

ROLE OF ASHTAVIDHA SHASTRAKARMA IN NETRA ROGA: A CLASSICAL AND CLINICAL PERSPECTIVE

Minal Santosh Rahinj^{*1}, Santosh Prakash Rahinj², Atri Ghosh³

¹Assistant Professor, Shalakya Tantra, G.S. Gune Ayurved College Ahilyanagar.

²Associate Professor, Shalakya Tantra, Dr. D.Y. Patil College of Ayurveda and Research Center, Pimpri, Pune.

³Assistant Professor, Shalakya Tantra Dr. D.Y. Patil college of Ayurveda and Research Center, Pimpri, Pune.

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***Corresponding Author**

Minal Santosh Rahinj

Assistant Professor, Shalakya
Tantra, G.S. Gune Ayurved College
Ahilyanagar.



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ABSTRACT

Ashtavidha shastrakarma, the eightfold surgical procedures described in Ayurvedic classics, represents the fundamental surgical principles employed in the management of various diseases. In shalakyatantra, especially in Netra Roga (eye disorders), these procedures play a crucial role when conservative management fails. The delicate anatomy of the eye demands precision, which was well understood by ancient Acharyas, particularly Sushruta. This article highlights the classical concept, indications, and clinical relevance of Ashtavidha shastrakarma in the management of ocular disorders, along with its correlation to modern ophthalmic surgical procedures.

KEYWORDS: Ashtavidha shastrakarma, Netra Roga, Shalakyatantra, Ayurvedic Ophthalmology, Eye Disorders.

INTRODUCTION

Netra is considered one of the most important sense organs, essential for perception and daily functioning. Ayurveda gave prime importance to the preservation of vision, with Sushruta providing detailed descriptions of ocular anatomy, pathology, and surgical interventions under Shalakya tantra. While many Netra Rogas can be managed with internal medications

and Kriyakalpa, certain conditions require surgical or para-surgical measures. Ashtavidha Shastrakarma forms the backbone of such interventions and reflects the advanced surgical knowledge of ancient Ayurveda.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is a conceptual and literature view based on classical Ayurvedic texts such as Sushruta Samhita, Ashtaṅga Hridaya, Ashtang Sangraha, Madhava Nidana, and Bhavaprakasaa. Relevant modern ophthalmology textbooks were also reviewed to establish clinical correlation. Data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted to understand the role of Ashtavidha Shastrakarma in Netra Roga.

Concept of Ashtavidha Shastrakarma

छेदनं भेदनं लेख्यम् एषणं चाहरणं तथा । विस्रावणं सीवनं च अष्टौ शस्त्रकर्माणि ॥ सु. सु 25/4)

Ashtavidha shastrakarma refers to eight basic surgical procedures described for the management of surgical conditions. These include

Chedana (Excision)

Bhedana (Incision)

Lekhana (Scraping)

Eshana (Probing)

Aaharaṇa (Extraction)

Vraṇa Karma (Wound management)

Sevana(Suturing)

Visravaṇa (Drainage/Bloodletting)

These procedures are applied in Netra Roga, considering the sensitivity of ocular structures.

Classical Aspects of Ashtavidha Shastrakarma in Netra Roga

1. Indication of Shastrakarma in Netra Roga

(When medicines and kriyakalpa fail)

भेषजैः क्रियया चैव ये नेत्ररोगा न शाम्यति ।

तेषु शस्त्रप्रयोगस्तु दृष्टिरक्षार्थमुच्यते ॥ सु. उ 1/15

2. Chedana

अर्बुदं ग्रन्थिमांसं च वर्त्मनि छेदयेद् बुधः ।

अशेषदोषनाशार्थं सावधानतया भिषक् ॥सु. उ 3/18

Chedana is indicated in arbuda, granthi, and mamsaja vridhi, arma affecting the eyelids or ocular adnexa. Classical texts advise complete removal of diseased tissue while protecting surrounding healthy structures. In Netra Roga, improper excision is warned against due to risk of deformity and vision impairment.

3. Bhedana

पक्वे तु वर्त्मरोगेषु भेदनं हितमुच्यते ।

अपक्वे न प्रयुञ्जीत दोषवृद्धिकरं हि तत् ॥सु. उ 3/26

Bhedana is advised in suppurative conditions such as anyatra granthi and pualasa. Sushruta emphasizes performing incision only after pakva avastha (proper suppuration), highlighting the classical principle of correct timing (kala).

4. Lekhana

स्थूलमांसप्ररोहं तु नेत्रे लेख्यं प्रकीर्तितम् ।

नेत्रसन्धिं परित्यज्य यत्नेन भिषजा सदा ॥सु. उ 6/12

Lekhana is indicated in chronic, thickened, or ulcerative lesions of eyelids and ocular surface. Classical texts mention scraping in conditions where abnormal tissue obstructs normal ocular function. Excessive lekhana is contraindicated, as it may damage netra sandhi and drishti mandala

5. Eshana

अश्रुमार्गनिरोधे तु एषणां प्रयोजयेत् ।

मार्गशुद्ध्यर्थमक्ष्णोः स्रावस्यानुग्रहाय च ॥सु. उ 9/9

Eshana is described for exploring obstructed channels, especially ashrumarg. Classical ophthalmology recognizes tear drainage as essential for ocular health, and probing is advised only with proper instruments and anatomical knowledge.

6. Aharana

अगन्तुजं तु नेत्रस्थं शीघ्रमाहत्य भिषक् ।

रक्षेदक्ष्णोः क्रियां कृत्वा दृष्टिनाशभयात् सदा ॥सु. 312/7

Aharana is indicated in agantuka netra roga, where foreign bodies like dust, lashes, insects, or metallic particles enter the eye. Sushruta clearly states that failure to remove foreign material leads to shotha, ruja, and drishtinasha.

7. Visravaṇa

नेत्ररोगेषु बुद्धिमान् ।

विस्रावणं प्रयुञ्जीत शीतोपक्रमसंयुतम् ॥सु. 3 10/ 22

Visravaṇa is especially important in pittaja and raktaja netra roga. Classical texts advocate controlled bloodletting or drainage to reduce congestion, redness, burning sensation, and pain. Jalaaukavacharaṇa is considered the safest method near the eye.

8. Sevana

छिन्नं भिन्नं च वर्त्माख्यं सीवनं तत्र शस्यते ।

यथास्थानं समं कृत्वा विकृतिं परिहर्तये ॥सु. 3 3/41

Sevana is advised in chinna and bhagna conditions of eyelids. Classical descriptions include types of suturing and suitable materials, emphasizing proper alignment to prevent vartma vikriti (eyelid deformities).

9. Vrana Karma

व्रणशोधनरोपणाभ्यां व्रणः सम्यक् प्रशाम्यति । सु. सु

Vrana Karma includes cleansing (shodhana), healing (ropana), and protection of ocular wounds. Sushruta states that clean wounds heal faster, while contaminated wounds result in complications. Special care is advised in Netra Roga to avoid scarring and functional loss.

Clinical Significance of Ashtvidha shastrakarma in Ophthalmic Diseases

1. Chedana (Excision)

Clinically significant in eyelid disorders such as arbuda and granthi. Excision helps remove abnormal growths obstructing vision or causing irritation. In modern ophthalmology, this correlates with excision of chalazion, papilloma, and pterygium-like lesions.

2. Bhedana (Incision)

Bhedana is indicated in suppurative conditions like anyatra granthi (stye) and eyelid abscesses. Classical texts emphasize incision only after proper suppuration. Clinically, this corresponds to incision and drainage procedures used to relieve pain and inflammation.

3. Lekhana (Scraping)

Lekhana is useful in chronic ocular conditions with thickened or unhealthy tissue, such as granulation tissue or corneal surface pathology. Scraping removes pathological tissue and promotes healing, comparable to curettage or superficial keratectomy.

4. Eshana (Probing)

This procedure is significant in disorders of the lacrimal apparatus, especially ashru marg sanga (nasolacrimal duct obstruction). Probing restores tear drainage and prevents recurrent infections, similar to lacrimal duct probing in contemporary ophthalmology.

5. Aharana (Extraction)

Aharana plays a crucial role in agantuka netra roga, where foreign bodies lodge in the eye. Immediate extraction prevents corneal ulceration, infection, and vision loss. Clinically, it parallels corneal and conjunctival foreign body removal.

6. Visravana (Drainage / Bloodletting)

Visravaṇa is particularly indicated in inflammatory eye diseases dominated by Pitta and Rakta, such as severe redness, burning sensation, and pain. Classical texts recommend controlled drainage or bloodletting to reduce congestion, which clinically resembles decompression or drainage procedures.

7. Sevana (Suturing)

Sevana is essential in traumatic injuries and surgical wounds of the eyelids. Proper suturing restores anatomical integrity and prevents deformities like ectropion or entropion. This aligns closely with modern eyelid suturing techniques.

8. Vrana Karma (Wound Management)

Effective wound care is critical in ophthalmic surgery and trauma. Classical wound management emphasizes cleanliness, protection, and appropriate healing measures to avoid scarring and functional impairment. This corresponds to post-operative care and ocular wound management in modern practice.

Modern Correlation

The principles of Ashtavidha Shastrakarma closely resemble modern ophthalmic surgical techniques such as excision, incision, drainage, probing, suturing, and wound care. The classical emphasis on asepsis, proper case selection, and post-operative care aligns with contemporary surgical standards.

DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic surgical principles demonstrate a holistic and scientific approach to eye care. The application of Aṣṭavidha Śāstrakarma in Netra Roga not only addresses the pathology but also focuses on preserving vision and preventing recurrence. Integration of these principles with modern ophthalmology can enhance patient outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Ashtavidha shastrakarma forms the cornerstone of Ayurvedic surgical management in Netra Roga. Its classical descriptions and clinical applications reveal a deep understanding of ocular diseases and their management. Even today, these principles remain relevant and provide a strong foundation for integrative ophthalmic care.

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