

CONCEPTS OF *PRANASTA SHALYA* AND *NIRHARANA UPAYA* IN AYURVEDIC *SHALYATANTRA*: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Shalya Tantra is a special group of Ayurveda discipline, dealing specifically with removal of foreign bodies (*Shalya*) and the use of specific *Yantra* and *Shastra* for the surgical or para-surgical purposes including *Vrana Nidana*. Regarding foreign bodies Ayurveda described concept of *Pranashta Shalya* which embedded deep or lost into the body. It is important to mention that even in the absence of current equipment in modern medicine, ancient physicians were able to identify the foreign bodies using *Lakshanas* of same. Ancient physicians also described specific procedures for the removal of foreign bodies using specific surgical instruments. There were sets of techniques mentioned for managing *Pranashta Shalya* including *Pachana*, *Darana*, *Pramarjana*, *Bhedana*, *Nirdhmapana* and *Prakshalana*. This review presents the classical Ayurvedic understanding of *Pranashta Shalya* and *Nirharana Upaya* according to Ayurvedic *Shalyatantra*.

KEYWORDS: *Pranashta Shalya*, *Nirharana Upaya*, *Shalyatantra*, Foreign body, Surgical.

INTRODUCTION

Shalya is defined as anything that is external of foreign body, producing pain or discomfort. The word *Pranashta* means hidden or invisible, therefore *Pranashta Shalya* refers to any unfamiliar body remaining concealed in the body. Untreated *Pranashta Shalya* may result in numerous complications and in extreme cases, can lead to fatalities; therefore, early diagnosis and timely removal is needed. Regarding the clinical point of view *Gati*, *Ashraya*, *Samanya Lakshanas* and *Visesha Lakshanas*, *Shalya Sthana Jnanopaya*, *Antah Shalya Avastha* and *Visheshena Asakta Shalyas* are important factors need to be considered. Ayurveda also described several methods for the extraction (*Nirharana*) of these foreign bodies. Ayurveda science explained the clinical features that indicate the successful removal of foreign body and techniques of surgical instruments used, many of which are still used today.^[1-4]

Shalya (Foreign Body)

Shalya is classified into two broad types as mentioned in **Figure 1**. The first kind of *Shalya* is *Sharirika Shalya* which comes from the body and may include items such as teeth, hair, nails, metabolic waste, food waste, and *Doshas* that have vitiated while in the body. The second kind of *Shalya* is *Agantuja Shalya* emerging from outside

the human body, made of external matter and emotions capable of causing pain. *Shalya* can be categorized depending on its characteristic as *Avabaddha* and *Anavabaddha*.^[4-6]

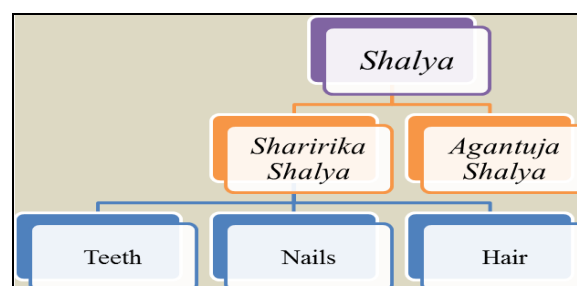


Figure 1: Types of *Shalya*.

In addition, *Shalya* has five types of movement and can move in one of the five motion directions: up, down, back, side and straight. When *Shalya* is blocked in its movement, it can get stuck or deposit in various locations. These deposits can occur in many tissues: skin, blood, muscles, ligaments, bones, viscera, *Marma*, arteries, *Srotas*, joints and muscle, etc.

Symptoms

The symptomatology of *Shalya* is classified into two parts as *Samanya* and *Visheshika* symptoms. The *Samanya* symptoms include blackish discoloration, recurrent pain, bleeding, swelling with eruptions and swelling, etc. The specific symptoms will be determined by the site of lodgment. These symptoms are present in the skin and create discoloration, swelling and hardness, etc. If the lodgment is in muscle, it will develop overwhelming swelling, new growth in the pathway of the foreign body, sucking pain, pus development and pressure intolerant, etc. A foreign body lodged in veins causes distension, pain and swelling of the vessels. When lodged in ligaments, *Shalya* produces lifting of the ligament structure, swelling and severe pain.^[5-7]

Foreign bodies lodged in different sites of the body produce distinct signs and symptoms. For example, foreign bodies in the airway produce respiratory distress and coughing. If lodged in the gastrointestinal tract, signs and symptoms can produce features consistent of intestinal obstruction.

Localization of *Shalya*

Localization involves examination of accompanying signs and symptoms, such as pain and/or other sensations like pricking sensation. The location of any injury is always of paramount importance. Prickling pain can occur when an individual has an injury at the proximal joint in a limb that has not yet lost the ability to flex or extend beyond where the full range of motion cannot be attained. Treating *Shalya*, involve first step as to locate the injury, in this regards *Acharya* describes the techniques for identifying the site of a foreign body lodged; called *Shalya Sthana Inanopaya*.^[6-8]

In the case of *Twak-gata shalya*, the skin is to be smeared and fomented, and a mud paste, flour of *Masa*, *Yava* and cow dung is to be applied, and the changes at the application site observed. Swelling, redness and pain indicate the stimulus from the foreign body which is concentrated at this site.

In the case of *Mamsa Gata Shalya*, the patient would need to practice oleation, sudation and other safe measures; which helps out to soften the foreign body, if the *Shalya* is rendered mobile, the patient may feel redness, swelling, or pain to the affected site this would be identifying the site of the foreign body. The same method is utilized wherever the foreign body is lodged in the *Koshta*, *Asthi*, *Sandhi* and *Pesi vivara*, etc. Similarly, in the case of foreign bodies lodged in the *Sira*, *Dhamani*, *Srotas* and *Snayu*, the patient is seated in a chariot with broken wheel and is taken on a fast ride; the location where the redness, swelling or pain arises to signify the location of the foreign body.^[7-9]

In case of *Asthi*, the bones are tightly bandaged or compressed; the site of the foreign body will be assessed by looking for the appearance of pain, swelling or

redness. When the foreign body is lodged in the *Sandhi*, oleation and fomentation are carried out and then the joint functions either with movements of extension and contraction, or if they were treated by tightly bandaging or compressing the joint, in both cases the site is determined by observing swelling, pain or redness, etc.

Shalya Nirharana

Natural methods includes removal of foreign body due to *Svabhava*, removal due to being found/getting excited due to *Harsha*, or removal of pus due to *Pachana*. Mechanical methods include removal of *Shalya* by *Bhedana*, *Darana*, *Pidana*, *Pramarjana*, *Prakshalana* and *Nirdhmapana*, etc. Expulsive measures include utilization of techniques such as *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Pratimarsha*, *Pravahana* and *Achushana*, etc.

Specific examples include loosening a foreign body that is not completely avulsed and cutting its protruding part before removing it, if necessary cut around the foreign body. For *Sira-gata* foreign bodies the use of a metal rod may help, and some manipulation causes the foreign body to release; with the weak handle of a foreign body encouraged to remove with the foreign body held by a stronger thread may make the process easier.

Foreign bodies in the heart should be left to exit in the original entry path. Instruments for working in bone cavities should be blunt, in which blunt force or physical brute strength may be needed. For a thermally significant obstruction to the throat, heated metal rods or metal rods covered in beeswax are advocated. Obstruction to the *Kanta rodha* can present with frothing or consciousness loss and is treated with oil anointing, purgation and fomentations, etc.^[6-9]

CONCLUSION

Acharya Sushruta pointed out that the complete removal of a *Pranashta Shalya* should always be the goal regardless of the treatment plan. The ability to identify and extract foreign bodies has drastically improved through traditional knowledge and modern diagnostic tools. In the past, without the resources of surgical techniques and anesthesia, surgeons relied solely on expertise and skill to remove foreign bodies with minimal injury and complications and were able to ensure the utmost care during these procedures. Differences in diagnostic techniques for foreign bodies depend on the site of lodgment. A number of techniques are given for the removal of foreign bodies, including natural expulsion, stimulating excitement and suppuration as well as *Bhedana* or *Darana* to the foreign body. Other techniques include *Pidana*, *Pramarjana*, *Prakshalana* and *Nirdhmapana*, as well as expulsive therapies such as *Vamana* or *Virechana* in addition to nasal instillation, straining efforts and sucking are used depending on the kind of foreign body and their location.

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