



Research Article

Role of Panchakarma in Poisoning (Visha Chikitsa): An Ayurvedic Review

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Abstract

Poisoning (Visha) is a medical emergency that can cause serious morbidity and mortality. Ayurveda describes detailed concepts of Visha, its classification, pathogenesis, and management under Agadatantra. Panchakarma, being the prime Shodhana Chikitsa, plays a crucial role in the elimination of toxins from the body. This review highlights the role of Panchakarma procedures such as Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Nasya, and Raktamokshana in various types of poisoning. The paper emphasises the detoxification, dosha balance, and restoration of physiological functions through Panchakarma in poisoning cases.

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INTRODUCTION

Poisoning is defined as the entry of toxic substances into the body by ingestion, inhalation, injection, or absorption. In Ayurveda, poison is termed as Visha, which is capable of causing Pranahara effects if not managed properly. Acharya Charaka, Sushruta, and Vagbhata have elaborately described Visha, its sources, symptoms, and management.

Panchakarma is a specialised therapeutic procedure aimed at eliminating morbid Doshas and toxins from the body. In poisoning, Panchakarma plays a vital role in removing the absorbed or circulating toxins and preventing systemic complications.

Concept of Visha in Ayurveda

According to Ayurveda, Visha is defined as:

“Visham Vishameti Visha” – a substance that produces imbalance and destruction in the body.

Classification of Visha

Sthavara Visha – Plant and mineral origin

Jangama Visha – Animal origin

Kritrima Visha (Gara Visha) – Artificial or cumulative toxins

Samprapti (Pathogenesis) of Visha

Visha spreads rapidly in the body due to its:

Tikshna

Ushna

Ashu

Vyavayi and Vikasi properties

It vitiates Tridosha, mainly Pitta and Rakta, leading to systemic toxicity.

Role of Panchakarma in Poisoning

Panchakarma helps in:

Elimination of toxins

Prevention of further absorption

Restoration of Dosha balance

Strengthening of Agni and Ojas

1. Vamana Karma

Indication: Oral poisoning, Kapha-dominant poisoning

Role:

Expels unabsorbed poison from the stomach

Prevents systemic spread

Useful in food poisoning and Gara Visha

2. Virechana Karma

Indication: Pitta and Rakta dominant poisoning

Role:

Eliminates toxins through purgation

Effective in plant and chemical poisoning

Reduces liver and blood toxicity

3. Basti Karma

Indication: Chronic and systemic poisoning

Role:

Eliminates toxins lodged in deeper tissues

Balances Vata

Useful in cumulative toxicity and heavy metal poisoning

4. Nasya Karma

Indication: Poisoning affecting the head and neck region

Role:

Removes toxins from the supraclavicular region

Useful in inhalational poisoning and toxic headaches

5. Raktamokshana

Indication: Rakta Dushti due to Visha

Role:

Removes vitiated blood

Highly effective in snake bites, insect bites, and skin manifestations of poisoning

Supportive Panchakarma Measures

Snehana and Swedana – To mobilise toxins

Samsarjana Krama – To restore digestion post detoxification

Rasayana Therapy – To improve immunity and tissue regeneration

DISCUSSION

Modern management of poisoning focuses mainly on symptomatic and supportive care. Panchakarma offers a holistic detoxification approach by removing toxins at their root level. When applied judiciously and at the appropriate stage of poisoning, Panchakarma can significantly reduce complications and improve prognosis.

CONCLUSION

Panchakarma plays a significant role in the management of poisoning by eliminating toxins, restoring Dosha balance, and strengthening the body's natural defence mechanisms. Integration of Panchakarma with emergency care can enhance the effectiveness of poisoning management.

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