

AN APPRAISAL ON THERAPEUTIC AND CLINICAL ASPECTS OF PANCHKARMA THERAPY IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Ancient Ayurveda literature is key to health. Ayurveda Samhita contain plenty of references related to ideal lifestyle and diseases of mankind. Ayurveda Panchkarma is one of the most practiced branches of Ayurveda. Today, everyone is concerned about immunity. Shamana and Shodhana are the two basic principles of treatment and Shodhana is possible with various Panchkarma procedures. Panchkarma is the main line of treatment in many disorders. Knowledge of Panchkarma procedures is immensely important for a fruitful treatment. This article is aimed to compile Ayurveda principles related to Panchkarma.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Panchkarma, Shamana, Shodhana.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has rightly emphasized that health is not only the state of not having disease but, it is the state of normalcy of Dosha, Dathu, Agni and Malakriya. It also includes the Prasanna Atma (soul), Indriya (sense organs) and Manas (mind).

Three doshas of the body, Vata, Pitta and Kapha, which broadly represent the nervous system, the metabolic system and the nutritive system, keep the human body in balance. Whenever the delicate balance between these doshas is disturbed, a disease may be manifested. The main objective of the Ayurvedic system of treatment is to restore the original state of equilibrium between the doshas. In order to achieve the same Ayurveda has advocated certain regimens and treatment modalities such as Dinacharya, Rutucharya, Vega Adharana, Rasayana-Vajikarana and Panchakarma.

Panchakarma is a method of cleansing the body of all the unwanted waste after lubricating it. Panchakarma are 5 (five) in number; hence the term PANCHA (five) – KARMA (procedures). Panchakarma treatment is unique in the sense that it includes preventive, curative and promotive actions for various diseases.

Health is a state of homeostasis of the body doshas, Agni (digestive and metabolic fire), dhatus and removal of waste products and toxins properly. It is a state of happiness/cheerfulness of Atma (soul), indriyas (sense organs) and Mana (emotion & thought process). Now a days in a stressful and toxic environment, our physical and mental systems accumulate toxins causing various diseases which may ultimately damage an individual's health and wellness.

Panchakarma is the ultimate Ayurvedic detoxification of body. It also maintains balances of Doshas, digestive fire, life span, immune status, health conditions & many other factors. Pancha means five and karma means therapeutic actions according to Acharya Charak. Thus, Panchakarma is a process that involves 5 methods:

1. Vamana (Therapeutic emesis)
2. Virechana (Therapeutic purgation)
3. Nasya (Medication through nasal route)
4. Anuvasana Vasti (therapeutic enema with medicated oil enema)
5. Nirooha Vasti (enema with herbal decoction)

Benefits of Panchakarma

Helps restore metabolic fire (AGNI)

Assists balance all three doshas.

Boosts the bodies immunity levels

Slows the ageing process.
 Helps implement a healthy diet and lifestyle.
 Reduces stress, improves relaxation & tolerance

Panchakarma a specialty of Ayurveda 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 pharmacokinetic effect of medicines administered thereafter. Panchakarma provides a comprehensive therapy role as a promotive, preventive, curative & rehabilitative procedure. Panchakarma is not merely bio-purificatory therapy as it is understood, but also has wider range of therapeutics such as replenishing, depleting, rejuvenating therapies etc. Panchakarma, a comprehensive, and an integral part of Ayurvedic treatment and have its role in every therapeutic condition. Due to its long lasting and radical relief of chronic diseases, it is now developing globally. But Panchakarma, the purification therapy expounded in Ayurveda is perhaps the most misunderstood of all the Ayurveda practices. Due to ignorance, it is often perceived as just another system of oil massage. In today's world more and more people are falling victim to the adverse effects of stress and anxiety, which is leading to diseases like improper digestion, lack of sleep, allergies, heart diseases, diabetes, chronic fatigue, cancer, osteoporosis etc. These diseases are caused mainly due to deep seated toxins. Panchakarma eliminates these toxins from the body, allowing permanent healing of tissues and channels and thus normalizes digestion, and mental functions.

- **Panchkarma procedure-** Actual Panchkarma procedure consists of three stages named as Poorvakarma, Pradhan Karma and Paschaat Karma.
- Poorva Karma, which is the preparatory procedure required before the main procedure to enable a person to receive the full benefits of the main treatment. It consists of two main processes – Snehan (oleation) and Swedan (fomentation). These methods help to dislodge the accumulated poisonous substances in the body, thus preparing them for their complete removal.
- Pradhan Karma or the main procedure. On completion of the first step, it is decided which of these are to be done depending upon the proximity of the waste. An increased level of upper respiratory tract waste shall call for Vamana. Similarly, a lower gastro accumulation of waste calls for a Virechan.
- Paschaat Karma or the post-therapy dietary regimen to restore the body's digestive and absorptive capacity to its normal state.

Panchakarma therapy is specially designed five procedures of internal purification of the body through the nearest possible route.^[1] Such purification allows the biological system to return to homeostasis and to

rejuvenate rapidly and also facilitates the desired pharmacokinetic effect of medicines administered thereafter.^[2] Panchakarma provides a comprehensive therapy role as a promotive, preventive, curative & rehabilitative procedure. Panchakarma is not merely bio-purificatory therapy as it is understood, but also has wider range of therapeutics such as replenishing, depleting, rejuvenating therapies etc. Panchakarma, a comprehensive, and an integral part of Ayurvedic treatment and have its role in every therapeutic condition. Due to its long lasting and radical relief of chronic diseases, it is now developing globally.^[3] Besides their application in the treatment of the disease, they are also used as preparatory measures before institution of surgery and also before administration of rejuvenation therapy, virility therapy, and palliative medicines.

In today's world more and more people are falling victim to the adverse effects of stress and anxiety, Newly found Covid 19 infection has again triggered the importance of immunity and health. Panchakarma eliminates these toxins from the body, allowing permanent healing of tissues and channels and thus normalizes digestion, and mental functions.^[4] If the Dosha (bio-humors) are excessively aggravated, they produce Ama (toxins) vitiating the digestive fire. This Ama has a tendency to block minute channels. In such condition the bio-purificatory therapy is recommended as the pacification of this level of aggravation is impossible.

Vamana (Emesis Therapy) - When there is congestion in the lungs causing repeated attacks of bronchitis, colds, cough or asthma, the Ayurvedic treatment is therapeutic vomiting, to eliminate the Kapha. Therapeutic vomiting is mainly indicated in chronic asthma, chronic sinusitis and skin diseases involving upper part of body, diabetes, chronic cold, lymphatic congestion, chronic indigestion, and edema.^[5]

Virechana (Purgation Therapy)- When excess Pitta is accumulated in the liver, gall bladder, and small intestine, it produces biliary vomiting, nausea, jaundice, rashes, skin inflammation, acne, and chronic recurrent fever. Ayurvedic classics recommend therapeutic purgation in these conditions.^[6]

Basti (Therapeutic Enema) -Vata is a prime factor involved in pathogenesis (disease). If Vata is controlled by the use of Basti, then it is easier to treat the root cause of the many diseases. The main seat of Vata is large intestine, but bone tissue (Asthi Dhatu) is also a site for Vata. Hence the drugs administered rectally does action on Asthi Dhatu. The mucus membrane of the colon is indirectly related to the bone tissue. Therefore, the medicines administered rectally transported into the deeper tissues, like bones, and thus pacifies Vata diseases. Basti involves the administration of honey, rock salt, medicated ghee or oil, medicinal paste and herbal decoctions, into the rectum. Basti is the most effective treatment in disorders of Vata. It cures sciatica, paralysis,

backache, Parkinson's diseases, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, constipation, infertility, erectile dysfunction etc. many critical chronic diseases.^[7]

Nasya (Errhine therapy) The nose is the entrance to the brain. The nasal administration of medication is called Nasya. Nasya eliminates the excess of Doshas (bio-humors) collected in the nose, sinuses, head areas and throat through the nose. Prana Vayu, the life force enters the body through the breath taken in through the nose. Prana Vayu is in the brain and controls the sensory functions, motor functions, mental activities, memory, concentration and intellectual activities. Deranged Prana leads to improper functioning of all these activities and causes reduced sensory perception, loss of memory convulsions, headaches etc. Thus Nasya is indicated for nasal diseases, sinus congestion, migraine headaches, nervous system disorders, convulsions and diseases of eye and ear.^[8]

Raktamokshana (Bloodletting therapy) Toxins present in the gastro-intestinal tract are absorbed into the blood and circulated all over the body. The basic cause of repeated infections, hypertension and certain other circulatory conditions are cause improper elimination of waste products and the free radicals produced by them. The conditions include skin diseases such as eczema, leukoderma, psoriasis, urticaria, rashes, herpes, acne etc. In these conditions, bloodletting, oral medicines, and external applications are essential. Raktamokshana is also indicated for cases of CCF, HTN, pulmonary hypertension, hepatomegaly, splenomegaly and gout. Bloodletting purifies the Pitta bio-humor which leads to proper functioning of the spleen & liver which in turn stimulates immune system. Toxins present in tissues are neutralized leading to radical cures in many blood born diseases.^[9]

Misconception about Bio-Purification Bio-purification versus Detoxification - The Detoxification Program comprises of polyherbal formulations designed to specifically target some important organs of the body for Detoxification. Some of the important organs are the Colon (Large Intestine), Kidneys, Liver, Lung, Blood, lymphatic system, and the complete digestive system to name a few. Many people confuse Colon Irrigation, Colon Hydrotherapy, Colonics, Enema, and the Ayurvedic Basti offered in many cities in India and the rest of the world as Detoxification. This is really Detoxification of only one organ - the Colon, and not the whole body. This is misconception that the Panchakarma does only local purification, rather it is systemic purification of whole body even each cells of the body.^[10]

The modern detox therapy comes under palliative therapy and is helpful in some minor conditions. According to Ayurveda this detox therapy is beneficial in only when the bio-humors are aggravated in lesser degree; in case of greater aggravation of bio-humor the

only radical way is bio-purification by emesis or purgation therapy. These measures are indicated as preparatory procedures before the administration of rejuvenation therapy (Rasayana) & aphrodisiac therapy (Vajikarana). All diseases occur due to suppression and forceful expulsion of natural urges. Panchakarma is the best treatment for the diseases caused by suppression of natural urges (Vega Dharana). Suppression of natural urges affects gastrointestinal motility and continence of sphincters and later neuro-humoral control of glands. Vatanulomana is the prime line of treatment for diseases due to suppression of urges and Basti is best among Vatanulomana therapies.^[11] Weak digestive fire (Mandagni) is the cause for all diseases. For correction of digestive fire (Agni), Panchakarma is the best treatment. In diseases due to over nutrition (Santarpanjanya Roga) elimination of humors (Doshavasecana) is indicated. Most of the diseases are due to weak digestive fire as told by Vagbhata. So Panchakarma therapy is best for correction of Agni. In a person of disturbed homeostasis, there is impaired anabolism and catabolism resulting in the decreased nutrition and immunity impaired excretion of waste products leading to the collection of metabolic waste. All these leads to formation of free radicals, causing tissue damage and final outcome will be metabolic disorder. In such conditions cleansing of channels (Srotoshodhana) is essential which is done by Panchakarma therapy. Bio-purification is potential in emergency conditions because only purificatory drugs possess the property of immediate action. Bio-purification is also administered in chronic poisoning. In the current era also, human being is more exposed to acute & chronic poisoning, pesticide, chemical preservatives etc. so now also there is great need of bio-purification at least twice a year to purify the body from these harmful substances. In chronic diseases, these will be a severe vitiation of channels (Srotodushti), weakness of digestive fire (Agnimandya), improper nourishment of tissues, and decreased immunity (Ojokshaya), which warrants the purification of body, so that the nutrients, medicaments, and energy may flow freely in the system as earlier. For this bio-purification through Panchakarma is indicated. A chronic disease cannot be managed without the combined and judicious use of Panchakarma therapy and rejuvenation therapy (Rasayana).

CONCLUSION

Panchakarma represents a unique approach of Ayurveda with specially designed five procedures of internal purification of the body through the nearest possible route. Purification of body by Panchakarma is the unique feature of Ayurveda science. Such purification allows the biological system to return to homeostasis and to rejuvenate rapidly and also facilitates the desired pharmacokinetic effect of medicines administered thereafter. Panchakarma is not merely biopurificatory therapy as it is understood, but also has wider range of therapeutics such as replenishing, depleting, rejuvenating therapies etc. Panchakarma, a comprehensive, and an

integral part of Ayurvedic treatment and have its role in every therapeutic condition. Ayurveda Panchkarma therapy is practiced since many years and many research works are conducted on it. Panchkarma is the new health need of society for a health and disease free life. It should be promoted on every ground and should reach to everyone.

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