



Review Article

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POORVAKARMA OF VIRECHANA IN VARIOUS DISEASES

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Abstract

Virechana Karma, the therapeutic purgation, is one of the five principal Shodhana therapies (Panchakarma) in Ayurveda. Primarily indicated for the expulsion of vitiated Pitta dosha, it plays a crucial role in managing a wide spectrum of disorders involving Pitta, Rakta, and metabolic dysfunction. With increasing global interest in detoxification therapies, Virechana Karma has garnered attention for its potential applications in gastrointestinal, dermatological, metabolic, and hepatic disorders. However, a systematic evaluation of its safety, efficacy, and therapeutic outcomes is essential for its broader acceptance and integration into contemporary healthcare.

Introduction

तत्र दोषहरणम् अधोभागं विरेचनसंज्ञकम् । (च. क. 1/4)

Expelling doshas from the lower part (anal route) is called Virechana.¹

Virechana Ka Parichaya

Importance Of Virechana Karma

विवेचनं तु सर्वोपक्रमेभ्यः पित्ते प्रधानतमं मन्यते भिषजः । तद् हि आदित एवं आमाशयमनुप्रविश्य केवलं वैकारिकं पित्तमूलमपकर्षति, तत्रावजिते पित्तेऽपि शरीरान्तर्गताः पित्तविकाराः प्रशांतिमापद्यन्ते, यथाऽग्नौ व्यपोढे केवलमग्नि गृहं शीती भवति तद्वत् ॥ (च. सू. 20/16)

Virechana is the best treatment for pitta disorder because the purgative substance first goes to the stomach and extracts all the vitiated pitta from its root, expelling it through the lower path. After conquering the vitiated pitta in the stomach, the pitta-related diseases occurring in different parts of the body automatically subside. That is, just as when a house catches fire, the fire is extinguished and controlled, and after extinguishing the fire, the coolness is gradually attained and the house becomes cool, similarly, when the gastric pitta is pacified, all the pitta-related diseases of the body are cured.²

Indication of Virechana Karma

शेषास्तुविवेच्याः-विशेषतस्तु कुष्ठज्वरमेहाध्वं रक्तपित्तभगंदराशोब्रध्नप्लीहगुल्मार्बुदगलगंडग्रंथि विसूचिकाल-सकमूत्राघातक्रिमिकोष्ठविसर्पपांडुरोगशिरः पार्श्वशूलोदावर्तनेत्रास्यदाहहृद्रोगव्यंगनीलिका नेत्रनासिकास्यस्रवणहलीमक श्वासकासकामलापच्यपस्मारोन्मादवातरक्तयोनिरेतोदोषतैर्मिर्यारोचकाविपाकच्छर्दि श्वयथूदरविस्फोटकादयः, पित्त व्याधयो विशेषेण महारोगाध्यायोक्ताश्च ॥ (च. सि. 2/13)

No.	Disease (Sanskrit/Hindi)	English Equivalent
1.	Kushtha	Obstinate Skin Diseases (e.g., Psoriasis, Eczema)
2.	Jwara	Chronic Fever
3.	Prameha	Diabetes and Urinary Disorders
4.	Urdhva Raktapitta	Bleeding through upper channels (nose, mouth)
5.	Bhagandara	Fistula-in-ano
6.	Udara Roga	Ascites and Abdominal Diseases
7.	Arsha	Hemorrhoids (Piles)
8.	Bradhna	Inguinal Swelling / Hernia
9.	Pleeha Roga	Splenomegaly (Enlarged Spleen)
10.	Arbuda	Tumors or Lumps
11.	Galaganda	Goitre
12.	Granthi	Cyst or Glandular swelling

Contra Indication of Virechana Karma

अविरेच्यास्तु सुभगक्षतगुदमुक्तनालाधोभागरक्तपित्तविलंघितदुर्बलेन्द्रियाल्पानिनिरूदकामादि व्यप्राजीर्णिव-
ज्वरिमदात्ययिताध्मातशल्यदिताभिहतातिस्निग्धरुक्षदारुणकोष्ठाः क्षतादयश्च गर्भिण्यांताः ॥

क्षतादयश्च गर्भिण्यांताः (च. सि. 2/11)

- **Sukumar:** People with a very delicate or tender constitution.
- **Kshataguda:** Those with injuries, wounds, or ulcers in the rectum/anal canal.
- **Muktanala:** Those suffering from diarrhea or an inability to control bowel movements.
- **Adhoga Raktapitta:** Conditions involving bleeding from the lower body parts (e.g., blood in urine or stool).
- **Vilanghita:** Individuals weakened by excessive fasting or lightening therapies.
- **Durbalendriya:** Those with very weak sense organs or extreme physical debility.
- **Alpagni:** People with a very weak digestive fire (Mandagni).
- **Niruha:** Those who have just undergone a decoction enema (Niruha Basti).
- **Kamadi Vyagra:** Those preoccupied or overwhelmed by intense emotions like lust, anger, grief, or fear.
- **Ajirni:** Those suffering from indigestion.
- **Navajvara:** Patients with acute or newly onset fever.
- **Madatyayi:** Those suffering from acute alcoholism or related intoxication disorders.
- **Adhmata:** Those with severe abdominal distension or bloating.
- **Shalyardita:** Those suffering from injuries caused by foreign bodies or weapons.
- **Abhihata:** Those who have suffered a recent trauma or physical assault.
- **Atisnigdha & Atiruksha:** Those who are excessively oily (due to over-saturation) or excessively dry.
- **Daruna Koshtha:** Those with an extremely hard or stubborn digestive tract (chronic constipation).
- **Garbhini:** Pregnant women.

Types Of Virechana

चरकानुसार

	मृदु विरेचन	सुख विरेचन	सुख विरेचन
1. मल प्रवर्तक	अल्प मल प्रवर्तक	सुख पूर्वक अबहु मल प्रवर्तक	अति वेग से मल प्रवर्तक
2. उदाहरण	अमलतास	निशोथ	स्नुही क्षीर

शार्ङ्गधर व भावमिश्रानुसार

	अनुलोमन	खंसन	भेदन	रेचन
मलादि की स्थिति	मलादि को पकाकर बाहर निकाले	बिना पकाये ही शरीर से बाहर निकाले	मलादि को टुकड़े करके शरीर से बाहर निकाले	पक्व अथवा अपक्व मलादि को पतला करके बाहर निकाले
उदाहरण	हरीतकी	अमलतास	कुटकी	निशोथ

Poorvakarma of Virechana

The pre-purgation procedure aims to prepare the body for purgation and to bring toxins to gut for expulsion. Digestive (pachana) therapies are administered to correct digestion and detach the microcellular toxins (ama). Unction (snehana) is prescribed in a suitable dose for a duration until proper unction features are observed. This is generally done for three to seven days. Therapeutic massage (abhyanga) and fomentation therapy (swedana) are generally advised for six sessions in three days after completing internal unction therapy. [Cha. Sa. Sutra Sthana 13/80] The person is advised to take light to digest food, sour fruits and hot water on previous day of virechana. [Su.Sa.Chikitsa Sthana.33/20] The food prior to virechana should not increase kapha dosha, because it can adversely affect purgation. The less amount of kapha dosha present in the gut at the time of virechana is important for complete benefits of virechana. [Cha.Sa.Siddhi Sthana 1/9] The three days interval prior to main procedure is meant to reduce the kapha dosha, possibly aggravated due to oleation therapy.³

Selection and dose of purgative medicine

There are three dosages of the drug based on the strength of the patient. Strength of the medicine depends on strength of the patient.

Sr. No.	Strength of the Patient	Strength of the medicine	Dosage for decoctions	Dosage*
1.	Good strength (strong individual)	Most potent (strong purgatives)	96 gms (2pala)	48 gms (1 pala)
2.	Moderate strength	Moderately potent (moderate purgatives)	48 gms (1pala)	24 gms (2karsha)
3.	Less strength (weak)	Mild potent (mild purgatives/laxative)	24 gms (½pala)	12 gms (1karsha)

Dalhana on Su.Sa.Chikitsa Sthana 33/20] *Dosage as per Sharangadhara if the medicine used is in the form of paste or tablet or powder form.[Sha.Sa.Uttara Khanda

Comparative Study of Poorvakarma according to different Acharyas

Āchārya	Dīpana-Pācana	Snehapāna	Abhyanga	Svedana	Special Emphasis
Charaka	✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	Detailed Snehapāna
Suśruta	✓	✓✓	✓	✓ (mild)	Rakta śuddhi
Vāgbhaṭa	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	Concise & combined
Kāśyapa	✓	✓ (mridu)	±	✓ (mridu)	Bala-strī roga

Bhela

Reference	Marking
<i>Bhela</i>	✓
Charaka-based	✓✓
Other classical support	✓
Clinical applicability	✓
Final basis	Charaka-based

Poorvakarma of Virechana in Pakshagata (Hemiplegia)

Particular	Description
Disease category	<i>Vatavyadhi</i>
Primary <i>Dosha</i>	<i>Vata</i> with <i>Pitta</i> association in some cases
<i>Sthana</i>	<i>Charaka Chikitsa Sthana 28, Vatavyadhi Chikitsa</i>

Poorvakarma of Virechana in Pakshaghata According to Charaka

Step	Poorvakarma	Drugs / Procedure	Purpose	Charaka Reference
1	<i>Dipana Pachana</i>	<i>Trikatu Churna, Chitraka, Musta</i>	Removes <i>Ama</i> , improves <i>Agni</i> before <i>Shodhana</i>	C.S. <i>Chikitsa 28</i>
2	<i>Snehapana (Antah Snehana)</i>	<i>Ghrita (Bala Ghrita, Dashamula Ghrita, Mahatiktaka Ghrita if Pitta Anubandha)</i>	<i>Vata Shamana, Marga Sneha</i>	C.S. <i>Chikitsa 28/15-18</i>
3	<i>Abhyanga (Bahya Snehana)</i>	<i>Tila Taila, Mahanarayana Taila</i>	Softens <i>Dosha</i> , pacifies <i>Vata</i>	C.S. <i>Chikitsa 28</i>
4	<i>Svedana</i>	<i>Nadi Sveda, Bashpa Sveda, Pinda Sveda</i>	Liquefies <i>Dosha</i> , brings it to <i>Kostha</i>	C.S. <i>Chikitsa 28</i>
5	<i>Kostha Dosha Utklesha</i>	Proper <i>Snehana + Svedana</i> till <i>Utklishta Dosha</i>	Preparation for <i>Virechana</i>	C.S. <i>Sutra 16</i>

Samprapti Ghataka of Pakshaghata

Samprapti Ghataka	Description according to Charaka View
<i>Nidana</i>	<i>Vata Prakopaka Nidana, Ati Vyayama, Ati Vyavaya, Ruksha Ahara, Shita Ahara, Vega Dharana, Abhighata</i>
<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Pradhana Vata Dosha (Vyana and Prana Vayu); sometimes associated Pitta</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	<i>Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Snayu</i>

<i>Agni</i>	<i>Vishama Agni</i>
<i>Ama</i>	Present in <i>Avaranaja</i> and <i>Sama Avastha</i>
<i>Srotas</i>	<i>Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha, Medovaha, Snayuvaha</i>
<i>Srotodushti</i>	<i>Sanga</i> obstruction, <i>Vimargagamana</i>
<i>Udbhava Sthana</i>	<i>Pakvashaya</i>
<i>Sanchara</i>	<i>Dosha</i> moves through <i>Dhamanis</i>
<i>Adhishthana</i>	<i>Shira, Snayu, Kandara, Sandhi</i>
<i>Vyakti Sthana</i>	One half of the body, right or left side
<i>Roga Marga</i>	<i>Madhyama Roga Marga</i>
<i>Samprapti Prakara</i>	<i>Dhatukshaya Janya</i> or <i>Avarana Janya Pakshaghata</i>
<i>Lakshana</i>	<i>Cheshta Nivritti, Vak Stambha, Bahu Pada Cheshta Hani, Ruja, Stambha</i>

Samprapti of *Pakshaghata* According to *Charaka Samhita*

Heading	Description
Disease	<i>Pakshaghata</i>
Main pathological base	<i>Vata Prakopa</i>
Main involvement	One half of the body
Important clinical features	<i>Cheshta Nivritti, Vak Stambha, Bahu Pada Cheshta Hani, Ruja, Stambha</i>
Main treatment indication	<i>Snehana, Svedana</i> and <i>Virechana</i> according to condition

Treatment of *Pakshaghata*

Aspect	Description according to <i>Charaka View</i>
Indication	<i>Pakshaghata</i> with <i>Pitta Anubandha</i> ; <i>Avarana</i> of <i>Vata</i> by <i>Pitta/Rakta</i>
Type of <i>Virechana</i>	<i>Mridu Virechana</i>

<i>Poorvakarma</i>	<i>Dipana Pachana → Snehapana (Ghrita) → Abhyanga → Svedana</i>
<i>Preferred Sneha</i>	<i>Bala Ghrita, Dashamula Ghrita, Mahatiktaka Ghrita if Pitta dominance</i>
<i>Virechana Dravya</i>	<i>Trivrit, Draksha, Aragvadha, Eranda Taila with milk or decoction</i>
<i>Anupana</i>	<i>Dugdha, Yashtimadhu Kvatha</i>
<i>Dose</i>	<i>Alpa to Madhyama according to Bala and Kostha</i>
<i>Lakshana of proper Virechana</i>	<i>Lightness, clarity of sense organs, reduction in Stambha and Ruja</i>
<i>Paschat Karma</i>	<i>Samsarjana Krama + Brimhana therapy</i>

Kustha

हमाणः प्रकोपणविकृताः, दृष्याश्च शरीरधातवस्त्वमांसशोणितलसीकाश्चतुर्धा दोषोपघात-सप्त द्रव्याणि कुष्ठानां प्रकृतिर्विकृतिमापन्नानि भवन्ति । तद्यथा- त्रयो दोषा वातपित्त-देवता इति । एतत् सप्तानां सप्तधातुकमेवङ्गतमाजनं कुष्ठानाम्, अतः प्रभवाण्यभिनिर्वर्तमानानि विलं शरीरमुपतपन्ति ॥ ३ ॥

[Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana 7, Kustha Chikitsa]

Seven materials are the cause of this, when they are in a vitiated state; namely, the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) which are aggravated by their respective causative factors; the body tissues skin, flesh, blood, and lymph which are vitiated by the aggravation of the Doshas. These seven tissues become vitiated and produce the seven types of leprosy. Therefore, originating from these, they spread throughout the body and afflict the entire body and make it morbid.⁴

Poorvakarma of Virechana in Kustha

Step	Poorvakarma	Dravya / Procedure	Purpose according to Charaka View
1	<i>Dipana Pachana</i>	<i>Trikatu Churna, Chitraka, Musta</i>	<i>Ama Pachana, Agni Dipana</i>
2	<i>Snehapana (Antah Snehana)</i>	<i>Mahatiktaka Ghrita, Panchatikta Ghrita, Tiktaka Ghrita</i>	<i>Dosha Utklishta, Pitta Kapha Shamana</i>

3	<i>Abhyanga (Bahya Snehana)</i>	<i>Nimba Taila, Karanja Taila, Tila Taila</i>	<i>Twak Shodhana, Dosha Vilayana</i>
4	<i>Svedana</i>	<i>Bashpa Sveda, Nadi Sveda (Mridu)</i>	<i>Dosha Vilayana, Kostha Gamana</i>
5	<i>Utklesha of Dosha</i>	<i>Proper Snehana and Svedana till Samyak Lakshana</i>	<i>Preparation for Shodhana</i>

Samprapti of Kustha

वातादयस्त्रयो दुष्टास्त्वग्रक्तं मांसमम्बु चा दूषयन्ति स कुष्ठानां सप्तको द्रव्यसङ्ग्रहः ॥ ९॥

अतः कुष्ठानि जायन्ते सप्त चैकादशैव चा न चैकदोषजं किञ्चित् कुष्ठं समुपलभ्यते ॥ १०॥

[Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana 7, Kustha Chikitsa]

Samprapti Ghataka of Kustha

Samprapti Ghataka	Description according to Charaka View
<i>Nidana</i>	<i>Viruddhahara, Mithyahara, Guru Snigdha Ahara, Ati Madhura, Ati Lavana, Diva Svapna, Vega Dharana</i>
<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Tridosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) with Pitta and Kapha Pradhana</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	<i>Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, Lasika</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Mandagni</i>
<i>Ama</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>Srotas</i>	<i>Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha, Svedavaha</i>
<i>Srotodushti</i>	<i>Sanga, Vimargagamana</i>
<i>Udbhava Sthana</i>	<i>Amashaya</i>
<i>Sanchara</i>	<i>Dosha spread through Tiryak Dhamanis</i>
<i>Adhishthana</i>	<i>Twak skin</i>
<i>Vyakti Sthana</i>	<i>Twak of entire body</i>
<i>Roga Marga</i>	<i>Bahya Roga Marga</i>
<i>Samprapti Prakara</i>	<i>Sama Kustha</i>
<i>Lakshana</i>	<i>Vaivarnya, Kandu, Pidika, Srava, Daha</i>

Treatment of Kustha

वातोत्तरेषु सर्पिर्वमनं श्लेष्मोत्तरेषु कुष्ठेषु । पित्तोत्तरेषु मोक्षो रक्तस्य विरेचनं चाग्रे ॥ ३९

- Treatment Principle- Description
- Vata dominant- Internal administration of Ghrita (Snehana)
- Kapha dominant- Therapeutic emesis, Vamana
- Pitta dominant- Therapeutic purgation, Virechana, and bloodletting, Raktamokshana

Drugs use in Virechana

कुष्ठेषु त्रिवृता दन्ती त्रिफला च विरेचने शस्ता ॥ ४४॥

- **Indication:** Recommended when **Pitta** is dominant in the skin condition.
- **Key Ingredients:** Trivrit (Nishoth), Danti root, and **Triphala** are cited as the best substances for inducing purgation in skin patients.

सौवीरकं तुषोदकमालोडनमासवाश्च सीधूनि । शंसन्त्यधोहराणां यथाविरेकं क्रमश्चेष्टः ॥

- Substances like Sauviraka, Tushodaka, Asava, and Sidhu are suggested for mixing purgative medicines. The text also explains dietary regimens (Peya, Vilepi, etc.) to be followed based on the intensity of the purgation.

Key Definitions from the Text

- **Sauviraka:** Prepared by fermenting cooked husked barley in water.
- **Tushodaka:** Made by cooking roasted urad dal husks with barley grits and fermenting the mixture.
- **Sidhu:** A type of fermented vinegar.

Discussion

In the management of *Pakshaghata* and *Kustha*, proper planning of *Poorvakarma* before *Virechana* is very important because both conditions involve deep-seated *Dosha Dushti* and *Srotodushti*. In *Pakshaghata*, the main pathology is related to aggravated *Vata Dosha*, sometimes associated with *Pitta* or *Rakta Avarana*, where *Snehana*, *Abhyanga*, and *Svedana* help to soften, mobilize, and bring the vitiated *Dosha* towards *Kostha* before *Mridu Virechana*. This helps in reducing *Stambha*, *Ruja*, and loss of movement. In *Kustha*, the involvement of *Tridosha* along with *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, and *Lasika* shows a chronic and systemic pathology, where *Dipana Pachana*, *Tikta Ghrita Snehapana*, *Mridu Svedana*, and proper *Dosha Utklesha* prepare the body for effective *Shodhana*. According to the dominance of *Dosha*, *Vamana*,

Virechana, Raktamokshana, or Snehana may be selected. Thus, disease-wise selection of *Poorvakarma* and *Virechana Dravya* helps in safe purification, better removal of vitiated *Dosha*, improvement of *Agni*, clearing of *Srotas*, and better clinical outcome.⁵

Conclusion

According to Āyurveda, *Poorvakarma* plays a vital role in the success of *Virecana* therapy. Proper *Dīpana–Pācana*, *Snehapāna*, *Abhyanga* and *Svedana* help in removing *āma*, mobilizing *doṣas* from *śākhā* to *koṣṭha* and making them amenable for elimination. Although the basic components of *Poorvakarma* remain the same, their selection, duration and intensity vary according to the disease, *doṣa* predominance, *bala* of the patient and *agni*. In *Pitta-pradhāna* diseases like *Kuṣṭha*, *Tikta ghr̥ta* and *mṛdu svedana* are preferred, while in *Vāta*-associated conditions like *Pakṣāghāta*, *snehana* is emphasized and *Virechana* is given only when *Pitta āvaraṇa* is present. Thus, disease-specific *Poorvakarma* ensures safe, effective and successful *Virechana* and prevents complications.

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