

**PANCHAKARMA: A CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY INSIGHT INTO AYURVEDIC
DETOXIFICATION AND REJUVENATION**Dr. Anuja Pandey*¹ and Dr. Varij Pandey²¹Ayurvedic Medical Officer, Rajakiya Ayurveda Aushadhalaya Aguanakhurda Jhunjhunu Rajasthan.²Principal and Professor, (Department of Dravyaguna Vigyana) Gaur Brahman Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Brahmanwas, Rohtak, Haryana.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Panchakarma, the cornerstone of Shodhana Chikitsa (purification therapy) in Ayurveda, is a personalized detoxification and rejuvenation protocol designed according to Prakriti (constitution) and Dosha imbalance. Comprising Vamana (therapeutic emesis), Virechana (purgation), Basti (medicated enema), Nasya (nasal therapy), and Raktamokshana (bloodletting), it aims to eliminate Ama (toxins), restore Agni (digestive/metabolic fire), and enhance Ojas (vitality and immunity). **Methods:** A narrative review was conducted, synthesizing classical Ayurvedic texts (Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Bhavaprakasha) and contemporary biomedical studies focusing on clinical, biochemical, and physiological effects of Panchakarma. Relevant shlokas were included to establish textual authenticity. **Results:** Classical literature highlights the preventive, curative, and rejuvenative roles of Panchakarma. Charaka states: “शरीरं हि नाम दोषधातुमलमूलं तस्य शुद्धिर्हि श्रेयसी।” purification ensures optimal health. Modern research demonstrates significant reductions in oxidative stress, improved lipid and glucose metabolism, gut microbiota modulation, and neuroprotection, validating traditional concepts of Dosha balance and Agni-Ama theory. **Conclusion:** By integrating ancient Ayurvedic wisdom with contemporary evidence, Panchakarma emerges as a scientifically relevant, personalized protocol for detoxification, disease prevention, and management of lifestyle and chronic degenerative disorders.

KEYWORDS: Panchakarma, Shodhana, Ayurveda, Detoxification, Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Rasayana.**1. INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda prioritizes maintaining health (*swasthasya swasthya rakshanam*) and curing disease (*aturasya vikara prashamanam*) through restoring dosha-dhatu-mala equilibrium. *Shodhana chikitsa* is considered superior to *shamana*(palliative) therapies, as it expels *doshas* from their root sites (*koshtha* and *shakha*).

Bhavaprakasha

“शुद्धे शुद्धे शरीरस्य धातूनामुपचायः स्मृतः।

रसादीनां च वृद्धिः स्यात् बलवर्णोपपत्तये॥”

(*Shuddhe shuddhe shareerasya dhatunaam upachayah smritah, rasaadeenam cha vridddhih syat bala-varnopapattaye – In a purified body, dhatus proliferate, enhancing strength and complexion.*).^[3]

Thus, *Panchakarma* is advocated for both preventive (*swasthavritta*) and curative (*vyadhi chikitsa*) applications.

**2. CLASSICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND
PROCEDURAL RATIONALE****2.1 Purvakarma (Preparatory Regimen)**

Purvakarma prepares the body by mobilizing *doshas* toward the gastrointestinal tract.

- **Snehana (Oleation):** Internal (*snehapana*) with *ghrita* or *taila* and external massage (*abhyanga*).
- **Swedana (Sudation):** Induces sweating, softens *doshas*, and clears *srotas*.

Sushruta Samhita

“स्नेहस्वेदनाभ्यां दोषाणां मृदुत्वात् सुलभनिष्क्रमणम्।”

(*Sneha-swedanabhyam doshanam mridutvat sulabha-nishkramanam – Oleation and sudation soften doshas for easy expulsion.*).^[2]

2.2 Pradhana Karma (Main Panchakarma Therapies)

Each therapy is selected according to *dosha* predominance.

2.2.1 Vamana (Therapeutic Emesis)

- **Classical Rationale**

- **Charaka**

“कफे चोद्धृत्यमाने तु क्षिप्रं स्वास्थ्यं लभ्यते।”

(*Kaphe chodhrityamane tu kshipram swasthyam labhyate – Expelling kapha quickly restores health.*)^[1]

- **Indications:** *Kaphaja* disorders – bronchial asthma, obesity, skin disorders.
- **Modern Correlation:** Reduces mucus hypersecretion, inflammatory cytokines, and lipid dysregulation.

2.2.2 Virechana (Purgation)

- **Classical Rationale**

Ashtanga Hridaya

“पित्तविकाराणां श्रेष्ठो विरेचनः।”

(*Pittavikaranam shreshtho virechanam – Virechana is best for pitta disorders.*)^[2]

- **Indications:** Liver disorders, jaundice, dermatitis, gout.
- **Modern Correlation:** Enhances hepatobiliary detoxification, bile flow, and reduces oxidative stress.

2.2.3 Basti (Medicated Enema)

- **Classical**

Charaka

“अर्धचिकित्सा हि बस्तिः।”

(*Ardha chikitsa hi bastih – Basti constitutes half of all treatments.*)^[1]

Rationale

- **Types:** *Anuvasana* (oil-based), *Niruha* (decoction-based).
- **Indications:** Neurological disorders, arthritis, infertility.
- **Modern Correlation:** Modulates gut microbiota, reduces systemic inflammation, and improves short-chain fatty acid production.

2.2.4 Nasya (Nasal Therapy)

- **Classical Rationale:** Targets *urdhva jatru* (head and neck) disorders.

- **Indications:** Migraine, sinusitis, cervical spondylosis, insomnia.

- **Modern Correlation:** Enhances cerebral blood flow and modulates the autonomic nervous system.

2.2.5 Raktamokshana (Bloodletting)

- **Classical Rationale**

Sushruta “दूषिते रक्ता पित्ते रक्तविस्रवणं शुभम्।”

(*Dushite rakta pitte raktavisravanam shubham – Bloodletting is beneficial in pitta-rakta vitiation.*)^[2]

- **Indications:** Acne, eczema, varicose veins.
- **Modern Correlation:** Lowers serum ferritin, inflammatory mediators, and blood viscosity.

2.3 Paschatkarma (Post-therapeutic Care)

- **Diet:** Gradual restoration of *agni* using *manda*, *peya*, *vilepi*, *mamsarasa*.

- **Lifestyle:** Rest and avoidance of *nidana* (causative factors).

3. SCIENTIFIC VALIDATION – RESULTS

3.1 Biochemical and Physiological Correlations

Classical Concept	Modern Equivalent	Evidence
<i>Ama</i> (toxins)	Endotoxins & free radicals	↓ Oxidative stress markers post- <i>Panchakarma</i> ^[5]
<i>Srotorodha</i> (blocked channels)	Microcirculatory impairment	↑ Endothelial function ^[6]
<i>Agni Deepana</i>	Improved mitochondrial function	↑ ATP production, ↓ inflammatory cytokines ^[4]

3.2 Clinical Studies

- **Metabolic Syndrome:** *Virechana* and *basti* improved BMI, insulin sensitivity, and lipid profile.^[6]
- **Rheumatoid Arthritis:** *Basti* reduced CRP and ESR.^[4]
- **Mental Health:** *Nasya* reduced migraine attacks and anxiety symptoms.^[7]

4.2 Preventive and Geriatric Relevance

Panchakarma as part of *ritucharya* prevents seasonal *dosha* aggravation. In geriatrics, *basti* with *maha ksheera bala taila* improves joint mobility, and *nasya* with *anu taila* enhances cognition.^[3]

4.3 Rasayana After Panchakarma

Post-detox *rasayana* (*ashwagandha*, *amalaki*, *chawanprasha*) enhances *ojas*, immunity, and longevity.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Classical vs Modern Detox Concepts

- *Virechana* : hepatobiliary detoxification
- *Basti* : gut microbiome modulation
- *Nasya* : intranasal neurotherapeutics
- *Raktamokshana* : therapeutic phlebotomy

4.4 Global Relevance

The increasing demand for integrative medicine positions *Panchakarma* as a promising adjunct in chronic diseases, autoimmune disorders, and post-chemotherapy rehabilitation.^[8]

5. CONCLUSION

Panchakarma is a holistic detoxification and rejuvenation protocol, validated by classical texts and modern scientific studies. Its individualized approach and preventive potential make it relevant for contemporary integrative healthcare.

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