



**SOME CRITICAL ASPECTS OF AYURVEDA DETOXIFICATION TECHNIQUE
RAKTAMOKSHANA: A REVIEW**

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ABSTRACT

Raktamokshana is one of the important detoxification therapies of ayurveda which technically involves removal of vitiated blood in controlled manner. The therapy termed as bloodletting in modern science in which small quantities of blood removed from body to acquire therapeutic benefits in pathological conditions. The therapy mainly neutralizes accumulated toxins thus helps in conditions like; osteoarthritis, pericarditis, allergies, eczema, tonsillitis, sciatica, allergic dermatitis and abscess, etc. *Raktamokshana* is method of para surgery which helps therapeutically in *Raktajaroga*. *Prachhanna Karma*, *Siravedhana Karma* and *Jalaukavacharana Karma*, etc. are some approaches of *Raktamokshana*. The *Raktamokshana* works in both ways; preventive as well as curative therapy therefore practiced from many years to maintain good health status. Considering therapeutic importance of Ayurveda purification measures present article elaborated various aspects of *Raktamokshana* therapy.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Panchakarma, Raktamokshana, Bloodletting.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda the science of Indian heritage considered health of an individual as vital aspect of life and in this regards ayurveda advocated many therapies which helps to keep away from diseases. *Panchakarma* is one such modality of Ayurveda which not only maintain physical health but also restore and mental health. *Panchakarma* facilitate removal of accumulated toxins from body through various approaches and *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting) is one such approach of purification. *Raktamokshana* is important part of ayurveda detoxification process which provides health benefits in many diseases. The *Raktamokshana* specifically recommended for the conditions when vitiated *Pitta* mixed with *Dushya Rakta*. It is also suggested for pathological conditions which involve vitiation of *Vata* along with *Kapha*. Gout, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, varicose veins, diabetic wounds and thrombosis, etc. are some conditions which require *Raktamokshana* therapy.

The *Raktamokshana* can be used on the basis of *Doshas* predominance as mentioned below

- For *Vataja* vitiated blood *Shrungavacharana* can be employed
- For *Pittaja* vitiated blood *Jalaukavacharana* can be employed

- For *Kaphaja* vitiated blood *Alabu* can be employed

The improper conduction of *Raktamokshan* can cause many complications as mentioned in **Figure 1**, therefore it should be performed appropriately under the supervision of expert physician.



Figure 1: Some complications associated with improper conduction of *Raktamokshan*.

Raktamokshana Types

1. Shastravisravana

It is performed by using metallic instrument, the techniques further subdivided into two categories:

a. Pracchana

Pracchana involves utilization of many incisions to facilitate bloodletting. Sharp instrument used to make incisions in upward direction; incisions should not be very deep nor be superficial so that bloodletting can be achieved effectively.

b. Siravyadhana

Siravyadhana is process of venipuncture in which bloodletting achieved by puncturing specific vein. Tourniquet tied above affected area, then puncturing done using sharp instrument, finally when blood flows out completely then bandaging can be employed to arrest bleeding.

2. Anushastravisravana

Anushastravisravana not involves utilization of metallic instrument for the purpose of bloodletting; it is subdivided into three categories:

a. Jalaukavacharana

Jalaukavacharana mean application of leeches on particular body area, the leech suck impure blood and in this way bloodletting achieved. The leech therapy mainly indicated for *Pitta Dosh* predominant disorders. There are twelve types of leeches out of that six comes under poisonous category while six come under non poisonous leeches. The process involves washing of area with antiseptic solution before allowing leech to suck blood from body. The moist cloth may be used to cover leeches when they started blood sucking from body. Finally turmeric powder can be used to stop bleeding when process gets completed.

b. Alabu

Alabu involves blood extraction from the body using vegetable like *Alabu*, in this process bloodletting done through the vacuum created before applying *Alabu*. The therapy mainly utilizes for *Kapha dosha* predominant diseases.

c. Shrungavacharana

Shrungavacharana mean utilization of cow's horns for blood extraction and this process mainly indicated for *Vata* predominant disorders. Cow's horn open at both end used for this purpose, affected area cleaned first with antiseptic solution then small incisions made then larger end of applied over affected body parts where incision made and blood sucked through the other small end.

General Procedural Protocol of Raktamokshana

Raktamokshana is one of the modality of *Panchkarma* therefore as like other approaches of *Panchkarma* it is also performed in three steps; *Poorva karma*, *Pradhana karma* and *Paschat karma*.

The detailed procedural protocol of *Raktamokshana* is as follows:

Purva Karma

It is preparatory stage which involves conduction of all measures requires before main procedure. The affected part cleaned and patient advised to sit in appropriate position as per the modality of bloodletting and mental counseling done to achieve psychological synchronization with patients. The essential materials required for bloodletting like; cotton swab, instruments, gloves, gauze piece, antiseptic solutions and bandages, etc. arranged and sterilized if required.

Pradhana Karma

The *Pradhana Karma* varies depending upon choice of *Raktamokshana*, for *Siravyadha* patient advocated either to lie or sit erect position. Oleation and sudation done before *Siravyadha* and it should be done by expert physician only. Similarly *Jalaukavacharana* involves utilization of small nicks near affected area, the leech suck blood and their mouth is covered with a wet cloth. Turmeric powder can be sprinkled to stop excessive bleeding when process gets completed. *Shringa Yantra* is another approach of bloodletting in which horn is applied on body part where vacuum has been created through which blood get oozes out. The all therapies of *Raktamokshana* must be performed under the supervision of expert physician and previous illness (if any) of patient must be taken in consideration to avoid any complications.

Paschat Karma

After *Pradhana Karma* of *Raktamokshana* dressing with medicated oils recommended, *Yastimadhu* or turmeric powder or tight bandaging required to stop bleeding after main procedure. Patient should advise for relax after procedures and stay at clinic for a while to observe any clinical complication. It is also suggested to stop bleeding completely after *Raktamokshana*.

Probable Mode of Action of Raktamokshana

Raktamokshana prevents venous congestion and removes vitiated *Rakta* and *Pitta* thus detoxifies *Rasa Dhatu* and clears toxins from body. The detoxification by *Raktamokshana* facilitates functioning of minute channels thus maintain supply of nutrients and other essential elements. *Raktamokshana* improves circulatory process therefore prevent diseases related to the blood circulations. Moreover in leech therapy the saliva of leech offers analgesic effects thus relives symptoms of arthritis.

Contraindications

- ❖ Emaciated person
- ❖ Pregnancy
- ❖ Anemic condition
- ❖ Condition of hemorrhoids
- ❖ Chronic illness especially in elderly person

CONCLUSION

Raktamokshan is technique of ancient Ayurveda system which means bloodletting and mainly indicated for diseases which involved vitiation of *Pittadosha* and *Raktadhatu*. The technique help to remove toxicity of *Rakta* and *Pitta* thus provides therapeutic benefits in conditions like; hypertension, acne, dermatitis, abscess, arthritis and boils etc. *Raktamokshan* must be performed by expert Ayurvedic practitioners to avoid any complications and patient clinical background also taken in consideration before initiating procedure. The techniques of *Raktamokshan* are not well understood till time therefore it is required to explore this ancient approach of Ayurveda. Present article summarizes some basic aspects of *Raktamokshan* in a view to enhance awareness about this therapy for upcoming researchers of Ayurveda.

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