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Review Article



Properties and role of *Panchakarma Dravya* in some *Shodhna* Therapies

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Abstract

Panchakarma is a method which purifies body by eliminating unwanted waste via various approaches. The term "*Panchakarma*" itself derives from the combination of "*Pancha*" and "*Karma*", which means "five" and "procedures" respectively. It encompasses wide range of approaches which offers preventive, curative and promotive advantages. *Panchakarma* serves as a crucial detoxification method essential for maintaining overall well-being and preventing ailments. *Panchakarma* entails five activities; vomiting, purgation, *Niruham*, *Anuvaasan*, and *Nasyam*. These activities help to clean the body, enhance natural healing processes and eliminate toxins. *Panchakarma* accelerates metabolism, bolstering strength, reduces weight, clearing blocked channels, rejuvenating tissues, boosts immunity, alleviating stress and improves digestion, etc. *Panchakarma Dravya* offers significant contribution towards the biological effects of *Shodhna* Therapy.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Panchakarma, Shodhna, Vamana, Nasya, Dravya

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1. Introduction

Panchakarma is a transformative process of purification that brings some therapeutic changes to influence mental and physical dimensions of the body. This holistic approach purifies body and mind but also fosters spiritual growth by instilling mental tranquility and relaxation. *Panchakarma* rejuvenates *Agni*, expels toxins and imparts vital energy to the body tissues. *Panchakarma* enhances strength, provides immunity, reinstate the inner equilibrium and vitality of the body. *Panchakarma* therapy provides therapeutic benefits for numerous health conditions and facilitating the removal of impurities and toxins from the body. The substances used as *Panchakarma Dravya* possess specific properties that induce detoxification process. (1-4)

Poorva Karma is performed first as preparatory phase, this consisting of *Snehan* and *Swedan*, before main procedure. It aids in dislodging accumulated toxins within the body, ensuring their complete removal during the subsequent steps.

Pradhan Karma is performed as main procedure, the choice of specific procedures is determined based on the location of waste accumulation. The main purification measures are conducted in this step which include

therapies like; *Vamana* and *Virechanam*, etc. *Vamanam* procedure induces controlled vomiting to cleanse the upper gastrointestinal tract. *Virechanam* induces purgation to clear lower gastrointestinal tract. *Basti* (enema with medicated oil) facilitating the elimination of lipid-soluble waste through the anus. *Nasya* means instillation of medicated substances through the nostril to purify the respiratory tract. (4-6)

Paschaat Karma means post-therapy regimen which performed after the main therapeutic procedure. Post-therapy regimen is followed to restore the body's digestive and absorptive functions to their normal state and fasten the effect of therapy. *Paschaat Karma* ensures success of therapy and performed as post procedural precautions.

2. Panchakarma Dravya (Vamak Dravya):

Vamak Dravya refers to substances utilized to induce therapeutic vomiting. These medications exhibit characteristics such as *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, *Sookshma*, *Vyavayi* and *Vikashi* properties. These drugs facilitate upward movement of toxins, which make them effective in inducing vomiting. These substances stimulate vagus nerve endings, leading to the initiation of *Vamana* (controlled vomiting). Some common examples of *Vamak Dravyas* are as follows:

- ✓ *Madanaphala* (*Randia demetorum*)
- ✓ *Jeemutak* (*Luffa echinata*)
- ✓ *Ikshavaku* (*Lagenaria siceraria*)
- ✓ *Sarson* (*Brassica campestris*)
- ✓ *Madanaphala* fruit, rock salt, and honey, etc. can also be employed

It is advisable to administer digestive medicines like *Hingwashtaka Churna*, *Chitrakadi Vati* and *Trikatu churna*, etc. for a few days prior to *Vamana* therapy. Consumption of *ghee* or oil may also be recommended. In situations when excess of *Kapha*, characterized by mucus and congestion, *Vamak Dravya* with penetrating, hot, and pungent properties can be employed to induce vomiting. (6-8)

Similarly, when dealing with aggravated *Pitta*, *Vamak Dravya* should possess sweet and cooling properties. *Vamak Dravya* should have unctuous and sour qualities for *Vata* aggravation. Additionally, a decoction of *Madanaphala*, *Sarshapa* and *Pippali* also utilized for emetic purposes.

Vamana dravyas are dominance of *Agni* and *Vayu Mahabhutas*, which are responsible for the *Urdwa Gati*. The warmth, sharp, subtle and permeable properties of *Vamana dravyas*, plays a pivotal role in inducing natural vomiting. *Vamana dravyas* imparts their actions by following manner:

- ✓ The *Ushna guna* initiates *Visyandana* of aggravated *Doshas*, which are subsequently expelled from the body through vomiting.
- ✓ The *Tikshna guna* of *Vamana* drugs is responsible for breaking down morbid contents into smaller particles, which are then eliminated from the body.
- ✓ The *Shodhana*, *Pachana* and *Chedana* actions of these drugs facilitate the elimination of *Doshas*.
- ✓ The *Anu Pravanabhava* property of drugs brings morbid matter into the *Koshta* and from there it is expelled through vomiting.
- ✓ The *Sukshma* property of the drugs aids in their transportation through the minute *Srotas*, ensuring that *Vamana* drugs enter the *Stula* and *Anu Srotas* without adhering to the channels.
- ✓ The *Vyavayi guna* exerts its effects at the initial stages of drug administration, contributing to the rapid absorption of drugs.
- ✓ The *Vikasi guna* of drugs induces *Shaithilyata* in the joints and *Oja*, preparing the body for vomiting without causing excessive excitement.
- ✓ The *Saratva guna* is responsible for *Anulomana*, facilitating the evacuation of *Vata* and *Mala* from the *Koshta*.
- ✓ *Ushna Veerya* of drugs causes *Dahana*, *Swedana* and *Vivarana*, aiding in the circulation of the drug throughout the body.

- ✓ *Vamana Dravya* can be used in many health issues like *Shwasa*, *Ajeerna*, *Kasa*, *Kushtha* and *Unmada*, etc.

3. Role of *Nasya Dravya* in *Panchkarma*:

Nasya involves the administration of medicinal formulations through the nasal route, and the preparations used for this therapy are known as *Nasika kalpana*. *Nasya Aushadhi* includes *Taila Kalpana*, *Ghanasara Yoga* and *Ghrita*, etc. *Nasya* is considered beneficial for addressing issues like *Manyastambha*, *Gaurava*, *Supti*, *Stambha* and *Shirashula*, etc.

Taila is commonly used for *Nasya* therapy, especially in cases of *Siroroga*. *Tila Taila*, *Eranda*, *Shatahva*, *Jivanti*, *Bhringa*, *Yashti* and *Shunthi*, etc. are mainly used for *Nasya* purposes. These *Nasya Dravyas* offer actions that pacify *Vata* and *Kapha Doshas*, possess *Tridosahara* properties and exhibit anti-inflammatory effects. These properties help to alleviate symptoms associated with *Vata* and *Kapha* imbalances.

Nasya Karma involves the liquefaction of *Dosha* and *Mala* allowing these imbalanced elements to be subsequently eliminated. This cleansing action on the *Srotas* effectively clears congestion and obstructions, thereby addressing ailments associated with *Vata Dosha*. *Nasya Karma* opens up the pathways of the *Shira* allowing the administered drug to travel through the *Sringaataka*, *Murdha*, *Netra*, *Shrotra*, *Kantha* and *Mukha*, etc. It gathers morbid *Dosha* in the *Urdwajatra* and extracts them from the *Uttamanga*.

Nasya Dravyas are absorbed through a passive process via the cell membrane. Blood circulation in the head and facial regions plays a crucial role in the onset and duration of action of *Nasya Dravya*. Fomentation stimulates efferent vasodilator nerves, increasing blood flow to the brain. The *Kapha-Vata Nashaka* and *Srotoshodhaka* properties of the drugs stimulate vasodilator nerves, thereby enhancing blood circulation to the brain. This relieves symptoms of diseases related to the head region and provides effective relief in cases of disease of upper body parts.

Nasya Dravya effectively regulates endocrine, circulatory and neurological functions. Drug absorption through the nasal route results in a rapid onset and a prolonged action, increasing the bioavailability of the drug as it directly reaches to the site of action. The site of deposition, degree of absorption, and viscosity of the drugs play a role in determining the contact time between the nasal mucosa and the drug, affecting the therapy's response. (8-10)

4. Conclusion

Ayurveda has characterized *Panchakarma* as a detoxification method crucial for maintaining overall well-being and preventing the onset of diseases. *Panchakarma* serves as a comprehensive purification process that offers numerous benefits; it helps in eliminating toxins, accelerates metabolism, assimilation of nutrients, contribute to weight loss by eliminating excess fats, enhances physical strength, optimizing the digestive fire, ensuring efficient digestion, clearing blockages, alleviating stress and promoting mental

tranquility, etc. *Panchakarma* therapy derives therapeutic benefits primarily from the specific drugs used in the procedure. These drugs, known as *Panchakarma Dravyas*, plays crucial role in facilitating the removal of *Mala* and toxins from the body.

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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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