



Short Review Paper

Review of Hafeez, Shaik. and J. Chapla., Treatment of Naja Naja (King Cobra) Snakebites in Tribal Areas of Adilabad District, India, by Hakim

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Abstract

Treatment of snakebite by the 'Hakims' and by herbal treatments are suggested in many research paper, many of them are without any scientific proof and do not confirm the authenticity of the treatment. Several papers suggest the treatment of snake bite, without any consideration of whether snake is poisonous or non poisonous. Author has reviewed the paper very carefully, which is not only interesting but encouraging to discover herbal treatment for snake bite, by Hafeez, Shaik. and J. Chapla., Treatment of Naja Naja (King Cobra) Snakebites in Tribal Areas of Adilabad District, India, by Hakim. International Research Journal of Biological Sciences Vol. 4(3), 1-5, March (2015).

Keywords: Review, Snake bite treatment, Adilabad, Telangana.

Introduction

While going through carefully the paper by Hafeez, Shaik. and J. Chapla., Treatment of Naja Naja (King Cobra) Snakebites in Tribal Areas of Adilabad District, India, by Hakim. International Research Journal of Biological Sciences Vol. 4(3), 1-5, March (2015)., it was found interesting and encouraging, reviewed and found that authors of the above paper were totally under confusion whether snake was *Naja naja* or King Cobra. It seems authors have not gone through herpetological literatures review, now available¹⁻⁵. Above mentioned authors has titled the paper as "Treatment of Naja Naja (King Cobra) Snake bites in Tribal areas of Adilabad District, India, by Hakim". Above authors have to understand that the *Naja naja* and King Cobra are two different species of snakes, which can be easily be differentiated. Both the snakes are Elapid snake. King Cobra is a robust bodied, with shining scales, long having 'Λ' mark on the body and has two large Occipital Shields behind parietals, which is absent in *Naja naja*.

Above authors have also mentioned that, snake was identified as *Naja Naja*. Authors have failed to mention identifying feature of snake and have remained under confusion whether it was *Naja naja* or King Cobra. With the help of scalation it is not difficult to identify the snake whether *Naja* or King Cobra. King Cobra can also be identifies from a distance, based on body marking and robustness in body and large length. Length of the king however may be less then *Naja naja*, depending on the age of the King. The distribution range of *Naja naja* is throughout mainland of India⁵, whereas presence of King Cobra, in Telangana state is not very doubtful. The reported bites of king Cobra are lesser; fact that King inhabits in dense jungle and very rarely encountered near human habitation⁵, it is therefore

difficult to ascertain that the biting snake was *Naja naja* or King Cobra.

Authors also have mentioned that *Naja naja* are common in Adilabad forests area. The fact is acceptable because *Naja naja* feeds on rodents and mice etc. i.e. Mammalian diet in forests, and are also likely to be attracted on, at near human habitation, due to the availability of feed. Accordingly referred biting snake could be *Naja naja* and not King Cobra.

As per the International code of Nomenclature, generic name is followed by species name with small letter, accordingly, *Naja* is written as *Naja naja*, and not as *Naja Naja*.

Above author has given time take from the bite to Hakim as 20 minutes, whereas exact time of the bite remained unnoticed. Time of the bite gives clues of the snake and supports in the treatment of victim.

The process of identification was ignored. He has not mentioned whether snake was killed after the bite and identified or identified just on the bases of punctures on skin of the victim, or based on the abundance of *Naja naja* in Adilabad forests area. Proper identification helps saving the life of victim.

The above mentioned paper shows the picture of broken tooth of *Naja*, which does not entitle the tooth to be of *Naja naja*. The fangs in snakes are larger, but don't suggest the identification aid of the snake.

Unconfirmed and fragmentary reports suggests the treatments of poisonous snake bite by hakim or by herbal treatments⁶ is

possible, yet it has no established and confirmed platform to prove the treatment authenticity. If it is confirmed, that biting snake is poisonous snake, victims of the snake bite should not take any risk of treatment by Hakims or any herbal treatment and should be take to nearest hospital where anti-venom are now available. Otherwise it could be life threatening. Normally tribal people go for such treatments due to poor medical facilities, transport facilities, poor financial conditions or may be due to lack of awareness. Poor identification or without any knowledge of whether snake is poisonous or non poisonous, business of hakims, flourish in tribal areas.

The positive treatment of poisonous snake bite by Hakim etc. could be due to the fact that 35-50% of snakebite is false bite or dry bites i.e. no venom is injected⁷. It is also in my own experience that victims are taken to Hakim for treatment, where he treats the patient and finally patient dies, due to improper, unscientific and unauthentic treatment. The aim of this review is not to criticise the learned authors but to express my views for betterment of Herpetological research.

Conclusion

Naja naja and King Cobra are two different species of Elapid snakes and both the snakes are having different identifying features. Snake bite treatment by Hakims and by herbal medicines be precisely highlighted with proper scientific proof

and authentication, otherwise the treatment may have adverse effect and life threatening to victims.

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