

AYURVEDIC REVIEW OF STROKE (PAKSHAGHATA / PAKSHAVATA)

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ABSTRACT

Stroke is a leading cause of disability and mortality worldwide. In Ayurveda, it is correlated with **Pakshaghata**, a condition characterized by paralysis of one side of the body due to vitiation of **Vata Dosha**. This review highlights the Ayurvedic understanding, etiology, pathogenesis, clinical features, and management of stroke, along with its relevance in modern integrative care.^[1]

KEYWORDS: Pakshaghata, Vata Vyadhi, Stroke, Ayurveda, Panchakarma, Basti.

INTRODUCTION

Stroke, known in Ayurveda as **Pakshaghata**, is included under **Vata Vyadhi** (neurological disorders). It presents with sudden loss of motor and sensory functions, commonly affecting one half of the body. Ayurveda provides a holistic approach focusing on **Dosha balance**, **Panchakarma therapies**, and **rehabilitation**.^[2]

Ayurvedic Concept of Stroke^[3]

- Term: **Pakshaghata / Pakshavata**
- □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ **Vata Dosha**
- □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ **Mamsa** (muscle), **Snayu** (nerves), **Sira** (vessels)
- □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Loss of movement and function in one side of body

Nidana (Etiological Factors)^[3]

Aharaja (Dietary Causes)

- Excess dry, cold, light food
- Irregular meals
- Fasting or malnutrition

Viharaja (Lifestyle Causes)

- Overexertion
- Sleep deprivation
- Stress and anxiety

Any (Other Causes)

- Aging (Vata predominance)
- Trauma
- Chronic illness

Samprapti (Pathogenesis)^[4]

Stroke in Ayurveda occurs due to **Vata vitiation** affecting the nervous and vascular systems.

Main Mechanisms

1. **Margavarana (Obstruction)**
 - Blockage of channels (similar to ischemic stroke)
2. **Dhatukshaya (Degeneration)**
 - Loss of tissue nourishment (neurodegeneration)

Lakshana (Clinical Features)

- Hemiplegia (one-sided paralysis)
- Loss of movement
- Speech impairment (Vak Stambha)
- Facial deviation
- Sensory loss
- Muscle stiffness or flaccidity

Bheda (Types)

- **Vataja Pakshaghata** – Pure Vata dominance
- **Kaphavrita Vata** – Obstruction by Kapha (heaviness, rigidity)

- **Pittavrita Vata** – Associated with heat/inflammatory features

Chikitsa Siddhanta (Principles of Treatment)

- Pacification of **Vata Dosha**
- Removal of obstruction (Srotoshodhana)
- Nourishment of tissues (Brimhana therapy)
- Restoration of motor function

Chikitsa (Management)^[6]

1. Panchakarma Therapy

Snehana (Oleation)

- Internal and external oil therapy
- Improves lubrication and nerve function

Swedana (Sudation)

- Relieves stiffness and improves circulation

Basti (□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □)

- Most effective therapy for Vata disorders
- Types:
 - Anuvasana Basti (oil-based)
 - Niruha Basti (decoction-based)

Nasya

- Useful in facial paralysis and speech difficulty

2. Shamana Chikitsa (Medicinal Treatment)

Commonly used drugs (under supervision).

- Ashwagandha
- Bala
- Dashmoola
- Yogaraj Guggulu
- Ekangveer Ras
- Brihat Vata Chintamani Ras

3. Bahya Chikitsa (External Therapies)

- Abhyanga (oil massage)
- Shirodhara
- Pizhichil

Pathya-Apathya (Diet & Lifestyle)^[7]

Pathya (Recommended)

- Warm, soft, unctuous food
- Milk, ghee
- Moong dal
- Light and digestible diet

Apathya (Avoid)

- Dry, cold, stale food
- Excess spicy or junk food
- Alcohol
- Irregular lifestyle

Rehabilitation and Yoga^[8]

- Physiotherapy
- Gentle Yoga exercises
- Pranayama

- Speech therapy

Prognosis (Sadhya-Asadhyata)^[9]

Better Prognosis

- Early stage
- Partial paralysis
- Good strength of patient

Poor Prognosis^[10]

- Chronic condition
- Complete paralysis
- Associated complications

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present article is based on a comprehensive literary

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda explains stroke as a **Vata-dominant disorder** involving obstruction or degeneration. While modern medicine focuses on emergency management, Ayurveda plays a crucial role in **rehabilitation, functional recovery, and prevention of recurrence**.

CONCLUSION

Stroke (Pakshaghata) is primarily a disorder of aggravated **Vata Dosha**. Ayurvedic management through **Panchakarma, medicines, diet, and lifestyle modifications** provides a holistic approach, especially in long-term recovery and rehabilitation. An integrative approach combining modern emergency care with Ayurvedic therapy offers the best outcomes.

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