

Panchakarma in the Detoxification and Management of Visha Condition”

Chandan Khairkar, Vaishali Gawande, Aruna Jeswani

1. Assistant Professor, Agadtantra evam Vidhi Vaidyaka, BMAC & RH Butibori, Nagpur.
PhD Scholar, Agadtantra Evam Vidhi Vaidyaka, Sumatibhai Shah Ayurved Mahavidyalaya Hadapsar Pune.
2. Professor & HOD, Agadtantra evam Vidhi Vaidyaka, BMAC & RH Butibori, Nagpur.
3. Associate Professor, Agadtantra evam Vidhi Vaidyaka, BMAC & RH Butibori, Nagpur.

*Corresponding author: dr.chandankhairkar01@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Introduction – *Ayurvedic chikitsa* (treatment) mainly consist of *Sanshodhan* (elimination) and *Sanshaman* (pacifies) *chikitsa*. *Sanshodhan* by *Panchkarma* therapy is unique to Ayurveda. *Panchakarma* therapy is one of the best therapies to detoxify the body. *Charakacharya* has stated 24 *Upkramas* in treatment of poisoning in his *Samhita* in *chikitsa sthana*.

Aim & Objectives – To study the efficacy of *panchakarma* therapy in the management of *visha chikitsa*. To study *chaturvinshati vishopakrama* explained by *Aacharya charaka*.

Discussion – *Panchakarma* is not only effective in acute poisoning like *Jangam* and *Sthavara visha* but also in chronic poisoning like *Garavisha* & *Dushivisha* in

which toxins are stored in body channels. No any other techniques like *panchakarma* are helpful in removing such toxins from storage at deep cellular level.

Conclusion- *Panchakarma* therapies like *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Raktamokshana* and *Nasya* are effective in *visha chikitsa*.

Keywords: *Panchakarma*, Poison, *Visha*, Detoxification.

INTRODUCTION

Agadtantra, one of the eight branches of Ayurveda, deals with the study of poisons (*visha*), their effects and treatment. *Agadtantra* is also known as *visha tantra*, *Damshtra chikitsa*, *visha Vaidya*, *visha vaidyaka*, *visha gara vairodhika prashamana*, *jangulika* etc.^[1] This branch deals with treatment of various natural toxins resulting from animals, insects, birds, herbs, vegetables, plants, minerals, artificial poisons, air and water pollution.

Agadtantra also includes the negative effects of *viruddha ahar* and drugs. Which could lead to chronic poisoning symptoms.

Agadtantra describe two types of poisons natural poison and artificial poisons. The natural poisons are classified as inanimate poisons (*sthavara visha*) and animate poisons (*jangam visha*).^[2] Among the inanimate poisons are those of plant origin and toxic minerals, metals or those found within the earth and the animate poisons are venoms of animals such as snakes, scorpions, spiders etc. Artificial poisons are the poisons prepared by combining various kind of animate and inanimate poisons.

Panchakarma is a unique therapeutic modality of Ayurveda, describes as a comprehensive detoxification and rejuvenation procedure. The term *panchakarma* literally means ‘five actions’ referring to the five principle therapeutic measures aimed at expelling accumulated toxins (*ama*) and balancing the three doshas – *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. Unlike symptomatic treatments, *Panchakarma* works at a deeper level by cleansing the body’s channels (*strotas*), restoring normal physiological functioning, and enhancing the body’s innate healing capacity. It is considered both a curative as well as preventive measure, useful for maintaining health, managing disease, and preparing the body for rejuvenate therapies (*Rasayana*).

The five principal procedures included under *panchakarma* are ^[3] –

1. *Vamana* – therapeutic emesis
2. *Virechana* – therapeutic purgation
3. *Basti* – medicated enema
4. *Nasya* – administration of medicines through nasal route
5. *Rantamokshana* – Bloodletting

Ayurveda has described different modalities of treatment in poisoning. *Charakacharya* has stated 24 *upakramas* in treatment of poisoning in his Samhita in the *chikitsa sthana*. *Sushrutacharya* has invested whole of the *kalpashthana* while describing about the poisons and its treatment. Similarly, *visha* and *visha chikitsa* is also emphatically described in *Ashtanga sangraha* and *Ashtang Hridaya*. *Ayurvedic Chikitsa* (treatment) mainly consist of *Sanshodhan* (elimination) and *Sanshaman* (pacifies) *Chikitsa*. *Sanshodhan* by *Panchakarma* therapy is unique to *Ayurveda*. *Panchakarma* therapy is one of the best therapies to detoxify the body.

Visha (Poison) described in Ayurveda is a potent, rapidly spreading substances that vitiates doshas and threatens life. Management of poisoning (*Visha chikitsa*) is an emergency, focusing on rapid detoxification, neutralization, and protection of vital organs. Among the ayurvedic treatment modalities, *Panchakarma* plays a key role in eliminating toxins from the body. However due to acute nature of poisoning, only certain *panchakarma* therapies are emphasized i.e., *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Nasya* and *Raktamokshana*, while others, such as *Basti* have limited scope. Hence this review study has been undertaken to highlight in brief about *panchakarma* in the detoxification and management of *visha* condition.

AIM

To study the efficacy of *Panchakarma* in the Detoxification and management in *visha* condition.

OBJECTIVE

- To study the efficacy of *Panchakarma* therapy in context of *Agadtantra*.
- To study *Chaturvimshati Vishopakrama* explained by *Acharya Charaka*.

MATERIALS

- Articles from various websites.
- *Samhitas*
- Various Ayurvedic Textbook

OBSERVATIONS

The *Charak Samhitas* in its *Chikitsa Sthan Adhyay 23* has stated following *chikitsa upkramas* for *visha*.^[4]

मंत्रारिष्टो उल्कर्तन निष्पीडण चूषण अग्निपरिषेका : |
 अवगाह रक्तमोक्षण वमन विरेकोपधानानि ||
 हृदयावरणा अंजन नस्य धूम अवलेह औषध प्रशमनानि |
 प्रतिसारणं प्रतिविषं संज्ञा संस्था प नं लेपाः ||
 मृत संजीवन मेव च विंशतिरेते चतुर्भिरधिकाः | च. चि.
 २३/३५-३७

1. VAMANA

It detoxifies the body by eliminating the toxins and the vitiated dosha by administration of emetics.

Indication –

- 1) It is indicated within 1-2 hrs of poisoning when poison is present in stomach.
- 2) 1st & 2nd *vega* of *sthavar visha* (inanimate poison) (Su. Ka.2/40-43, A.H.U. 35/7, Cha. Chi. 23/45)
- 3) *Jangam visha- Darveekar sarpadamsha* (2nd, 4th, 5th & 6th *visha vega*) *Mandali sarpadamsha* (3rd *vega*) *Rajiman sarpadamsha*

(2nd, 4th & 5th *vega*) (Su. Ka. 5/20-30, A.S.U. 42/53, A.H.U. 36/75)

- 4) In *Dushivisha* -Indigestion (Su. Ka. 2/50-52, A.H.U. 35/38)
- 5) In *Garavisha – Vaman* with *Tamraraj* in symptoms oedema of the limbs (Cha. Chi. 23/239-240, A.H.U. 35/55)
- 6) *Luta* poisoning (in exaggerated stage or *kaphaj luta* bite) (A.H.U.37/74)
- 7) In insect bite (Keeta *Visha*) – (A.H.U. 37/24-26)
- 8) In *Mushak visha* (A.S.U. 46/17, A.H.U. 38/20)
- 9) *Savishanna Amashayagat* (Cha. Chi. 23/122)

Contra indication

Corrosive poison, in convulsive drugs like strychnine, petroleum distillates, coma, severe cardiac and respiratory distress, advanced pregnancy etc.

2. VIRECHANA

It detoxifies the body by expelling the poison, toxin & vitiated dosha from stomach through anal route.

Indication-

- 1) *Sthavar visha* (2nd *Vega*) (Cha. Chi. 23/46)
- 2) *jangam visha- Darveekar sarpadamsha* (5th & 6th *vega*) *Mandali & Rajiman sarpadamsha* (3rd & 5th *visha vega*) (Su. Ka. 5/20-30, A.S.U. 42/53, A.H.U. 36/75)
- 3) *Dushivisha* (A.H.U. 35/38)

- 4) Person of *pittaj* constitution, bitten by snake of predominant pitta.
- 5) *Luta* poisoning – in exaggerated stage of *Dosha* (Su. Ka. 8/134, A.S.U. 40/31, A.H.U. 37/75)
- 6) *Mushak* poisoning *virechana* by *trivrutta*, *Nilini*, *Triphala*. (Su. Ka. 7/37, A.S.U. 46/23, A.H.U. 38/23)
- 7) Insect (Keeta) poisoning (A.H.U. 37/24)
- 8) *Alarka visha* (dog bite) – *Virechana* by *Arka* juice (Su. Ka. 7/51, A.S.U. 46/55, A.H.U. 38/35)
- 9) *Savishanna pakwashayagat-Virechana* by *Niliniphal*

Contra indication

Intestinal obstruction, perforation, severe dehydration, Shock etc.

3. RAKTAMOKSHANA

Elimination of toxin, poison or vitiated *Dosha* from blood through skin route.

Indication

- 1) When poisoned area becomes discolored, swollen, rigid & painful (Su. Ka. 5/36)
- 2) *Raktagat visha*
- 3) *Darveekar*, *Mandali*, *Rajiman Sarpadamsha (1st Vega)* (Su. Ka. 5/20-24, A.S.U. 42/53, A.H.U. 36/74)
- 4) Poison at seat of *Kapha Dosha* (Cha. Chi. 23/61)

- 5) In *Rajiman Sarpadamsha Raktamokshana* is done with *Alabu* (Su. Ka. 5/24)
- 6) In *Dushivisha Panchsiravedhan* (Cha. Chi. 23/63-64)
- 7) In *Luta* poisoning (A.S.U. 44/31, A.H.U. 37/69)
- 8) In *Mushak* (*Raktamokshana* is done by *Pracchhan karma*) (A.S.U. 46/13, A.H.U. 38/17)
- 9) In *Alarka Visha* (dog bite) (Su. Ka. 7/50)

Contraindication

It is contraindicated in pregnancy, children, and old persons, Anemia.

4. NASYA

Removal of poison, toxin & vitiated dosha by giving medication through nasal route.

Indication

- 1) *Sthavar visha (5th Vega)* (Cha. Chi. 23/46-52)
- 2) *Darveekar sarpadamsha (3rd & 7th Vega)*, *Rajiman sarpadamsha (6th vega)* (Su. Ka. 5/21, A.S.U. 42/53, A.H.U. 36/75)
- 3) When effect of poison is seen in head *Nasya* by *mula* of *Bandhujeev*, *Bharangi*, *krushna*, *Tulasi* (A.S.U. 42/37)
- 4) If obstruction occurs at nose, eye, ear, tongue & throat due to poisoning. (Cha. Chi. 23/68)
- 5) If person is unconsciousness. (Su. Ka. 5/43)

- 6) In *Luta* poisoning -*Nasya* by *Shyama, Yavphal, Fanirjak, Shirisha* (A.S. U. 44/42-43)
- 7) In *Mushaka Visha*. *Nasya* is done by *Shirishphalsar* (A.S.U. 46/23, Su. Ka. 7/37, A.H.U. 38/23)

Contra indication

In children, old person, pregnancy, indigestion.

5. BASTI CHIKITSA

In Ayurveda *Basti chikitsa* (therapeutic enema) is considered the best treatment for *vata dosha*, and it has prime importance in *Pachakarma*. But when we study *visha chikitsa* (Toxicology), *Basti* is generally not mentioned as a primary line of management. The reason is:

Emergency nature of *visha*

- *Visha* (Poison) acts very fast, spreading rapidly through *Rasa* and *Rakta dhatu*.
- Immediate interventions are required, *Vamana, Virechana, Dhooma, Parisheka, Lepa, Agada prayoga* etc.
- Since *Basti* required preparation (*Anupana, Sneha, Kalka, Kwatha*) and time for administration, it is not suitable in acute emergencies.

Agnimandya and *Aama* in *visha*

- Poisons usually derange *Agni* and create *Ama*- like conditions.
- *Basti* requires a certain digestive strength for proper drug absorption and action.
- In *visha avastha*, the patient may not assimilate *basti dravyas*.

Risk of Spreading *Visha*

- *Basti* promotes the flow of doshas in the large intestine and circulation.
- If *visha* is still active in circulation, *basti* might enhance its systemic spread rather than eliminate it.

Conditional

- Some texts do mention that once the acute stage subsides and the patient survives, *Basti* may be used in post-toxic sequelae, especially if *vata* is aggravated after poison exposure or after evacuative therapies. But this is not part of the main line of *visha chikitsa*.

Focus of *Visha Chikitsa*

Charaka Samhita

- In *Chikitsa Sthana* 23 (*Vishachikitsa*), *Charaka* lists the main management – *Pranaraksha* (Life-saving), *Vamana* (induced emesis), *Virechana* (purgation), *Nasya* (Nasal therapy), *Dhuma* (medicated smoke), *Parisheka, Abhyanga, Pradeha* (external therapies), *Agada yogas* (antidotes, herbs, formulations)
- No mention of *Basti* here, but in *chikitsa sthan* 28 (*Vatavyadhi chikitsa*) declares *Basti* is the best therapy for pacifying *vata*. This shows a clear separation *Basti* is supreme in *vata chikitsa*, not in *visha chikitsa*.

Sushruta Samhita

- In *kalpa sthana* and *chikitsa sthana* *sushruta* explains – *Vamana* and

Virechana are first line after *ahara janya visha* (ingested poison).

- For inhaled/bitten/sting poisons – *shirovirechana (nasya)*, *Dhuma*, *Parisheka*, *Agada yoga*.
- Again, *basti* is not listed. But in *chikitsa sthana 35 (Vatavyadhi chikitsa)* [5], *sushruta* says- for many diseases, *Basti* constitutes half of the treatment. This exalts *basti* in *vata* disorders, not in poison management.

Ashtanga Hridaya

- *Kalpa Sthana (Visha kalpa adhyaya)* lists – *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Nasya*, *Dhuma*, *Agada*, no *basti* is included.
- But in *sutra sthana 19* [6] (*Bati Vidhyayam*) *vagbhata* stated – Among all treatments, *Basti* is the best.
- Again, emphasis only in *vata pakvashaya* and systemic disorders, not in *visha chikitsa*.

Therefore, *Acharyas* intentionally excluded *basti* in *visha chikitsa*, because poison is an acute, life-threatening emergency where time consuming *basti* is impractical and unsafe.

DISCUSSION

Panchakarma, the principal detoxification and purification therapy in Ayurveda, plays a crucial role in the management of *visha chikitsa* (toxicology). The ancient ayurvedic texts such as *charaka Samhita*, *sushruta samhita*, and *ashtanga Hridaya* describe various modalities of *panchakarma* that help eliminate

accumulate doshas and toxic substances (*visha*) from body, thereby restoring balance and health.

In cases of *visha vega* (acute poisoning), the prime objective is the rapid expulsion of the poison and prevention of its systemic spread. *Vamana* and *Virechana* are especially emphasized for their ability to cleanse the upper and lower gastro intestinal tracts respectively. These procedures not only help in the elimination of ingested toxins but also reduce *Ama* (metabolic toxins) and deranged pitta and *kapha doshas*, which are often vitiated in toxic conditions.

Nasya and *Raktamokshana* are mentioned for cases where the poison affects the head region or circulates in the bloodstream. *Raktamokshana*, through techniques like *Jalaukavacharana* (leech therapy), helps in removing vitiated blood and minimizing systemic toxicity.

Although *Basti* is not directly indicated in acute *visha* conditions, it is beneficial in chronic or post toxic states where residual *visha dosha* causes *dooshivisha* or long-term toxicity. *Basti* aids in expelling deep seated toxins and balancing *vata dosha*, thus preventing complications and promoting recovery.

Hence, *Panchakarma* is not only effective in acute poisoning like *Jangam & Sthavar visha* but also in chronic poisoning like *Garavisha & Dushivisha* in which toxins are stored in body channels. No any other technique like *panchakarma* is helpful in removing such toxins from storage at deeper cellular level.

CONCLUSION

The application of *Panchakarma* procedures like *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Raktamokshana* and *Nasya* are effective detoxification and improvement in systemic balance in *visha chikitsa*.

REFERENCES

1. Vaidya Shital Prakash Mirajkar, Sartha Agadanttra, Creative Publication Nanded. First Edition Sept 2010, Page No. 14
2. Kaviraj Dr. Ambikadatta Shashtri, Sushrata Samhita, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Edition Reprint 2017, Kalpasthan page no. 18
3. Aacharya Vidyadhar Shukla, Prof. Ravidatta Tripathi, Charaka

Samhita, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Pratishthan Delhi, Edition reprint 2017, page no. 53

4. Aacharya Vidyadhar Shukla, Prof. Ravidatta Tripathi, Charaka Samhita, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Pratishthan Delhi, Edition reprint 2017, page no. 546
5. Kaviraj Dr. Ambikadatta Shashtri, Sushrata Samhita, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Edition Reprint 2017, Chikitsa sthan page no. 189
6. Dr. Bramhanand Tripathi, Ashtang Hridayam, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Pratishthan Delhi, Edition Reprinted 2017, Page no. 229.

Conflict of Interest: *Non*

Source of funding: *Nil*

Cite this Article:

Panchakarma in the Detoxification and Management of Visha Condition
Chandan Khairkar, Vaishali Gawande, Aruna Jeswani

Ayurline: International Journal of Research In Indian Medicine: 2026;10(01):01-07