



Review Article

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NEED OF SHARADI VIRECHANA: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

A healthy lifestyle promotes healthy well-being. Shodhana (purificatory measures) are one lifestyle modification done to conserve health or treat disorders, especially during the onset of seasonal variations. Ayurveda suggests 'Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam', which indicates preventive and curative management. This is necessary for the present environmental conditions as each seasonal variation marks a phase for the onset of various ill effects on health. So hereby, focussing on one Ritu – Sharat Ritu in which Virechana is considered a primary purificatory measure as Pitta dosha prakopa occurs in this Ritu. One has to focus on Ritu lakshanas, body constitution and dosha avastha of an individual rather than the calendar months in which seasonal variations are prebound to occur.

Keywords: Ritu Shodhana, Sharat Ritu, Pitta dosha, Virechana

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda describes a healthy lifestyle and its promotion. Critical equilibrium and homeostasis in tri-doshas are responsible for health and ill health. Chaya (increase in its site), prakopa (increase causing the spread from its own site) prashama (pacification) are the three natural stages that occur according to daily periodical and seasonal variations¹. The present lifestyle, food habits and adaptations trigger the unhealthy states. Climate change is impacting human lives and health in a variety of ways. It threatens the essential ingredients of good health – clean air, safe drinking water, nutritious food supply and safe shelter – and has the potential to undermine decades of progress in global health². The practice of dinacharya (daily regimens) and ritucharya (seasonal regimens) is considered one of the main remedies for preventing such unhealthy states. Ritushodhana, a mandatory procedure in ritucharya, is a part of preventive measure which balances this state of health. This era's seasonal and climatic variations due to

urbanisation and environmental pollution emphasise its importance. Sharat ritu is considered to be a kaala of Pitta prakopa in which purificatory therapies should be done in such a way as to eliminate mainly Pitta dosha. Here the concepts of ritucharya, ritushodhana, specifically of Sharat ritu, are reviewed from the foremost Ayurvedic classics, the relevant websites, journals and articles.

Division of Kaala

According to Ayurveda, kaala (time) is divided into two:

- a) Aadaana – where bala decreases
- b) Visarga – the time in which bala increases³

Each kaala constitutes three ritu, for which per ritu consists of 2 months. Mainly six ritu, which are explained in Samhitas on two bases includes:

Chaya - Prakopa Adhikritya



Samshodhana Adhikritya⁴



Table 1: Time and Procedure of Dosha Shodhana⁷

Dosha	Chaya	Prakopa	Shodhana
Kapha	Hemanta (early winter) and Sisira (winter)	Vasantha (spring)	Vamana
Vata	Greeshma (summer)	Varsha (rainy)	Basti
Pitta	Varsha (rainy)	Sharat (Autumn)	Virechana and Raktamoksha

Ritushodhana

Shodhana is the most successful resort for certain chronic or recurring conditions, called apunarbhava chikitsa⁵. Ritushodhana, a seasonal regime, improvises the body through different functions:

- Maintains Jatharagni (digestive fire)
- Eliminates accumulated toxins.
- Replenishes the body's cells.
- Addresses immune disturbances and hormonal imbalances.
- Reduces seasonal epidemics⁶.

Sharat Ritu – Kaala and Lakshana

Seasonal changes are more evident in the environment. Some such changes that occur in Sharat ritu include:

- Environment and atmosphere changes to babhru (brown or yellowish).
- Plants like Bhaana (*Strobilanthus ciliates*) and Saptaparna (*Alstonia scholaris*), full of slush, water lily, and paddy saplings, grow.
- The sky is clear of clouds with sunrays spreading wide and is hot; krauchana birds (curlews) flying in a formation resembling garlands can be seen.
- Water is evident with the movement of swans, waves raised in the ponds by the fish moving underneath the lotus leaves.
- The land is dry and composed of anthills.^{8,9}

The main months of this ritu-autumn season are¹⁰:
Ashwina – Kartika (Isha – Urja) - September to November
Kartika – Maargasheersha - October to December

Pitta Dosha

The homeostatic mechanism of the body is centred around the three main pillars-Tridoshas. Pitta is an Agni that sustains the body through endocrine and neuroendocrine functions. Five main types include:

Pachaka Ranjaka Saadhaka Aalochana, Braajaka¹¹

Which performs functions of metabolism, transformation, digestion and assimilation.

Pathogenesis of Pitta dosha

The excessive moisture content in the Varsha ritu due to rain imparts klinnatwa (moistness) in nature, vegetation and living beings. Along with this, the cold breeze of the environment vitiates Vata, which in turn hampers Agni. This creates vidaha while consuming food, resulting in indigestion, producing vidagda annarasa. Here the Pitta dosha undergoes sanchaya.

By the commencement of Sharat ritu, the moisture gets dried up because of the emergence of severe sunrays. The body, habituated to the cold of Varsha ritu, suddenly gets exposed to the sun's heat, resulting in the further aggravation of Pitta turning to prakopa¹². Even in this Pitta prakopa state, the drava-guna of Pitta hampers the agni rather than its increase¹³. As Rakta and Pitta have ashraya ashrayee sambhandha (interdependent relationship), diseases related to Rakta are also bound to occur in this increased Pitta¹⁴. Some Pitta Rakta prakopa features like burning sensation, temperature, shonita dushti, kushta, jwara etc., can be manifested. Thus, alleviating Pitta is necessary to pacify these conditions for which methods like tikta ghritapana, virechana and raktamoksha can be adopted¹⁵.

Virechana in Sharat ritu

Virechana is considered one of the main purificatory measures for the Pitta prakopa as it directly enters into the amaashaya and cuts the pittamoola (the root of Pitta), thereby pacifying Pitta residing in the other parts of the body. This can be compared to putting off the burning house by removing the source of the fire itself¹⁶. As Sharat ritu is centred around the Pitta dosha prakopa, virechana is the best regimen to be practised in Sharat ritu.

Effect of Virechana on Pitta dosha

Virechana maintains the equilibrium of functions, nullify comorbid conditions of doshas, and nourishes various Pitta sites that process various chemical reactions in the formation of nutrient products which is used for the nourishment of every cell.

Table 2: Effect of Virechana in Panchavidha Pitta¹⁷

Pachaka	Ranjaka	Saadhaka	Aalochana	Braajaka
-Improves digestive enzymes and metabolic functions	-resides in the liver and spleen -coloration of Rasa -Rakta. -proper absorption of factors regulating erythropoiesis and maturation of RBCs	-resides in Hridaya -helps in fulfilling the desires of the mind.	-resides in Dristi (eye) -helps in the perception of vision and vitamin A absorption	- resides in the skin -helps in the digestion and absorption of substances used in the skin.

Time for Virechana

One should administer purification after snehana and svedana in dosha prakopa avastha, mainly occurring in the second month of the specific ritu. The shodhana therapy should be conducted in the second month of every season. Thus, Pitta shodhana has to be done in maargasheersha¹⁸.

Procedure of Virechana

Deepana & Paachana

Snehapana

Abhyanga and Svedana started after Snehapana

Continued for next 3 gap days

On 4th day – Virechana medicine administered after doing Abhyanga and Svedana

Based on Vegas & Koshta shudhi - samsarjana is administered

Figure 3: Steps in Virechana

Utility

Shodhana procedures are meant for swastha (healthy) and aatura/vishamaswasthavritta (diseased), depending on the disease condition.

For Swastha - Shodhana is mainly indicated in swastha before the intake of any rasayana¹⁹.

For Athura – Shodhana indicated in different diseased conditions like Kushta, Shonitha Dushti and Visarpa²⁰.

DISCUSSION

Samshodhana adikritya shadritu is considered the ritushodhana, which is divided based on dosha prakopa and its timely purification. Based on that, in Sharat ritu, virechana and raktamokshana can be adopted to eliminate Pitta prakopa avastha.

The seasonal timings based on maasa and raashi are followed, but the prime intention should be to consider the ritu lakshanas. The specific features of environmental changes are necessary to create changes in one's body. Here in Sharat ritu, the appearance of sunrays, an environmental cause, shoot the state of Pitta dosha into its prakopa avastha.

The ashrayee ashraya sambandha exists between the Pitta and Rakta dosha, in which the increase or decrease in one simultaneously affects the other. So, when the Pitta dushti occurs, raktaja vikaras also develop.

Pittahara upakarmas have to be followed in these conditions in which virechana eliminates the root cause of the vikara. This balances all types of Pitta, thereby channelising the functions of Rakta.

Even the pure water kept in an undisturbed vessel can get contaminated in time, so toxins accumulate in our body, for which timely elimination is necessary²¹. Ritushodhana is thus meant for both swastha and aatura.

CONCLUSION

One can avoid seasonal diseases and the best preventive medicine by attending to timely purificatory treatment methods. Virechana Karma is considered the safe and effective treatment modality for Pitta disorders, especially in Sharat ritu and can be effectively used even for a delicate person.

Following ritushodhana, by analysing proper ritu lakshanas, the dietary regime and body constitution of each function, both preventive and curative remedies.

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