



## UTILIZATION OF PANCHAKARMA IN HEALTH CARE: PREVENTIVE, NUTRITIVE AND CURATIVE TREATMENT OF DISEASE

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### ABSTRACT

The importance of Ayurveda in global scenario is because of its holistic approach towards positive life style. Ayurveda is a science of life, which is continuously developing as a result of various discussions and researches from ancient time onwards. It gives equal importance to preventive and curative aspects of diseases. Panchakarma therapy is an integral part of Ayurveda (Indian Medical System). Panchakarma is a term used to symbolize five medical procedures for internal purification of body. It helps in detoxifying and rejuvenating body by simple techniques that can be done easily applied in outdoor practice. Failure of contemporary medicines in the prevention of major health burdens force us to revert back for the original detoxifying naturopathy. Panchakarma is an effective therapy in managing autoimmune, neurological, psychiatric and musculo-skeletal diseases of chronic and metabolic origin. In the current scenario, these unique procedures are widely practiced by physicians in India and many other countries globally for prophylactic and therapeutic purposes.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Panchakarma, Detoxification therapy, Purification therapy.

### INTRODUCTION

Panchakarma presents a unique approach of Ayurveda with specially designed five procedures of internal purification of the body through the nearest possible route. Such purification allows the biological system to return to homeostasis and to rejuvenate rapidly and also facilitates the desired pharmacotherapeutic effects of medicines administered thereafter. Panchakarma has a full therapy role as promotive, preventive and curative procedures. Panchakarma is a bio-cleansing regimen comprising of five procedures, which facilitate better bio availability of the pharmacological therapies, help to bring about homeostasis of body humours, eliminate disease – causing complexes from the body and check the re occurrence and progression of disease. The five fold measures comprehended in this therapy are Vamana (therapeutic emesis), Virechana (therapeutic purgation), Asthapan basti (therapeutic decoction enema), Anuvasana basti (therapeutic oil enema), and Nasya Karma (nasal administration of medicaments). Panchakarma procedures are preceded by Snehana (therapeutic oleation) and Svedana (sudation) procedures to make the body system conducive for elimination of bio-toxins and cleansing of channels. Ayurveda emphasis on three folds therapeutic management of the diseases viz; Samshodhana (purification), Samshamana (pacification) and Nidana Parivarjana (avoiding causative factors)<sup>1</sup>.

### General Introduction of Panchakarma

According to Acharaya Charaka Panchakarma comprises of five procedures namely – 1. Vamana, 2. Virechana, 3. Niruha basti, 4. Anuvasana basti and 5. Shirovirechana / Nasya<sup>2</sup>. According to Acharaya Susruta, there are three main procedures – Purvakarma (pre procedure), Pradhanakarma (main procedure) and Paschatakarma (after procedure)<sup>3</sup>. Pachana (use of digestive and carminative drugs), Snehana (external and internal oleation) and Svedana (sudation) use before Sodhana karma (Panchakarma) is included under

Poorvakarma; Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Nasya and Siramokshana are Pradhakarma and using Samsarjana karma (dietary regimen) by Peya, Vilepi, Yushadi etc. is Paschata karma. A point of conflict occurs including Raktamokshana (bloodletting) among five procedures. Acharaya Charaka has not included Raktamokshana in Pachakarma whereas Acharaya Susruta and Vagbhatta included it<sup>4,5</sup>. The reason behind this may be the difference in field of speciality. As Susruta is Salyapradhana tantra it mainly focus more on surgical procedure and that's may be the reason of his acceptance Rakta (blood) as a fourth Dosha.

### Procedure of Panchakarma

#### Poorvakarma

It includes following procedures:

1. Pachana
2. Snehana
3. Svedana

#### Pachana

Digestion of Ama (undigested food and food toxins) and increasing the digestive fire with the help of various Deepan - Pachana (digestive and carminative) drugs is known as Pachana. It usually takes 3-5 days.

#### Snehana

It is again of two types<sup>6</sup>- 1. Bahya (external application of oil) and 2. Abhyantara (internal use of oil); Abhyantara Snehapana can again be divided into two types namely- i. Vicharana (different edible formulation by mixing Sneha with other food materials), ii. Acchapeya (pure sneha); On the basis of mode of action it can further be subdivided into many types.

#### Svedana

Sagni and Niragni are two types of Svedana<sup>7,8</sup>. Niragni (sweating without direct contact with heat) includes Vyayam

(exercise), Usnasadana (living in hot place), Gurupravara (covering with blanket), Kshudha (suppressing desire of food or upholding food desire), Bahupana (excessive alcohol drinking), Bhaya (perspiration due to fear), Krodha (sweating due to anger), Upanaha (hot bandaging), Ahava (sweating due to exercise) and Atapa (sweating due to sun). Sagni Svedana (sweating by direct contact with heat) includes-Tapa, Upnaha, and Ushma and Dravya Svedana, which again can be subdivided into many types.

### Pradhana Karma

#### Vamana

Eliminating Doshas (toxins) through Uradhamarga (oral route) is known as Vamana<sup>9</sup> (emesis). On the basis of mode of action it can be subdivided into –i. Pravara ii. Madhyama and iii. Avara.

#### Virechana

Eliminating Doshas (toxins) through Adhomarga (anal route) is known as Virechana<sup>10</sup> (Purgation). It is subdivided as – Anulomana, Sanrsana, Bhedana and Rechana on the basis of mode of action.

#### Basti

Administering medicine through rectal (Gudamarga), urethral (Mutramarga) and vaginal (Yonimarga) route is known as Basti<sup>11</sup>. On the basis of medicine used, it can be divided into Sneha and Niruha subtypes. Niruha basti can again be subdivided as Sodhana, Lekhana, Utkleshana, Brihamana, Samana, Rasayana, Bajikarana etc. Sneha basti can be divided as Anuvasana basti, Sneha and Matrabasti. On the basis of mode of administration of drug it can further be subdivided as:

Pakwashayagata Basti- Drug given through rectum.  
Garbhashayagata Basti- Drug given through vagina.  
Mutrashayagata Basti- Drug given through urethra.

#### Nasya / Shirovirechana

Medicine given through nasal route is known as Nasya<sup>12</sup>. It is of three types: Virechana / Rechana, Brihana / Tarpaka and Shamana. According to the mode of action and on the basis of method of drug administration it is subdivided as Navana, Pradhmana, Marsha, Pratimarsha, Dhuma and Avpidana etc.

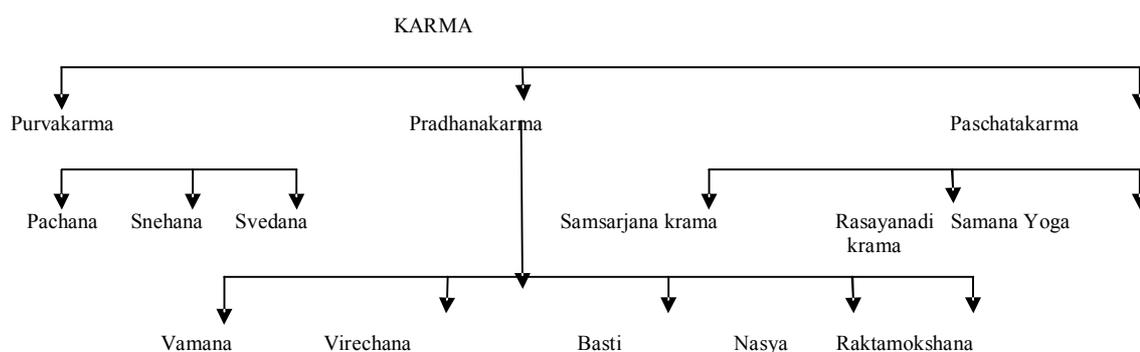
#### Raktamokshana

Removing vitiated blood from body (bloodletting) is known as Raktamokshana<sup>13</sup>. It is of six types: Sringa, Alabu, Ghatyantra, Jalaukavacharana, Pracchana and Shiramokshana.

#### Paschatakarma

Bringing back the body to its normal physiological condition after drastic eliminatory purification procedure by specific dietary regimen and different medicine is known as Paschata karma. It comprises of three procedures as:

1. **Samsarjana Krama:** Using Peya, Vilepi, Akrita- krita Yusha, etc. under specific dietary regimen to enhance dietary fire is known as Samsarjana krama<sup>14</sup>.
2. **Rasyanadi Krama:** When Sodhana therapy is used as Purvakarma for Rasayana then after Pradhana Karma, Rasayana drug should be given.
3. **Samana Yoga:** When Sodhana Chikitsa is use as a part of treatment for a particular disease then the specific medicine mentioned for it should be given.



### Indication of Panchakarma (Field of action)

- In healthy persons for maintenance of health.
- To achieve Rasayana guna.
- For eliminating vitiated doshas and disrupting pathogenesis of disease.

### Use of Panchakarma for Management of Diseases

Ayurveda is mainly popular for chronic disabling diseases like osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, hemiplegia, diabetes, etc and those that are incurable by contemporary medicine like rare hereditary diseases. Mostly people seek help of Ayurveda when they get disappointed by long exhausting and expensive medical treatment and at this stage they admit Ayurveda as a miracle therapy. Ayurveda keep the faith by offering best remedy in the management of such diseases through its unique procedures named as Panchakarma. Panchakarma is now developed as complete independent

science by virtue of scientific validation and collection of clinical data from various research studies proving its efficacy in various difficult diseases like:

### Management of Pakshaghata (Hemiplegia) with Basti and Virechana

A research study conducted at Institute for Post Graduate Teaching and Research in Ayurveda, Gujarat Ayurveda University, Jamnagar, India showed that significant improvement was found in patients treated with basti<sup>15</sup>.

### Management of Essential Hypertension with Shirodhara

Result of the study showed that Ksheerdhara (pouring milk on forehead) reduced both systolic and diastolic pressure in a more pronounced way and no any untoward side effect had been observed after its administration for 1 month<sup>16</sup>.

### **Management of Obesity with Lekhana Basti**

Research study conducted on 24 obese patients reveal that there was an average loss of 1.5 kg of body weight just after administration of lakhen basti and a total of 9.5 kg of weight lose after the completion of therapy<sup>17</sup>.

### **Management of Diabetes with Vamana**

Total 47 patients of Sthula Pramehi (DM-type-2) were registered in this study, out of which 38 completed the treatment. The efficacy of therapy was assessed based on relief in cardinal signs and symptoms and blood sugar, lipid profile and other biochemical parameters etc. The results showed that the Vamana provided better relief in signs and symptoms as well as on fasting blood sugar (FBS) and postprandial blood sugar (PPBS) in comparison to Virechana<sup>18</sup>.

### **Management of Cervical Spondylosis with Greeva Basti, Patra Pottali Sveda and Nasya**

Clinical studies showed significant relief in pain and stiffness in neck with these procedures<sup>19</sup>.

### **Management of Bronchial asthma with Vamana**

In this study, a total of 89 persons were registered and 69 volunteers/patients undergone classical Vamana Karma without any major complications. The results were encouraging and showed significant improvement in difficulty in breathing<sup>20</sup>.

### **Management of Psoriasis with Vamana, Virechana and Matra basti**

Clinical study showed that PASI score significantly reduced much in patients treated with panchakarma therapy. In the whole study PASI score is nowhere more than 45 which indicates that none of the patients was suffering from erythroderma. Highly significant results were observed after one month, as before treatment mean scoring of Utsanna mandala was 0.18, which was reduced to 0.06 one month after basti<sup>21</sup>.

### **Management of Facial Paralysis with Nasya, Shirobasti**

Clinical studies showed significant as well as quick improvement in signs and symptoms of facial paralysis in patients treated with nasal insufflations<sup>22</sup>.

### **Management of Oligospermia with Madhutailika Basti**

Madhu Tailik Basti significantly increased the sperm count by 78.48 %, increased the motility by 41.84 %, increased the volume of semen by 28.125 %, reduced the liquefaction time by 21.276 %, reduced the viscosity in abnormal specimens by 60 %, increased the erectile function by 75 %, sexual desire by 73.33 %, ejaculatory function 72.22 %, frequency of coitus by 60 %, duration of coitus by 35 % were observed<sup>23</sup>.

### **Management of Infertility with Uttar Basti**

A total of 16 patients in the reproductive age group were registered for the study, with 62.50 % unilateral and 37.50 % bilateral tubal blockage. Fifteen patients completed the course of treatment. The tubal blockage was removed in 80 % of the patients, and 40 % of the patients had conceived within the follow-up period of two months. The results suggest that Uttar Basti is a highly significant treatment modality for tubal blockage, with no apparent complications<sup>24</sup>.

### **Management of Vasomotor Rhinitis with Nasya**

Clinical study on 30 patients showed significant improvement in sneezing, nasal block and nasal discharge by Nasya treatment with shunthyadi taila<sup>25</sup>.

### **Management of Hypothyroidism with Vamana**

Oral medicaments preceded by Vamana therapy give better result than treated with oral medicine alone. Result showed that in Vamana with Shamana (oral medicine) group highly significant and better improvement was recorded in puffiness of face, oedema, constipation, dry skin, lethargy, fatigability and significant improvement was recorded in generalized pain, anorexia, cold intolerance, excessive sleep and weight gain<sup>26</sup>. It also provided comparatively better relief in body temperature, in total leucocytes count, lymphocytic count and ESR.

These and many more clinical studies can be quoted showing the efficacy of Panchakarma therapy in the restoration of health. A lot had been done but a lot has to be done to bring this therapy in the frontier of all medicine.

### **Intervention of Panchakarma for Prevention of disease and maintenance of Good Health**

#### **According to Dinacaraya**

Acharaya Caraka under the heading of Swasthavritta<sup>27</sup> (daily regimen) mentioned daily use of Pratimarsa nasya (nasal insufflations), Abhyanga (massage), Udartana (a type of massage), Murdhintaila (head massage) etc to maintain healthy state.

#### **According to Ritucaraya**

The regimen that should be followed in a particular season to maintain healthy state is known as Ritucaraya. Different Panchakarma procedures that should follow in different season are:

#### **Hemanta Ritu**

- i. Abhyanga (massage)
- ii. Utsadana
- iii. Murdha taila (head massage)
- iv. Jentaka Sveda (type of sudation)
- v. Atapa Svadana (sun bath)
- vi. Ushma Svadana (hot sudation)<sup>28</sup>

#### **Basanta Ritu**

- i. Vamana (emesis)
- ii. Trikshana Virechana (strong purgation)
- iii. Asthapana basti (medicated enema)<sup>29</sup>
- iv. Anuvasana basti (medicated enema)
- v. Nasya (nasal insufflations)

#### **Sarada Ritu**

- i. Snehapana (internal oleation)
- ii. Virechana (purgation)<sup>30</sup>
- iii. Raktamoksana (bloodletting)

#### **Shishira Ritu**

Similar to Hemanta Ritucaraya (Winter season)<sup>31</sup>

#### **Varsha Ritu**

There is vitiation of Vata in this season therefore Basti (medicated enema) (Monsoon season) is the best Panchakarma procedure to be performed<sup>32</sup>.

### Global Prospective of Panchakarma

Ayurveda is gaining growing attention and acceptance all over the world. Panchakarma due to its cost effectiveness and high efficacy become the world most demanded therapy. As Panchakarma is a cleansing therapy it can be given in healthy individual for the prevention of diseases. Advancement in research and effort by experienced scientist developed the Panchakarma science that can be accepted worldwide. Presently there is a paradigm shift of health care from being curative to more dominated by preventive therapies; therefore Panchakarma gets easy acceptability worldwide. Moreover previous lacunas in making effective trade and marketing of Ayurvedic drugs like standardization, heavy metal controversy, etc are not restricting the global acceptance of Panchakarma. Since Ayurveda is gaining recognition at national and international market due to intense research and documentation of effective data with the involvement of enthusiastic and devoted youth, there is tremendous scope for increasing the exports of not only drugs but also manpower to provide better health services worldwide especially in the post reform period of liberalization and globalization.

### Nutritive use of Panchakarma Therapy

This seems to be controversial that a purification therapy that claims to expel out the morbid doshas from the body has nutritional intervention. Use of Ksheer basti for the management of peptic ulcer, Piccha basti for the management of Ulcerative colitis, Yavana basti for the management of hemiplegia and muscular dystrophy etc. nourishes the body along with restoration of health. The attempt has been made to maintain nutrition by rectal feeding when it is impossible or undesirable to introduce food into the stomach, or when it cannot be retained. But the colon has hardly any digestive power and its absorptive capacity even for a water-soluble substance of large molecular size is very poor and nil for fat. Therefore for the nourishment of body mainly milk and oil enemas are used.

### CONCLUSION

Panchakarma involving all the three aspects of Preventive, Nutritive and Curative treatment, is all in one treatment methodology. Due to its unique methods of drug administration and principle of bio-cleansing it has distinctiveness in approach of treatment. According to Ayurveda the morbid Doshas subdued by Langhana and Pachana (fasting therapy) may sometimes be again provoked, but in the case of those which are subdued by Samshodhana (Panchakarma), there is no possibility of such recurrence. If the root cause of a disease is not eradicated, reoccurrence occurs like the saplings reoccur if we do not cut a plant from the root completely. To show the importance of Shodhana therapy, Charaka has also mentioned it in the context of Vajikarana that, as the paint applied on dirty clothes cannot take up the paint properly, likewise the medicines given to the body without Shodhana therapy do not serve the purpose. Therefore medicines should be given only after proper Shodhana (i.e. Bio purification by Panchakarma therapy) of the body. This Shodhana therapy also forms a part in the regimen of Swastha Vritta (i.e. The Preventive Medicine) indicated as prophylactic measures in the context of Epidemics and Pan Epidemics. Besides the application in the treatment of disease, they are also stated as preparatory measures before institution of Surgery and also before

administration of Rasayana (Rejuvenation therapy) and Vajikarana therapy and in Kshetrikarana treatment (Before internal administration of Mercurial preparation). In this way the Shodhana or Panchakarma therapy is not merely a therapeutic regime but also a management of the individual which improves the body resistance and thereby checks the pathogenesis of the disease confirming its promotive and preservative effects of normal health. Thus, Panchakarma therapy has a direct reference to both the health as well as the ailing.

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