



VARIOUS ASPECTS OF PANCHAKARMA IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT Everybody strives for quality life rather than just number of years without good health. An unhealthy lifestyle has contributed a lot in the manifestation and exacerbation of different disorders. *Ayurveda* has rightly emphasized that health is not only the state of not having disease but, it is the state of normalcy of *Dosha, Dhātu, Agni, Malakriya* along with blissful state of Mind, Soul and Senses. *Ayurveda* also gives utmost importance for prevention and cure of diseases, wherein *Panchakarma* plays a vital role. *Dosha* will get vitiated daily and seasonally whenever favorable condition arises. When an individual indulges in *Aahara* and *Vihara* which vitiates a particular *Dosha*, in its aggravated stage it may produce respective disorders. So, *Panchakarma* becomes mandatory choice in order to eliminate the same and maintain the healthy status. Oral administration of drugs after *Panchakarma* plays an incredible role in multi-dimensional approach towards health. Benefits of *Panchakarma* are holistic in the life of a human being.

KEYWORDS : *Panchakarma*, bio-purification, detoxification, health and *Shodhana*.

INTRODUCTION

Panchakarma is a complex system of expulsion of vitiated *Doshas* (toxins or waste) and bio purification of the body without giving incision. *Pancha* means "five" and *Karma* means "treatment done to detoxify the body". Five procedures are claimed to eliminate the vitiated *Doshas* from the body. They are *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis), *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation), *Niroohabasti* (Decoction enema), *Anuvasanabasti* (Oil enema) and *Nasya* (Instillation of medicine through nostrils).⁽⁶⁾

Ayurveda has two equally important domains known as *Swasthavritta* (preventive & promotion of health) and *Aturavritta* (treatment of disease) which helps to maintain normal health situations and restores the equilibrium of *Doshas* by different modalities of *Panchakarma* respectively.⁽⁶⁾ According to *Ayurvedic* theory each individual is made up of three pillars (*Dosha, Dhātu & Mala*) and three supportive pillars (*Ahara, Nidra & Bramhacharya*). *Dosha, Dhātu* and *Mala* are moving in entire body as nutrients through *Srotas* (channels) and on the specific *Srotas*. If any of the *Doshas* gets vitiated due to imbalance of supportive pillar of individuals, it leads to abnormality of the *Srotas* (channel) and leads to imbalance of normal *Dosha, Dhātu* and *Mala*. If an imbalance occurs, it leads to manifestation of disease. *Panchakarma* rebalances the *Doshas*, bringing them back to equilibrium and the individual back to good health and prevents the disease.

Panchakarma is used in *Ayurvedic* medicine to treat a vast array of diseases.⁽⁶⁾ In literature our body is nourished through a complex network of *Srotas* or channels or tube like structures. This network contains both microscopic and macroscopic channels. (Digestive system, nervous system, circulatory system etc are few examples of these channels).⁽⁶⁾ Diseases occur when toxins get accumulated in body and clog these channels. Unhealthy diet, lifestyle, stress, changes in environment etc lead to accumulation of toxins in body. These accumulated toxins have to be expelled out in order to keep our body healthy. Through *Panchakarma* therapy these toxic clogs are removed to normalize the physiological process. Hence *Panchakarma* therapy is called as detoxification therapy. *Panchakarma* is also used to cleanse the body before starting a treatment. A diseased body can be compared to a soiled cloth which cannot be colored as we desire. Hence to attain the maximum benefits, the body has to be purified or cleaned before starting the treatment. The cleared channels help medicines to penetrate the deeper tissues.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF PANCHAKARMA

- Prevention of disease
- Promotion and rehabilitation of health
- Cure of disease

- Preconception health
- Pediatric health
- Rejuvenation health
- Geriatric health
- Sensory health care
- Psychiatric health

Prevention of disease

Panchakarma plays an important role in prevention of disease but also for curing the existing disease thus maintaining good health. *Ayurveda* advocates *Shodhana* on regular basis as vitiation of *Dosha* sets in whenever favorable condition arises. It is explained that just as dirt develops on a Mani (diamond) kept undisturbed in due course of time, *Dosha* accumulates inside the body in due course of time, which need to be cleaned from time to time. *Ayurveda* has elaborately explained the different stages of *Dosha* in different *Rutu* which is accumulated. On the basis of *Doshas*, the different *Rutu* (seasons) and *Panchakarma* are explained as follows.^{(6)(iv)}

Table: Seasonal Panchakarma for prevention of diseases

Season	Panchakarma procedure
Vasant	Vamana karma or Panchakarma
Sharad	Virechana karma and Raktamokshan
Varsha	Basti karma
Hemant	Swedana (steam)
Vasant, Sharad and Pravrit	Nasya
Nitya	Anjana, Dhumapana, Gandusha, Karnapurana, Abhyanga, Pratimarshanasya.

Promotion and rehabilitation of health

The world is undergoing a rapid change in all spheres; the eco system, nature and living beings are under strong survival stress due to severe pollution, climate change, population rise and other socio-economic reasons. To achieve the goal of public health, just by taking the measures such as, bringing doctor-patient gap closer, invention of new molecules for the challenging diseases and sophisticated medical aids are not sufficient, perhaps it needs a more inclusive approach of many aspects which could influence and improve human health in far better way.

In this scenario, there is a window of opportunity emerging from the corners of world towards *Ayurveda* specially with *Panchakarma*. *Acharya Chakrapani* mentioned - स्वस्थे च बलायुर्वृद्धिकर्तृया यथोक्तपंचकर्मप्रयोगः सुखहेतुर्भवतीतिज्ञेयम्।^(vii)

Cure of disease

In literature, main second *Prayojana* (purpose) of *Ayurveda* is cure of

disease and now a days, even cure of condition of those who are advised surgery. Some of the diseases and *Panchakarma* procedures are mentioned below-

Table: Examples of disease and Panchakarma

Disease	Panchakarma
Sthaulya (obesity)	Udwartana, Ruksha Choorna Pinda Swedana and Lekhanbasti
Amlapitta(acidity)	Vamana and Virechana
Parinamshoola (peptic ulcer)	Basti and Shirodhara
Pakshaghat (hemiplegia)	MriduVirechana, Asthapanabasti, Anuvasanabasti, Snehana and Swedana
Shwasa (asthma)	Vamana, Virechana and Swedana
Ekakushta (psoriasis)	Vamana, Virechana, Raktamokshana, and Nasya
Udararoga(ascites)	NityaVirechana
Shirahshoola (migraine)	Virechana, Nasya and Virechana
Anidra (insomnia)	Nasya and Shirodhara
Sandhivata(osteoarthritis)	Snehana, Swedana and Basti
Amavata (rheumatoid)	Deepana&Pachana, Virechana, Snehan, Anuvasanabasti, Ksharbasti and ValukaSwedana
Prameha (diabetes)	Vamana, Virechana, Udwartanaand Takradhara
Agnimandya (hypothyroidism)	Vamana, Virechana and Pachana

Above mentioned *Panchakarma* procedures can be used only after examination of the patient. *Ayurveda* has given much emphasis to personal health and community health. In *Ashtanga Hridaya*, it is well described that, *Dushya* (*Dhatu* - tissue and *Mala* - excreta), *Desha* (*Deha* - human and *Bhumi* - the locality), *Bala* (*Samarthy* - stamina), *Kala* (diurnal and seasonal time), *Anala* (different states of *Agni*), *Prakriti* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*), *Vaya* (child, adult and old age), *Sattva* (mind), *Satmya* (food and geographical compatibility), *Ahara* (diet), *Avastha* (different phenomenal state), *Sukshmasukshma* (minute observation), *Esham* (diseases), and *DoshaAushadhaNirupanam* (deciding the *Doshik* involvement and drugs) are the fundamental principles to be observed and considered for each patient's assessment and treatment.^(viii)

Preconceptional Health

In *Ayurveda*, there are specific actions mentioned to all people which not only increases the chances of conception but also of having a healthy child. *Ayurveda* suggests *Panchakarma* for all expectant parents. Just as a healthy seed bears healthy fruit, the first step in having healthy sperm and egg is achieved through a deep internal cleansing to balance the *Doshas* and remove toxins (known as *Ama*) by detoxifying the body. पूर्व शब्दशरीरानामिच्छैः सानुवासनैः।बलापेक्षीप्रयुजोत शुक्रापत्य विवर्धनाम्।^(ix) The physician, considering the strength, should administer the formulations for promoting semen and virility after cleansing the body by non-unctuous and unctuous enema.

Pediatric health

Childhood is considered as the most important phase in life, which determines the quality of health, wellbeing, learning and behaviour across the lifespan. This may be the reason for giving the foremost position for *Balachikitsa* among *Ashtangas* (8 branches) of *Ayurveda*.^(x) The regional growth of indigenous medicine gave significant contribution in the development of primary health care. In literature, *Panchakarma* is mentioned by all *Acharya's* in *Balaroga* (children health care & cure of disease), and as *Amrita* told by *Acharya Kashyapa*.

Rejuvenation health

The *Panchakarma* procedures like *Basti*, *Abhyanga* and *Utsadana* using special *herbals*, *oils* and *ghee* that are very much effective in enhancing sexual activity, complexion, longevity and also in achieving *Dharma*(virtue), *Artha* (wealth), *Preeti*(pleasure) and *Yasha* (fame).^(xi) Rejuvenation Therapy in *Ayurveda* aids in toning up the skin and strengthening body tissues so as to facilitate longevity. The overall resistance of the body increases as well, due to the optimization of the *Ojas* (primary vitality) and the *Sattva* (mental clarity).

Geriatric health

Ageing is inevitable. It is a natural phenomenon and an intrinsic feature of life. *Ayurvedic* Classics believe that human body is meant to be *Shatayushi* (live for 100 years) provided one follows the right daily

regimen (*Din Charyas* & *Rutucharaya*) that includes Diet and exercise. The *Panchakarma* procedures *Nitya Abhyanga* (whole body Massage),^(xii) *Swedana*(steam), and *Basti* (therapeutic enema) are very much effective in reducing degenerative changes, strength and longevity along with oral administration of *Rasayan* herbals. And also we are using now day *Shirodhara*, *Katibasti*, *Janubasti*, *Greevabasti* for improving geriatric health.

Sensory health care

The *Indriyas*, or senses, are the third major component of life described by *Ayurveda* as one branch of *Ashtanga Ayurveda*. The *Indriyas* act as a bridge between the non-physical parts of life: *Ama* or *Soul* and the *Mind* on one side, and the physical body and environment on the other. The *Indriyas* gather information from the outer world. Incoming perceptions get relayed to the mind in the form of sound; touch and temperature; light, color and form; taste and flavor; and smell. If the perceptual information gathered by the senses is of proper quality and quantity, it will have an uplifting and supporting influence on the mind. If it is not, it will create imbalance in the mind and, eventually, imbalance in the body. So that in this condition very useful *Panchakarma* therapy for prevention and cure of sensory disorders like – *Snehana*, *Swedana*, *Vamana*, *Virechan*, *Nasya*, *Tarpana*, *Anjana*, *Ashchyotana*, *Pindi*, *Vidalak*, *Dhoomapaan*, *Kawal*, *Gandusha* and *Karnapurana*.^(xiii)

Psychiatric health

Mental health includes our emotional, behavioral and social wellbeing. And it is also concern on the level of thinking process. Mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety or sleep problems are seen very commonly among people who have a very unhealthy lifestyle. In *Ayurveda*, management is counselling of the patient (धीर्घैय त्मादिविज्ञानमनोदोशोपपरम्).^(xiv) And also suggests some effective regimens to stay happy and have a healthy mind. There are some effective *Ayurveda* therapies that are also beneficial in improving Mental Health. Which detoxify and clear any blockage that may be present in the subtle channels of the brain as well as rejuvenating and strengthening the mind.

The *Panchakarma* procedure contains three steps:-

Purvakarma- Preparations which have to be done before the detoxification.

- *Deepana*
- *Pachana*
- *Snehana*
- *Swedana*

Deepana&Pachana

These steps are adopted to cleanse the channels and *Ama* (toxins), so that the toxins are detached and eliminated easily during main detoxifying process. The hard toxic clogs are loosened by increasing body fire or *Agni*. Medicines are administered internally for this purpose. This process is called *Deepana* and *Pachana*, the duration of this process is 3-5 days depending on the patient and diseases.

Snehana

After *Deepana* & *Pachana* whole body is oiled with *Snehapana*^(xv) (oral) and *Abhyanga*^(xvi)(massage). Patients are asked to drink a specific amount of medicated ghee or oil for a specific period. The amount of medicated ghee or oil is gradually increased on daily basis. The course of *Snehapana* may take 3 to 7 days. *Abhyanga*(massage) is done with medicated oil or *ghee* and may take 1 to 4 days or as required, *Snehapana* and *Abhyangas* a part of *Snehapana therapy*, and it cures the vitiated *Vata Dosha*, which makes the body soft and disintegrates the accumulation of vitiated *Doshas* (toxins or waste).

Swedana

Swedana is the process of inducing sweat with the help of steam, made from medicated herbal decoctions. It is the pre-operative procedure in various *Ayurvedic* detox therapies where the objective is to dilate the channels of the body to detach the vitiated *Doshas*(toxins or waste) from the tissues. *Ayurvedic* fomentation is usually given after an oil massage.^(xvii)

Vashpa Swedana- The fomentation is done by making the person to sit in the chamber where steam emanates from boiling herbal decoction.

Naadi Swedana- *Naadi Swedana* is a penetrating heat. It is a more penetrating type of wet heat than *Vashpa Swedana*. This is given to

whole body or particular region of body using a tube; importance is given to specially in joint disorders. If the vitiated *Vata* in the body is corrected by sudation preceded by oleation procedure, his urine, stool and semen do not get inspissated. Even dry inanimate sticks, treated with oiling and sweating, become soft and elastic. The same principle applies with greater force to animate human bodies.

Pradhanakarma- The main detoxifying process:

- *Vamana*
- *Virechana*
- *Niroohabasti*
- *Anuvasanbasti*
- *Nasya*

Vamana karma

The process of expelling vitiated *Doshas* (toxins or waste) through the upward tract (mouth) is called *Vamana karma* (induced emesis). It is mainly indicated in vitiated *Kapha-Pitta Dosh* and *Kaphaja* disorder. Many drugs can be used for *Vamana karma* but the most common drug is *Madanphala*. Drugs which are *Ushma* (hot), *Tikshna* (sharp), *Sukshma* (subtle), *Iyavayi* (those pervading the entire body before getting digested) and *Vikasi* (those causing looseness of joints), by virtue of their own potency, reach the heart, and circulate through the vessels. Because of their *Agneya* nature (predominance of *Agni-Mahabhuta*) they liquify the compact (adhered) *Doshas* and because of their sharpness, they separate the adhered *Doshas* located in the gross and subtle channels of the entire body. Like honey kept in a pot smeared with fat, the vitiated *Doshas*, after separation, starts floating without adhesions in the body which has been oleated (by the administration of oleation therapy). Because of its nature to move through subtle channels and flowing (towards the gastro-intestinal tract) the vitiated *Doshas* reach the stomach, and gets propelled by *Udana Vayu*.^(xviii)

Process of *Vamana karma* respectively –

- *Akanthyapaan* – with milk, *ekshu rasa*, *nimba kwatha* etc
- *Vamana yoga* – *Madanaphala*, *Ekshavaku* etc.
- *Vamanopaga* – *Yashtiphanta*
- *Dhoomapana* – *Snehika*, *Shamana*, *Virechnik*

Action of *Vamana karma* on the basis of modern physiology –

- Local irritation
- Increased volume
- Stimulation of vomiting center

Virechana karma

The process of expelling vitiated *doshas* (toxins or waste) through the downward tract (rectum) is called *Virechana karma* (therapeutic purgation).^(xix) The *Virechana karmas* medicated purification, cleansing the body from excess *Pitta-Kapha accumulation*, purifying blood and clearing toxins. The therapy primarily concentrates on the toxins accumulated in the liver and gall bladder, thus cleansing the gastro-intestinal tract completely.

Niroohabasti

Niroohabasti is the specialized *Panchakarma* procedure to cure *Vata* related disorders. It is best treatment for the vitiated *Vata dosha* or *Tajja* disorder. In this procedure using decoctions administered through the rectal route, it pacifies the aggravated *Vatadosha*.^(xx)

Anuvasanbasti

AnuvasanaBasti is used to treat the people suffering from severe dryness, who have good digestive fire and purely *Vatavyadhi* (nervous system, musculoskeletal system disorder etc).^(xxi) This procedure with small amount of oil can be used for an equilibrium of *VataDosh*. Warm oil with a little amount of *Shatapushpa kalka* and *Saindhav* is used.

Nasya

Nasal Cavity is the door to consciousness and the pathway to our brain. Medications that are administered via the nasal passages affect the Mind, *Prana Vayu*, *TarpakaKapha*, *Sadhaka Pitta*, and *MajjaDhatu*. *Nasya* is administered empty stomach, patient is told to lie down with the head tilted back and *Nasya* drug is administered in each nostril.^(xxii)

Pashchat karma- Modifications in diet and lifestyle after the detoxification process.

- *Peyadi or Tarpanadi Samsarjana karma*
- *Brimhana*
- *Abhyanga, Utsadana* and *basti*
- Use oral administration of *Rasayan&Vajikaran*

DISCUSSION:

Shodhana improves *Kayagni* (digestive power and metabolism), cures the disorders, maintains the equilibrium of the *Doshas*, improves colour, complexion, mind and intelligence. It also improves the vigor and vitality and enables the person to live a long and healthy life.^(xxiii) Properly conducted *Vamana* removes aggravated *Kapha* and also makes the body light, improves the functions of sensory organs and clears the channels of chest, flanks and the head region. Properly conducted *Virechana*, removes aggravated *Pitta* and clears all channels of body, *Jatharagni* gets kindled and lightness sets in. Properly performed *Basti Karma*, establishes proper expulsion of the feces, urine and the flatus, increases appetite, taste and creates euphoria. Properly conducted *Nasya Karma* removes the aggravated *Dosha* seated above *UrdhvaJatruPradesha* (head and neck), clears the channels of circulation.

Considering all the benefits of the *Shodhana* it is believed that *Shodhana* has action over almost all the systems of the body especially gastro-intestinal system, endocrinal system and metabolic activities. It is believed that *Shodhana* will improve all the waste products of the metabolism and remove the free radicals thus providing a platform from which the whole body rejuvenates. And it is clinically noted that bio-chemicals of the body go towards the normal range after *Panchakarma* procedure. It is essential to examine the status of *Dosha*, *Bheshaja*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Bala*, *Sharir*, *Ahara*, *Satmya*, *Satva*, *PrakritiVayaavastha* before performing *Panchakarma*.

CONCLUSION:

Panchakarma is one of the unique contributions to the health of human beings. These modalities of treatments can create wonder if performed judiciously. Success of *Panchakarma* is dependent on properly performed *Purva*, *Pradhana*, and *Paschat Karma*. *Panchakarma* therapy eliminates the *Doshas*, eradicates diseases and restores normal strength and complexion and if taken properly, it brings about longevity. The elimination therapies, on the other hand, eradicate diseases completely so much so that they do not recur again unless there are very strong etiological factors, on the contrary they remove the vitiated *Doshas* from their very site of origin.^(xxiv) And it has provide wellbeing to various aspects of health, *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned - इत्यातुस्वस्थसुखः प्रयोगबलायुशोवृद्धि पanchakarma course of treatment is wholesome for the diseased as well healthy, promotes strength, life span and destroys ailments.^(xxv)

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