



Review Article

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A REVIEW ON NETRA: LAKSHANAS IN SYSTEMIC DISEASES

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is generally understood as the science of life translating “Ayu” as life and “Veda” as science. It has eight branches, out of which “Shalakya Tantra” is the one that deals with diseases above neck. Eyes (Netra) are connected with rest of the body through blood vessels, nerves and muscles. Eyes are the windows in to the body state of health. Systemic diseases can involve the eye and it is important to understand that they may be the first to suggest a diagnosis to underline diseases. So, in Ayurvedic literature, there are many references of involvement of netra (eye) in systemic disorders which can be correlated to the symptoms mentioned in contemporary science. Therefore, the same is discussed in this review article.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Netra, Systemic disorder.

INTRODUCTION

Shalakya tantra is the branch of Ayurveda (also called “Urdhwanga chikitsa”) as it deals with the upper body part mainly described in Ayurvedic literature such as Susrutha Samhitha, Charaka Samhitha & Ashtanga Hrudaya. “**Sarvendriyanam nayanam pradhanam**” mentioned by Acharya Susrutha shows the importance of Eye among all other sense organs. Numerous systemic diseases have ocular manifestations that manifest secondarily. An ocular manifestation of a systemic disease is an eye condition that directly or indirectly results from a disease

process in another part of body. The human eye, as an organ, can offer critical clues to the presence of systemic diseases. Eye is one of the special parts of human body, composed of tissues identical to those of brain and also functionally linked to the brain in many ways. Awareness of this association between brain & eyes assist in early diagnosis and it may help to avoid the complications.

Few references related to involvement of eyes in systemic diseases explained in Ayurvedic classics and in the contemporary sciences are indicated below (Table 1).

Table 1. References of eye in systemic disorders with respect to Ayurveda & contemporary science.

SL. No	Diseases	Ayurveda	Contemporary ^{1,2}
1	Jwara/ Fever	Chakshusorakulatha ³ Nayana parushatha ³ Asru agamana ³	Redness of eye Lusterless eye Watering
2	Pandu/ Anaemia	Soonakshikootatha ⁴ Haaridra netratha Rooksha netratha ²	Swelling around eye Conjunctival pallor Dryness of eye
3	Prameha/ Diabetes	Urdhwagatha rakthapitta Timira ³	Neovascularization Cataract
4	Unmada/ Insanity	Akshi vikshepa ³ Chakshusorakulatha ³ Samrabdhaksha ³	Inability to focus on particular object Turbid eyes
5	Madatyaya/Toxic amblyopia	Timira ⁴ Raktha netratha ⁴	Reduction of visual Acuity Reddish discolouration of eyeball
6	Arditha/ facial palsy	Netra stabdatha ⁴ Ekasya akshi nimeelanam ⁴	Inability to move eye in four quadrants Blinking of any one of eye
7	Kushta/Leprosy	Pakshma saatha ⁴ Akshi raga ³	Falling of eye lashes And eyebrows Episcleeritis
8	Sosha/tuberculosis	Prakasha akshamatha ³ Akshnorathi suklatha ^{3,4}	Photo phobia Whitish discolouration of eye

Apart from the above, references of many other signs & symptoms of systemic disorders manifested in Netra are found in Ayurveda literatures.

Following are few such references found in “Samhithas” with regard to systemic diseases (Table 2).

Table 2. References of eye in systemic disorders with respect to Ayurveda Samhitha

Sl.No	Diseases	Symptoms
1	Jwara (Fever)	Thimira ⁴ (Blurred vision) Sa asra akulakshita ²
2	Prameha (Diabetes)	Peetha Netratha ³ (Yellowish discoloration) Netra upadeha ⁴
3	Unmada (Insanity)	Tamra Haritha haridra ³ Samrabdaksha (Turbid eyes) Sukla sthimitha aalepadigdaksha ³
4	Vatha vyadhi(Praana vayu vrudhi)	Chakshuradeenam Upagatham ⁶
5	Apathantraka	Nimeelithaksha, Nischeshta ⁶ (Motionless)
6	Arditha (Facial palsy)	Netradeenam cha Vykrutham ⁶
7	Gulma	Krishna, aruna, parusha Nayana ³ Athyartham glani chakshusho ⁷ (Tired eyes)
8	Apasmara (Epilepsy)	Prathatham akshno Vykrutham ³ Uthpindithaksha (Upward gazing of eyes)
9	Udara (Ascites)	Peethakshi ³ (Yellowish eye)
10	Arshas (hemorrhoids)	Akshno swayadhu ^{4,6} (Swelling of eyes) Peetha, sukla, Krushna nayana ^{4,6}
11	Kasa (Cough)	Peethakshatha ⁴ Sreemath lochana ⁴ (lustered eyes)
12	Swasa, Hikka (Wheezing)	Uchritaksha, Adho Druk ⁴ (Downward gazing of eyes)
13	Grahani	Vibrantha lochana ³ Timira ⁴
14	Apathanaka	Vishtabdaksha ⁶

IMPORTANCE OF NETRA PAREEKSHA (EXAMINATION OF EYE)

Acharya Charaka has explained the importance of netra pareeksha in the diagnosis of diseases.

pareekshyakaarino hee kushala bhavanthi (cha.sutra 10/5)⁸

Examination of eye (Drik pareeksha) is included under ashta sthana pareeksha⁹ (eight sites of examination) of body. Drik pareeksha helps to identify the dominance of dosha involved and fatal signs. Acharya of Yogaratnakara has mentioned about different netra lakshanas based on dosha involved (Table 3).

Table 3. Netra lakshana based on dosha vrudhi

Aggravated Dosha	Netra lakshanas ⁵
Vata	Netra rookshata (Dryness) Dhoomra varna Roudra Chala (frequent blinking) Antharjalathyapi
Pitta	Deepadweshi (photophobia) Santhaptham (burning sensation) Peetham (yellowish discoloration)
Kapha	Jalardram (Watering) Jyothiheena (lusterless) Snigdham (oily) Mandam (slow movements)
Dwanda dosha	Toornam-toornam vilochanam (Continuous blinking)
Tridosha	Syamavarnam (Bluish discoloration) Tandra (Tiredness) Moha (Sluggishness) Raktha varna (Reddish eye)

DISCUSSION

The Eyes are the windows of our body and soul to view the outside world. Similarly, the eyes act as a window to detect the pathologies of the body. Early identification, prevention and treatment of diseases has been possible by ocular examination. Our ancient Acharyas have also given prime importance to eyes by considering it as the most vital sense organ among all sense organs. The references of Ocular manifestations in systemic diseases along with its method of examination found in

contemporary science were earlier mentioned by Ayurveda Acharyas. Here, in this article, we have tried to analyse the ocular manifestation of systemic diseases explained by various Acharyas of Ayurveda with respect to references found in contemporary science.

CONCLUSION

In this review article, an attempt has been made to analyze the ocular manifestation of systemic diseases explained by various Acharyas of Ayurveda with references found in contemporary science. Further, it is tried to bring about many other signs & symptoms of systemic disorders manifested in Netra which are found in Ayurveda literatures. Also, the importance of Netra pareeksha (examination of eyes), as narrated in Ayurveda samhitha, that helps in identifying the dominance of dosha in human body, is explained in this article. From this analysis, it can be concluded that various systemic diseases are closely associated with eye and the diagnosis of the same can be effectively done by examining the eyes.

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