

ROLE OF SAPTOPAKRAMA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF VRANA SOPHA - A CLASSICAL AYURVEDIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Vrana Sopha represents the inflammatory stage preceeding wound formation and is considered a crucial, reversible phase in Ayurvedic surgical pathology. *Suśruta* described *Saptopakrama*, the seven-fold therapeutic approach, for stage-wise and management of *Vrana* and its associated conditions.^[1] To critically review classical Ayurvedic literature regarding the role of *Saptopakrama*—especially *Vimlāpana*, *Avasecana*, *Upanāha*, and other therapeutic measures—in the management of *Vraṇa Śopha*. A comprehensive literary review of classical Ayurvedic texts was conducted. Descriptions related to *Vraṇa Śopha*^[2], its pathogenesis, and therapeutic interventions under *Saptopakrama* were systematically analyzed and interpreted. *Vimlāpana*, *Avasecana*, and *Upanāha* are found to be most effective in the early, non-suppurative stage of *Vraṇa Śopha*. These measures help in *Doṣa śamana*, reduction of inflammation, and prevention of suppuration. *Patana*, *Shodhana*, *Ropana* and *Vikruthapaha* are remaining

saptopakramas which are used in suppurated stage of *Vranashopha*. *Saptopakrama* provides a rational, stage-specific, and holistic approach to the management of *Vraṇa Śopha*. Early application of appropriate *Upakrama* can arrest disease progression and reduce the need for surgical intervention.

KEYWORDS: *Vraṇa Śopha*, *Saptopakrama*, *Vimlāpana*, *Avasecana*, *Upanaha*, *Shalya Tantra*.

INTRODUCTION

Vraṇa Śopha is described in Ayurveda as an inflammatory swelling that precedes the manifestation of a wound. *Vranashopha* is a swelling different from *Granthi*, *Vidradhi*, *Alaji*, which has different structures, has specific clinical features, it may be widely spreadened or nodulated, even or uneven, situated in skin and muscles which arises from combinations of *Dosha* and is a localized swelling.^[3]

Three stages of *vranashopha* are there and they are -*Aamavastha*, *Pachyamanavastha* and *Pakwavastha*.

- Acharya Suśruta emphasized that improper or delayed management of *Śopha* leads to suppuration, tissue destruction, and chronic non-healing wounds. Hence, early recognition and intervention at the *Śopha* stage are more important.^[4]
- Acharya Sushruta has mentioned *saptopakrama* for the management of *Vranashopha*. They are *Vimplana*, *Avasechana*, *Upanaha*, *Patanakriya*, *Shodhana*, *Ropana* and *Vaikritapaham*.^[5]
- To address various stages and presentations of wounds, Suśruta propounded the concept of *Saptopakrama*, a systematic seven-fold therapeutic approach. These *Upakramas* are applied based on the stage of disease, *Doṣa* predominance, and tissue involvement.^[6]
- Among them, *Vimlāpana*, *Avasecana* and *Upanāha* play a vital role in managing *Vraṇa Śopha* before suppuration sets in. This article aims to review classical literature to understand the therapeutic relevance of *Saptopakrama* in *Vraṇa Śopha*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Vraṇa Śopha is described in Ayurveda as an inflammatory swelling that precedes the manifestation of a wound. *Vranashopha* is a swelling different from *Granthi*, *Vidradhi*, *Alaji*, which has different structures, has specific clinical features, it may be widely spreadened or nodulated, even or uneven, situated in skin and muscles which arises from combinations of *Dosha* and is a localized swelling.^[7]

There are basically three stages in *vrnashopha*.^[8] these are as follows

1. Amavastha- It is immature stage of inflammation. Mild rise in temperature, skin coloured, cooled, inflammatory swelling which is hard, presenting with slight pain and swelling are the feature of this stage.

2. Pachyamanavastha- This stage is better called suppurating stage.

Pain like being pricked by needles, being bitten by ants, as though ants are crawling, as though being cut by sharp weapons, punctured by pointed weapons, beatens by batons, hit by the hand, squeezed by the fingers, as being burnt by fire and alkalies, burning sensation locally sensation, thirst, loss of appetite-these and generally all over the body; the person does not find comfort in sitting, lying or sleeping, as though being stung by scorpion; the swelling resembles like a bag distended by air(felt by the fingers of the examiner), change of color of the skin, increase in the size of the swelling, fever, burning sensation, thirst, loss of appetite-these are the symptoms of *pachyamana* stage.

3. Pakva Avastha- Relief of pain, paleness, decreased inflammation, appearance of wrinkles, scaling of skin, depressed in appearance, rising again after pressing with fingers, movement of pus as in a bladder so that by pressing on one end it moves to other end(Fluctuation), frequent pricking pain, itching, swelling, subsidence of complications and desire for food, these are sign and symptom of mature inflammation.

All these symptoms are produced in combination of all the three *doshic* vitiation. Vitiating *vayu* is responsible for different type of pain, suppuration is only possible due to vitiated *pitta* and disarranged *kapha* is responsible for formation of pus.

Saptopakramas in the treatment of *vrnashopha* are,

1. *Vimlapana*
2. *Avasechana*
3. *Upanaha*
4. *Patana*
5. *Shodhana*
6. *Ropana*
7. *Vaikruthapaha*

1. *Vimlapana*

- According to Sushruta-In case of *sthira, manda ruja vrana shopha*, after *snehana* and *swedana* to the part. *Vimlapana* has been advised. *Vimardhana*/Gentle massage should be done with a bamboo, palm and thumb.^[9]
- This facilitates recovery by dispersing accumulated *doshas* in the *srotas* and releasing obstruction.

2. *Avasechana*

- In case of *shopha* of recent onset, *raktamokshana* should be resorted in order to mitigate the *vedana* and *paka*.
- Even in *vrana* associated with *shopha* which are *katina*(hard swelling), dark in color, containing *rakta*, *vedanayukta* or deep seated-*rakta avasechana* should be done.
- Just like that in poisonous wound or swelling blood letting should be done by using leeches.
- Effective in the acute stage of *vrnashopha*, this procedure alleviates pain and stops the progression of suppuration by removing stagnant blood and inflammatory mediators.^[10]
- This may work as illuminating the *Doshas* outside the body and diminishes the local sign and symptoms. *Raktavasechana* removes the *Avaraka* of *Vata*, thus facilitates the *Anuloma Gati* (normal movement) of *Vata* thus helping to cure the *Vranashopha*.

3. *Upanaha*

- In unsuppurated or partially suppurated inflammation *upanaha* (Application of poultices) are advised.
- Due to this inflamed swelling either subsides or suppurates quickly.
- When it is applied in *Amavastha* the *Shopha* gets subsided, and when it is applied to *Pachyamanavastha* the *Shopha* gets *Pakwa*. So it can be applied in both *Amavastha* and *Pachyamanavastha*.^[11]
- Promotes vasodilation, which supports the acute inflammation response, allowing for transmigration and phagocytosis of immune cells, leading to resolution of *vrnashopha*.

4. *Patana*

- Surgical drainage of collected material from the swelling to improve tissue function.
- If inflammation and swelling doesn't reduce even after use of above three procedures and when it gets suppurated/liquified, then *patanakriya* should be performed.^[11]

- If it is done in *amavastha* by mistake then it may cause injury to *mamsa*, *sira*, *snayu*, *asthisandhi*, injuries to different body tissues with various complications as blood loss, pain^[12] etc.
- Ignoring or missing the suppurative stage causes spread of pus to surrounding normal tissue and may result in formation of *nadivrana*.
- Hence it is important to recognise the stage first and then treat accordingly.
- This procedure helps to remove infectious material, reducing pressure and allowing for tissue repair.

• Procedure of *patana*

It has to be done in *pakvavastha*. Different kinds of *shastrakarma* can be used to open the cavity and suppurative contents inside are drained out well by *peedana* and cavity is cleaned with *kashaya*. This has to be performed with proper *purva* and *paschat karma*.

Draining *doshas*, avoiding sinus formation and further progression to gangrene by timely removal of pus and debris.

*After *patana kriya* *Vrana shopha* gets converted into *vrana* and then it is treated with next *karmas* by *shodhana*, *ropana* and *vaikrutapaha*.

5. *Shodana*(cleaning)

- Cleaning wound post incision with medications so as to remove pus, debris and promote favourable environment for healing.
- Procedure: *shodana* is done by using *kashaya* of *shodana dravya*^[13] as well as using them in other forms such as *kalka*, *rasakriya*, *churna*, *varti*, *ghrutha*, *taila*, *dhupana* etc.

Drugs: *Shankini*, *jaati*, *karaveera*, *suryavarta*, *triphala*, *daruharidra*, *nimbapatra*, *bala*, *darbha*, *aragwadhadi gana*, *nyagrodadhi gana*, *surasadi gana*, *trikatu*, *karanja*, *manjishta*, *trivrutt*, *chitraka*, *danti*, *panchavalkala* etc.

- Using antiseptic solutions or other cleansing agents to prevent contamination and promote healing by ensuring the wound environment is sterile.
- Mostly *dravyas* with properties as *kashaya*, *katu*, *amla*, *lavana rasa*, *tikshna*, *ushna*, *ruksha* are used.

Purpose: Cleaning of wound.

- Reducing local *dosha-dhatu dushti*(reducing toxins and microbial load, discharge debris in wound), promotes healing.

6. *Ropana*(Healing measures)

- Measures for healing of wound by promoting healthy granulation.

Procedure: *Ropana* is done when wound gets into *shuddha avastha*, after achieving a clean wound.^[14]

- It is done by use of application with 7 *ropana kalpana* as *kashaya, varti, kalka, ghruta, taila, rasakriya, churna* etc.
- Drugs used: Medicines with properties such as *madhura, kashaya rasa, snigdha, sheeta, balya, jeevaniya* drugs.

eg, *nyagrodha, udumbara, plaksha, madhu, chandana, manjishta, durva* etc.

Purpose: Healing of wound by promoting granulation.

7. *Vaikrutapaha*

- Even after complete healing of *vrana* restoration of normal colour, shapes are essential. Among all *Saptopakram Vaikritapaham* is the most important. This involves all the procedure from healing of wound till the normal colour, hair, etc., of skin is attained.
- Sometimes there is abnormal pigmentation depression/elevation, hair loss etc. So *vaikrutapaha* is a measure which helps in restoration.
- For this *krishnakarma, pandukarma, romasanjanana, romapaharana* are mentioned.

1. *Krishnakarma*: White scar that results after healing of those wounds which cure with great difficulty *krishna karma* are advised.^[15]

Bhallataka seeds are soaked in urine (cow) followed by in milk (cow) each for 7 days. After that seeds are cut into two and filled into an iron pot.

Another mud pot is to be buried in the ground and the pot containing *bhallataka* kept over it joining and sealing the mouths of both with mud plash. The seeds are then cooked by fire of cowdung heaps. The oil of *bhallatakas* seed are trickled slowly in lower pot. Hoof of domestic animals and of marshy regions are burnt by fire and then powdered nicely, then it is mixed with the oil of *bhallataka* should be applied on the white skin.

2. Pandu karma(whitening)

Pandu karma are advised in those cases in which after improper healing of wound or dark colour scar has resulted out of *vrana*.^[16] *Rohini phala*, *kapittha phala* etc. with other drugs are processed and used in these cases.

Rohini phala is soaked in goat milk for seven days and made into a paste. This is very good to produce white color.

Evacuated shell of *kapittha* fruit is filled with urine of goat, added with powder of *kasisa*, *rochana*, *tuttha*, *haritala*, *manashila*, bark of *renu*, *prapunnada*, *rasanjana* and *arjuna*. The shell are buried in the ground for one month. After one month it is taken out. The paste inside it applied on the area of the wound.

3. Romasanjanana (Promoting hair growth)

Bhasma of *hastidanta* mixed with *rasanjana* is helpful to grow hairs even on the palm. *kaseesa* and leaves of *naktamala* are macerated in the juice of *kapittha* is best for growth of hairs.

4. Romapaharana

Due to presence of hair, wounds are not healed properly. In that case hairs are removed by razor, scissor or forceps.

eg: Two parts of *bhasma* of *shankha*, one part of *haritala* macerated in vinegar is best to make the hairs fall off.---

Oil of *bhallataka* mixed with latex of *snuhi* is applied as one of the best depilation. Ash of *kadali* and *deerghvrinta* with *haratala*, salt and seeds of *shami* in the form of paste prepared in cold water are used to depilation of hairs.

DISCUSSION

Vranashopha and its *Avasthas* (stages) should be understood very clearly as surgery in *Amavastha* causes injury to the normal *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu* and increased bleeding and ignoring surgery in *Pakwavastha* leads to sinus and fistula formation. An attempt has been made to review the *Sushruta Samhita* and collect the spread knowledge in one place. As *Acharya Sushruta* explained *Saptopakrama* in *Vranashopha* but direct reference regarding use of *Saptopakrama* according to the *Avastha* is not mentioned clearly. From the explanation explained above in the individual *Saptokrama* discussion it can be concluded that the

procedures *Vimlapana*, *Avasechana*, *Upanaha* can be used for both *Amavastha* & *Pachyamanavastha* of *Vranashopha*. The *Upakramas* for *Pakvasthas* are *Patana* followed by *Shodhana* & *Ropana*. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, the *Vaidya* who incises the *Vranashopha* in *Amavastha* and ignores the *Vranashopha* even if it is reached in *Pakwavastha* is called *Shwapach* (*Chandal* i.e., worst among the *Vaidyas*). From a modern perspective, these therapies resemble conservative management of inflammatory swellings, emphasizing circulation enhancement and inflammation control. The holistic nature of *Saptopakrama* minimizes complications and promotes tissue preservation.

CONCLUSION

This review study, shows that *Acharya Sushruta* describe *Vranashopha* and *Saptopakrama* in detail. This description clearly states that they have clear understanding about this disease and therefore were able to treat this condition properly. In *Vraṇa Śopha*, early implementation of *Vimlāpana*, *Avasecana* and *Upanāha* can effectively reverse pathology and prevent progression to suppuration. That can be employed according to the different stages of wound. It is easy to learn and apply the principle of *Saptopakrama* in the management of surgical wounds.

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