

RATIONALE BEHIND THREE DAYS REST PERIOD BEFORE VIRECHANA KARMA (PURGATION THERAPY)

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Abstract

Vamana and Virechana processes amongst Panchakarma have the fixed time bound procedural format. Both are having almost same pre-procedures. At first, internal oleation till the occurrence of symptoms of complete oleation, then gap day/s and then the main procedure. The main difference lies in duration of gap day/s between their pre-procedures. Vamana has one gap day, while virechana has the gap of three. There is no clear cut reason mentioned in texts anywhere. One has to extract the rationale behind it from their purposes and modes of action. Surprisingly the quantity of Kapha dosha inside Gastro intestinal tract (GIT) (Koshtha) plays a major role in both these different procedures. So, evaluation of virechana process out of these two on the basis of presence of doshas in GIT before the procedure, relevance of keeping certain rest period, rationale behind the specific diet regimes before it needs attention.

Keywords: Virechana; Rest period; Quantity of Kapha.

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional Ayurveda Medicine deals with the treatment in two basic formats. Palliative treatment (shamana chikitsa) and Purificatory treatment (shodhana chikitsa).^[1]

Panchakarma, literally means five procedures, consists of Vamana (emesis), Virechana (medicinal purgation), Niruha basti (enema by decoctions), Anuvasan Basti (enema by oils) and Nasya (Nasal instillation) which mainly aim at purification or expulsion of vitiated doshas from the body.^[2] Vamana, Virechana and Basti are the most efficient modalities for the expulsion of Kapha, Pitta and Vata respectively.^[3]

In fact Panchakarma are the only location in Ayurveda where the actual presence of doshas in materialistic state can be felt and shown practically to the outer world.

During Vamana and Virechana, Doshas from all over the body are liquified first and then expelled from the body through the ways of mouth and anal region respectively.^[4]

Both procedures are meant for different purposes and carried out differently. But still they have something very common. The Pre procedures (Pooorvakarma) of vamana and Virechana are almost same barring a little variation. Both processes start with process of digestion of ama (amapachana). After completely digesting ama, daily intake of ghee or any other oleous article (sneha) is started (internal oleation process). It is continued till the occurrence of complete oleation symptoms (samyak snehana of oleation therapy) which generally are achieved usually within three days to seven days.^[5]

After achieving the complete internal oleation as pre-procedure part, the metabolic environment inside the body will be the same before both the processes. This is so certain that even if diet is moderated or altered, one

can change the decision of vamana or virechana before the first rest day (Vishranti dina) too.

Till this juncture both the procedures run similarly. Then after both the processes is move forward in a different way. Vamana process is generally carried out after keeping the gap of one day while for virechana, one has to keep minimum gap of three day.^[6]

In routine, it has been observed that in some parts of India or institutions, while carrying out the procedures, gap of two days is kept before virechana (one day gap for vamana is followed by mostly all). Nowhere in our ancient texts, has it been mentioned to keep the gap of two days. If one does not understand the rationale behind keeping this gap of three days before virechana, it will definitely affect the conduct of virechana. So it is very necessary to understand the reasoning behind these directions.

Factor really matters most before vamana and virechana

Virechana Karma is carried out to expell excessive Pitta Dominant Doshas from Body through anal route. So logically Gap days must be used to increase Pitta inside Gastro intestinal Tract or Koshtha. The directions should have been given in this regard from any one of the texts. But the commands are not ordered in that way. Instead, Charaka says as -

Larger quantity of Kapha in Koshtha carries Vamana Karma comfortably, while for Samyaka Virechana, Quantity of Kapha (in Koshtha) shall be at lower levels. If the quantity of Kapha during virechana remains at higher level and during vamana at lower levels, Doshas will move in opposite direction. That is Doshas will be expelled through oral route with virechana medicines and through anal route with vamana medicines.^[7]

So if one does not maintain relevant quantity of Kapha before any one of the both procedures, doshas will move in opposite direction. This is movement in opposite direction of doshas and is said clearly to be lesser or improper expulsion (Ayoga) of the respective procedures.^[8] Complete absence of expulsion after the administration of medicine for vamana or virechana or expulsion in a lesser quantity or expulsion in completely opposite direction are said to be Ayoga. Inability to throw doshas in an expected way, puts all of these conditions under 'Ayoga' term.^[9]

Necessity to have lesser quantity of kapha before virechana

Before serving virechana to the patient, vamana must be carried out. If it is not followed in this sequence, Kapha will slip down from Amashaya to Grahani (Stomach to small intestinal region), cover it and produce gaurava and pravahika (heaviness in abdomen and expulsion of sticky bowels).^[10]

It is important to understand why increased or more quantity of Kapha will not be useful for the process of Virechana. After completion of samyaka snehapana, Kapha dominant doshas having properties like cold (sheeta), slimy (pichchila), stable (sthira), slow (Manda), soft (Mrudu) etc. get increased inside the body due to possessing similar properties of Ghee or other Sneha drugs (Samanya Vishesh Sidhdhanta).^[11] This denotes increase and provocation of Doshas (Vridhi and Vishyandana). Further with fomentation, the process of liquification starts moving doshas towards central Koshtha region for the removal by oral or anal route.^[12]

If one goes for virechana medicines immediately in this condition, it will draw these Kapha dominant doshas downwards covering whole grahani. It will not only curb the procedure of virechana but also produce flatulence (adhmana) and loss of appetite

(agnimandya). It will further create ayoga of virechana by producing either lesser episodes of urge of virechana (Vega) or expulsion of doshas from oral route instead of Adhomarga.^[13]

Thus fate of Proper (samyak) vamana or virechana is decided by the presence of "Appropriate quantity of kapha" in Koshtha at the time of procedure. So during pre-preparations the focus shifts to the Management of Koshtha in relation to quantity of Kapha prior to both the processes. But, in doing so, it must be ensured that already accumulated liquified doshas (especially pitta) inside koshtha are not getting hampered.

Management of Kapha in Koshtha prior to Vamana and virechana

So "Prime concern" before vamana and virechana remains to increase and decrease the quantity of kapha respectively and can be achieved by managing following two things -

A. Diet

B. Time management (Kaal Chikitsa)

A. Diet before the procedures

Before Vamana, the diet must be such that it should provoke and force to increase the quantity of Kapha and move it from its position (Utkleshana). This nature of diet is expressed as Kapha vardhanam,^[14] Utkleshniyah,^[15] Kapham Utkleshya^[16] or Doshan Utkleshya.^[17] So the diet suggested before Vamana consists of food articles containing curds, black gram, fish, sesame seeds etc. which will provoke Kapha.

Before virechana, diet to be expected, is having the quality like Pittavardhakara or Pitta Utkleshakara in it (indicating the need to increase Pitta before Virechana process). But instead, Kapha Avrudhikaraih,^[18] Utklishta Alpa Kaphatven,^[19] Ashleshmalam^[20] are the quotations suggested to describe the properties of diet. These all expressions indicate that the

diet shall be of such a nature that it shall not increase the quantity of Kapha and shall try to keep the lower quantity of the same in Koshtha before Virechana.

Even thinking further, the terms like “Kapha Kshayakara” or “Kapha shamaka” etc. are also avoided. Properties like Ruksha (rough), shushka (dry), Khara etc. may come along with that and these eventually may end up drying already accumulated liquified Pitta dominant doshas. This throws light upon the motive to achieve lesser quantity of Kapha without disturbing the Liquified state of the doshas before virechana.

The patient is kept on diet having the properties like liquid (Drava), oleous (Snigdha), Hot (Ushna) with non veg soup of the animals from dry or hot area (Jangal Mamsa Rasa),^[21] easy to digest (Sujaram), and light (Laghu).^[22] This type of diet will not increase kapha and will also not dry up the liquified doshas, instead may help in increasing the quantity of liquefied Pitta dominant Doshas. Same sentiments are partially expressed by both Chakrapani^[23] and Dalhana.^[24]

B. Time management (Kaal Chikitsa) before virechana -

Kaala (Time) is considered as the part of treatment in Jwara (Pyrexia), as said in Langhanam swedanam kalohyavagutiktakoh.^[25] This expression says that fasting-fomentation-Time-paste of rice and use of medicines having bitter taste decrease fever by digesting ama (undigested diet and humours) in it. During its treatment, digestion of ama takes place after 6 days, the condition of decrease in quantity of Kapha (Kapha ksheenata) associated with increase in the quantities of vata-pitta doshas (Vata Pitta Vrudhi) arrives automatically after 10 days as an effect of TIME (Kaalmahimnaev).^[26]

Even in Panchakarma, importance of time reflects at other places too. For example, Niruha Basti shall not be given before completion of seven days after virechana karma or vice versa,^[27] Virechana must be given, on fifteenth day after vamana.^[28]

Keeping the difference of certain period as ‘Rest period’ (vishranti din) before vamana and virechana, is another best example to showcase the use of Kaala (time or duration) as a treatment.

Regarding virechana, three days period is quite considerable if compared with the total days of snehapana (usually between three to seven days). This is almost 100 % (if internal oleation will be for only three days) to 50 % approximately (if six to seven days of internal oleation). So “Rest period of three days” also has a lot of impact over the process.

Double fold Kaala Treatment before Virechana

This part of treatment can be seen at two levels.

- A. Three days rest period
- B. Time of administration of virechana medicine.

Three Days Rest period

This ‘three day period’ acts as a treatment tool. This can be understood in following way. In the initial phases of age, day-night period and digestion process, the quantity of Kapha remains increased, in the middle it is pitta and in the later stage Vata gets increased as a natural part.^[29] This increased quantity of Kapha starts reducing in all further stages by nature itself.

Even In earlier stages of Jwara (Navjvara stage), due to existence of ama, the properties like heavy (guru), slow (manda), oily (snigdha) remain at higher level, but as it

moves towards the chronic of jeerna stage, kapha dominant properties get reduced and properties like dry (ruksha), light (laghu) showing dominance of Vata and Pitta take the centre stage.^[30]

Similarly, as the time passes by after completion of internal oleation process, the accumulated kapha dosha will start decreasing from stomach (amashaya) without loosing liquified nature of Pitta dominant doshas which is maintained with the help of particular diet, oleous massage (Abhyanga) and fomentation (swedana).

One must look at the role of “Time” in metabolism. The whole process of Panchakarma is about bringing the vitiated humours back from cellular microsystem to alimentary system for expulsion. Through internal oleation (snehapana), the process of metabolism is initiated. So the factors influencing the digestion and metabolism must also be taken into consideration for understanding physiology taking place during these three gap days. These factors are termed as Ahaara Parinaamkara Bhaava (factors responsible for transformation of food during digestion and metabolism). Hot property (Ushma), Vata Dosha (Vaayu), liquidity (Kledah), oleousness (Snehah), Time (kaala), synchronisation of all these five with the food and body (Samayoga) are these six factors. Time factor helps the digestion by ensuring sufficient time for each involved phase of digestion and metabolism (Kalah Paryaptim Abhinirvartayati).^[31]

With this much Rest/Gap period, whatever changes needed for the process of vamana or virechana, specific time is assured for them and this particular Time gap will allow the internal atmosphere to get regularized as needed for the karmas.

Along with this three day rest period, one is offered fomentation (swedana) during this Time period of three days. Fomentation brings doshas from channels to central Alimentary system and will also bring kapha down.

Thus broadly, liquid and oleous properties will maintain liquified nature of pitta pradhana doshas, while light and hot properties will not allow kapha to increase.^[32]

The time of administration of Virechana medicine on the day of virchana

As Virechana is the best purification of Pitta Dosha, it should be administered at a time when maximum Pitta dosha will be available in the circulation or in alimentary system. So the guidelines from the Texts are expected to be in the words like “Give virechana in pitta kala”.

But the texts suggest waiting till the period of Kapha dominance is over for the administration of Virechana drug. Absence of stressing or pointing towards the time of arrival of Pitta dosha dominance (madhyanha), itself indicates the lesser importance of Pitta in the successful outcome of this procedure. The expressions *vigatashleshmadhatum*^[33] and *shleshma kaale gate dnyatva*^[34] mean after the passage of Kapha Dosha (Shleshma Dhatu) dominant period, Virechana drug may be given. Even, if residue of digested or undigested liquified nature along with Shleshma or Kapha dosha (rasa ashesha) is present and producing symptoms like nausea (praseka), one should not administer virechana drug to that patient.^[35]

Further, commenting on the word Purvanhe commentator like Dalhana comes out with very strange evaluation and putting some unorthodox directions of not serving the food on the previous eve of virechana (Purvanhe grahanam saayamnishedha artham).^[36] This also seems targetting to lower the quantity of Kapha as much as possible before Virechana.

DISCUSSION

Arranging any scientific protocol is always a difficult and task. It involves a lot of research. It may have taken a lot of efforts and research to differentiate between Vamana and virechana procedures by ancient scholars.

By stretching from a gap of one day to that of three days for virechana have such a definitive vision. For Virechana, the quantity of liquified humours must be at the proper level with comparatively lower level of Kapha in them while for vamana that must be with higher levels of Kapha.

Arranging diet only doesnot serve the whole purpose. So the course must have been changed. By keeping gap of three days, Kapha gets decreased in quantity. This purpose is not solved if one keeps the gap of two days. That will not minimise the quantity of kapha sufficiently. Vamana can be performed with a gap of one day or two days as advised by vagbhata.^[37] So quantity of Kapha remains high even after two days. Even on the day of Virechana too, the diurnal period of highest level of Kapha (i.e. early in the morning) is avoided as it may create obstruction by bringing down kapha from Amashaya (Stomach) to Grahani (small intestinal level).

Therefore Keeping gap of three days before virechana is the most advisable and scientific way of performing the process.

CONCLUSION

This 'three day period' acts as a treatment tool. This particular Time gap will allow the internal atmosphere to get regularized as needed for the Karmas.

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