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Prevention Of Life Style Disorders Through Panchakarma - A Holistic Approach

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ABSTRACT

With rapid economic advancement and increasing westernization of lifestyle in the past few decades, prevalence of many diseases like obesity, diabetes, arthritis, cardiovascular diseases, spinal problems, carcinomas of different parts of body, high cholesterol level, anxiety & depression, etc. has reached alarming proportions among people in the recent few years. Diet & life style are the major factors thought to influence susceptibility to these diseases. Drug abuse, tobacco smoking, alcohol intake as well as lack of exercise, a sedentary life style combined with an increase in the consumption of fatty & junk food is to blame cases of obesity, diabetes, etc. Failure of modern medicines in the prevention of major health burdens force us to revert back for the original detoxifying naturopathy ^[1].

Ayurveda the science of life, describes the management of life style diseases in the forms of proper dietary & behavioural management(dinacharya & ritucharya), Panchkarma procedures, medicaments & rejuvenation therapies. Vitiated dosha is the basic factor in the manifestation & progress of any disease. Panchkarma therapy aims at the elimination of vitiating Dosha from the body so that the disease would be prevented or if the pathology has already established can be treated in the effective manner. Panchkarma helps in detoxifying and rejuvenating body by simple techniques that can be done easily in outdoor practice ^[2].

Keywords: Life style disorders, Panchkarma, Detoxification therapy.

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INTRODUCTION

The world has come a long way in the last 100 years, not just in terms of economic advancements and blurring geographies for trade, but also in the field of science, specifically medicine. As developments in businesses occurred, there was an implicit effect on the pace of lifestyles of the people involved. Although medicine has evolved extensively and has eradicated most of the diseases that were prevalent in the 19th century, the next generation has been plagued with a fresh set of diseases, creatively called “Lifestyle diseases”. These diseases, as the name suggests, are the result of fast-paced lifestyle that necessarily accompanies the developments over the years and have become a major threat to health in the present era. According to WHO, Lifestyle diseases (LSDs) may be chronic diseases of long duration and slow progression or they may result in more rapid death. Diet and lifestyle are the major factors found to influence susceptibility to many diseases. The main factors contributing to lifestyle diseases include bad food habits, physical inactivity, wrong body posture, disturbed biological clock and also addictions such as drug abuse, tobacco smoking, alcohol drinking. The four main types of Lifestyle diseases are Cardiovascular diseases (like heart attacks and stroke), Cancers, Chronic respiratory diseases (such as Chronic obstructed pulmonary disease and Asthma) and diabetes. The other Lifestyle diseases include Hypertension, Obesity, Osteoporosis, Alzheimer’s disease, Arthritis, Atherosclerosis, Chronic Liver disease or Cirrhosis and so on.

The WHO has estimated that by 2020, two-thirds of the global burden of diseases will be attributable to chronic non-communicable diseases, most of them strongly associated with life style. In India (which is already crippled by an ever increasing burden of infectious diseases, poor maternal and perinatal conditions and nutritional deficiencies) 10% of adults suffer from hypertension while the country is home to 25-30 million diabetics. Three out of every 1,000

people suffer a stroke and the number of deaths due to heart attack is also in increasing trend. A report jointly prepared by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Economic Forum says India will incur an accumulated loss of \$236.6 billion by 2015 on account of unhealthy lifestyles and faulty diet. According to a survey conducted by the Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ASSOCHAM), 68% of working women in the age group of 21-52 years were found to be afflicted with lifestyle ailments such as obesity, depression, chronic backache, diabetes and hypertension.

In spite of great progress made by modern scientific system of medicine, the modern drugs have their limitations in use and also result in side effects. Hence, there is a growing interest in the world towards herbal remedies, as the therapeutic efficacy of various Herbal drugs used to treat the lifestyle disorders is insurmountable. According to *Ayurveda*, lifestyle diseases are diseases caused by wrong “*Ahara*” and “*Vihara*” (food and regimen). *Ayurvedic*

intervention is targeted towards complete physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing, which makes it a wonderful option in treating lifestyle disorders. *Ayurveda* provides solution in the forms of proper dietary management, lifestyle advises, *Panchakarma* like detoxification and bio-purification procedures, medicaments and rejuvenation therapies³.

PANCHAKARMA AS PREVENTIVE MEASURE

Panchakarma is a bio cleansing regimen comprising of five procedures, which facilitate better bioavailability of pharmacological therapies, help to bring about homeostasis of body humors, eliminate disease causing complexes from the body & check the recurrence & progression of disease. *Panchakarma* procedures are preceded by *Snehana* (therapeutic oleation) & *Swedana* (sudation) procedures to make the body system

conductive for elimination of bio toxins & cleansing of channels.

The five detoxification/purification measures according to *Charak*, *Sharangdhara* & *Bhavamishra* are *Vaman* (emesis), *Virechana* (purgation), *Asthapanabasti* / *niruhabasti*, *Aanuvasanabasti* / *snehabasti*(enema) *Nasya* (errhines). On the other hand, *Sushruta* & *Vagbhata* describe *raktamokshana* (blood letting) as the fifth *sodhana* therapy⁴.

PANCHAKARMA PROCEDURES

Objective of *Panchakarma* therapy

Panchakarma is performed with three main objectives

- (i) Preventive *Panchakarma*-Promoting the health of healthy individuals
- (ii) Curative *Panchakarma* - Eradicating the disease of a diseased persons
- (iii) Conservative *Panchakarma*- Disease suppression and rehabilitation.

The *Panchakarma* process contains three steps

Purvakarma- Preparations which have to be done before the detoxification

Pradhanakarma– The main detoxifying process

Pashchat karma – Rehabilitating the diet and lifestyle after the detoxification process.

Purvakarma- Snehana Karma (Oleation therapy)

Procedure adopted to induce lubrication of internal and external body channels and tissues with *Sneha Dravyas*.

***Snehana Karma* is of two types**

- (i) *Abhayanga* (External oleation) by massage with medicated oils. External oleation is done after the completion of internal oleation.. The whole body or body part is massaged with medicated oil.
- (ii) *Snehapana* (Internal oleation) for purification or *Shamana*.

Internal oleation is done by administering small quantities of medicated oil or ghee internally. The duration of internal oleation, quantity and

type of medicated oil or ghee is determined by the physician after analyzing the body constitution of the patient. The patient has to eat liquid food or light food on the day prior to internal oleation. After consuming the medicated oil or ghee the patient is encouraged to sip warm water frequently. When medicated oil or ghee is completely digested, the patient is advised to consume light food.

Snehana Karma leads to Oleation, Liquefaction, Increased fluidity and Softening. These steps are adopted to soften the channels and toxins, so that the toxins can get detached and eliminated easily during main detoxifying process.

Purvakarma- Swedana(Fomentation / Sudation therapy)

Swedana (Fomentation/Sudation therapy) relieves stiffness, heaviness and coldness of body and induces the sweating. *Swedana* is preceded by *Snehana* (oleation therapy). As a result the waste materials blocked in the body channels become unctuous and the channels become lubricated. Through *Swedana* these waste materials are brought into the main body channels(*Kostha*), before it is expelled through the main techniques of *Panchakarma*. Both *Snehana* and *Swedana* help to soften the channels and toxin clogs. Elimination of toxins becomes easy when channels are soft and toxins are loose.

Pradhanakarma- Panchakarma(Five Major Purificatory Therapies)

1. ***Vamana Karma***: therapeutic vomiting or emesis therapy
2. ***Virechana Karma***: purgation or catharsis therapy
3. ***Basti Karma***: enema therapy
4. ***Nasya Karma***: errhine therapy
5. ***Raktamokshana Karma***: bloodletting therapy.

Vamana (emesis therapy): When there is congestion in the lungs causing repeated attacks of bronchitis, colds, cough or asthma, the

Ayurvedic treatment is therapeutic vomiting (*Vamana*), to eliminate the *Kapha*. *Vamana* therapy is conducted in early hours of day, when *Kapha Dosha* is dominant. Vitiated *Doshas* and accumulated toxins are expelled through methodically induced emesis. Detoxification through *Vamana* is suggested in diseases which mainly involve *Kapha Dosha*. Therapeutic vomiting is also indicated in chronic asthma, diabetes, chronic cold, lymphatic congestion, chronic indigestion and edema.

Virechana (purgation therapy): When excess *Pitta* is accumulated gall bladder, liver and small intestine, it tends to result in rashes, skin inflammation, acne, chronic attacks of fever, biliary vomiting, nausea and jaundice. *Ayurvedic* literature suggests in these conditions the administration of therapeutic purgation. *Virechana* is expelling the vitiated *Doshas* and toxins through purgation. This therapy can be conducted as an individual detoxification therapy or as a follow up therapy next to *Vamana* to ensure complete detoxification. This detoxification method helps to expel toxins and vitiated *Doshas* from blood, liver and intestines.

Basti (enema therapy): *Vata* predominant site is the colon. *Basti karma* is expelling body toxins and vitiated *doshas* by introduce medicated liquids or oils through anus, urethra or vaginal canal. *Basti* is the most effective treatment of *Vata* disorders. *Basti karma* is usually performed after the first two detoxification process namely *Vamana* and *Virechana* or only after *Virechana*. The expelled medicated liquids/Oil brings out toxins and vitiated

Doshas along with it. Introducing medicated liquids and oils through urethra in men or through vagina in women, is called *Uttarabasti*. It relieves constipation, distension of abdomen, chronic fever, cold, sexual disorders, kidney stones, heart pain, backache, sciatica and other pains in the joints. Many other *Vata* disorders such as arthritis, rheumatism, gout, muscle spasms and headaches may also be treated with

Basti. *Basti* improves vision, decreases weight in obese people, increases weight and nourishes emaciated persons, slows down ageing process and boosts health.

Nasya (errhine therapy): The nose is the gateway to the brain. The nasal administration of medication is called *Nasya*. Vitiated *Doshas* and toxins which are accumulated in head and neck are expelled through nose and mouth along with nasal and oral secretions. This

detoxification method is also known as *Shirovirechana*. *Prana*, life force as nerve energy, enters the body through the breath taken in through the nose. *Prana* is in the brain and maintains sensory and motor functions. *Prana* also governs mental activities, memory, concentration and intellectual activities. Deranged *Prana* creates defective functioning of all these activities and produces headaches, convulsions, loss of memory and reduced sensory perception. Thus nasal administration, *Nasya* is indicated for *Prana* disorders, sinus congestion, migraine headaches, convulsions and certain eye and ear problems.

Raktamokshana (therapeutic blood letting): Toxins present in the gastro-intestinal tract area absorbed into the blood and circulated throughout the body. Also the metabolic waste products not eliminated properly and the free radicals produced by them are the basic cause of repeated infections, hypertension and certain other circulatory conditions. This includes repeated attacks of skin disorders such as urticaria, rashes, herpes, eczema, acne, leukoderma, chronic itching or hives. In such conditions bloodletting is indicated. This procedure can be done in two ways- 1) Bloodletting with Instruments: also called *Siravedha* is one of the varieties of bloodletting and it can be done with the help of needle and some physicians perform vein isection . But bloodletting with needle is very simple and easy method and can be done anywhere without any operation theatre. 2) Blood letting without Instruments: also called Leech application.

Pashchat Karma

A strict diet and lifestyle procedure has to be followed throughout *Panchakarma* treatment. The rehabilitative procedures to bring back the diet and lifestyle to normal are considered as "*Paschat Karma*". In this stage the digestion power is brought back to normalcy. Medicines are administered to rejuvenate the body or to treat the disease⁵.

MANAGEMENT THROUGH PANCHAKARMA

The observations recorded in certain researches done in I.P.G.T. & R.A. Jamnagar with *Panchakarma* therapy in some life style diseases are reported below:

OBESITY

The selected patients were randomly divided into two groups. In group A *Guduchi-Bhadramustadi Basti* for 16 days is adopted starting from one *Guduchi Bhadramustadi Anuvasana* (80 ml) followed by three days of *Niruha* (450 ml) and again repeating the same schedule till 13th *Basti*, after that 2 *Niruha Basti* & completing the full course on 16th day with *Anuvasana*. There are 11 *Niruha Basti* & 5 *Anuvasana Basti*. In group B: *Guduchi-Bhadramustadi Ghanavati* in a dose of 7gm/day, divided into 3 doses before meal with warm water for 30 day. In group A total 10 patients completed the treatment of which maximum i.e. 70% patients reported the improvement followed by 20% which found to be moderately improved by the treatment. In group B (*Guduchi-Bhadramustadi Ghanavati* group) total 10 patients completed the treatment of which, Maximum i.e. 70% patients reported the mildly improvement followed by 30% which found to be improved⁶.

CANCER

Total 40 patients were registered which were randomly divided in two groups. Group A (standard control) - patients taking chemotherapy along with routine adjuvants & Group B (study group) - patients taking chemotherapy along with routine adjuvants & *Matra Basti*. *Matra Basti* may improve digestion and metabolism, facilitates a better blood

circulation and helps in the easy reach of nutrients to all parts of the body. This ultimately helps in reducing the ill effects of chemotherapy and brings in all round health and vitality. Summarizing the effect of therapy on subjective parameters, it can be said that *Matra Basti* showed better result in systemic cancer chemotherapy induced anorexia and generalized weakness. Trail drug (*Matra Basti*) had no effect on chemotherapy induced nausea & vomiting⁷.

OSTEOPOROSIS 25 patients were registered with Osteoporosis/Osteopenia which were randomly selected and divided into two groups. In Group-A, Total 10 patients were treated. Here *Asthishrinkhala Ghrita* was administered in a dose of 60ml as *Matra Basti* for 2 weeks with interval of 1week in between. *Asthishrinkhala* pulp capsule in a dose 1 capsule (500mg each) three times with milk for the duration of 2 months was administered after completion of *Basti* and *Brimhana Snehana*. In Group B Total 12 patients were treated. Here *Asthishrinkhala Ghrita* was administered in a dose of 30 ml divided in to two doses was administered as *Brimhana Snehana*. Overall effect shows that 20% patients of group A were 100% improved 10% patients were markedly improved, no one patient of group B were 100% improved, 8.33% patients were markedly improved⁸.

ESSENTIAL HYPERTENSION The selected patients were randomly placed & studied under two groups. Group A – *Shirodhara* by *Bala Taila* for 30 min (7 Days for *Shirodhara* three sittings between three days interval for 21 days (30days)). Group B - *Sarpagandha Vati* (Each 250mg) 2 *vati* twice daily for 30 days. In 20 patients of each group 40% of patients and 20% patients gained marked improvement in *Shrirodhara* group and *Sarpagandha Vati* group respectively, 50% patients and 35% patients gained in moderate improvement in *Shrirodhara* group and *Sarpagandha Vati* group respectively⁹.

DIABETESMELLITUS 21 patients out of total 42 patients of *Madhumeha* studied in this series

were administered the *Nyagrodhadi Ghanavati*. 21 patients included in combined therapy group, were given *Virechana* therapy before administering the *Nyagrodhadi Ghana Vati*. In both groups *Nyagrodhadi Ghana Vati* was given in the dose of 2 *Vati* (1gm) thrice a day for the duration of 30 days. It was given ½ hour before meal with lukewarm water. 44.44 % patients showed markedly improvement, 68.75% patients showed markedly improvement, 31.25% patients showed improvement 55.55% patients showed improvement¹⁰.

BRONCHIALASTHMA Total 32 patients registered. In the V. P. group, 16 patients were subjected for *Virechana* with *Trivrit* and *Draksa* after proper *Snehana* with *Suddha Ghrita* and 3 days *Baspasveda*. After completion of *Samsarjanakarma*, patients were given *Pippalyavaleha* in dose of 10 gm with milk, twice daily for 1 month. In group P, 16 patients were given *Pippalyavaleha* in dose of 10 gm with milk, twice daily for 1 month as *Samana* therapy. In the V.P group, 50% attained marked improvement. In the P group, 11.8% attained marked improvement. There was moderate improvement in the status of 37.5% patients of the V.P group and 52.9% patients of the P group. *Virchanapura Pippalyavaleha* is have more credibility in bringing out stable and maximum improvement in *Tamakaswasa*¹¹. In other comparative study, group A: *Vamana* group – 14 patients of *Tamaka Shvasa* were treated with classical *Vamana Karma* followed by *Drakshadi Leha*. group B : *Virechana* group– 17 Patients of *Tamaka Shvasa* were treated with classical *Virechana Karma* followed by *Drakshadi Leha Yoga*. Marked improvement was found in 21.42% of patients in group A, while it was not found in any patient in Group B. Moderate improvement was found in 28.57% of patients in Group A, while it was 46.66% of patients in Group B¹².

TENSIONHEADACHE

In group 1, 10 patients of *Vatika Shirahshula* were given 20 ml of *Medhya Ghrita* twice orally with lukewarm water at of *Kshudhakala* (i.e.

when patient felt hungry). Duration of treatment was 44 days. Group 2 : *Medhya Ghrita Nasya* Group (MGN Group) :10 patients of *Vatika Shirahshula* were treated by *Nasya* given with *Medhya Ghrita*. The dose of *Nasya* was 16 to 32 drops in each nostril according to patient's tolerance, once in a day for a period of 10days at a stretch. Three such sittings were carried out in each patient with an interval of 7 days, thus covering the total duration of 44 days. Maximum 8 patients (80%) gained marked improvement and remaining 2 patients (20%) showed moderate improvement in group 1. In group 2, 9patients (90%) gained marked improvement and remaining 1 patient(10%) was having moderate improvement¹³.

DISCUSSION

Shodhana therapy or *Panchakarma* improves *Kayagni*, Cures the disorders, maintains the equilibrium of the *Dosha*, improves colour and complexion and *Bhuddhi*. It also improves the vigor and vitality and enables the person to live a long and healthy life. These benefits of *Shodhana* are similar to the benefits of *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana Chikitsa*. Properly conducted *Vamana* removes aggravated *Kapha* and also makes the body light, improves the functions of sensory organ and clears the channels of chest, flanks and the head region. Properly conducted *Virechana*, removes aggravated *Pitta* and clears all channels of body, *Jatharagni* gets kindled and lightness sets in. Properly performed *Basti Karma*, establish proper expulsion of the feces, urine and the flatus, increases appetite, taste and creates euphoria. Properly conducted *Nasya Karma* removes the aggravated *Dosha* seated above *Urdhva Jatru Pradesha* (head and neck), clears the channels of circulation. Considering all the benefits of the *Shodhana* it is believed that *Shodhana* has action over almost all the systems of the body especially gastro-intestinal system, endocrinal system and metabolic activities. It is believed that *Shodhana* will remove all the waste products of the metabolism and remove the free radicals thus providing a

platform from which the whole body rejuvenates¹⁴.

Researches shows *Vamana* and *Virechana karma* both effectiveness in Bronchial asthma. Review indicates the utility of *Virechana karma* in Diabetes Mellitus. *Shirodhara* found useful in controlling the hypertension. *Basti karma* is found effectiveness in obesity, cancer, osteoporosis. *Nasya karma* was found useful in reducing tension headache.

CONCLUSION

Panchakarma procedures are meant for purification of the body which are helpful for management of certain chronic and life style disorders and they are an important and integral constituent of *Ayurvedic* line of treatment. More and more research works are to be carried out to explore the scientific basis of *Panchakarma* therapy and create a wonderful understanding of its usefulness in lifestyle disorder¹⁵

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