



Review Article

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CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON RUKSHANA: ITS IMPORTANCE AND THERAPEUTIC METHODS IN AYURVEDA

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Abstract

आयुर्वर्णो बलं स्वास्थ्यमुत्साहापचयां प्रभाः। ओजस्तेजोअमनयः प्राणाश्चोक्ता देहग्निहेतुकाः।

शान्तेगनौ म्रियते युक्ते चिरं जीवत्यनामयः। रोगी स्थिवदिकृते मूलमग्नितस्मान्निरुच्यतं

(Ch. Chi 15/3-5)

Agni is regarded as the factor responsible for digestion, metabolism, and maintenance of health. Any imbalance in the normal functioning of Agni results in the production of Ama, which is the cause of the development of many metabolic and Kapha predominant diseases. Ayurveda has described various treatment procedures such as Deepana, Pachana, and Rukshana for the correction of Agni and elimination of Ama. Rukshana is a treatment procedure that provides dryness, lightness, and non-unctuousness to the body and is primarily used as Vishesh Poorvakarma for Shodhana procedures. This article describes the concept of Rukshana, its properties, types, indications, and uses. Therapeutic procedures such as Takrarishta, Udvartana, and Valuka Sweda are described along with their possible mechanism of action. Rukshana has great importance in the prevention of Sneha-related complications and increases the efficacy of Shodhana procedures, especially in the treatment of Prameha, Sthoulya, Urustambha, Amavata, and Shotha.

Keywords - Rukshana, Agni, Ama, Deepana, Pachana, Panchakarma

169

Introduction

Agni is the key concept of Ayurveda that controls digestion, metabolism, and nourishment of the body. Agni is said to be responsible for Ayu, Varna, Bala, Swasthya, Utsaha, Ojas, Teja, and Prana, as per the ancient texts. When Agni is impaired or reduced, the digestion of food is not proper, and this results in the production of Ama. Ama is an undigested or partially digested toxic material that moves in the body and is the basic cause of many diseases. When Agni is balanced, it maintains health, but when it is imbalanced, it causes diseases, and when it is completely lost, it causes death. Therefore, the correction of Agni is the main aim of Ayurvedic treatment.¹

Materials and Methods

The present article is based on the literary review of classical Ayurvedic texts like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, and Yogaratnakara. The relevant references regarding Agni, Deepana, Pachana, and Rukshana were analyzed and compiled to discuss their therapeutic significance and uses.

Results and Discussion. Deepana and Pachana

Predominant Rasa In Deepana		
च.सू. 26/ 42	सु.सू. 42/ 9- 10	अ. ह.सू. 10/ 10- 21
Amla Katu	Amla Katu	Amla Lavana
Tikta Lavana	Tikta	Katu

Deepana and Pachana are significant therapeutic approaches that can be employed either as Purvakarma preceding Shodhana Chikitsa or as the prime therapy in different diseases. Deepana drugs are known to stimulate the digestive fire without actually digesting Ama, while Pachana drugs assist in the digestion of Ama without augmenting Agni. According to Acharya Charaka, Deepaniya Dashamani includes drugs like Pippali, Pippali Mula, Chavya, Chitraka, Shunthi, Amlavetasa, Maricha, Ajamoda, Bhallataka, and Hingu Nirayasa. Deepana drugs act as stimulants for the taste receptors in the mouth and also as stimulants for the secretion of saliva, which in turn increases the secretion of gastric juice. They also act as stimulants for the vagus and glossopharyngeal nerves, thus increasing the secretion of gastrin and hydrochloric acid.²

Concept of Rukshana

रौक्ष्यं खरत्वं वैशद्यं यत्कुर्यात्तद्धि रूक्षणम्। (च.चि 22 /10)

Rukshana is referred to as the process of therapy that generates Rukshata, Kharatva, and Vishadata in the body. The word “Ruksha” refers to the absence of Sneha and stickiness. Rukshana is primarily used as a Vishesh Poorvakarma procedure for Shodhana, especially in Kapha and metabolic disorders. The drugs that possess Ruksha, Laghu, Khara, Ushna, Sthira, and Apicchila Gunas are the causative agents for the Rukshana effect. Of the Shadrasa, Kashaya Rasa is the most Ruksha, followed by Katu and Tikta Rasa.³

Rukshana in Dinacharya

Some daily practices like Vyayama, Udvartana, and Tambula Sevana provide Rukshana effects. These practices do not allow the Kapha and Meda to accumulate in excess and make the body light.

Rukshana in Panchakarma

According to Acharya Vagbhata, in obese patients with excess Kapha Dushti and irregular digestive fire, Rukshana Karma should be done prior to Snehapana and Shodhana. Proper Rukshana helps to avoid the accumulation of Sneha in the body and makes it easy to eliminate the Doshas. In patients with Sneha Vyapats, Rukshana can be used effectively.

Types of Rukshana

There are two types of Rukshana:

1. Internal Rukshana
2. External Rukshana

1. Internal Rukshana

Takrarishta

Takrarishta is an internal Rukshana formula that is prepared using Takra and other ingredients such as Yavani, Amalaki, Pathya, Maricha, and different Lavanas. It has Deepana, Pachana, Rochana, and Kapha-Vatahara properties. Takrarishta balances Agni, removes Ama, and assists in healthy Dhatu nourishment. It is used in treating conditions such as

Grahani, Arshas, Prameha, Udara, Shotha, and Agnimandya. It acts mainly on the digestive system, including the stomach, intestines, and liver.

2. External Rukshana

Udvartana

Udvartana is an external Rukshana treatment that requires massage of the body with herbal powders in an upward motion. It acts on the skin and subcutaneous tissues, increasing circulation, reducing excessive fat, and eliminating toxins. Udvartana assists in the liquefaction of Kapha and Meda, reduces lymphatic congestion, increases muscle tone, and regulates Doshas. It is especially useful in cases of obesity, metabolic disorders, and Kapha dominance

Valuka Sweda

Valuka Sweda is a form of Ruksha Swedana where heated sand is packed in a cloth pouch and administered over the affected area of the body. Sand is rich in silica and has a low specific heat index, making it an ideal material for heat storage and distribution. When heated, it radiates far-infrared rays, which can penetrate deeply into the tissues, cause vasodilation, increase blood circulation, relieve pain, and remove toxins at the cellular level. Valuka Sweda is particularly useful in Medoroga, Urustambha, and Ama-originated diseases.

Indications of Rukshana

Rukshana is indicated in the following conditions:

Abhishyanda (excess discharge and obstruction of channels)

Kapha and Meda-dominant diseases

- Urustambha
- Amavata
- Shotha
- Prameha
- Kushta
- Sthoulya

Use of Rukshana in Diseases

लंघनं स्वेदनं तिक्तं दीपनानि कटूनि च । विश्वन स्नेहपान बस्त्याश्चाममारुते ॥

सैन्धवाद्येनानुवास्य क्षारवस्तिः प्रशस्यते ॥ **(Chakradhutta 25)**

In Amavata, low digestive fire results in the production of Ama, which mixes with the Vata and causes stiffness and pain in the joints. Langhana, Pachana, and Ruksha Swedana are used for the digestion of Ama and relieving stiffness.

In Urustambha, the primary treatment is the reduction of Kapha and Ama. Rukshana drugs, which are opposite in properties to Kapha and Ama, are to be taken, and Sneha and Basti therapies are contraindicated.

सदा रूक्षोपचाराय यवश्यामाककोद्रवान् । शाकैरलवणैर्दद्याज्जलतैलोपसाधितैः ॥२६॥

[Charak Chikitsa 27/26]

Conclusion

Rukshana is a very significant therapeutic procedure mentioned under Apatarpana Chikitsa and is commonly practiced as a Vishesh Poorvakarma prior to Shodhana procedures. In Kapha, Meda, and Kleda-dominant Bahudoshaja diseases, improper or inadequate Rukshana can cause complications related to Sneha. Hence, Rukshana is a very important procedure in the treatment of diseases like Prameha, Kushta, Sthoulya, and Urustambha.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST -NIL

SOURCE OF SUPPORT -NONE

References

1. Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 22, 26; Chikitsasthana 15, 27
2. Sushruta Samhita, Sutrasthana 42; Chikitsasthana
3. Ashtanga Hridaya, Sutrasthana 2, 10