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Review & Introduction of Panchakarma

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Abstract

Panchakarma is a specialty of Kayachikitsa (Medicine). Pancha means 'five' and Karma means 'action', so Panchakarma means five action. Panchakarma (five major Bio-Purification Therapies) a) Vamana, b) Virechana, c) Basti, d) Nasya, e) Raktastrav. These five procedures use for internal purification of the body through the nearest possible route. Such purification allows the biological system to return to homeostasis and to rejuvenate rapidly and also facilitates the desired pharmacokinetic effect of medicines administered there after. Panchakarma provides a comprehensive therapy role as a promoter, preventive, curative & rehabilitative procedure.

Key Words:-Panchakarma, Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Nasya, Raktastrav.

Introduction: Ayurved deals with the preventive and curative aspects of health. Panchakarma therapies are popular in the field of Ayurvedic disease management. Though their effect and safety is well established by the evidence of experiences since many centuries. This therapy restores balance with natural law to maintain the equilibrium of doshas and stabilize the internal milieu of body. Panchakarma helps to eliminates toxins in a more stable way, allowing healing of tissues, cleaning of srotas (channels), improving digestion and mental functions.

Panchakarma a specialty of Kayachikitsa presents a unique approach of Ayurved with specially designed five procedures of internal purification of the body through the nearest possible route.¹Shodhana is appropriate for person those posses good strength, Mandagni and severity of disease.²According to Ayurvedic texts our body is a network of Srotasas. Diseases occur when toxins get accumulated in body and clog these Srotas. These

accumulated toxins have to be expelled out in order to keep the body healthy. Through Panchakarma therapy these toxic clogs are cleared to restore normal physiological process. Panchakarma therapy is not only for diseased person it can also be administered to a normal person to prevent diseases and keep his body healthy. Therefore it is an important therapy for maintaining the health of individuals and also regulates with imbalance doshas to cure the diseases. The word 'Panchakarma' means five karmas. The "Pancha" word is a symbol of blessing of the god called "Mangalam" and this represents that all the procedures of treatment should require the presence of god. There is reference that all constituent of universe forms body or Pancha mahabhuta are main constituents of the body. All living and non-living things are a combination of pancha bhuta (prithvi, apa, thejas, vayu, akasa). To regulate the living body, Acharyas concised pancha bhutas into tri doshas (vata, pitta, kapha) and therefore the main aim of treatment is to stabilize the equilibrium among these doshas. 'Karma' word may be defined as method, procedures, techniques etc. Here it can be describe as procedures of treatment and preventive measures. According to Ayurveda, vyadhi has been defined as the state in which both the body and mind are subjected to pain and misery. This is the state of imbalance of three doshas. The measures undertaken to restore the doshika equilibrium is called chikitsa.³ In Ayurveda, chikitsa has been broadly classified into two groups:

1. Shamana: The treatment, which doesn't eliminate the Doshas or elevate those, which are in normal condition but tries to bring equilibrium in the imbalanced doshas, is called as "Shamana". It may be done in seven ways⁴

1) Pachana 2) Deepana 3) Kshudha 4) Trushna 5) Vyayama 6) Aatapa 7) Maruta

2. Shodhana: The treatment through which increased doshas are eliminated from the body is referred to as "Shodhana"⁵. Shodhan is considered as a prominent process. Which doshas are treated by lahghana, pachana are reimbanced by some cause, but which doshas are eliminated by Shodhan are not reimbanced again.⁶ Five types of Shodhana:⁷

1) Basti 2) Vaman 3) Virechana 4) Shirovirechan 5) Raktastrav.

Process of Panchakarma (Comprises of three parts)

Purva Karma (Preparatory Procedure)	Pradhan Karma (Main procedures)	Paschat Karma (methods after main procedure)
Snehana (Oleation therapy)	Vamana (Emesis)	Samsarjana Karma (specific dietetic regimen and mode)
Swedana (Sudation)	Virechana (Purgation)	
	Shirovirechana (Nasya or putting medicines through nostrills)	
	Niruhabasti (Decotion enema) Anuvasanabasti (Oil enema)	
	Raktastrav (Bloodletting)	

Acharya Charaka mentions main five karma :-Vamana, Virechana, Shirovirechana, Niruhabasti, Anuvasanabasti. Raktastrav is mention by Acharya Sushruta.

Acharya Vaghabhat clubbed the basti karmas mentioned separately above together as enema therapy and in the vacant place adds Raktastrav or Blood letting as the fifth measure of shodhana (eliminative or purificatory) procedures. Among the both categories samshodhana has been given much emphasis because it eliminates the disease completely so much so that it does not recur again unless there being strong etiological factors, and at the same time it regulates the vitiated doshas from their very site of origin. Samshodhana therapy purifies or cleanses all the body tissues and micro-circulatory channels, and brings about the harmony of tridosha i.e. vata, pitta, kapha and manasadosha (satva, raja and tama) in such a way that vitiated doshas are regulated in the body and long lasting beneficial effects of long duration are produced in the body.

Utility of Panchakarma:⁸

Panchakarma is a very unique therapeutic procedure, because of its preventive, promoter, prophylactic and rejuvenate properties as well as providing a radical cure.

Panchakarma plays a vital role in the preservation, maintenance & conservation of health & promotion of longevity. They form a part in the regimen of preventive medicine (SvasthVritta) indicated as prophylactic measures in the context of epidemics and pan epidemics.

All diseases occur due to suppression and forceful expulsion of natural urges. Panchakarma is the best treatment for the diseases caused by suppression natural urges (Vega Daharana). Suppression of natural urges affects gastrointestinal motility and continence of sphincters and later neuro-humoral control of glands. Vatanulomana is the prime line of treatment for disease due to suppression of urges and *Basti* is best treatment among Vatanulomana therapies.

These measures are indicated as preparatory procedures before the administration of rejuvenation therapy (Rasayana) & aphrodisiac therapy (Vajikarana).

Bio-purification makes the biological system to return to normalcy & to rejuvenate rapidly & also facilitates the desired pharmaco- kinetic effect of therapeutic remedies administered there after. It eliminates toxins & stagnated excreta & metabolites from the body, cleanses the macro & micro channels, maximizes the absorption & metabolism of nutrients& drugs, and helps in minimizing their dose & toxicity.

Characters of Samyaka samshodhana:⁹

After taking manda, sweating visible first on head, forehead, heart, neck, scrotum, aksha and in temporal region:

- a) Proper udgar
- b) Vishudhhavata karma
- c) Nirupdrava

d) Pushti

Equilibrium state of dosha and relief from diseases considered arogya¹⁰ (Symptom of arogya):

- a) Annabhilasha
- b) Bhakshaya paripaka sukham
- c) Shushta vina mutram vatatvam
- d) Sukhswapna, pratibhodhanam
- e) Bala, varna, ayu.
- f) Soumnasya
- g) Samagnita

Panchakarma Procedures: Panchakarma consists mainly three categories, solitary as well as accompanied it cure and prevent health problems. A diseased body can be compared to a soiled cloth which cannot be color as we desire. Hence to attain the maximum benefits, the body has to be purified or cleaned before starting the treatment. The cleared channels help medicines to penetrate the deeper tissues. Panchakarma therapy is a comprehensive samshodhana regimen under which all other similar procedures may be included. The classical panchakarma therapy consists of following groups of procedures.

1. Purva karma
2. Pradhana karma
3. Pashchat karma

Purva-Karma: This is a foundation of Panchakarma, following preliminary methods tolerance an acceptance of the consequence of main procedure is improved. It makes changes in vitiated doshas to mobilise them without trouble, and thus easily removed from the body tissues without creating harm to the body. Purva-karma helps to achieve best response of main procedure of Pancha-karma; subsequently body develops sensitivity, to keep balance throughout the process of Pradhan- Karma. Devoid of pre-procedure produces complications as an unripe fruit get crushed during juice extraction, whereas ripped fruit is best, and juice can easily be extracted.

Pre procedures consist of¹¹

- a) Snehana
- b) Swedana

Purva karma helps to mobilization of doshas from sakha (Periphery) to koshta (GIT) and can be excreted from their nearest route of excretion. Mobilization of doshas (Bio-humor) is achieved with the help of Snehana (Oleation) and Swedana (Sudation).

The evacuation of morbid, spoiled and vitiated doshas initiated since preliminary procedure. This is an effort to make up the body and its doshas in a proper state of elimination of ama dosha (toxins) also helps the pradhana karma to produce positive and stable response to the body.

Importance of Purva Karma: As in a vessels smeared with oil , water falls down without sticking to the vessels, similarly Kapha and other morbid humours are expelled out easily from the body which has undergone Snehana (oleation) therapy. As a fire makes the water in moist wood to trickle out from every pore, similarly Swedana (Sudation) therapy causes the adhered, stagnant toxic matter to melt and flow out in a person who has been previously oleated¹².

Just as dirt of cloth is separated and washed by soap and water, so by Snehana and Swedana therapies, the toxic matter in the body is separated and washed out by Pardhana karma.¹³

Purificatory therapy (Vamana, Virechna etc.) given without Snehana (Oleation) and Swedana (Sudation) would destroy the body like the dried wood.¹⁴

Apart from these methods some other systemic procedures have their own importance to assemble the raw material procedure after improper digestion; these are rukshana (roughness), dipana (appetizer) and pachana (digestive) these actions should be applied according to the condition and require special sense of treatment.

Snehana:-¹⁵

The therapy which produces oiliness, liquefaction, softening and moistening in the body is known as Snehana.

The drug having properties like liquid, subtle, unctuous, slimy, heavy, cold , sluggish and soft is called the Snehana drug.

Swedana:-¹⁶

The therapy which relieves stiffness, heaviness and coldness of the body and produces sweating is known as Swedana.

1. Pradhana Karma: These are the main procedures and may be applied as a single procedure or in different situations these may use collectively. These procedures actually let off the impure material called "Ama Doshas" from their accumulation sites.

These procedures also called Shodhana Karma. Shodhana karma is indicated in the stages of excess aggravation of doshas (Bio- humors). Acharya Charaka stressing on the essentiality of purification told that, without breaking the boundary wall, it would not be possible to dry up a pond. Similar is in the case of when the doshas are exceedingly vitiated then expelling by purification is the only way, because palliative therapy does not has the capacity to subside them.¹⁷

Various types of **Pradhana Karma** (Shodhana karma) are defined according to Acharya Vaghabhat :-¹⁸

- a) Vamana (Therapeutic Vomiting or Emesis)
- b) Virechana (Purgation)
- c) Nasya (Elimination of toxins through the nose/errhine therapy)

- d) Basti :- two types
 - Niruha Basti (Decotion Enema)
 - Anuvasana Basti (Oil Enema)
- e) Raktastrav (Bloodletting)

Vamana (Therapeutic Emesis): It is a process in which vitiated doshas (Bio-humour) are expelled through the upper route. i.e. mouth.¹⁹

When there is congestion in the lungs causing repeated attacks of bronchitis, cold, cough or asthma, the ayurvedic treatment is therapeutic vomiting, to eliminate the Kapha. Therapeutic vomiting is mainly indicated in chronic asthma, chronic sinusitis, and skin diseases involving upper part of body, diabetes, chronic cold, lymphatic congestion, chronic indigestion, and edema.

Virechana (Purgation Therapy): The procedure in which, the elimination of morbid doshas (Bio-humour) occurs through the lower part / anal route is known as Virechana.²⁰

When excess Pitta is accumulated in the gall bladder, liver, and small intestine, it tends to result in rashes, skin inflammation, acne, chronic recurrent fever, biliary vomiting, nausea, and jaundice. Ayurvedic literature suggests in these conditions the administration of therapeutic purgation.

Basti (Enema Therapy): The procedure in which, formulation administered through rectal canal reaches up to the small intestine and disintegrates the accumulated doshas (Bio-humour) and stool, spreads the uncutuousness (potency of the drugs) all over the body and easily comes out along with the stool and doshas is called Basti.²¹

Vata is the main factor involved in pathogenesis (disease). If one can control Vata through the use of Basti, then it is easier to treat the root cause of the vast majority of diseases. Vata is the motive force behind the elimination and retention of faeces, urine, bile and other excreta. Vata is mainly located in the large intestine, but bone tissue (Asthi Dhatu) is also a site for Vata. Hence the medication administered rectally affects Asthi Dhatu. The mucus membrane of the colon is related to the bone tissues.

Nasya (Errhine Therapy): The procedure in which, the medicated oil are administered through nose to eliminate the vitiated doshas situated in head is known as Nasya.²² Nose is the gateway of the brain. An excess of doshas accumulated in the sinus, throat, nose, or head areas is eliminated through the nose.

Raktastrav (Bloodletting): It is a procedure of removing the vitiated blood out of the body, in diseases caused mainly by Rakta and Pitta. It is carried out either by using sharp surgical instruments or by parasurgical measures in a measured quantity.²³

Paschat Karma: After Shodhana karma, digestive fire (Agni) & strength of body becomes weak. So to restore the strength of digestive fire & body strength special dietetic regimen is advised. So Paschat karma includes the regimens like Samsarjana Krama, specially planned

diet and other post therapeutic measures like Dhumapana, Kavalgraha and Gandusha etc. Also some restrictions related to food & behaviour are advised to the person.

The patients should refrain from activities like atyashana, wrong posture, speaking loudly, sleeping during the day, excessive sexual activities, and use of cold water, roaming in the sun, cold. Patient must avoid windy and angry temperament. He should take beneficial food, considering the kala.²⁴

Conclusion: Panchakarma consists mainly three above categories, solitary as well as accompanied it cure and prevent health problems. A diseased body can be compared to a soiled cloth which cannot be color as we desire. Hence to attain the maximum benefits, the body has to be purified or cleaned before starting the treatment. The cleared channels help medicines to penetrate the deeper tissues. Panchakarma therapy is a comprehensive samshodhana regimen under which all other similar procedures may be included.

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