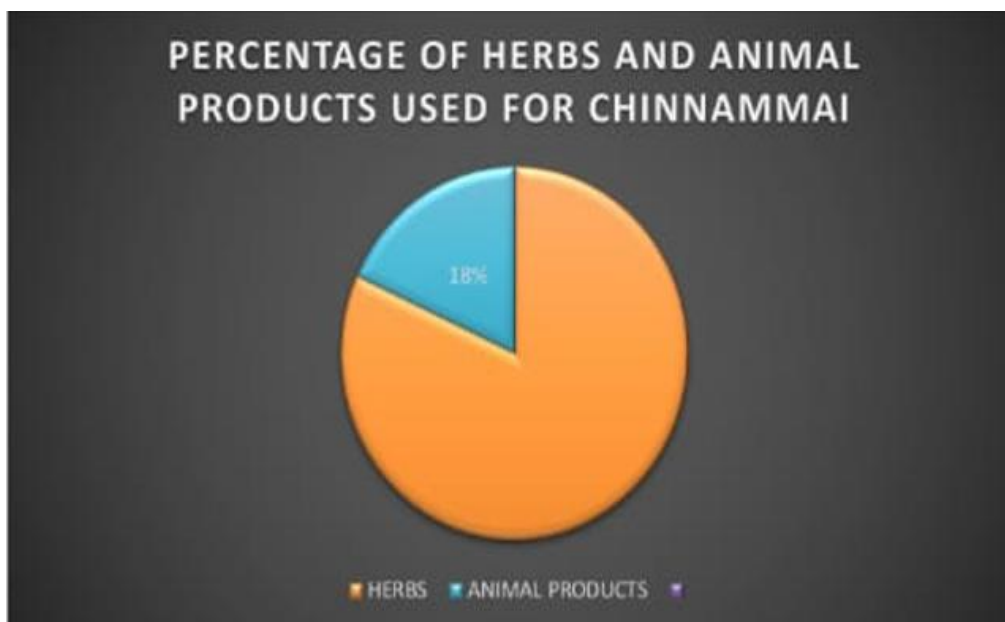


Chart 2: Schematic representation of percentage of Herbs & Animal products used.

S.No	Herbs	Animal products
1	18	4



## Summary

The traditional knowledge of ancestors transferred orally for centuries is fast disappearing, it should be document before they are lost.

So, this study has been taken on the purpose of documenting traditional health practices & rituals for chinnammai (chicken pox).

A total of 30 informants include 12 male and 18 female were interviewed.

Interview lasts for about 20-30 minutes for each member.

Information was recorded in their own language.

Data was summarized and organized in a simplified manner.

## Conclusion

This descriptive study concluded that both internal and external medicines, herbs, animal products and foods were given with diet restrictions as traditional health practices and rituals for chinnammai (chicken pox) followed by

local residents of Paramathi, Velur, Namakkal, Tamilnadu are documented. In future this may be helpful for further studies.

## References

- 1) T.V.Sambasivampillai Volume IV (Part II)
- 2) Giulia Freer et al, Varicella-Zoster virus infection: natural history, clinical manifestations, immunity and current and future vaccination strategies. issue Jan 29,2018
- 3) Neelam Dehal et al, Public funded immunization: key to varicella control in India. Volume 386, issue 10011, Dec 12,2015
- 4) M.R. Lokeshwar et al, Age related seroprevalence of Antibodies to varicella in India. Indian pediatrics 2000; 37:714:719
- 5) Grish.K, Shankara Bhat, Neem –a Green treasure, Electronic journal of Biology, issued 2008, Volu 4(3) 102-111.

- 6) HB patel, Traditional method of treatment of chicken pox in India, issued 2021 – eLibrary.
- 7) HB patel, Traditional method of treatment of chicken pox in India, issued 2021 – eLibrary.me
- 8) S.Singh P. Prakash – Chem Sci. Trans, Evaluation of anti-oxidant activity of physalis minima, issued 2014 – research gate. Net.
- 9) Sujogy – Kumar panda, Ana Hortenion Fonseca, Ramir Saleh Jounegheni, peter Leysen, Antiviral & cytotoxic Activity of Different plant parts of Banana (Musa SPA) , 15 May 2020.
- 10) W. Mari , SG Alsabri , N. Tobol, S. Younes , A. Sharif , Novel insights on under standing of keloid scar –anticle review - journal of American – 2015 Elsevier.

Access this Article in Online	
	Website: <a href="http://www.ijcrims.com">www.ijcrims.com</a>
	Subject: <a href="#">Siddha Medicine</a>
Quick Response Code	

How to cite this article:

P.Kiruthika, S. Priyadharshini. (2022). Documentation of traditional health practices and rituals for Chinnammai (Chicken pox) in Paramathi Velur, Namakkal district, Tamilnadu. Int. J. Curr. Res. Med. Sci. 8(12): 40-47.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22192/ijcrms.2022.08.12.004>