



ROLE OF JALAUKAVACHARANA (LEECH THERAPY) IN THROMBOSED EXTERNAL PILES: A CASE REPORT

Dr. Sameer Farukh Inamdar*, Dr. Dinesh Rathi¹ and Dr. Chandrakant Dhanokar²

*PG Scholar, ¹Professor, ²HOD & Professor, Dept. of Shalya Tantra, Radhakishan Toshniwal Ayurveda Mahavidyala, Akola, Maharashtra, India.



*Corresponding Author: Dr. Sameer Farukh Inamdar

PG Scholar, Dept. of Shalya Tantra, Radhakishan Toshniwal Ayurveda Mahavidyala, Akola, Maharashtra, India.

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ABSTRACT

Jalaukavacharana, or leech therapy, is an ancient therapeutic technique rooted in Ayurveda, commonly employed to treat various inflammatory disorders, particularly those related to Raktaja (blood-related) and Pittaja (heat-related) imbalances. Its therapeutic efficacy lies in the bioactive components present in leech saliva, which exhibit anti-inflammatory, analgesic, thrombolytic, anticoagulant, and circulatory-enhancing properties. A thrombosed external hemorrhoid is a painful emergency condition where a blood clot forms in the hemorrhoidal veins, causing severe anal pain, swelling, and inflammation. Conventional treatments often focus on pain relief, clot removal, and resolving venous congestion. However, leech therapy offers an alternative, minimally invasive approach by relieving pain, reducing swelling, and improved circulation. In the present study a thrombosed external haemorrhoids is managed with Jalaukavacharana and its efficacy was observed.

KEYWORDS: Jalaukavacharana, Leech therapy, Thrombosed external hemorrhoid, Thrombolytic.

INTRODUCTION

Acharya Sushruta, regarded as the Father of Surgery, included Arsha among the Ashta Mahagada (eight major diseases), which are considered difficult to treat due to their chronicity.^[1] According to Ayurvedic texts, Arsha (hemorrhoid) can be described as Mansakila (which relates to the flesh or muscle tissue) can refer to conditions affecting the soft tissues surrounding the Guda (anal canal). When it develops into a pathological condition, it can obstruct the Gudmarga (the anal passage), causing significant discomfort to the patient and tortures the patient similar to an enemy.^[2]

Haemorrhoids are dilated veins within anal canal in the sub epithelial region formed by radicles of superior, middle and inferior rectal veins.^[3]

A thrombosed external hemorrhoid is characterized by the formation of a blood clot in one or more veins located under the anal skin, resulting in painful swelling and inflammation.^[4] The swollen area typically appears bluish due to the clot.

Acharya Sushruta, emphasizes Visravana or Raktamokshana (bloodletting) is one of the treatment can be implied for such painful condition.^[5] Bloodletting is specifically recommended to relieve congestion, inflammation, and venous stagnation.

Acharya Sushruta's recommendation of Raktamokshana—whether through Jalauka (leech therapy) or other methods.^[6]

when secondary complications like thrombosis are present, surgical intervention may be contraindicated.^[7] Because it can complicate surgery and increase the risk of post-operative complications. Instead, conservative or non-invasive treatment such as Raktamokshana (bloodletting) with leech therapy (Jalaukavacharana) can be preferred. The effect of leech therapy (Jalaukavacharana) in thrombosed external piles has been studied in this case and Efficacy was evaluated.

CASE STUDY

Presenting Complaint: A 38 years old Female patient came to our OPD having complaints of pain, and mass per rectum in the past 2 weeks.

History of Presenting Complaint

The patient was apparently normal two weeks ago when she developed a painful swelling over anal region. The pain progressively worsened. The pain is aggravated while sitting, lying on her back, and during bowel movements, making it difficult for her to pass stools comfortably. She presented at our hospital for further evaluation and management due to persistent severe pain and discomfort.

Past History: No H/O - HTN, DM, Asthma, TB or any other major illness.

Personal History Appetite - Good Sleep - Disturbed Bowel – Constipated.

Micturition - Normal

Habits

Non smoker, Non alcoholic

Examinations

BP - 110/ 80 mmhgPulse - 74/min Temp - 98.7 F
Spo2 – 98% with RA

Systemic

CVS – S1 S2 normal

CNS - conscious, orientedRS - AEBE clear

P/A - soft and normal

Local Examination

Ano rectal examination

Inspection : reddish black globular mass at 11 o'clock

Palpation : mass is tender

Proctoscopy : not done due to severe pain

Blood Investigations

Hb - 12.8 gm/dl TLC - 7300/cumm

Rbc - 4.42 millions/cummMCV - 78.8 fl

MCHC - 32.6 gm/dl MCH - 25.9 picogram

Platelet count - 2.93 Lakh/cummBleeding time - 02 min

04 sec Clotting time - 05 min 22 sec BSL - 99 mg/dl

HbsAg - Non-Reactive HIV 1 - Non-Reactive HIV 2 -

Non-Reactive

METHODOLOGY

After thorough investigations and evaluations, leech therapy (Jalaukavacharana) was plannedWritten consent was taken.

Leech Application

Purva Karma:^[8] The affected perianal area was thoroughly cleaned and dried to minimize the risk of infection. Non-poisonous leeches (*Hirudo medicinalis*) were selected for the therapy. The leeches were bathed in turmeric water for detoxification and to stimulate their appetite.

Pradhan Karma:^[9] A small prick was made in the inflamed area of the thrombosed external hemorrhoid. Leeches (*Hirudo medicinalis*) were applied to specific points around the hemorrhoid at the 11 o'clock positions. Once the leeches were placed on the pricked areas, they began to suck blood. As the leeches began to draw blood,

their bodies were covered with a damp bandage. The process was continued till spontaneous detach of leech.

Pashchat Karma:^[10] After the leeches detached naturally, the bite area was sprinkled with turmeric powder and covered with gauze soaked in Yashtimadhu Ghrita secured with a loosebandage. To induce vomiting in the leeches, turmeric was applied to their mouth. Once they began to expel their stomach contents, the leeches were gently squeezed from the tail to the mouth to release any ingested blood. They were then rinsed in fresh water and stored in separate labeled bottles containing clean water.

The patient was advised to take sitz baths twice daily. Total sittings done on consecutive days.

Pathya Apathya^[11]

Pathya - Laghu, Snigdha, Raktavardhak,Amlarahit aahara sevan.

Apathya - Vyayama, Maithuna, Raag, Diwaswapa, Kshar, Amla, Lavana,Katu, sheeta aaharasevan.

OBSERVATIONS

Variables	BT	Day 1	Day 4	Day 7
Pain	+++	++	++	-
edema	+++	++	++	-
Discoloration	+++	++	++	-

BT: Before treatment, Mild : +, Moderate : ++ ,Severe : +++,No symptom : - Symptoms were evaluated using a grading system based on their severity. After the First session of Jalaukavacharana, there was a 30% decrease in the bluish discoloration of the thrombosed haemorrhoids, approx. 60% reduction in pain and a moderate decrease in swelling was observed.

On the 7th day, bluish discolouration, pain and edema resolved completely.

RESULT

The patient experienced a reduction in pain over the thrombosed haemorrhoids as soon as the leech treatment started.

she experienced less discomfort.

There was noticeable decrease in discolouration following the second sitting.

The patient experienced a 80% reduction in all symptoms following the 2nd sessions of Jalaukavacharan. The patient is completely satisfied with the treatment and was relieved of all symptoms on 7th day.



Before Treatment



During Jalaukavacharan



After Treatment (7th Day)

DISCUSSION

Raktamokshana, a therapeutic practice in Ayurveda, has been utilized in India for thousands of years. It is considered one of the *Panchakarma* procedures, which are five bio-purification methods. Several techniques are employed for bloodletting in Ayurveda, with one of the most notable being the application of leeches (*Jalaukavacharana*). The saliva of these leeches contains hirudin, a potent anticoagulant that inhibits blood clotting, facilitating the drawing of blood from the affected area.^[12]

hyaluronidase assists in draining stagnant blood, facilitating clot breakdown through improved circulation and enhancing the action of anticoagulants.

By leveraging the therapeutic properties of hirudin, hyaluronidase, Eglin and other bioactive compounds, this traditional practice effectively addresses pain, swelling, and local immunity, while also supporting tissue repair and overall health. They enhance blood circulation not only in the affected organs but also in surrounding tissues, improving capillary exchange.

This helps in reducing pain, swelling and dissolve organized blood clots. Leeches also boost local immunity. In cases of thrombosed haemorrhoids, leech application has a thrombolytic effect.^[13]

CONCLUSION

Based on the above observations and therapeutic effects

discussed, we can draw conclusion regarding the efficacy of *Raktamokshana* using *Jalauka* (*Hirudo medicinalis*) for managing thrombosed external hemorrhoids.

Leech therapy effectively provides comprehensive relief from the symptoms associated with thrombosed external hemorrhoids, including significant pain reduction, swelling, and discomfort.

It has various pharmacological properties like antimicrobial, mucolytic and thrombolytic. In addition to this benefit, the method is cost effective, less time consuming and an OPD procedure.

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