

ROLE OF RAKTMOKSHANA AS TOOL IN MANAGEMENT OF SURGICAL DISEASES

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ABSTRACT

Panchakarma is an indispensable therapy inhabiting all the eight branches of *Ayurveda*. *Panchakarma* therapy includes *Vamana* (emesis), *Virechana* (purgation), *Basti* (medicated enema), *Nasya* (nasal medication) and *Raktmokshana* (therapeutic bloodletting). Out of them *Raktmokshana* is most likely to use in surgical diseases as described in *Shalyatantra* (ancient Indian surgery). *Raktmokshana* includes *Siravedhana* (vein-puncturing), *Prachana* (scraping), *Shrung* (horn of animal application), *Jalauka* (leech application), *Alabu* (pitcher gourd). *Raktmokshana* is indicated in disorders of *Pitta* (fire/bile) and *Rakta* (blood) involvement, thus numerous acute and chronic surgical conditions like *Vrana* (wound), *Dushta vrana* (non-

healing wound), *Bhagna* (musculo-skeletal injuries), *Arsha* (hemorrhoids), *Bhagandara* (fistula in ano), *Arbuda* (tumours), *Shalipada* (filariasis), *Shopha* (swellings), *Visarpa* (Erysipelas), *Gudpaka*, *Medhrapaka*, *Raktpitta*, *Plihavridhi*, *Vidradhi* (abscess) & *Siragatavata* (venous ulcer)etc. can be well managed with *Raktmokshana*. In the classical texts of *Ayurveda*, an emphatic description of *Raktmokshana* is available, with special relevance in the management of various surgical pathologies. In this article, an endeavor has been made to explore the applied concepts of *Raktmokshana* in the field of *Shalya Tantra*.

KEYWORDS *Ayurveda* treatment, *Raktmokshana*, *Siravedha*, *Prachhana*, *Jalaukaavarchan*, surgical diseases.

AIM: To study the Role of *Raktmokshana* in Surgical Diseases.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study ancient literature *Raktmokshana*.
2. To study the role of *Raktmokshana* in surgical Diseases.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has discussed principles as well as philosophy of life. It is one of the healing sciences with its main objective to maintain healthy person in healthy and sound condition of the body and soul respectively and to achieve the respective benefits in case of diseased persons.

There is an increasing curiosity and awareness about *Ayurveda* and its various branches not only in India but also through the world. However the, the *Panchakarma* treatment from *Ayurveda* attracted whole attention than any other. *Panchakarma* therapy includes *Vamana* (emesis), *Virechana* (purgation), *Basti* (medicated enema), *Nasya* (nasal medication) and *Raktmokshana* (therapeutic bloodletting). Among these processes *Raktmokshana* has been done for purification and treatment of diseases related to *Pitta & Rakta* (blood).^[1] *Raktmokshana* is one of the most effective treatments in *Shalya-Tantra*.

Raktmokshana is considered to be one of the *Panchakarma* by *Sushruta*, as he mentioned *Rakta* as the fourth *Dosha*.^[2] *Raktmokshana* means letting out blood from the body in order to prevent and cure disease. *Rakta* means blood and *mokshana* means letting out the blood. The importance of *Raktmokshana* can be described as ‘all other surgical treatments on one side & *Raktmokshana* on the other hand considered are the same’.^[3]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

- Literature study of *Sushrut Samhita*.
- Literature study of *Charak Samhita*.
- Literature study of *Astaang Samgraha*.

This paper focuses on concepts *raktmokshana* in surgical diseases in the point of view of *Ayurveda*. The literature study of different *Samhitas* as well as available ancient books and online sources related to topic was done.

Instruments for *Raktmokshana*

1. *Shrunnga*
2. *Alabu*
3. *Jalauka*
4. *Suchi*
5. *Kushapatra*
6. *Trikurchaka*

Types of *Raktmokshana*

Raktmokshana are of two types

1. With surgical instrument
 2. Without surgical instrument
- With surgical instrument- *Prachana* (scrapping) and *siravyadha* (vein puncture).^[4]
 - Without surgical instrument- *Shrung* (horn of animal), *Jalauka* (leech application), *Alabu* (pitcher gourd).

Blood vitiated by *vata*, *Pitta* and *kapha* should be removed from body, by using *Shrung*, *Jalauka*, *Alabu* respectively.^[5] *Raktmokshana* should be done according to severity of disease; means when blood is clotted, *prachana* is beneficial; when the vitiated blood is spread to the entire body, puncturing the vein is ideal; and when the vitiated blood is present in the skin, use of sucking horn and pitcher gourd are beneficial.^[6]

Acute *Shopha* is recommended for *Raktavistravan* by *Jalouka* and also in painful deep rooted *Shopha*, *Visham Vrana* and also in *Savish Vrana* i.e. toxic wound. *Vistravan* is one of the *Upakrma* of *Shashthi Upakrama* of *Vrana*.^[7]

Raktavistravan by *jalouka* as *anushatra* is also oriented as *pratishedh*; *Pratishedh* means to prevent the disease or its advancement and further prevents any other major surgical disorder.

The persons who undergo *Raktamokshana* regularly in *Sharad Rutu* they do not suffer from the diseases like wise, *Twak Dosha* [skin disease-*Kshudraroga*], *Granthi* [various types of cyst], *Shopha*, [swelling] and blood disease.

Raktmokshana Karma (Therapeutic Blood-letting) in various diseases**• In acute inflammatory swellings**

Raktmokshana karma may prove helpful to relieve pain and to prevent suppuration. It is Volicularly indicated in the wounds with inflammation, hardness, dark-red discoloration, pain and uneven surfaces. In poisoned wounds, bloodletting has been prescribed with leeches and scarification.^[8]

• *Arsha Chikitsa (Hemorrhoids)*

Acharya Gayadasa considers *Arsha* as one of the main pathologies related to the field of *Shalya Tantra*.^[9] The *Nidana-samprapti* (aetio-pathogenesis) of *Arsha* includes *Manda-agni* (suppression of digestive fire) and *Mala-Upchaya* (excessive accumulation of excrements)^[10-11]

• *Shopha (Oedema)*

According to the level of vitiation of *Doshas*, *teekshana Vamana* (drastic emetics), *Virechana* (purgation), *Asthapana Basti* (non-unctuous enema), *Snehana* (unction), *Svedana* (sudation), *Upnahana* (poultices) along with frequent *Sira-vedha* are the main indications.^[12]

• *Prameha Pidika (Diabetic Boils)*

Treatment with *Vamana* (emesis), *Virechana* (purgation) and *Sira vedha* has been prescribed along with surgical intervention.

• *Granthi Roga (Cystic Lesions)*

In *vataj granthi*, different types of sudations and poultices are useful to alleviate the local symptoms. Bloodletting with leeches has a role in *Pitta granthi roga*.^[13]

• *Shalipada Roga (Elephantiasis)*

To get rid of impurities in the circulating blood, *Raktmokshana* karma by *Sira vyadha* has been specifically indicated in the management of all the three types of *Shalipada*.^[14]

• *Yakritodara roga (Hepatomegaly) and Pleehodara Roga (Splenomegaly)*

Siravedha (venepuncture) karma has been indicated after *Snehana* and *Svedana karma*^[15] Both *Yakrit* (liver) and *Pleeha* (spleen) are the seat of *Rakta-vaha srotasa*.^[16] Bloodletting directly corrects the vitiation of *Rakta*.

- **Vridhhi/Bradhna (Hernia)**

Raktmokshana karma by *Siravedha* (venepuncture) has been indicated by *Acharya Sushruta*, although its effects are still undetermined.^[17]

- **Atyayika Chikitsa (Emergency Management)**

Emergency management is an integral Vol of discipline of Surgery. *Acharya Sushruta* has indicated the procedure of *Siravyadha* (venepuncture) to relieve acute conditions owing to its rapid action. *Raktmokshana karma* by *Siravyadha* has been said to contribute as half of the total surgical management. It has also been rendered as the last measure to be adopted, when all other measures fail to provide relief.^[18] In the management of excessive blood loss, *Rakta-Basti karma* (enema with blood) has been indicated as an effective means of replenishment.^[19]

- **Vishajanya Vyadhi (In poisoning cases)**

The rational management protocol requires *Panchakarma* procedures.^[20] In *Dushi visha* or poisons situated in blood, venepuncture along with all the five evacuative measures of *Panchakarma* had been advised by *Acharya Charaka*.^[21]

- **Vrana (In wound management)**

In management of wound gentle types of *Raktamoksha* like *Jalauka & Pracchana* is to be used. *Jalaukawacharana* (leech application) is important *anushastra karma* illustrated by many authors. *Jalaukawacharana* is a method of *Rakta mokshana* (blood-letting). *Jalaukawacharana* is generally applied in initial phase of wound progress. *Rakta mokshana* reduces the pain and suppress the suppuration of premature swelling. Wound with inflammation, hardness, reddish black in colour, tenderness and uneven surface are treated by *Rakta mokshana*. Inflammation with poisonous in origin is specially treated by leech application and *Pracchana*.

- **In venous ulcer**

Venous ulcer can be correlated with *Siragatavata*. The *lakshanas* of *Siragatavata* i.e. Pain in *Sira*, contraction & engorgement of *Sira*.^[22] *Acharya Sushruta* has exclusively mentioned the treatment regime for '*Siragatavata*' which includes local oleation and fomentation along with Leech therapy.^[23] *Acharya Sushruta* has advocated sixty procedures (*Shashthi upakramas*) for wound management which can be practiced as per stage of wound and necessity. He has given the utmost importance to Bloodletting therapy and considered Leech as the most

unique, effective method of bloodletting even in infected wounds and in abscess management. *Acharya Sushruta* has also specified that the wounds over the lower limb delays in healing. Leech therapy is considered as most unique and effective method of bloodletting. It can be tried in all mankind including females, children, old and patients having poor threshold to pain. It drains impure blood, useful in *Pitta dushitha Rakta* diseases, various skin disorders and all types of inflammatory conditions. *Acharya Sushruta* has advocated that bloodletting by Leech can be practiced in all inflammatory, suppurative and painful conditions to relieve pain & inhibit suppuration including that of non-healing ulcerative lesions.^[24]

- **In varicose vein**

In varicose vein mainly *Rakta* and *Pitta Dushti* is there so, *Raktamokshana* is best treatment for it.

- **Use of *Raktamokshana* in various conditions-**

1. Chronic condition occurs in skin diseases
2. Knee Arthritis
3. Knee joint effusion
4. Calcaneal spur
5. Rheumatoid Arthritis
6. Non healing ulcers
7. Diabetic foot
8. Vitiligo etc.

DISCUSSION

Raktamokshana is one of the most effective measures as a half treatment in *Shalyatantra*. *Raktmokshana* is considered to be one of the *Panchakarma* by *Acharya Sushruta*, as he mentioned *Rakta* as the fourth dosha. In *Raktmokshana* therapy impure blood is to let out from the body. As per *Acharya Vagbhata* (In *Ashtanghrudaya*) *Rakta* and *Pitta* are having *Ashrayaashrayee bhavas*, so the best treatment for *Pittaj* and *Rakta Rogas* is *Raktamokshana*. It can be used in *Rakta Dhusti*, *Twaka vikara* and all above said diseases. The place where surgical instruments are not possible to operate at that time *Raktamokshana* should be used. It can be used in various surgical, medical conditions to avoid fatal, critical condition of disease

and prevention of prognosis of disease. *Raktmokshana* as a divine boon with less side effects, less time consuming, cost effective in today's surgical world.

CONCLUSION

Panchakarma has an international recognition as major, supportive or preparatory therapy in the preservation, maintenance and conservation of health, along with promotion of longevity. In the field of *Shalya Tantra* (Surgery), the procedures of *Panchakarma* can play an incredible role. Successful peri-operative management of numerous surgical conditions requires adjuvant therapies of *Panchakarma*. Standardization and scientific validation of efficacy of these procedures along with necessary modifications is the need of the hour and a major thrust area also. By adopting these procedures, the practice of *Shalya Tantra* is sure to be benefitted with improved outcomes.

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