

REVIEW ON VIRECHANA KARMA (THERAPEUTIC PURGATION)

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Article Received on 14/04/2021

Article Revised on 04/05/2021

Article Accepted on 24/05/2021

ABSTRACT

The *Samshodhana Chikitsa* of *Ayurveda*, which includes *Panchkarma* treatment, basically intends to eliminate the morbid *Doshas* from the body and thereby enhances the immunity of the body. The group of five purification measures comprising of *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, *Nasya*, *Raktmokshana*. Purification is given more importance because disease once cured by pacification may circumstantially be provoked again, where as it cannot ever do so once it is totally expelled by biopurification method. *Shodhana* is necessary because without this any palliative treatment do not work properly Among the *Panchkarma* therapy by *Virechana*, *Pitta Dosh*a clears not only from the *Amashaya* but from all over the body i.e., from cellular level. It is worth mentioning that *Virechana Karma*, unlike the modern purgatives, is not merely an act to clean the bowel, but it is a complete therapeutic measure which has systemic as well as local effects.

KEYWORDS: *Samshodhana*, *Virechana*, *Amashya*, Biopurification.

INTRODUCTION

Virechana is procedure in which the orally administered drug acts on internally situated *Doshas*. Specifically on *Pitta Doshas* and expels them out of the body through anal route. Apart from *Pitta* it is also useful in disorders in which *Pitta* is associated with *Vata* or *Kapha*. The verbal meaning of word *Virechana* is expulsion of *Doshas* from the body. In the usage of different terms like *Shirovirechana*, *Shukravirechana* and *Mutravirechana*, the word *Virechana* means mere expulsion. However, this word refers to expulsion of vitiated *Dosha* from any route in general but here elimination of *Dosha* by way of inducing purgation is referred by the name *Virechana*.

Definition

- The process of expelling vitiated *Doshas* through the downward tract is called *Virechanakarma*. Since the expulsion of *Doshas* take place even from either routes known by the common term *Virechana*.^[1]
- The process of elimination of *Mala* either in *Pakva* or in *Apakva Avastha* but along with excessive fluid portion is known as *Virechana*.^[2]

Synonyms

Rechanam, *Praskandanam*.

Classification

A. According to mode of action

- *Anulomana* (e.g. *Haritaki*)

- *Sransana* (e.g. *Aragvadha*)
- *Bhedana* (e.g. *Katuki*)
- *Rechana* (e.g. *Trivrita*)

B. According to Origin and Part used

1. Animal origin (e.g. *Mutra*, *Milk*, *Takra*)
2. Plant origin (e.g. *Phala (Triphala)*, *Mula (Danti, Trivrit)*, *Kashir (Snuhikashir)*, *Twacha (Kampilaka)* etc.^[3]

C. According to the intensity of action

1. *Mridu virechana*

The dravyas which are *Manda* in *Virya* or when combined with opposite *Virya*, or given in low Dosage to the *Ruksa patient* and causes less purgation is known as *Mridu Virechana*.^[4]

Indicated in *Durbala*, previously *Shodhita*, *Alpa Dosh*a, unknown *Kostha* and who have not taken *Virechana Drugs* in past.^[5] e.g. *Guda*, *Sugarcane juice*, *Mastu*, *Ulloditadadhi*, *Payas*, *Kshira*, *Sarpi*, *Kasamari*, *Triphala*, *Pilu* and *Taruna Madya*.^[6]

2. *Madhya virechana*

The drugs which are moderate in qualities are known as *Madhya Virechana* drugs.

Indicated in *Madhya Roga* (disease with moderate symptoms), *Balavana rogi* e.g. *Trivrita*, *Katuki* and *Aragvadha*.

3. *Tikshna virechana*

The drugs which causes numerous (*Mahavega*) motions and eliminates the *Doshas* in large quantity by quick (*Kshipra*) and gentle (*Sukha*) purgation without causing either much *Glani* (depression) and pain in heart area or anus or harmful to internal organs, is known as *Tiksna Virechana*.

Indicated in Strong (*Balavana*) patients, *Tiksna Vyadhi*, *Krura Koshta* e.g *Snuhikshir*, *Jayapala*, *Katuki*, *Hemakshiri*, *Danti* etc.

D. Classification on the basis of drug properties

- 1. *Sneha virechana*:** The *Virechana* given by using *Snigdha Dravyas* is known as *Sneha Virechana*. *Sneha Virechana* should be used in all patients except *Snigdha* patients.^[7] It is contraindicated in patient who has been given higher dose of *Sneha* e.g *Erand*, *Tilwak*, *Argvadha*.
- 2. *Ruksha virechana*:** The *Virechana* given by using *Ruksha Dravyas*, is known as *Ruksha Virechana*. It is prescribed in the patient who is *Atisnigadha* because in such persons increased *Sneha* (unctuousness) may cause adherence of the *dosha* instead of being detached. e.g *Haritaki*, *Danti*, *Katuki*.

Procedure

1. *Purvakarma*

- a. *Sambhara sangraha*:** The drugs and other equipments required in the different stages of *Virechana karma* as well as to tackle the complications (if develop at any stage) should be arranged prior to the administration of *Pradhanakarma*. Such as *Pachana* and *Snehana dravyas*. The various emergency drugs should also be collected like *Karpura Rasa*, *Kutaja Ghana Vati*, *Grahani Kapata Rasa* etc. for the management of *Vyapads*.
- b. *Atura pariksha*:** - *Dashvidha* (*Dosha*, *Desh*, *Kala*, *Bala*, *Sharira*, *Aahara*, *Satmya*, *Satva*, *Prakruti*, *Vaya*), *Ashtvidha Pariksha* (*Nari*, *Mutra*, *Mala*, *Jihwa*, *Shabda*, *Sparshadi*)

Systemic examination and vitals (bp, pulse, temp) and lab investigations should be carried out before the administration of *Virechana Karma*.

Indications^[8]

Pitta Pradhana Vyadhi – *Jwara*, *Pandu*, *Kamala*, *Halimaka*, *Netra Aasyadaha*, *Paittika vyadhi*.

Vata Pradhana Vyadhi-*Pakvashaya Ruja*, *Shirahshula*, *Parshvaruja*, *Gulma*, *Vatarakta*

Kapha Pradhana Vyadhi- *Prameha*, *Netrasrava*, *Aasyasrava*, *Nasasrava*, *Shwasa*, *Kasa*, *Shotha*, *Tridoshaja Vyadhi*, *Kushtha*, *Visarpa*, *Hridroga*.
Rakta Pradhana Vyadhi-*Pliha*, *Vyanga*.

Contraindications

Durbala, *Durbalendriya*, *Adhoga-raktapitta*, *Alpagani*, *Garbhini*, *Navprasuta*, *Madatya*, *Navjvara*, *Navapratishtyaya*, *Adhmana*, *Atisthula*, *Atikrisha*, *Atisnigdha*, *Atiruksha*.

c. *Atura siddhartha*

1. *Pachana-Deepana karma*
2. *Snehana karma*:

Internal *snehpana*

Dose (*Matra*)

The Dose of *Sneha* is adjusted according to *Agni*, *Koshtha*, *Roga* and *Rogi Bala*.^[9]

Time (*Kala*)

For *Shodhana* purpose, the *Sneha* should be given empty stomach in *Akshudhakala* (not having hunger), when the meal of previous night is completely digested *Acharya Susruta* Mentioned that the *Sneha* should taken at morning in the *Suryodayakale*, after digestion of previous meal.

Duration (*Sneha prakrash kala*) - 3 to 7 days.

Bahya snehan- *Sarvang Abhyanga* and *Svedana* should be done for 3days after appearance of *Samayka snehana lakshana*.

Diet and Importance of three days gap between *Snehapana* and *Virechana karma* (*Vishrama dina*)

Acharya Sushruta advised light diet and *Phalamla* juice a day before *Virechana*. *Dalhana* described that this type of diet will increase the *Pitta* and will be favourable for *Virechana*. Importance of keeping three days gap between *Snehapana* and *Virechana Karma* (*Vishrama kala*) *Acharya Charaka* has advised that *Virechana* should be carried out in *Manda Kapha* that is *Hina Kapha* condition for *Samyaka Virechana*.^[10] *Sneha* and *Kapha* are having Same *Gunas*. After *Snehapana* there is increase in *Kapha* so it is difficult to carry out *Virechana* in such state. Hence, for *Kapha Shamana* we have to wait for some period.

- d. *Matra vinischaya*:** The dose of the *Virechana drug* should be given according to *Koshta*, *Agni*, *Bala* of the patient.

Table no. 1: Dose of Virechana Aushadhi.^[11]

<i>Kalpna</i>	<i>Hina for Mridu Koshtha</i>	<i>Madhyama for Madhyama Koshtha</i>	<i>Uttama for Krura Koshtha Kwatha</i>
<i>Kwatha</i>	2 Tolas	4 Tolas	8 Tolas
<i>Kalka, Churna, Modaka</i>	1 Tolas	2 Tolas	4 Tolas
<i>Swarasa (Half of Kwatha)</i>	1 Tolas	2 Tolas	4 Tolas
<i>Ushmodaka (As Anupana)</i>	4 Tolas	8 Tolas	12 olas

2. Pradhan karma

- a. Administration of drug:** - *Virechana* drug should be administered in empty stomach after passing of 'Shleshma Kaala'. It should not be administered in early morning time.
- b. Atura paricharya:** Patient is advised to sprinkle hot water over the face, gargle by hot water and have a fragrance of flowers to avoid nausea or vomiting due

to unpleasant taste and irritating nature of *Virechana* drugs. Patient must take complete rest. Patient should be given hot water repeatedly in little quantity. If *Vegas* are not induced then *Svedana* is done over abdomen.

- c. Vega vinishchaya:** The assessment of *Virechana Karma*:

Table 2.

<i>Vega vishya</i>	<i>Pravra shudhi</i>	<i>Madhyam shudhi</i>	<i>Avara shudhi</i>
<i>Vaigiki</i>	30 Vega	20 Vega	10 Vega
<i>Maniki</i>	4 Prastha	3 Prastha	2 Prastha
<i>Antaki</i>	<i>Kaphanta</i>	<i>Kaphanta</i>	<i>Kaphanta</i>
<i>Laingiki</i>	<i>Srotovishudhi, Indriyasamprasad, Laghuta, Aganivridhi, Kramat Vata Pitta Kapha Anila shudhi.</i>		

d. Observation of Ayoga, Samyaka Yoga and Atiyoga lakshanas

Ayoga (Asamyaka yoga) lakshana: Vitiating of *Tridosha, Agnimandya, Gaurava, Pratishyaya, Tandra, Chhardi, Aruchi, VataVibandha, Daha, Kukshi-ashuddhi, Hridya-ashuddhi, Kandu, Vitsanga, Mutrasanga, Pidika, Adhmana, Adaurbalya, Alaghava.*

Samyaka yoga lakshana: *Srotoshuddhi, Indriyasamprada, Laghuta, Aganivridhi, Anamayatwa, Kramat Vitta, Pitta, Kapha, Anila Shudhi, Vata anulomana, absence of Ayoga Lakshana.*

Atiyoga lakshana: *Vata Vriddhi* due to *Kapha, Pitta* and *Rakta kshaya, Supti, Angamarda, Unmada, Hikka, Anidra, Klama, Murchha, Gudabhransha, Shula,* expulsion of blood through anus, discharge similar to *Mamsa* and *Meda* from anal route, disorders created by *Rakta Kshaya* etc.

Vyapada

As per *Acharya Charaka* there are 10 *Vyapadas*, *Chakrapani* has divided this 10 *Vyapada* into two groups i.e *Atiyoga and Ayoga.*

Atiyoga – Parikartika (gripping pain), *Jivadana* (bleeding per rectum), *Vibhransh-1.Gudbhransha* (rectal prolapse), *2.Sanjnabhrmsa* (confusion).

Ayoga–Adhmana (distension in abdomen), *Parisrava* (discharge), *Haridragha* (cardiac discomfort),

Gatragraha (stiffness of body), *Updrava* (serious complications), *Klama* (exhaustion).

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned 15 complications *Saavashesha Aushadatvm, Lina Aushadhatavum, Hina–Doshapritatvam, Urdhav Gati* are different.

3. Paschata karma

- a. Behavioural restrictions** - Loud speech, sitting or standing in one position for long duration, long walks and riding vehicles should be avoided. Exposure to excessive cold or heat or dew, exposure directly to flowing wind, long journey, waking in night, sleeping during day time and to retain strong urge or provocation of the urges should be prohibited.

- b. Samsarjana krama:** Due to *Dosha* elimination from the body after *Samshodhana Karma*, *Agni* becomes weak. So, *Peyadi Samsarjana Krama* should be followed to restore the strength of *Agni* and *Prana*. It should be given according to *Shudhi* and *bala* of the patient.

Types

- *Peyadi Samsarjana Krama*^[12]
- *Tarpanadi Krama*

Table 3: Peyadi samsarjana karma.

Days	Annakala	Pravara Shuddhi	Madhyama Shuddhi	Avara Shuddhi
I day	Morning	-	-	-
	Evening	Peya	Peya	Peya
II day	Morning	Peya	Peya	Vilepi
	Evening	Peya	Vilepi	Kritakrita Yusha
III day	Morning	Vilepi	Vilepi	Kritakrit Mamsarasa
	Evening	Vilepi	Akrita Yusha	Normal diet
IV day	Morning	Vilepi	Krita Yusha	-
	Evening	Akrita Yusha	Akrita Mamsarasa	-
V day	Morning	Krita Yusha	Krita Mamsarasa	-
	Evening	Krita Yusha	Normal Diet	-
VI day	Morning	Akrita Mamsarasa		-
	Evening	Krita Mamsarasa		-
VII day	Morning	Krita Mamsarasa	-	-
	Evening	Normal diet	-	-

Tarpanadi krama: It should be given in the patients with increased *Kapha* and *Pitta Dosha*, alcoholic patients and patients having *Vata & Pitta Prakriti*.

This is preferred against 'Peyadi Samsarjana Krama'^[13] as it may produce 'Abhishyanda' in the *Srotasa* of *Vishodhita* persons.

Mode of action

Ayurvedic review: *Virechana yoga* because of its *Vyavayi Guna* gets absorbed quickly and due to its *Virya*, it reaches to *Hridya*, *Dhammani* and all of the macro and micro channels of the body. Its *Vikasi Guna* causes softening and loosening of the bond by *Dhatu Shaithilya Karma*. *Ushna guna* causes liquifications of *Dosha Sanghata*. It breaks the *Mala* and *Doshas* in micro form due to its *Tikshana Guna*. Due to *Sukshma Guna* by reaching in micro channels, disintegrates endogenic toxins, which are then excreted through micro channels. *Virechana* occurs mainly due to *Prabhava*, *Prithvi* and *Jala* constitution and presence of *Sara Guna*.

Modern view

Probable mechanism of *Virechana*

Virechana occurs due to following three actions:

- Increase propulsive movement:** Due to its irritant property *Virechana Dravya* stimulates motor activity of GI tract. Some of them increase motility by acting on mesenteric plexus and because of increased propulsive activity there is a less time for absorption of colonic content.
- Reduced absorption:** By virtue of its irritative nature *Virechana Dravya* produce structural injury to the absorbing mucosal cells and thus absorbing capacity of mucosa is decreased.
- Fluid accumulation in gut:** *Virechana Dravya* causes inflammation in mucosal cells. Due to inflammatory changes vasoactive amines and polypeptides increases membrane permeability in GIT and causes Vasodilatation. Some chemical factors are also responsible which increases the permeability in response to acute inflammation. In

this way all these factors together initiate the *Virechana* process.

Elimination of pitta

Bile can be considered as *Pitta Vargiya Dravya*. Bile production is increased due to increase in uptake of Lipids (*Sneha*) in following manner. Polyunsaturated fatty acids stimulate oxidation of cholesterol to bile acids. They also stimulate cholesterol excretion through bile in intestine. When fatty food enters duodenum, hormone cholecystokinin is released which stimulate gall bladder contraction and thus bile come out in intestine. In this way, *Snehapana* stimulates bile production. In the *Virechana* process during the relaxation phase of peristaltic wave the sphincter of oddi is also relaxed then bile comes out in GIT.

Elimination of kapha

Large intestine chiefly secretes mucus; which contain moderate amount of bicarbonate ions secreted by a few non-mucus secreting epithelial cells that lie between mucus secreting epithelial cells. After the elimination of *Mala* and *Pitta*, this mucus is secreted by gut and can be taken as *Kapha Vargiya Dravya* in *Virechana* process. The rate of secretion of mucus is regulated principally by direct, tactile stimulation of the mucus cells on internal surface of large intestine and by local nervous reflexes to the mucus cell in crypts of Lieberkuhn.

CONCLUSION

Virechana karma is more accepted cleansing process in *Panchkarma*. *Virechana* therapy promotes metabolism and assimilation by stimulating the *Dhatwagni* while simultaneously eliminates metabolic waste products specially *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha* and burns *Ama*. It reduces excessive body heat and deeply cleanses the blood, liver and bile. It improves the functions of motor and sensory organs, strengthens and rejuvenates the body tissue.

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