



## CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF RAKTAMOKSHANA - A LITERATURE REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Raktamokshana therapy is the blood cleansing & purification therapy. Ancient Indian texts have talked various procedures that can cause immense Shodhana or purification of the body. Among the five cardinal Shodhana karmas Raktamokshana chikitsa is emphasized as half treatment as far as shalya tantra is concerned and every second patient invites this treatment. 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. 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. The process of Raktamokshana can be traced back to Vedic period only and not beyond that. Bloodletting indeed represent one of the oldest human effort.

**KEYWORDS:** Raktamokshana is considered one among shodhana procedure.

### INTRODUCTION

Raktamokshana is considered one among shodhana procedure. Raktamokshana means letting of blood which is mainly indicated in certain disease state specially when there is raktadushti & also during physiologic function. The term "Raktamokshana" comprises of two words, i.e 'Rakta' & 'Mokshana'.

Rakta- The word 'Rakta' means coloured, dyed, painted, red.

Mokshana- The word 'Mokshana' is derived from the root 'Moksha' means 'to relieve' or 'to let out'.

Thus letting out of blood is known as Raktamokshana.

Raktamokshana is one among the parasurgical procedure, one of the principle shodhana therapies. If the disease does not respond to the palliative measures (shamana chikitsa) it is considered to be due to vitiation of rakta, thus it is indicated as a therapy in various rakta & pitta related diseases.

Raktamokshana is one of the purification therapies where the disease causing factors are expelled out from the body in addition to relief from the disease symptomology as well as no recurrence. Hence it is said to be a complete treatment.

Ancient Indian texts have talked variedly about various procedures that can cause immense shodhana or purification of the body. Among the five cardinal shodhana karmas 'Raktamokshana chikitsa' is emphasized as half treatment as far as shalya tantra is concerned.

The process of raktamokshana can be traced back to vedic period only & not beyond that. In the koushiksutra of Atharvaveda, references of raktamokshana by leech application are to be found during the period of Buddha, this process was in regular practice.

Sushruta, Vagbhata focused on the raktamokshana in detailed. In sushruta samhita & ashtanga sangraha, we get separate chapters on siravyadha. Charaka has also given brief description on this topic. Coming to sangraha period, Bhavamishra & Sharangdhara have discussed Siravyadha vidhi while describing the management of various diseases.

In the present day practice there are set of disorders which do not respond to medical treatment. In surgery, a set of parasurgical procedures like Raktamokshana, chemical cauterization is prescribed in addition or as substitute for major surgical procedure.

### Classification of Raktamokshana

It can be classified in two types

#### 1. Shastra Visravana

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

- a) **Pracchana** which means letting the blood pass through several incisions.<sup>[1]</sup>
- b) **Siravyadha** which is also known as the venepuncture.

#### 2. Anushastra Visravana

The metallic instruments are not considered for carrying out this procedure. It is further classified into three categories:

- a) **Jalaukavacharana** which means applying leeches. This is mainly done for the patients with pitta dosha disorders.<sup>[2]</sup>
- b) **Alabu** which means creating vacuum & extracting blood through the vacuum using a vegetable, which may be bottle gourd or alabu. This is mainly done for treating kapha dosha diseases.<sup>[3]</sup>
- c) **Shrungavacharana** which means applying the cow's horns. This is mainly taken into account for treating the vata disorders.<sup>[4]</sup>

### Procedures of Carrying Out Raktamokshana

It comprises following three steps:<sup>[5,6,7]</sup>

- i) Pre procedure or Purva karma
- ii) Main procedure or Pradhana karma
- iii) Post procedure or Paschat karma

#### i) Purva Karma

It is carried out in regular periods. It is mainly done for diseases like gout, filariasis, psoriasis, glaucoma, oedema, erysipelas, liver & spleen disorders. Cotton swabs, gauze pieces are some of the proper instruments used to carry out this procedure.

#### ii) Pradhana Karma

a) **Pracchana**- The part should be tied with tourniquet to dilate the vessels. Then without injuring Marmas, tendons multiple incisions are given parallel to the local blood vessels. Pracchana should be done in Pratilome direction & should be in parallel way. By this method, the superficial doshas are removed & also relieves tension on the part.

b) **Siravyadha**- The vein is selected according to disease. After proper snehana, swedana, liquid gruel is given. Then patient sits in erect position or lies down. In muscular areas puncture should be the size of yava & in other areas it should be ½ yava or 1 brihi.

c) **Jalaukavacharana**- Small nicks are given around the diseased part. When blood starts oozing, leech is applied. When it starts sucking mouth takes the shape of horse's hoof & lift its neck, then cover its neck with wet cotton. When a leech has sucked enough blood, it leaves that spot & drops down. If it

doesn't leave, turmeric powder is sprinkled around the mouth.<sup>[8]</sup>

d) **Shringa Yantra**- It is applied on a flat, round, fleshy part of the body. 2-3 nicks are given on the site of bloodletting. Horn is applied & air is sucked out from narrow part creating a vacuum. The blood comes out. Now days, the procedure can be carried out by a syringe cut as it is snigdha, ushna & madhura in properties. So used for removing rakta vitiated by vata.

e) **Alabu Yantra**- A small nick is given on the skin. Put a leaf by the side of nick. Keep a cotton ball dipped in spirit & light it. Immediately put Alabu on that. As fire extinguishers the skin edges are caught tight with margins of Alabu yantra. When bloodletting completes, the base get slackened. Jatyadi taila or Ghruta is used for dressing & bandaging the wound. Rakta vitiated by Kapha dosha can be removed by Alabu karma.<sup>[9]</sup>

#### iii) Paschat Karma

After completion of procedure, whenever blood flow stops tourniquet & instruments are removed. Tight dressing is applied & gentle massage around the wound with medicated oil is done.

### Indications of Raktamokshana

Raktamokshana or the technique of bloodletting is mainly advised for pitta dosha & rakta. This is highly effective in skin diseases, oedema, abscess, inflammation, dullness, uremias etc.

### Contraindications of Raktamokshana

Patients less than 16 years and above 70 years of age were contraindicated. Patients suffering from disease like anaemia, haemorrhagic disorders, diabetic mellitus, cancer, tuberculosis, hemiplegia, convulsions, and other severe complicated systemic disorders were contraindicated. Wounded, thin, timid, pregnancy, and chronicity more than 5 years also excluded.

### CONCLUSION

It has been specified in Ayurveda text that Raktamokshana Ayurvedic treatment of panchakarma works both as curative as well as preventive therapy. As in Ayurvedic medicine, the Basti karma is regarded as partial or even the complete treatment method, similarly in the Ayurveda surgery text, Raktamokshana is considered as the partial or complete treatment.

### DISCUSSION

The way of treating the patients with Raktamokshana therapy is basically having local as well as systemic effect which improves the health of a person in simple manner, without any harm to health. Raktamokshana is basically parasurgical procedure and popular all around

the world. It is typically acting on Dushta Doshas in our body. Raktamokshana is a purifactory procedure, especially when there is Raktadushti. According to Acharya Sushruta the person who regularly undergo Raktamokshana will not affected the diseases like Shopha, Twakroga, Visarpa, etc.<sup>[10]</sup>

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