A REVIEW ON IMPORTANCE OF RAKTAMOKSHANA (BLOODLETTING) IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Raktamokshana is the important and prime process of blood detoxification. It is derived from two words ie; ‘rakt’ which means blood & ‘mokshana’ which means leave. So the meaning of raktamokshana is to let the blood out. The blood is expelled out from the body to reduce the qty of toxic substances in the blood borne diseases(raktaja vikara). The process of raktamokshana can be traced back to the vedic period only and not beyond that. In the koushika sutra of atharvaveda, reference of raktamokshana by leech application are available. Sushruta, Father of Indian Surgery, has given all the information regarding bloodletting in detail in his treatise, "Sushruta Samhita". To expel out the vitiated blood, seven procedures are advocated: Venesection (Sira Vedhan), horn application (Sringa Avacharana), gourd application (Alabu Aavacharana), leech application (Jalauka Avacharana), scrapping (Pracchanna Karma), cupping glass application (Ghati Yantra Avacharana), and needle application (Suchi Avacharana). Bloodletting as a method of treatment is indicated in gouty arthritis, filariasis, herpes, tumors, various skin disorders, genital infections, abscess, inflammatory condition, cellulitis, painful ulcers, chronic ulcers resulting from snake bite, etc. Inspite of this, bloodletting is contraindicated in conditions like- Generalized swelling, swelling in debilitated persons, in those suffering from anemia, piles, phthisis and in pregnancy etc.
KEYWORDS: Raktaja vikara, Sira Vedhan, Jalauka Avacharana, Pracchanna Karma.

INTRODUCTION
Acharyas emphasize the shodhana therapy as the line of treatment at various places. Among these various shodhana therapy, raktamokshana is indicated specially because rakta is mainly involved as dushya in samprapti ghatak for many diseases. Rakta is important dhatu as it does the dharan of sarira.

Raktamokshana, in other words blood letting, is a kind of Para surgery directed for the treatment of specifically Raktaja roga (blood-borne) diseases, along with other many surgical diseases. Sushruta and Vagbhata focused on the Raktamokshana in detail. The texts of Ayurveda consider Rakta Dusti as one of the prime causes for so many diseases, in that patients may get relief after letting out the vitiated Rakta. Acharya Sushruta propounds practical guidelines for bloodletting and claims it as most effective therapy in half of the body ailments. There are various methods for bloodletting such as Jalaukavacharana Karma, Prachhanna Karma, and Siravedhana Karma. Among all Jalaukaavacharna Karma (Leech therapy) is considered as the ideal method to expel out the vitiated blood safely, quickly, and effectively. The other method of raktamokshana ie Siravedhana Karma (Vein puncture) etc was routinely practiced in the past and so much importance was given in classics. But now a days the jalokavcharana method is practising more.

TYPES OF RAKTAMOKSHANA

Two type
1. Shastra visravana -Generally metallic instrument are used to carried out the this process. It is further divided into two category- Pracchana which means letting the blood pass through several incision and Siravyadhana, which is also know as venipuncture.

2. Anushastra visravana- The metallic instrument are not considered for carrying out this procedure. It is further divided into 3 categories:-(1) Jalaukavacharana, which mean applying leeches on a particular area. This is mainly done for pitta dosha disorder. (2) Alabu, which mean creating vaccum & extracting blood through the vaccum using a vegetable, which may be bottle guard or alabu. This is mainly done for treating the kapha dosha diseases. (3) Shrungavacharana, which mean applying the cow’s horns.This is mainly used for treating the vata disorder.
INDICATIONS OF RAKTAMOKSHANA THERAPY ARE\textsuperscript{[7-8]}

Individuals with aggravated rakta and pitta dosha & high level of toxicity are recommended the raktamokshana therapy. The important diseases & complication to be treated with this therapeutic therapy are-Gout, Eczema, Psoriasis, Filariasis, Glaucoma, Liver & spleen disorder, Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis, Cellulites, Sciatica, Varicose Veins, Rheumatic Disease, Diabetic Wound, abscesses, Hypertension, Thrombosis (blood clot), Alopecia and Herpes zoster.

PROCEDURE OF RAKTAMOKSHANA\textsuperscript{[7-9]}

Raktamokshana, the specialized detoxification process comprises the following steps-

1. Preprocedure or poorva karma.
2. Main procedure or pradhana karma.
3. Post procedure or paschat karma.

PURVA KARMA:- It is preparatory phase before going to main karma. In this all the material should collected well eg cottan swab, gauze piece, instrument, gloves etc.

PRADHANA KARMA- The various procedure can be considered under pradhana karma.

- **PRACHHANA**-This method helps to provide relief from stress, tension and anxiety.
- **SIRAVYADHA**-The patient either lies or sit in erect position. According to the disease the vein is selected. Then after proper oleation and sudation, the liquid gruel is injected. The size shoud be that of I brihi or half barley praman in muscular area.
- **JALAUKAVACHARANA**-Small tiny sized nicks are applied near the affected region. As soon as the the blood oozes out.the leech is applied.its mouth is covered with a wet cottan cloth. After sucking of impure blood the leech will leave the area on its own.In any case when it does not leave its own then turmeric powder is sprinkled on the leech.
- **SHRINGA YANTRA**-The horn is applied on the fleshy part of the body in this a vaccum area has been created by which blood is oozes out.

PASCHAT KARMA: After completion of pradhana karma,dressing is done with medicated oils.

CONCLUSION

Raktamokshana is one procedures among panchkarma which aims at excreting vitiated blood (Dushta rakta) from the body. Rakthamokshana means the procedure of blood letting for the
therapeutic purpose for removing morbid doshas with blood or it can practised in blood born diseases, in pitta predominant diseases and also in a few vata disorders. This therapy in ayurveda is a partial or a complete treatment depending on the situation. It explained thousands of years ago and still holds an important place in ayurvedic treatment in curing many diseases, and have become a necessity in todays world due to changing food habits and lifestyle, for curing ailments and also to maintain health. One who timely performs Raktamokshana never suffers from skin diseases, and other Raktaja vyadis mentioned above.

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