

REVIEW OF JALAUKAVACHARANA: LEECH THERAPY**¹Dr. Sushama Arjun Patil, ²Dr. Veena Sachin More and****^{*3}Dr. Shubhangi Bharama Bharamgonda**¹(MS Shalya), Assistant Professor, J.J. Magdum Ayurvedic Medical College, Jaysingpur.²(MD Dravyaguna), Assistant Professor, Ayurvedic Medical College, Pethvadgaon.³(MS Shalakyatantra), Assistant Professor, Ayurvedic Medical College, Pethvadgaon.Article Received on
14 August 2023,Revised on 03 Sept. 2023,
Accepted on 24 Sept. 2023

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr202317-29784

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According to Ayurveda the disequilibrium of Tridoshas viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha is the root cause of all the diseases. Hence, the basic Ayurvedic treatment is also based on two principles viz. Shodhan chikitsa (Elimination Therapy) and Shaman chikitsa (Internal medicine). Raktmokshana is the ancient bio surgical procedure described by Sushruta, father of Indian surgery. Jalaukavacharana is the ancient technique used for Raktmokshana. Jalaukavacharana (leech therapy) is a non-surgical type of Raktamokshana and considered as the most unique and effective method of bloodletting. Raktmokshana is indicated in treatment of Rakatajroga. Individuals with aggravated imbalance between Rakta and Pitta dosha are recommended for Raktmokshana therapy.

KEYWORDS: Raktamokshana, Jalaukavacharana, Leech Therapy.**INTRODUCTION**

As per Ayurveda, Jalaukavacharan is one of the procedures of Raktmokshana. Raktmokshana is the ancient bio surgical procedure described by Sushruta, father of Indian surgery. The First documented evidence of the use of leech for medicinal purpose goes back to 200 BC. Ancient history suggests that lord Dhanwatari evolved in this world after Samudra manthan with Jalauka along with a pitcher filled with nectar in its hand. Since Jala is their life or they are habituated to the water they are called Jalauka. Raktmokshana is indicated in treatment of Rakatajroga. Individuals with aggravated imbalance between Rakta and Pitta dosha and high level of toxicity are recommended for Raktmokshana therapy. Leech Therapy has been

practiced by Ayurvedic Physicians since ancient times. At the end of the 19th century use of leeches began to be less prevalent due to discontinuity in flow of knowledge. At the end of the 19th century, leech therapy again emerged, due to its role as constructive surgery.^[1]

According to Ayurveda the disequilibrium of Tridoshas viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha is the root cause of all the diseases. Even the definition of health in Ayurveda focus on the equilibrium of the Doshas, Agni, Dhatu & Mala. Hence, the basic Ayurvedic treatment is also based on two principles viz. Shodhan chikitsa (Elimination Therapy) and Shaman chikitsa (Internal medicine). In Shaman chikitsa vitiated Doshas are brought to equilibrium by the internal administration of herbomineral medicines while in Shodhan chikitsa the vitiated Doshas are expelled out of the body by the means of Panchakarma.^[2]

According to Acharya Sushruta the Panchakarmas are Vamana (emesis), Virechana (purgation), Basti (enema), Nasya (instilling medicines through nose) and Raktamokshana (bloodletting). Among these five, Acharya Sushruta has described Raktamokshana as the best procedure because it eliminates all three vitiated Doshas viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha. Broadly there are three different methods of Raktamokshana namely; Sira-vedh in which bloodletting is done through the prominent superficial veins with the help of simple scalp- vein cannula, Jalaukavacharana with the help of Leech and Prachhan karma which is done by taking multiple Incisions on a particular site. Also for different Doshas different instruments are used for bloodletting like.

1. Shring (by sucking blood with the help of animal horn) for Vata dosha.
2. Jalauka (using Leeches) for Pitta dosha and.
3. Alabu (removing blood with the help of empty dried bottle gourd or Ghatyantra) for Kapha dosha.

Jalaukavacharana is a unique method of Raktamokshana. It comes under 'Ashastra' category of Raktamokshana. Also Acharya Sushruta has described Jalauka under the heading of Anushastra (para surgical procedures). The word leech comes from an old English word 'laece' meaning 'physician'. In medieval England, leeches were linked with healing because of the etymology of the word. In Ayurveda, Leeches are called Jalauka because the basis of their life, the site of their dwelling and the source of their nutrition is Jala (water).^[3]

TYPES OF JALAUKA (LEECHES)^[4]

Broadly Jalaukas are divided into two types

1. Poisonous (Savisha Jalauka)- *Hirudo detrimental*
2. Non- poisonous (Nirvisha Jalauka)- *Hirudo medicinalis*

Savisha (Poisonous Leeches)

These Leeches born from the urine, excreta and putrefied (decayed) dead bodies of poisonous fish, insects, worms, frogs and live in dirty water. These are red, white or very black in colour, are over active, stout and slimy, and have varied rainbow like lines on their back. There are six Savisha (Poisonous) Jalaukas. Bite of these six kinds of leeches leads to profuse swelling, itching, fainting, fever, burning sensation, vomiting, toxicity and debility. These should be rejected.

Nirvisha (Non-poisonous Leeches)

These are born in clean water. They are bluish black in colour like algae, have spindle shaped body with dark back and yellowish belly. They are strong, voracious and drink blood quickly. They are born from putrefied (decayed), Padma (Lotus), Utpala (White lotus), Nallina (slight red lotus), Kumuda (lily), Saygandhika (highly fragrant lily), Kuvalaya (red lily), Pundanke (very white lotus), Saivata (algae). There are six Nirvisha (Non Poisonous) Jalaukas. These Nirvisha leeches are found in provinces like Yawana (Arab countries), Pandya (South India), Sahya (Central India) and Pautma (region around Mathura in Uttar Pradesh).

INDICATIONS OF JALAUKAVACHARANA^[5]**Classical indications**

Gulma (abdominal lump), Arsha (piles), Vidradhi (abscess), Kustha (skin diseases), Vatarakta (gouty arthritis), Galroga (throat disorders), Netraroga (eye disorders), Vishavikara, Visarpa (erysipelas).

Other Indications

Venous disease, varicose veins, Peripheral vascular diseases, Haemorrhoids, Osteoarthritis Gout (Vatarakta), Non healing ulcer, Diabetic foot ulcer, Reconstructive surgery, Eczema (Vicharchika).

CONTRAINDICATIONS OF LEECH THERAPY (JALAUKAVACHARANA)^[6]

Leech Therapy is not recommended under the following medical conditions and diseases.

Absolute Hemophilia, Anticoagulant medication eg. Warfarin, Heparin, Marcumar. (Aspirin and Clopidogrel are not contraindicated), Severe Anaemia, Erosive gastritis and potential gastrointestinal bleeding, During chemotherapy (or people who are on immunosuppressive medication), Individuals with HIV infection, Severe allergic diathesis (allergy to foreign proteins), Hypotension, Active tuberculosis, Pregnancy, Mental disorders during acute episodes, Severely ill and bed ridden patients, Extremely fearful patient.

MODE OF ACTION OF JALAUKAVACHARANA^[7]

Action of leech is due to the biological substances present in saliva. This saliva contains more than hundred bioactive substances, which includes an anti-platelet aggregation factor, anaesthetic and anti-inflammatory and antibiotic agents. These agents anaesthetize the wound area making the bite of leech painless to its host and dilate blood vessels to increase blood flow to the site of bite.

CONCLUSION

Raktamokshana by means of 'Leech' comes under 'Ashastra' category as no cutting instrument is used for bloodletting. Because of its safety and high efficacy, Leech therapy is gaining greater attention globally and is considered as a supreme therapy. Leech therapy is widely used in plastic and reconstructive microsurgery as the protective tool against venous congestion.

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