

## CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT OF PAKSHAGHATA W.S.R TO THE ROLE OF VIRECHANA KARMA

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### ABSTRACT

Pakshaghata is a disease mentioned in Ayurvedic classics under the spectrum of 'Vata Vyadhis' and also 'Vataja Nanatma Vikaras', which mainly include neurological diseases. The word Pakshaghata literally means 'blow to the half side of the body', which refers to a disease showing signs and symptoms in either half side of the body. In modern science we may correlate Pakshaghata to the hemiplegia, which is commonly caused due to cerebro vascular accident, resulting in the impairment of motor functions of half of the body. Generally, Basti Karma is considered as 'Ardha Chikitsa' for the Vata Vyadhis due to its multifunctional ability and its affinity towards nervous system. But in the management of Pakshaghata, more emphasis is given to Virechana Karma than Basti Karma. In this paper the author tries to explain the therapeutic relevance and importance of Virechana Karma in the management of Pakshaghata based on the references available in the Ayurvedic classics.

**KEYWORDS:** Pakshaghata, Hemiplegia, Cerebro vascular accident, Virechana Karma.

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science of life which encompasses in-depth medical theorems and principles which are evolved after close and constant experimentation and also best peer reviewed for many centuries in human subjects by expert Ayurveda scientists who were clinicians themselves.<sup>[1]</sup> According to Ayurveda any disease is mainly caused due to the imbalance of 'Tridoshas' namely Vata, Pitta and Kapha.<sup>[2]</sup> Among these 3 Doshas, Vata Dosha plays an important role due to its ability to move and also carry other 2 Doshas from their own site.<sup>[3]</sup> Thus the Vata Dosha maybe correlated to the key component of nervous system which is responsible for every movement in the human body.

Pakshaghata is a disease mentioned in Ayurvedic classics under the spectrum of 'Vata Vyadhis', which mainly include neurological diseases. It is also included under 'Vataja Nanatma Vikaras' where Vata Dosha is the main responsible pathological factor in the disease production. The word Paksha means one half of the body and Aghata means blow or injury. Thus the term 'Pakshaghata' refers to damage to the half side of the body. The Vata Dosha which is vitiated due to the etiological factors will effect the Dooshyas namely Sira and Snayu of half side of the body and causes

impairment of motor functions, pain in either right side or left side of the body along with difficulty in the speech.<sup>[4]</sup> The management of Pakshaghata encompasses 3 main therapeutic procedures of Ayurveda namely Snehana, Swedana and Virechana<sup>[5]</sup> which are the main components of 'Panchakarma'.

### PANCHAKARMA

The literal meaning of the word Panchakarma is 5 procedures. Thus the term Panchakarma refers to 5 important therapeutic procedures of Ayurveda which play a key role in the management of diseases and also in the protection of health. They are Vamana, Virechana, Asthapana Vasti, Anuvastana Vasti and Nasyam.<sup>[6]</sup> Vamana and Virechana refers to elimination of morbid Doshas through upper and lower channels respectively. Asthapana and Anuvastana Vasti refers to enema therapies. Nasyam is a specialized therapeutic procedure of Ayurveda where medicine is instilled through the nostrils as a part of treatment.

### VIRECHANA

In Ayurveda Virechana is included under the spectrum of both 'Sodhana' and 'Panchakarma'. Virechana refers to the Elimination of morbid Doshas from the body through the lower channels like anal route.<sup>[7]</sup> Caraka opines that Virechana is the best suited therapeutic procedure to

eliminate vitiated Pitta Dosha.<sup>[8]</sup> Vagbhata stressed that Virechana can be administered not only in Pitta vitiated conditions but also when Pitta and Kapha Doshas are combined or when Kapha Dosha is residing in the Pitta Dosha site.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Mode of Action of Virechana Karma<sup>[10]</sup>

Once the Virechana drug is administered by the virtue of its own potency, the active principles first reach heart and from there through the vessels they spread entire body with the help of big and small channels. Due to hotness, they dissolve the bonding of vitiated Doshas. As the patient has been underwent Snehana and Swedana procedures prior to Virechana, the channels will have lubrication effect and Doshas now freely move through these channels. Affinity of Virechana drugs to the downside brings these vitiated Doshas downwards and thus finally eliminated from the body.

### Benifits of Virechana

Virechana as a part of elimination therapy helps to restore the power of digestion and enhances metabolism. Patient's normalcy will be achieved and he will become free from diseases. The keenness of sensory organs will be enhanced along with the intelligence and intellectual capacities. Body will be well nourished and the reproductive health will be enhanced. The person who undergo proper Virechana Karma will be least affected by the changes of old age and can live longer without much sufferings.<sup>[11]</sup> Palliative measures cannot completely eliminate the vitiated Doshas and thus the chances of recurrence are plenty. On the other hand, proper elimination therapy like Virechana can eliminate the vitiated Doshas in total and thus prevents any chances of recurrence.<sup>[12]</sup>

### Importance of Virechana Among Sodhana Therapies

Susrutha explained the general management of vitiated Doshas as – decreased Doshas should be enhanced, increased Doshas should be pacified, excessively increased Doshas should be eliminated and balanced Doshas are protected.<sup>[13]</sup> Dalhana added that Doshas which are aggravated and moved from their own site should be eliminated from the body.<sup>[14]</sup>

Among all Sodhana therapies Vamana and Virechana are given prime importance as they thoroughly eliminate the Doshas.<sup>[15]</sup> Dalhana opines that Vasti will effectively eliminate the Doshas which are in Pakvasaya. Procedures like Dhumapana, Nasya, Kavalagraha will eliminate Doshas in small amounts only. Vamana and Virechana will eliminate Doshas in large amounts and at once. Hence, Vamana and Virechana got priority among Sodhana Procedures.<sup>[16]</sup>

### General Vata Vyadhi Treatment

In Vata Vyadhis, if Vata is vitiated alone and doesn't have any obstruction, then the prime line of treatment will be Snehana and Swedana. If the disease is not reduced with these therapies, because of combination

with other Doshas, then mild Virechanam is advised. By Virechana, obstruction will also be cleared and thus allows Vata to move freely. Anulomana Avastha, which is the normal movement of Vata will also be achieved by Virechana.<sup>[17]</sup>

If Pitta or Kapha Dosha are present as Anubandha Dosha, they can also be eliminated by Virechana.<sup>[18]</sup>

### Treatment For Dooshyas In Pakshaghata

Dooshyas, which means the tissues that are affected in the pakshaghata, are 'Sira' and 'Snayu'. Dalhana considered Snayu as Kandara. Sira and Kandara are the Upadhatus of Raktha Dhatu.<sup>[19]</sup> Thus, the management of Sira and Snayu Vitiations will be like the line of treatment of Rakth Dhatu.

Virechana is the appropriate therapy which helps in the management of both Raktha Dhatu<sup>[20]</sup> and Vata Dosha. Virechana also helps for Dhatu Sthiratva which is affected in the Pakshaghata.

### Benefits of Snehana and Swedana

Snehana and Swedana are the preparatory therapies which are administered prior to the Virechana Karma. Among them, Snehana helps in the Pacification of Vayu, makes the body soft and removes any obstruction caused by the vitiated Doshas. Swedana will liquify the Doshas present in minute channels and thus helps in driving them towards Kosta which later will be eliminated through Sodhana procedures.<sup>[21]</sup>

A dried wooden stick can be bended by repeated application of Sneha and Sweda. In the same way the human body can also be treated and restored by the help of Snehana and Swedana.<sup>[22]</sup>

### DISCUSSION

Pakshaghata is a Vata Vyadhi which affects mainly motor functions of half side of the body. As the main residing site of Vata Dosha is Pakwashaya, Virechana which eliminates Doshas from Pakwashaya is aptly recommended as main line of treatment for all Vata Vyadhis. Hence it is also effective in Pakshaghata treatment.

Similar to all Vata Vyadhis, pathogenesis of Pakshaghata also involves either 'Srothorodha' means obstruction of channels or 'Anubandha Dosha' means combining with other Doshas. Virechana is considered as best treatment to remove any obstruction from the channels especially which are located near to Pakwashaya. If Pitta Dosha or Kapha Dosha are combined they can also be eliminated through Virechana.

Anulomana gati of Vata is one of the main benefits of Virechana and achieving this will have significant effects in the Pakshaghata treatment.

Dooshyas affected in Pakshaghata are Sira and Snayu which are the Upadhatus of Raktha Dhatu. Virechana is suitable treatment for the management of Raktha Dhatu as it has similar properties of Pitta Dosha.

Snehana and Swedana are Purvakarmas which are essential in preparing patient for Virechana Karma. Apart from this Snehana and Swedana are also advised in the main treatment of Pakshaghata as they directly act on Vata Dosha and highly useful in restoring motor functions.

## CONCLUSION

Why Virechana is given importance in the treatment of Pakshaghata, a Vata Vyadhi, but not Basti Karma? This is a fascinating question which still remains in the minds of many Ayurvedic students and physicians. Even though Basti Karma is considered best for the management of Vata Dosha, Pakshaghata treatment involves complex approach. It requires not only pacifying Vata Dosha but also managing motor functions and muscular activities. Thus the Virechana Karma which has multiple benefits varying from controlling Vata Dosha to restoring impaired motor functions, is aptly considered as prime treatment modality for the effective management of Pakshaghata.

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