

APPLIED APPROACH OF VIRECHANA KARMA

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ABSTRACT

Virechana is one of the *Panchakarma* by the virtue of which *Doshas* are expelled through *Adhobhaga* i.e. *Guda*. It helps in alleviating three *Doshas*, specifically aims at the elimination of excessive *Pitta Dosh* not only *Aamashya* and *Pakwashaya* but from the whole body. It is regarded as one of the best among all the therapeutic measure for *Pitta*. It is the process of elimination of *Mala* either in *Pakwa* or in *Apakwa Avastha* but along with excess fluid portions. It is widely used as *Shodhana* therapy in practice. It is less stressful procedure, less possibility of complications and more acceptable to all classes of patients. It is indicated for multiple conditions like *Pitta Pradhana Vyadhi's* (*Pandu, Kamala*), *Rakta Pradoshaja Vyadhi* (*Kustha, Visarpa, Raktapitta, Gudapaka*), *Amlapitta, Meha, Amavata, Hridayaroga, Tamak Shwasa, Pakshaghata, Sthaulya, Apasmara, Urdhwaga Raktapitta, Chardi*.

KEYWORDS: *Virechana Karma, Shodhan therapy, Purgative.*

INTRODUCTION

Virechana Karma is the act of expelling *Doshas* through *Adhobhaga* i.e. *Guda*.^[1] The *Doshas* even from the *Amashaya* are taken to the *Pakwashaya* and they are removed through *Gudamarga*. It is the process of elimination of *Mala* either in *Pakwa* or in *Apakwa Avastha* but along with excess fluid portions. It is widely used as *Shodhana* therapy in practice. It is less stressful procedure, less possibility of complications and more acceptable to all classes of patients. It is considered the best treatment for morbid and increased *Pitta Doshas*.^[2-3]

Virechana is even a treatment for *Pitta Samsargaja Doshas, Kapha Samsrista Doshas* and also for *Pitta Sthanagata Kapha*. It is worth mentioning that *Virechana*, unlike the modern purgatives, is not merely an act to open the bowel, but is a complete therapeutic measure which has systemic as well as local effects. *Virechana*, removes aggravated *Pitta* and clears all channels of body, *Jatharagni* gets kindled and lightness sets in.^[4]

Virechana drugs are having *Ushna, Sukshma, Vikashi, Teekshna, Vyavayi* and *Adhobhag Prabhava* properties. These drugs consist of *Prithvi* and *Jala Mahabhootas* which are heavy in nature and thus help in expulsion of *Dosha* from *Adhobhaga*. They get absorbed and due to *Virya*. It reaches to the *Hridaya* then the *Dhamanies* and thereafter it reaches to macro and micro-channels of the body. *Ushna Guna* has *Agneya* property and hence *Vishyandana* occurs. Hence it facilitates movement of

morbid *Doshas* towards *Kostha*. Due to *Tikshna Guna*, *Doshas* are broken up in larger to smaller molecules that help in quick excretion. *Sukshma Guna* due to its *Anupravanabhava* will open micro channels and makes the *Doshas* to move towards *Kostha*. Due to *Vyavayi Guna* this drug spreads quickly throughout the body and starts their action before its digestion. *Vikasi Guna* of drugs loosens the *Dhatu Bandhana*. It creates the *Dhatu Shaithilyata*. Hence drugs initiate their action without being digested. From all these properties *Doshas* are driven to *Kostha*.^[5]

MODE OF ACTION^[6]

Local action: Locally mild inflammation occurs which is transient due to *Ushna* and *Tikshna* properties of drugs which irritate the intestinal mucosa. Hence hyperaemia results due to arteriolar and capillary dilatation and also exudation of protein substances which helps in dilution of toxins.

Action on nerves: Here the defecation centre is irritated in *Medulla oblongata*. The vagus nerve stimulates pancreas, liver to produce secretions. Bile is secreted due to contraction of gall bladder and also due to irritant and vagal stimulation, Brunner's glands are stimulated which secrete mucus. Due to increased peristalsis, lumbosacral lumbar plexus are irritated, ileo-caecal and anal sphincters are relaxed & these secretions are excreted out.

Faecal matter, when it reaches the intestine, stimulates local nerve plexuses and then enforced peristalsis further helps in expelling contents of intestines towards rectum & finally to anal canal. When these voluntary or involuntary act of defaecation starts, finally results in evacuation of bowels.

Elimination of Pitta: Potent stimulus for causing the gall bladder contraction is from cholecystokinin hormone. This causes increased secretion of digestive enzymes from pancreas. The stimulation for this hormone is the presence of fatty food in duodenum and gall bladder is also stimulated by acetylcholine secreting nerve fibres from both vagi & intestinal enteric nervous system. Due to the relaxant action of sphincter of oddi, bile enters into duodenum. This bile contains bile acids, bile pigments, cholesterol, lecithin, water, sodium, potassium, bicarbonate ions which are eliminated out can be called as *Pitta*.

MECHANISM OF ACTION^[7]

All the purgatives increase the water content of faeces by:

1. A hydrophilic or osmotic action, retaining water & electrolytes in the intestinal lumen – increase volume of colonic content and make it easily propelled.
2. Acting on intestinal mucosa to decrease net absorption of water and electrolyte, intestinal transit is enhanced indirectly by the fluid bulk.
3. Increasing propulsive activity as primary action-allowing less time for absorption of salt and water as a secondary effect.

The irritant action of the drugs causes inflammation in the small & large intestine and since the mucosa is extensively irritated, secretion rate is enhanced & motility of the intestinal wall usually increases. As a result, large quantities of fluid are propelled by propulsive movements and results in formation of loose stools.

INDICATION OF VIRECHANA KARMA^[8]

1. *Pitta Pradhana Vyadhi's* - Pandu, Kamala.
2. *Rakta Pradoshaja Vyadhi* - Kustha, Visarpa, Raktapitta, Gudapaka.
3. Diseases in extreme need to eliminate doshas - Gara Visha, Krimi Kostha and Udavarta.
4. Diseases having *Viparita Gati* like *Urdhwaga Raktapitta* and *Chardi*
5. Diseases in which there will be excessive vitiation of *Doshas*, *Tridosha Prakopa* and also those diseases requiring *Ubhaya Bhaga Shodhana* - Kustha.
6. Diseases wherein *Pitta* has its location - *Hridroga Sadhaka Pitta*, *Jwara- Pachaka Pitta*, *Kamala-Ranjaka pitta*.

CONTRAINDICATIONS OF VIRECHANA KARMA^[9]

1. Incapable of tolerating the stress produced during *Virechana* - *Langhita*, *Durbalendriya*.
2. *Ashukari Roga* - *Hridroga*, *Kshata Ksheena*.
3. *Sama Avasthas*.
4. Local problem - *Kshata Guda*.
5. Altered or disturbed mental conditions - *Bhayabheeta*, *Kamadi*, *Vyaghra*.
6. Certain altered physiques - *Atisthula*, *Atikrisha*.
7. Weak physical conditions - *Bala*, *Vridhdha*.
7. *Adhomarga Pathology* - *Atisara*, *Adhoga Raktapitta*.

MECHANISM OF VIRECHANA KARMA

In Amlapitta - *Amashaya* is the specific seat of *Pitta* and *Kapha*. Though *Virechana* is a specific therapy for *Pitta Dosha*, it may also be used for eliminating *Kapha Dosha*. The *Aashaya* involved in this disease are *Aamashaya* and upper end of *Pakvashaya*. The *Dosha* involved is mainly *Pitta*, which includes the *Pachaka Pitta* of *Amashaya* and *Achcha Pitta* of *Pittashaya* and the *Dushya* are *Rasa* and *Rakta*. *Virechana* may be able to expel the excessive *Dravata* of *Pitta* and *Pitta* present in rest of *Avayavas*. *Rasa Dushti* can be corrected by this process. After the process of *Virechana*, the *Agni*, digestive power is increased so it is beneficial for further digestion. There is reduction in severity of symptoms like *Daha*, *Shula*, *Amlodgara*, *Chhardi*, *Avipaka* which helps in further *Shamana* therapy.^[10]

In Amavata - After *Langhana*, *Swedana* and *Tikta, Katu, Deepana Dravyas*, *Doshas* attain *Niramavastha* and may require elimination from the body by *Shodhana*. Production of *Ama* is the result of *Avarana* of *Pitta Sthana* by *Kledaka Kapha*, thus hampering the digestive activity of the *Pachaka Pitta*. *Virechana* removes the *Avarana* produced by *Kledaka Kapha* and most suited therapy for the *Sthanika Dosha Pitta*. It helps to normalize the *Pratiloma Gati* of *Vata*, which produces symptoms like *Anaha*, *Vibandha*, *Antrakujana*, *Kukshishula* etc. It has direct effect on *Agnisthana* and hampered *Mandagni* is one of the initiating factors in *Amavata*. It pacifies the vitiated *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha* and has the quality of *Srotovishodhana*.^[11]

In Hridaya Roga - *Hridaya* is the specific seat of *Sadhak Pitta* and *Avalambak Kapha*. *Virechana* drugs gets absorbed and due to *Virya*, it reaches to the *Hridaya* than the *Dhamanis* and thereafter reaches to *Sthula* and *Anu Srotas* i.e. macro and micro channels of the body.^[12]

In Hypertension – Essential hypertension is *Vata Pitta Pradhan Tridoshaj Vyadhi* and *Rasa-Rakta dushya* are main culprits and *Raja, Tama* are also involved. *Virechana Karma* is major therapy stated for eliminating vitiated *Pitta Dosha* and also capable of mitigating of *Vata Dosha*. It eliminates *Kapha Dosha* either associated with *Pitta Dosha* or situated in *Pitta sthana*. It has been advised in all *Dhatu Dustijanya Vikara* viz. *Rasaj, Raktaja Vikara*. It helps to improve intellectual and

mental status. It provides strength to the body by increasing strength *Indriyas* and stabilizing all *Dhatus*. Also, it helps in potentiating *Jathragani* and decelerating aging process. During *Virechana* process, the inflammation of intestinal mucosa leads to hyperemia and exudation resulting into increased passage of protein-rich fluids through vessel walls to intestinal lumen. Increase in fluid volume also results in the dilution of toxic material. Evacuation of the fluid from *Rasa-Rakta* by *Virechana* is the direct process that leads to decrease in fluid volume.^[13]

In *Madhumeha* - The main *Dushya* involved in the pathogenesis are *Rasa*, *Meda*, *Mamsa* and *Kleda*. They are closely related with each other because of their same qualities and etiological factors. The treatment principles are also more or less same. *Vamana Karma* and *Virechana* are very useful in *Rasa* and *Meda Dushti*. *Madhumeha*, the *Kapha* and *Pitta* are vitiated excessively and they remain lying in the lower part of the body. The *Virechana* has the quality to eliminate both *Pitta* and *Kapha*, also it is the best *Shodhana* therapy for the elimination of *Dosha* lying in the lower parts of the body. By the elimination of *Kapha* and *Pitta* removes the obstructions (*Avarana*) caused by them to the path of *Vata*. Same time the elimination of *Kapha* also alleviates the vitiated *Kapha Vargiya Dushyas*. In this way, the *Virechana* therapy reduced the vitiation of *Tridosha* and the *Dushyas*.^[14]

In *Pakshaghata* – In *Pakshaghata* the main *Dosha* involved is *Vata*. The natural abode of *Vata* is *Pakvashaya*. In *Pakvashaya Gata Vata*, *Virechan* is indicated. In *Pakshaghata Sira Snayu Vishosha* has been described as a symptom. *Sira* and *Kandara* are the *Upadhatus* of *Rakta*. Hence in this disease *Rakta Dhatu* involvement is also seen. *Pitta* being *Mala* of *Rakta*, its involvement may also occur. In *Raktaja* and *Pittaja Vikara*, *Virechan* is the treatment of choice. *Kaphandubandhit* and *Pittanubandhit Pakshaghata* have been described in text. This can be compared with *Kaphavritta* and *Pittavritta Vata* respectively. In treatment of both these conditions *Virechan* is beneficial.^[15]

In *Sthaulya* - *Virechana* is not only effective to eliminate *Pitta Dosha* but also effective for *Kapha*, *Meda* and *Vata*. It helps to remove *Vayu Avarana* thus helps in correcting *Agni-vaigunya* which corrects *Meda Dhatu Agni* and the proper amount of *Meda Dhatu* is formed. It helps in flushing excessive *Ambu Dhatu* which is a content of *Meda Dhatu*. It proves to be much beneficial in alleviating *Pitta* prominent symptoms of *Sthaulya* like – excessive hunger (*Ati-kshudha*), excessive thirst (*Ati-pipasa*), excessive sweating (*Swedadhikya*) and foetid odour (*Daurgandhya*). Moreover, it corrects the *Medodhatvagni*. Therefore, the formation of *Uttardhatu* is increased, while the formation of *Medodhatu* is decreased. Thus, symptoms of *Sthaulya* are subsided.^[16]

In *Tamak Shwasa* – *Virechana* is very useful in *Tamaka Shwasa*, particularly when it is combined with *Vatahara* and *Kaphahara* drugs. In *Tamaka Shwasa Kapha* obstructs the passage of *Vata* and the obstructed *Vata* traverses in reverse direction. In such conditions the drug and food which are *Ushna* and *Vatanulomana* in nature having *Kapha* and *Vata* alleviating property are helpful in relieving the *Shwasa*. *Virechana* drugs have the quality of *Kaphaghna* and *Vatanulomana* proves beneficial in the condition of *Shwasa* and also corrects the direction of *Vata* to set it on normal course.^[17]

In *Vicharchika* - *Vicharchika* being *Kapha* dominant even has features of *Tridoshas* which can be appreciated by presence of *Kandu*, *Strava*, *Pidika* and *Shyavata*. The *Dushyas* are *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa* and *Lasika*. *Virechana* has actions on all types of *Pitta* and even eliminates *Kapha* to some extent which helps in reduction of *Shyavata* and *Kandu*. A large amount of fluid in the body is eliminated in the process of *Virechana* along with *Pitta*, reduces the *Strava* present in *Vicharchika*. The *Bhrajaka Pitta* will also be corrected & hence *Pidika* subsides. *Daha*, *Paka* which are due to predominance of *Pitta* and *Rakta* even gets subsided. *Vedana* or *Ruja* even found as associated symptom is reduced since *Vata* is controlled and regulated. *Parushya* which is due to *Swedavaha Sroto Dusthi* is corrected, since *Pitta* and *Sweda* has got *Ashrayashrayi Bhava*.^[18]

CONCLUSION

Virechana Karma is safe and effective treatment modality for *Pitta* disorders and can be effectively used among all classes of patients. It pacifies *Tridosha* specially *Pitta Dosha* and thus effective in multiple conditions. It is an effort to make a concept regarding mechanism of *Virechana Karma* in various disorders.

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