

# Ayurveda View on *Raktamokshan* and its Mode of Action as per Modern Science

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## REVIEW ARTICLE

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is old science which deals with many surgical and parasurgical procedures for the management of different pathological conditions. Amongst the many unique modalities *Raktamokshan* (bloodletting) is one of the important modality which provides health benefits in many diseases. *Acharya Sushruta* described importance of this procedure in conditions involving vitiation of *Rakta* and *Dosha*. Vitiation of *Rakta* is responsible for many health issues including skin problems and *Raktamokshan* helps greatly in this regard. Leech therapy, venesection and cupping therapy are subtype of *Raktamokshan* which helps in blood purification. The bloodletting therapies gaining attention of modern science due to their technical advancement. *Raktamokshana* mainly involves various techniques of blood liberation. *Raktamokshan* helps to treat conditions like eczema, swellings, inflammations and poisoning, etc.

**Keywords:** *Raktamokshan*, *Ayurveda*, *Bloodletting*, *Rakta*, *Purification*

## 1. Introduction

Ayurveda mentioned several surgical and a parasurgicals therapy for curing various pathological conditions and *Raktamokshan* (bloodletting) is one of them. *Raktamokshan* remove impure blood

from body and treat conditions like swelling, skin diseases, tumor, debility, sinusitis, suppuration and bleeding disorders, etc. (1-4) Various materials or methods used for bloodletting purposes are depicted in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** Various materials used for bloodletting purposes

**Types:**❖ **Raktamokshan using sharp instruments (Shastra):***Prachana and Siravedha*❖ **Raktamokshan without instruments (Anushastra):***Jalauka, Shrungha and Alabu***Shrungha:**

*Shrungha* is cow's horn open at both ends, larger open end kept over the incised area while blood sucked through other end.

**Alabu:**

*Alabu* is medium sized pitcher opened at top, dried under sun till to get hard, vacuum created inside the pitcher which helps to drains out blood.

**Prachana:**

**Prachana means bloodletting by puncturing in which** tourniquet applied above the affected area using sharp instrument.

**Siravedha:**

*Siravedha* means liberating blood using venepuncture.

**2. Technique of Bloodletting using Leech:**

- ❖ *Snehana* (oleation) and *Swedana*
- ❖ Cleaning of leech using turmeric powder water
- ❖ Cleaning and preparation of site of application
- ❖ Pricking skin with sharp and sterile needle
- ❖ Application of leech at the area from where blood come out
- ❖ Covering by wet cotton cloth
- ❖ Application of *Madhu*, *Ghrit* and butter if leech not sucking blood from the pricking site

❖ After sufficient time interval leeches were removed from the skin carefully and put into water tub.

❖ If wound created by leech then application of *Yastimadhu*, turmeric powder and bandaging with cotton cloth suggested healing wounds and cuts. (3-7)

**3. Common health benefits of leech therapy:**

- ✓ Patient feels lightness in the body after therapy.
- ✓ Alleviation of pain and burning sensation
- ✓ Relieving from inflammatory symptoms
- ✓ Reduction in symptoms of swelling and skin ailments
- ✓ Joyful mind and mental relaxation
- ✓ Removal of toxins, relaxation from tenderness and joint stiffness.

**4. Leech therapy mechanism as per modern science:**

Leeches releases active compounds through saliva, these bioactive compounds are antithrombin, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory chemicals, etc. Leeches secrete pharmacologically active substances into the wounds and affected area. Leeches release antithrombotic agent thus relieves symptoms of cardiovascular diseases. Leech increases blood flow thus improves circulatory process of body and provides relief from low blood pressure. It blocks health consequences of coagulation cascade and prevents congestion in veins and artery. Leech saliva also secretes analgesic and anti-microbial substances therefore relieves symptoms of pain and infections respectively. (6-10)

**5. Therapeutic indications of Raktmoksana:**

✚ *Vatharaktha*

- ✚ Skin diseases
- ✚ Fibroid and tumor
- ✚ Debility and heaviness in body
- ✚ Conjunctivitis and sinusitis
- ✚ Liver and spleen abscess
- ✚ Headache, gonorrhoea and bleeding disorders.

**Raktamokshan should be avoided in following conditions:**

- Should not perform for emaciated person
- **Raktamokshan should be avoided in pregnancy**
- Patient suffering from anemia, hemorrhoids and dropsy
- Elderly and children patients should be treated with lot of care

**6. Management of Atiyoga of Raktamokshan (Treatment of excessive blood flow):**

- ❖ Paste of *Lodhra*, *Sarja* and *Rasanjana* with *Gairika*.
- ❖ Uses of silk cloth with herbal medications.
- ❖ *Agnikarma* and *Sharakarma*.
- ❖ *Yastimadhu* and turmeric powder.

**7. Appropriate Methods of Raktamokshana for Specific Doshas Vitiations:**

- ❖ *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* vitiated blood should be removed using *Shrungha*, *Jalauka* and *Alabu*.
- ❖ Blood vitiated with *Vata Dosha* should be removed using horn method.
- ❖ *Pitta* vitiated blood can be purified using leech therapy.
- ❖ *Kapha* vitiated blood can be removed using *Alabu*.

**8. Conclusion**

*Raktamokshana* is blood purification therapy which removes vitiated blood and neutralizes accumulated toxins relieves many health ailments. *Raktamokshana* is effective blood purification therapy in which bloodletting was carried out using precise surgical instruments and by leech therapy. *Raktamokshana* works in both ways curative as well as preventive measure. *Raktamokshana* helps to treat scars, wound, osteoarthritis, gouty arthritis, dermatitis, pain, allergies, eczema, dermatitis, sciatica, rheumatoid arthritis and abscess.

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**Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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