



VIRECHANA IN TAMAKA SHWASA WITH SPECIAL RESPECT TO EXTRINSIC ASTHMA- A LITERATURE REVIEW

Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Extrinsic Asthma is a condition in which there is inflammation and obstruction caused to respiratory airway by irritants like dust, pollen, house mite, grain dust, cold air etc. In Ayurveda literature the symptoms of Tamaka Shwasa are similar to that of Extrinsic Asthma i.e. peenas, ghurghurakam shabda, tivra vegi shwasa, kasa, pramoha etc caused by dhooma, dhooli, raja, sheeta, vishamashana and viruddha ahara. Tamaka Shwasa is Pittasthana samudbhava vyadhi. For treatment of Pittasthana, Virechana is one of the most effective treatments. Also considering Rakta dushti, rakta shodhaka dravya (blood detoxifying drugs) should also be considered for Virechana. Virechana decreases intra-abdominal pressure, prevents hyperventilation, prevents stimulation of inflammatory mediator cells and depletes extracellular fluid. Hence Virechana, one of the Panchakarma therapy in Ayurveda is an effective treatment for Tamaka Shwasa.

KEYWORDS

Ayurveda, Panchakarma, Virechana, Tamaka Shwasa, Extrinsic Asthma

INTRODUCTION

According to statistics, allergic diseases are on the rise across the world, especially allergic respiratory diseases, whose prevalence is rising at an alarming rate. According to the Global initiative for Asthma (GINA), Asthma is defined as a chronic inflammatory disorder of airways which is associated with airway hyper-responsiveness. It leads to recurrent episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing particularly at night or early morning.^[1] In India, the prevalence of Asthma has been found to be around 7% in the majority of surveys done. However, it has been reported to vary from 2% to 17% in different study populations, the disease can start at any age, but in a majority, it starts before 10 years of age.^[2]

Panchakarma aids in elimination of disease aetiology and helps in maintaining the equilibrium of doshas. Following Panchakarma, the body becomes much more efficient at assimilation and absorption of the medicine used for treatment. Tamaka Shwasa is an Avrodhanak vyadhi. Virechana helps in getting rid of this avarodha. Vitiated Dosha is the basic factor in the manifestation and progress of any disease.

Tamake tu Virechanam

As per Charaka Acharya, Tamaka Shwasa is Pittasthana samudbhava vyadhi. Also considering Rakta dushti, rakta shuddhikara dravyas (blood detoxifying drugs) should also be considered for Virechana.^[3] Also, according to Yoga Ratnakara, Virechana is described at first place in the treatment of Tamaka Shwasa.^[4] Vagabhatta Acharya has also described shodhana karma for Shwasa vyadhi. Due to the aggravation of Vata dosha caused by the blockage of its movement by Kapha into Pranavaha Strotasa, both Hikka and Shwasa occur, so it is beneficial to prescribe Shodhana (purification) therapy.^[5] The Vata is obstructed in its path, similar to how flowing water overflow its banks when it is blocked. In this condition, passage of the Vata dosha needs to be cleaned.^[6] Also in a Balwaan Shwasa pidit Vyakti, Sushruta Acharya has advised Shodhana, in the form of Vamana and Virechana.^[7]

Panchakarma therapy is believed to impart radical elimination of disease-causing factors and maintain the equilibrium of doshas. Panchakarma increases acceptability of body to various therapeutic drug. So, for the better action of medicines within the body, avarodha is to be cleared first hence Virechana karma should be preferred in Tamaka Shwasa. The fundamental cause of the onset and progression of any ailment is vitiated dosha. Panchakarma therapy, specifically the Sanshodhana like Vamana and Virechana, is one of its kinds which aims at the elimination of vitiated Doshas from the body so that the disease could be treated in the most effective manner. Snehana (oleation therapy) and Swedana (steam therapy) are done before Virechana Karma. Out of which Snehana is significantly important for the patients of Tamaka Shwasa.

Significance of Snehana before Virechana

When administered before shodhana, snehana enhances the effects of shodhana medications. Virechana drugs are Ushna, Tikshna, Vyavayi and vikasi. They help in bhedana, vilayana of malas and then expel them out of the body. But due to lack of mardavta, Virechana cannot be carried out as effectively. This causes Vata prakopa and dhatukshaya. Snehana Dravyas are suksma, madhura, picchila, sara and drava gunatmaka. These cause no harm to the body and cause mardavta and very efficiently does Saar-Kitta vighattana of parameters of dhatu.^[8] Post bhedana of kitta, its vishyadana and vilayana occurs. Because of mardavta and kledana it absorbs moisture and liquidification takes place.^[9] When this occurs at a higher level, the doshas acquire utklesha awastha, meaning they get uttejti and are thus ready to be expelled out of the body. These utkleshita doshas are helped by Virechana drugs for, seemingly described as 'pranudynte'.^[10]

Properties of Virechana Drugs:

Virechana drugs, after entering Amashaya helps in removal of the vitiated Pitta dosha and henceforth pacifies all Pitta Vikara of the body. Virechana also cleanses sense organs by shodhana karma i.e., improves their function, purifies Rasa -Raktadi Dhatus and also helps in improving the efficacy of Shamana drugs. In a similar way to how draining a reservoir of water would wipe out all the plants and animals that lived there, the elimination of excessive Pitta also reduces the symptoms it causes. Virechana is especially helpful in treating disorders caused due to Pitta Dosha and it is also fruitful treatment modality in the disorders produced due to Amadosha. Mulabhoota Ashaya Dosha Dushya Sammurchana persists even after administering the Shamana aushadhi. So, Shodhana is a necessary means by which the Dosha Dushya Sammurchana can be broken. This is the reason why the diseases get radical cure by the administration of the Shodhana therapy.

Mode of Action of Virechana drugs:

Virechana drugs are Ushna, Teekshna, Sukshma, Vyavayee, Vikashi properties and has Adhobhagahar Prabhav. Virechana Dravya gets absorbed by its veerya, it reaches to Hridaya, Dasha Dhamani and to the macro and micro-channels of the body. i.e., Sukshmati Sukshma Strotasas. The dosha sanghatna is liquified (Vishyandana) by the Agneya property of Ushna Guna. Hence it facilitates movement of the Doshas towards Kostha. Due to Teekshna Guna, malas and doshas break up in micro form that helps in quicker excretion. Due to Anupranava bhava of Sukshma Guna, it opens micro channels and makes the Doshas to move towards Kostha. Due to Vyavayee Guna these drugs spreads quickly throughout the body and starts their action before its digestion. Vikashi Guna of drugs causes loosening of the bond between Dosha and Dhatu causing Dhatu Shaitihya. After Snehana (administration of oleation therapy) the morbid material in the body after separation, moves floating without adhesion and move through subtle channels and flows towards the gastrointestinal tract

just like honey kept in a pot smeared with fat. Here the Dushit Doshas reaches to the koshttha which gets propelled by udana vayu. In vamaka drugs there is predominance of Agni and Vayumahabhutas and because of their (Prabhava) specific action they move upwards so that the Doshas gets expelled through the upward tract (mouth). On the other hand, Virechaka drugs, because of the predominance of pruthvi and jalamahabhutas and because of their (Prabhava) specific action they move downwards to expel the Doshas through the downward tract (anus). Combination of both these attributes results in the expulsion of the Doshas through both the upward and downward tracts. This is the brief description of the mode of actions of Vamana and Virechana Drugs. From the above description a hypothesis can be postulated that due to the Veerya of the Virechana drugs softening, disintegration and liquification of endogenic metabolic products occurs and then brought to the koshttha for elimination.^[11]

Due to Virechana karma the lodged Dushta kapha in the Koshta pradesh gets eliminated and the path of the Pranavayu is free for its natural functioning. At a cellular level, it causes Strotoshodhana.^[12]

Hepatic Macrophage System Serves a Blood-Cleansing Function:

Blood flowing through the intestinal capillaries picks up many bacteria from the intestines. Indeed, a sample of blood taken from the portal veins before it enters the liver almost always grows colon bacilli when cultured, whereas growth of colon bacilli from blood in the systemic circulation is extremely rare. Special high-speed motion pictures of the action of Kupffer cells, the large phagocytic macrophages that line the hepatic venous sinuses, have demonstrated that these cells efficiently cleanse blood as it passes through the sinuses; when a bacterium comes into momentary contact with a Kupffer cell, in less than 0.01 second the bacterium passes inward through the wall of the Kupffer cell to become permanently lodged therein until it is digested. Probably less than 1% of the bacteria entering the portal blood from the intestines succeeds in passing through the liver into the systemic circulation.^[13]

Hence from the blood cleansing function of liver we can conclude that

1. Virechana improves the hepatic functions, increases its secretion which help in excretion of toxins and improving Jathara agni.
2. Due to improved hepatic functions, the blood cleansing property of the liver mentioned above is improved thus helping to improve Rakta Dhatu and hence get rid of allergy.

Effectiveness of Virechana:

Virechana (purgation) is to be administered when Pitta has aggravated alone or in association with Kapha or when Kapha gets localised in the Pitta's seat or when Pitta gets localised abundantly in the seats of Kapha.^[14] Virechana is regarded as the most important amongst all the therapies for Pitta by physicians. At very start of entering the Amashaya (location of Ama Dosha) it extracts the entire pathogenic root of Pitta. A fire chamber extinguishes a fire when it becomes cool, similarly Virechana calms Paittika manifestations in the body.^[15]

Action of Virechana:

- a) Lowers intra-abdominal pressure thus reducing the pressure on diaphragm and thus easing respiration.
- b) Depresses respiratory centre and prevents hyperventilation.
- c) Excretes undigested food material and prevent stimulation of inflammatory mediators and toxins.
- d) Decreases water and electrolyte absorption, depletes extracellular fluid.
- e) Improves response to allergies.

CONCLUSION

Considering the above factors, Virechana alone can be an effective therapy for Tamaka Shwasa with respect to Extrinsic Asthma.

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