



Review Article

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ROLE OF JALOKĀVACARAṆA (LEECH THERAPY) IN THE MANAGEMENT OF VISARPA, VARICOSE VEINS, AND MUKHADŪṢIKĀ – AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW

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Abstract

Leech therapy, or jalokāvacaraṇa, is a special parasurgical technique that is primarily recommended for Pitta and Rakta-pradhāna disorders Ayurveda describes the process through Raktamokṣaṇa. Classical Ayurvedic texts show its three important qualities which include safety and ease of use and effective treatment for inflammatory and vascular conditions.

Rakta and Pitta doṣas are important in the pathogenesis of Visarpa, Sirāgranthi (varicose veins), and Mukhadūṣikā. In contemporary medicine, these disorders are associated with acne vulgaris, venous insufficiency, and inflammatory dermatoses, respectively. In addition to removing vitiated blood, Jalokāvacaraṇa also introduces biologically active substances like hirudin, which have analgesic, anticoagulant, and anti-inflammatory qualities. The review investigates the application of Jalokāvacaraṇa for treating Visarpa and varicose veins and Mukhadūṣikā according to traditional Ayurvedic methods which contemporary scientific research supports.

The process provides a complete treatment solution that treats both inflammatory and chronic conditions through a method which requires minimal invasive procedures and delivers affordable treatment costs.

Keywords Jalokāvacaraṇa, Raktamokṣaṇa, Visarpa, Varicose Veins, Mukhadūṣikā, Ayurveda

Introduction

Ayurveda views health as a balance of Doṣa, Dhātu, and Mala. Rakta is the most important among the Dhātus because it is closely linked to Pitta Doṣa. The body uses this function to maintain skin color while it provides energy and supports tissue growth. Various systemic and skin disorders develop when Rakta experiences an imbalance.¹ Rakta purification works as a vital procedure which doctors use to treat patients suffering from Rakta-pradhāna diseases. Raktamokṣaṇa serves as the primary treatment method which doctors use to treat patients with Rakta Doṣa. Jalokāvacaṛaṇa is regarded as the best bloodletting technique because it is gentle and has few side effects.²

“तत्र जलौकावचरणं सर्वेषां रक्तदोषाणां श्रेष्ठतमम्” (Suśruta Saṃhitā, Sūtrasthāna 13)

Rakta and Pitta are dominant in Visarpa, Sirāgranthi (varicose veins), and Mukhadūṣikā. Jalokāvacaṛaṇa is a perfect treatment for these conditions because it acts both locally and systemically.³

Materials and Methods

This review is based on a thorough analysis of traditional Ayurvedic texts, such as Suśruta Saṃhitā, Caraka Saṃhitā, and Aṣṭāṅga Hōdaya, along with their genuine commentaries. To comprehend the physiological and pharmacological aspects of leech therapy, pertinent published research articles and contemporary scientific literature were also examined. Jalokāvacaṛaṇa's therapeutic action and disease pathogenesis were conceptually analyzed.⁴

Concept of Jalokāvacaṛaṇa

In Jalokāvacaṛaṇa, medicinal leeches are used for bloodletting. According to Suśruta, Jalokā is particularly appropriate for women, children, and the elderly, and sensitive people.

“पित्तासृक्दोषसंयुक्ते जलौकाभिर्विशोधनम्” (Suśruta Saṃhitā, Sūtrasthāna 13)

The anticoagulant, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties of leech saliva are explained by bioactive compounds like hirudin, calin, eglins, and bdellins.⁵

Role of Jalokāvacaṛaṇa in Visarpa

Redness, burning sensation, pain, fever, and swelling are the hallmarks of Visarpa, an acute inflammatory disease that spreads quickly. Rakta-Pitta pradhāna is the main cause of the illness.

“रक्तपित्तसमुत्थानं विसर्पं विद्धि बुद्धिमान्।” (Suśruta Saṃhitā, Nidānasthāna 9)

Samprāpti (Pathogenesis)

This vitiated Pitta in turn contaminates Rakta, causing it to spread rapidly through the skin and muscles. The disease spreads rapidly because of its Tikṣṇa and Sāra properties in Pitta.

Therapeutic Effect of Jalokāvacaraṇa

- Immediate elimination of vitiated Rakta
- Reduction in dāha (burning) and raga (redness)
- Control of rapid spread of lesions
- Prevention of suppuration and complications

Its application is especially indicated in Pittaja and Raktaja Visarpa, in which other methods of bloodletting may aggravate the case.⁶

Role of Jalokāvacaraṇa in Varicose Veins (Sirāgranthi)

The symptoms of Sirāgranthi are characterized by dilated tortuous veins accompanied by pain, heaviness, discoloration, and edema. It occurs due to Vāta-Rakta duṣṭi.

“वातेन रक्तदुष्टेन सिरासु ग्रन्थयः स्मृताः।” (Suśruta Saṃhitā, Nidānasthāna 11)

Ayurvedic Perspective -Vata will cause loss of elasticity and vein dilation, while vitiated Rakta will cause inflammation and discoloration.

Role of Jalokāvacaraṇa

- Reduces venous congestion
- Improves microcirculation
- Relieves pain together with edema and heaviness
- The treatment prevents patients from developing varicose ulcers

Leech therapy is particularly beneficial in early stages and inflammatory conditions associated with varicose veins

Role of Jalokāvacaraṇa in Mukhadūṣikā

The condition known as Mukhadūṣikā which appears under Kṣudra Roga presents itself through facial skin eruptions that create painful swollen areas which resemble thorns.

“मुखदूषिकाः पित्तकफरक्तोत्थाः।” (Suśruta Saṃhitā, Nidānasthāna 13)

Doṣa Involvement

- Pitta creates inflammatory responses which result in skin redness.
- The Kapha dosha leads to follicle obstruction issues.
- The Rakta dosha causes skin discoloration which results in pus formation.

Benefits of Jalokāvacaraṇa

- Purification of Rakta
- Decreased inflammation together with reduced pigmentation
- Skin complexion showed enhancement
- The number of chronic cases which returned decreased in frequency

Discussion and Conclusions

The Ayurvedic system considers Jalokāvacaraṇa to be an effective treatment method for Rakta-Pitta based disorders which require parasurgical procedures. The application of Jalokāvacaraṇa in Visarpa, varicose veins, and Mukhadūṣikā has been supported with classical literature as well as scientific knowledge. The procedure of Jalokāvacaraṇa therapy removes contaminated blood from the body through improved microcirculation which provides a secure and economical method for contemporary medical practices that require complete treatment.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST -NIL

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