



**RAKTAMOKSHAN: AN IMPERATIVE PROCEDURE OF PANCHAKARMA IN
RAKTA PRADOSHAJ VYADHI**

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ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda* there are different types of *Shodhan* therapies has been mentioned like *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Raktamokshana* etc. out of which *Raktamokshana* is considered as best therapy for *Pitta* and *Rakta Pradoshaj vyadhi*. Many *Acharya* consider *Rakta Dusti* as one of the prime causes of *Pittaj* and *Raktaj Vyadhi*. So *Raktamokshana* by different modalities is much more effective in resolving pathogenesis in these diseases. There are many historical evidences where *Raktamokshana* was extensively practiced. During the procedure preoperatively, indication and contraindication are analyzed. Instruments are collected depending on the wisdom of the surgeon, site, disease and availability instruments.

Acharya Sushruta who was expert of *Rachana Sharir*, has been explained different sites of *Sira* for *Vyadhana* According to the diseases and their *Adhithana*. In classics, it has been advocated that the bloodletting should be done when environment should not be too cold or too hot; because environmental stimuli can cause *Heena-Mithya-Ati Srava* of *Rakta*. As per classics, one *Prastha* has been advocated which is *Uttama Shodhana*. Automatic stoppage of blood after certain time is an indication of *Samyak Siravyadha*, associated with patient feels light and severity of illness is decreased. So due to the wide spectrum, much prevalence in society and lack of effective management of *Rakta Pradoshaj Vyadhi*, it is necessary to understand the concept of *Raktamokshana* in scientific way in the light of modern science and develop this therapy as safe and effective treatment modalities for the management of *Rakta Pradoshaj Vyadhi* in present era.

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INTRODUCTION

Acharaya Charaka, describes the five process of *Shodhana* under the heading of *Panchakarma* as *Vamana* (emesis), *Nasya* (administering medicine through the nasal passages), *Virechana* (purging) and two types of *Basti* (cleansing and nourishing enema). while *Sushruta* combined the two types of *Basti* into one category and added *Raktamokshana* – the therapeutic withdrawal of blood from the body – as the fifth major procedure used in *Panchakarma* therapy.

In *Ayurveda* the blood is said to be carrier of *Ayu*, or life, so its condition directly influences the four parts of life: soul (*Atma*), mind (*Mana*), senses (*Indriya*) and body (*Sharira*). Good blood, free from toxins and waste products, sustains life and helps maintain the physiological balance necessary for health. There are so many allergic conditions, systemic and skin diseases occur due to imbalance or toxicity of the blood. There

is necessity to removal of the noxious blood from the body for the better management of the blood born diseases.

In the past Blood removal is a recognized treatment of polycythemia and hemochromatosis. Exchange transfusions are used in hemolytic disease of the newborn. The phlebotomist makes his daily rounds in hospitals and physicians' offices around the world. Now bloodletting is used primarily for diagnosis rather than for treatment, and the lancet and fleam have been replaced by the syringe and needle. Blood loss for diagnostic testing in modern hospitals can be considerable. With some philosophic reflection, one might wonder whether or not the loss of blood could have any therapeutic benefit. Does the acute withdrawal of blood stimulate the defense mechanisms of the body? The body is known to respond more promptly to acute blood loss than to chronic loss of small amounts. It seems hard to believe that the many educated observers over the centuries were completely wrong in their assessment of clinical improvement following

bloodletting. Whether bloodletting represents treatment or mistreatment continues to depend on the evolution of our ideas as to the basic causes of disease. Perhaps someday a rational explanation for the popularity of bloodletting will be found. A closing quotation from the year 1935 by Randolph seems appropriate. "With alternating periods of excess and moderation it is about the only remedy that has held its own throughout our history."

Raktamokshana therapy is the blood cleansing and purification therapy. It is a therapeutic cleaning process given by *Ayurveda*. It is one of the essential parts of the *Panchkarma* healing treatments. It is the prime process of blood detoxification. It is derived from the two words, "*Rakt*", which means blood and "*Mokshana*", which means leave. Thus, *Raktamokshana* means to let the blood out. The blood is expelled out from the body to reduce the quantity of toxic substances in the blood borne disorders. However, this therapy is not generally recommended to the patients. This is because; it involves a certain amount of risk factors in the whole cleansing and detoxification processes.

Though *Raktamokshana* is the most limited of the five major procedures, it provides a rapid and sometimes dramatic decrease of symptoms in certain acute disorders, especially where time is a critical factor. When toxins appear due to excess *Pitta*, they concentrate in the blood. In situations, when *Pitta* symptoms must be reduced quickly and there is no time for *Purvakarma* (preparation for *Panchakarma*) and *Panchakarma* procedures, acute symptoms can be relieved within hours by simply removing a small amount of toxic blood from the affected area. After that the patient can be put on a *Panchakarma* regiment.

Classification of *Raktamokshana*

Shastra Visravana

Generally metallic instruments are used to carry out this process. It is further classified into two more categories:

Pracchana

In this process letting the blood has been done by making several incisions

Siravyadha

This process is also known as the Venepuncture in which removal of blood is done by using of scalp vein or syringe.

Anushastra visravana

In this procedure the metallic instruments have been not considered for removal of the blood. It is further classified into three categories:

Jalaukavacharana

It means applying leeches. This is mainly done for the patients with *Pitta dosha* disorders, children, ladies, physically and mentally weak patients.

Alabu

It means creating vacuum and extracting blood through the vacuum using a vegetable, which may be bottle guard or *Alabu*. This is mainly done for treating *Kapha dosha diseases*.

Shrungavacharana

• It means applying the cow's horns. This is mainly taken into account for treating the *Vata* disorders.

Among all the various classified types, Venepuncture or *Siravyadha* plays the most popular role in carrying out *Raktamokshana* effectively in present era.

Indications of *Raktamokshan* Therapy

Individuals with aggravated unbalance between the blood (*RAKT*) and *Pitta Dosha* and high level of toxicity are recommended the *Raktamokshana* therapy. The important complications to be treated with the therapeutic therapy are skin disorders like allergic dermatitis, eczema, sciatica. Some other disorders, which must be treated with *Raktamokshana* therapy, include abscess, edema, swelling and inflammations, uremia, dullness, pericarditis, tonsillitis. Also, this procedure helps in proper functioning of liver, heart and other essential organs of the body.

Precise time for *Raktamokshana*

1. Generally the *Pitta Dosha* provoked in the *Sharad* (autumn) season. *Rakta* vitiation is induced by *Pitta* provocation. So that in the autumn *Rakta Mokshana* should be carried out.
2. *Sushruta* has further specified that blood-letting should be performed on a patient not in an extremely hot or cold season, neither on one who is too much heated or improperly heated.(before the act of bloodletting).

In addition to these prescribed periods are;

- a. In rainy season, but in clear sky
- b. In summer season, but in cool time
- c. In *Hemant Ritu* (autumn), but in the noon.

The above cited periods are suitable for *Rakta Mokshana*. Beside these the time factor depends on the condition of the disease and the state of the patient in which the surgeon has to take his own will for *Raktamokshana*. (su.sa.8/19)

In this context *Vagbhata* describes that if any process of treatment demand is necessary and the unfavourable season does not warrant at procedure necessary to safe-guards to prevent the effects of the untoward season should be taken and the necessary measure is to be pushed in all urgent cases. A necessary measure of treatment should not be out off on that account i.e. on account of unfavorable season etc. One should not waste the valuable time available for treatment of the disease.

Complications of *Raktamokshana*:-

The following immediate complication may be occurring during *Raktamokshana*.

- 1) *Ati Rakta Srava* (excess flow of blood)
- 2) *Asrav* (unflow of blood)
- 3) *Alpa Srava* (less flow of blood) and
- 4) *Dustavyadha* (faulty puncture).

Other delayed complications may take the shape of disease in the later phase, which can be diagnosed from the symptoms narrated by the patient; e.g. interest in eat acid stuff (*Amla Pradartha*), Impatience to cold things, looseness to *Siras*(*Sira shaithilya*), dryness to the body (*Shareera Rukshata*), paleness to the skin (*parusa* of the skin) are observed in the case of severe hemorrhage. In the long run it may be converted into diseases like *Pandu*, *Kamla*, *Pakshaghata* etc. The conservative treatment should be prescribed according to the state of distress.

Importance of *Marma* in the context of *Raktamokshana*

While explaining the contraindications of *Raktamokshana*, *Susruta* has been described that during the process of *raktamokshana* one should avoid the *Avedhya Sira*, *Marmasthana*, arteries and nerves etc. *Avedhya Sira* considered as *Marmasrita* and hence should not be venesected because it may cause disability or death.

Benefits of *Raktamokshan* are as follows

All types of Skin diseases, Psoriasis, Lichen planus, leukoderma, Hyperlipidemia, Heart Disease, Hypertension, Acne, Herpes Infections, Gout (high levels of uric acid in blood), Obesity, Varicose Veins, Jaundice, Headache, White Patches, Psoriasis, Acute Pain at any site, and vertigo etc. could be treated with *Raktamokshana*.

October to December is a period (*Sharad Ritu*) in which *Raktamokshan* is advised for general detoxification. A healthy person can undergo process of *Raktamokshan* in this period so as to achieve healthy life.

DISCUSSION

In *Panchakarma Chikitsa*, the vitiated *Dosha* are purified, whereas in *Siravedha* vitiated *dushya* to be let out with *Rakta Dhatu* along with vitiated *Dosha* where *Rakta Dhatu* is predominant. The susceptibility of *Rakta* towards impurity is so versatile that the classics were compelled to agree upon *Rakta* as fourth *Dosha*⁵³. Therefore *Dushita* (vitiating) *Rakta* from the related *Siras* (veins) should be let out to protect the health or to remove the disease. Since, *Pitta* is depend on *Rakta*, therefore *Raktamokshana* decreases the quantum of enhancement of *Pitta*, henceforth *Dosha* and *Pittaja Vyadhi* are too relieved or cured by the therapy. *Acharya Vagbhata* in *Astanga Samgraha* mention probable mode of action of *Siravedhana*. *Purva karma* is indicated for liquefaction of *Dosha* and mobile them into blood circulation. *Siravedhana* remove that *Dosha* from circulation thus its act on removal of disease.

Raktamokshana is one of the important para-surgical procedure denoting letting of impure blood outside the body. Different modalities of *Raktamokshana* can be adopted, but *Siravyadha* is one of the *Shastravacharana*. Of course, it appears to be surprising that different sites have been advocated in different diseases. Why can't common site is selected in all diseases?, This is the point interpreted here, to analyze this context, different hypothesis and pathophysiological mechanisms are applicable as the basic unit of the body is cell. Each cell is especially adopting different mechanism to perform functions. The function of circulation is to serve the needs of the tissues such as nutrients, oxygen, hormones and also transport waste products away.

When tissues are active they need more blood flow. Heart normally cannot increase its cardiac out more than four to seven times. Therefore, it is not possible to increase the blood flow everywhere in the body. When a particular demands increased flow, instead micro-vessel of each tissue are monitoring the tissue needs, such as availability of oxygen and nutrients and the accumulation of waste products, these intern controls local blood flow to the level of tissue need. The microcirculation of each type tissue of body is specially organized to serve special needs. Every cell has got their own microcirculation to maintain its constant internal environment.

CONCLUSION

Raktamokshan is the effective therapeutic tool of *Panchakarma* in various types of *Rakta Pradoshaj Vyadhi* if judiciously administered. The efficacy of *Raktamokshana* is appreciated by ancient scholars and present day modern peoples also. The sites of *Raktamokshana* told by *Acharya Sushruta* are more scientific and can be adopted for the purpose of removal of toxic or impure blood from the body. Almost all the sites told by *Acharya Sushruta* for *raktamokshan* purpose can be adopted easily in clinical practice. *Raktamokshana* is safe and effective treatment modalities for the management of *Rakta Pradoshaj Vyadhi*.

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