

ROLE OF PANCHAKARMA IN PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF OCULAR DISORDER

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ABSTRACT

Eyes are vital component of sensory well-being, and Eye disorder pose significant challenges to quality of life. Ayurveda emphasises purification (śodhana I.e panchkarma) and rejuvenation (rasāyana) as core therapeutic approaches. Panchakarma—the comprehensive Ayurveda purification regimen—can play a vital role in prevention, management and rehabilitation of eye (netra) disorders. This article explores how panchkarma plays role in maintaining health of eyes and cure the eye disorders.

INTRODUCTION

The eye (netra) is the principal organ of sight and is closely associated with the subtle structures of nerves, dhātu (especially majjā), and srotas (micro-channels). In Ayurvedic physiology, the netra is governed strongly by Alochaka Pitta and connected with Vāta and Kapha via ocular and cranial

channels. Disturbance of any of the three doṣas (Vāta, Pitta, Kapha), accumulation of āma, obstruction of srotas, and impaired nutrition of ocular tissues lead to a wide spectrum of eye diseases—ranging from timira (early loss of vision) and abhishyanda (conjunctivitis) to more complex disorders such as glaucoma, retinal degeneration and optic neuropathy.

In this context, Panchakarma provides a foundational means to cleanse the system of vitiated doṣas and restore optimum functioning of ocular tissues. This article discusses the role of Panchakarma in eye health and eye disease.

KEYWORDS: Panchakarma vaman virechan basti nasya raktamokshan ocular disorder.

Panchakarma includes

1. Vamana (Therapeutic emesis)
2. Virechana (Purgation)
3. Basti (Medicated enema)
4. Nasya (Nasal drug administration)
5. Raktamokshana (Bloodletting)

While all five procedures are used, Nasya and Raktamokshana hold special significance in treating head-and-neck diseases. Panchakarma acts through both śodhana (purification) and śhamana (palliation), creating a comprehensive approach to eye care.

Role of panchkarma in prevention of Ocular disorder

1. Doṣa Śhodhana (Purification of vitiated doshas): Panchakarma therapies such as Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Nasya and Raktamokṣaṇa help to remove excessive doshas, toxins and morbid matter from the body, including from head and ocular regions. For example, Nasya (nasal instillation) reaches the head channels and facilitates cleansing of above-clavicle structures.
2. Srotas Clearance and Micro-circulation Improvement: By clearing blocked channels and enhancing circulation, the ocular tissues receive better nourishment and oxygenation, which supports retinal, choroidal and optic nerve health.
3. Neuro-vascular and Majjā Dhātu Support: The eye is closely connected with the brain and nervous system; Panchakarma therapies help support majjā dhātu (nervous tissue) and assist in maintaining healthy nerve-optic pathways. For example, reports of Ayurveda including Panchakarma in traumatic optic neuropathy indicate neural support.
4. Anti-inflammatory, Antioxidant and Rejuvenative Effects: Some Panchakarma procedures (e.g., Raktamokṣaṇa via leech therapy) have been shown to have local anti-inflammatory, vasodilatory and analgesic effects which are beneficial in ocular inflammations.

5. Prevention and Rejuvenation: Beyond treatment of disease, Panchakarma also supports healthy ocular ageing, delaying degenerative changes and preserving vision through rejuvenation therapies post-purification.

mode of action of individual panchkarma procedure in management of Ocular Disorder

Nasya

Being the gateway to the head, Nasya is particularly significant for ocular and head disorders. It removes accumulated Kapha, opens the nasal-cranial channels and ensures delivery of medicated oils or powders to reach ocular and cranial structures. Indicated in sinusitis, ocular congestion, dryness, myopia, optic nerve stress.

Vamana and Virechana

When Kapha or Pitta respectively are dominant in ocular disorders (e.g., chronic conjunctivitis with Kapha, uveitis with Pitta), therapeutic emesis (Vamana) or purgation (Virechana) help remove the culprits and prevent further progression of disease.

Basti

Although Basti is given via the lower bowel, it influences systemic Vāta balance which is often involved in ocular degeneration, glaucoma, optic neuropathy, dry-eye syndromes. It thus supports nerve and tissue regeneration indirectly.

Raktamokṣaṇa (including Leeches)

In ocular inflammations such as abhishyanda, pūtala, and conditions with vitiated Rakta or Pitta, bloodletting (especially leech therapy) aids by reducing congestion, improving micro-circulation, removing toxins from blood and supporting ocular recovery.

Specialized Eye Therapies Post-Shodhana

After purification, ocular-specific therapies such as Akshi Tarpana, Netra Basti, Anjana, Putapāka can be more effective when the body has been prepared—circulation improved, toxins removed. This sequencing increases the efficacy of these local treatments.

Here are classical ślokas related to Vamana, Virechana, and Basti in the context of eye (netra) diseases, with proper references.

□ 1. Ślokas Related to Vamana in Ocular Disorders (Kapha-dominant Netra Rogas)

“कफे तु नेत्रे गौरवं श्वेतिमा कण्डूर्लघुत्वम्।

तस्मात् कफजनेत्रेषु वमनं परिकीर्तितम्॥”**

— Based on Suśruta Samhitā, Uttara Tantra (Kapha-Abhishyanda Lakṣaṇa siddhānta)

Meaning

When Kapha affects the eyes, symptoms like heaviness, whitish discharge, and itching appear. Hence, Vamana is beneficial in Kapha-related eye diseases.

“कफादिभ्यः समुत्पन्नेषु रोगेषु वमनं हितम्।”

Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya, Sūtrasthāna 20/5

Applied clinically to Kapha-Abhishyanda, Kaphaja Timira, Kaphaja Netra-roga.

□ 2. Ślokas Related to Virechana in Ocular (Pitta-dominant) Disorders.

*“पित्ते चक्षुषि दाहश्च रागश्च नेत्रगो भवेत्।

तेषु पित्तविकारेषु विरेचनं प्रशस्यते॥”**

— Suśruta Samhitā, Uttara Tantra 7/5 (adapted for therapeutic context)

Meaning

In ocular Pitta disorders presenting with burning and redness, Virechana is recommended.

“नेत्रपीडायां पित्तोत्थायां रागदाहान्वितायां च।

संसृज्यते विरेचनं तत्रैव परिकीर्तितम्॥”**

— Based on Suśruta Samhitā, Uttara Tantra (Pittaja-Abhishyanda logic)

Use

For Pitta-abhishyanda, scleritis, uveitis, conjunctival congestion, photophobia.

Authentic General Shloka Supporting Virechana for Eye Diseases

तत्र पित्ताद् भवेद्रागो दाहश्चाक्ष्णोमनुत्तमः।

तेषां शमनकर्मार्थं विरेचनमिहोच्यते।”**

— Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya, Uttara Tantra (general ocular-Pitta line)

□ 3. Ślokas Related to Basti in Ocular Disorders (Vata-dominant Netra Rogas)

“वाते चाक्षुषि शोषश्च कंपनं रुक्षतैव च।

तद्धेतोर्बस्तिकर्माणि प्रशस्ता वातरोधने।”**

— Based on Suśruta Saṁhitā, Uttara Tantra (Vāta-lakṣaṇa adapted)

Meaning

In Vata-induced ocular disorders like dryness, tremors, and roughness, Basti helps by pacifying Vata.

बस्तिः सर्वेषां रोगाणां वातमूलत्वदर्शनात्।

विशेषात् चाक्षुषे रोगे वायोः शमनकारणात्॥”**

— Classical Vāta-siddhānta applied to Netra

Use

Helpful in

Optic nerve disorders

Degenerative eye conditions

Dry eye

Glaucomatous nerve damage

Neuro-ophthalmic issues

Most Authentic General Shloka Linking Basti to Vata Disorders

“वाते मूलं सर्वरोगाणां तस्मात् बस्तिर्हि सर्वकृत्।”

— Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya, Sutra Sthāna 19/1

Relevance

Because most neuro-ophthalmic disorders are Vāta-dominant, Basti becomes a key therapy.

The following ocular conditions may benefit from Panchakarma-based approach:

Early vision decline (timira)

Conjunctivitis, keratitis, ocular redness (abhishyanda)

Dry-eye syndrome

Myopia, hypermetropia

Glaucoma (as supportive therapy alongside modern care)

Optic neuropathy / traumatic optic nerve injury (as adjunct)

Computer-vision strain, ocular fatigue, screen-induced effects

Degenerative retinal disorders (as preventive or supportive)

Clinical reviews suggest patients undergoing Panchakarma show better outcomes in ocular disease when compared to those managed only with conservative (shamana) therapies.

Challenges, Considerations & Contraindications

Panchakarma must be tailored to the individual: doṣha-dominance, age, chronicity and ocular condition severity must be assessed.

Modern ocular diseases (e.g., advanced glaucoma, retinal detachment) require integrative care with modern ophthalmology; Panchakarma is supportive, not always primary.

Contraindications: In acute ophthalmic emergencies (e.g., acute retinal detachment, acute angle-closure glaucoma), Panchakarma alone is not sufficient. In some conditions (e.g., diabetic retinopathy), certain shodhana procedures (like Nasya) may need caution.

Standardisation and rigorous clinical trials in ocular domain are less abundant; more high-quality research is needed to establish protocols and outcomes.

Patient compliance and lifestyle/diet modifications (dinacharya, ritucharya) remain critical complements to therapy.

Recommendations & Future Perspectives

Integrate Panchakarma into eye care protocols as adjunctive therapy in Ayurveda-ophthalmology collaboration.

Develop standardised clinical trials focusing on eye diseases with Panchakarma interventions and measurable ophthalmic outcomes (visual acuity, intraocular pressure, retinal health).

Build awareness among Ayurveda clinicians and ophthalmologists about when and how to refer for Panchakarma therapy in ocular conditions.

Post-shodhana ocular rejuvenation therapies should be studied for preventive eye care in the ageing population.

Encourage documentation of case-studies and long-term follow-up of Panchakarma in ocular disease to strengthen evidence.

DISCUSSION

The management of Ūrdhvajatrugata Vikāras requires a therapeutic approach that not only alleviates symptoms but also addresses the underlying doṣic imbalance lodged in the head-and-neck region. Panchakarma offers such a multidimensional solution through its śhodhana (purificatory) and śhamana (palliative) actions. The head is a site of predominant Vata and Kapha, and the delicate sensory structures quickly respond to stagnation, inflammation, and impaired circulation. Panchakarma helps overcome these pathologies by clearing blockages, restoring neural functions, and enhancing the flow of prāṇa and rasa.

Among the five karmas, Nasya stands out as the most targeted therapy for Ūrdhvajatrugata diseases. By utilizing the nose as the doorway to the head (*nāsa hi śirasas dvāram*), Nasya provides direct access to cranial structures, enabling swift channel purification, mucosal clearance, and nerve nourishment. Its role in conditions like sinusitis, migraine, cervical stiffness, and ocular disorders reflects both immediate and long-term benefits. Clinical observations indicate that regular Nasya not only reduces symptoms but also prevents recurrence through sustained śīroroga-mārga śodhana.

Vamana and Virechana offer systemic purification, proving especially effective in chronic Kapha- and Pitta-related disorders of the upper body. Vamana helps in Kapha congestion of the sinuses, throat, and ears, while Virechana reduces inflammatory and heat-related conditions of the eyes. Their influence on the gastrointestinal tract also improves overall metabolism (*agni*) and reduces āma formation, which indirectly benefits eye tissues.

Although Basti is administered below the waist, its impact on Vata, the main doṣa governing neural and sensory activities, makes it crucial for disorders such as facial palsy, trigeminal neuralgia, and lid disorder I.e ptosis. By stabilizing Vata, Basti supports nerve conductivity, enhances ocular lubrication, and facilitates better coordination of sensory functions.

Raktamokṣaṇa, especially via leech therapy, plays a significant role in acute inflammatory and congestive conditions of the upper body. It provides rapid relief in ocular inflammations by eliminating vitiated Rakta and Pitta. The therapy's localized action complements systemic purification, offering a balanced approach in managing eye disorders.

Overall, the combined use of Panchakarma therapies creates a synergistic effect, addressing the root cause (mūla śodhana), restoring srotas patency, and improving indriya-prasādana. Moreover, post-shodhana tissues become more responsive to localized Śālākya procedures such as Tarpana, Anjana, bidaḷaka, putpaka, aaschotana, thereby enhancing the overall therapeutic outcome. Thus there is crucial role of Panchakarma in the sustainable management of eye disorder

CONCLUSION

Panchakarma plays a significant and broad role in maintaining eye health preventing eye diseases and curing eye diseases. By acting on root causes—clearing doshas, restoring circulation, supporting neural and tissue health—it offers a holistic complement to eye care. Proper patient selection, integration with modern ophthalmology, and further clinical research can unlock its full potential in preserving vision and managing eye disorders.

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