Virechana Followed by Shamana Chikitsa in Urdhwaga Amlapitta: An Ayurvedic Therapeutic Perspective

AUTHORS:

Dr. Insha Mushtaq[1]

Dr. Sudesh Kumar Bhambu[2]

Dr. Anupam Pathak[3]

Dr. Rishu Sharma[4]

Dr. Riyanka kumari[5]

Dr. Ankur[6]

AFFILIATIONS:

[1] Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Swasthavritta Evum Yoga, Sriganganagar College of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Tantia University, Sriganganagar.

[2] Associate Professor, P. G. Department of Swasthavritta Evum Yoga, Sriganganagar College of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Tantia University, Sriganganagar.

[3] Professor & HOD, P. G. Department of Swasthavritta Evum Yoga, Sriganganagar College of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Tantia University, Sriganganagar.

[4] Principal, Sriganganagar College of Ayurvedic science and Hospital, Tantia University, Sriganganagar.

[5] Assistant professor, P. G. Department of Swasthavritta Evum Yoga, Sriganganagar College of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Tantia University, Sriganganagar.

[6] Assistant professor, P. G. Department of Swasthavritta Evum Yoga, Sriganganagar College of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Tantia University, Sriganganagar.

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ABSTRACT:

Urdhwaga Amlapitta is an important gastrointestinal disorder described in Ayurveda, characterized predominantly by upward movement of aggravated Pitta and manifestations such as Amlodgara, Hrit-Kanta Daha, Utklesha, Avipaka and Aruchi. Its clinical presentation shows considerable overlap with symptoms encountered in gastroesophageal reflux and other upper gastrointestinal disorders. The Ayurvedic approach to management is directed towards correction of Agni, elimination of aggravated Dosha and restoration of physiological equilibrium. Virechana, being a principal Pitta-shodhana therapy, may be particularly relevant in Pitta-dominant disorders. Subsequent Shamana Chikitsa can support Dosha pacification and maintenance of therapeutic balance. The present article discusses the Ayurvedic rationale,

probable mode of action and therapeutic significance of Virechana followed by Shamana Chikitsa in Urdhwaga Amlapitta.

KEYWORDS:

Urdhwaga Amlapitta, Amlapitta, Virechana, Shodhana, Shamana, Pitta, Agni, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION:

Amlapitta is a commonly described disorder in Ayurvedic literature in which derangement of Agni and vitiation of Pitta produce characteristic gastrointestinal manifestations. Modern lifestyle, irregular dietary patterns, excessive consumption of spicy and acidic foods, stress and disturbed sleep may contribute to the increasing occurrence of acid-peptic and reflux-related symptoms.In Urdhwaga Amlapitta, the vitiated Dosha moves in an upward direction, resulting in symptoms such as sour or bitter eructation, burning sensation, nausea, indigestion and anorexia. These manifestations may clinically resemble gastroesophageal reflux-related symptoms.Ayurveda emphasizes management according to the involved Dosha, Agni and Samprapti. While Shamana Chikitsa provides symptomatic and Dosha-pacifying support, Shodhana is considered when elimination of aggravated Dosha is indicated.Virechana is one of the principal Shodhana procedures and is especially associated with the elimination of aggravated Pitta. Therefore, Virechana followed by appropriate Shamana Chikitsa provides a rational sequential approach for the management of selected patients with Urdhwaga Amlapitta.

AYURVEDIC AYURVEDIC UNDERSTANDING OF URDHWAGA AMLAPITTA:

The development of Amlapitta may be understood through the impairment of Jatharagni followed by improper transformation of ingested food and vitiation of Doshas. Pitta, particularly in association with impaired Agni, contributes to the characteristic sourness and burning manifestations.In Urdhwaga Amlapitta, the pathological process is directed upwards, resulting in manifestations involving the upper gastrointestinal tract.

The important clinical features include:

- Amlodgara
- Hrit Daha
- Kanta Daha
- Utklesha
- Avipaka
- Aruchi
- Amlatva
- Nausea
- Regurgitation

ROLE OF VIRECHANA:

Virechana is traditionally regarded as an important therapy for elimination of aggravated Pitta. In a suitable patient with Pitta-dominant Amlapitta, therapeutic purgation may help eliminate vitiated Dosha and restore Dosha equilibrium.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, Virechana may be understood through the following therapeutic actions:

Pitta Shodhana → Dosha elimination → reduction of Pitta aggravation → improvement of Agni → reduction of Amlapitta manifestations.

Appropriate patient selection is essential. Virechana should be performed only after proper assessment of Bala, Agni, Kostha, Prakriti, age and disease status, followed by appropriate preparatory procedures.

ROLE OF SHAMANA CHIKITSA:

Following Shodhana, Shamana therapy may be employed to pacify residual Dosha and maintain the therapeutic effects of purification.Selection of the Shamana formulation should be based upon the patient's predominant Dosha, Agni, symptoms and associated factors. Pitta-pacifying and Agni-supportive measures may be particularly relevant.Shamana therapy may therefore complement Virechana by addressing the remaining pathophysiological factors and supporting restoration of normal digestive function.

THERAPEUTIC RATIONALE OF THE COMBINED APPROACH:

The sequential use of Virechana and Shamana can be conceptualized as a two-stage therapeutic strategy.

Virechana: eliminates aggravated Pitta.

Shamana: pacifies residual Dosha and supports physiological equilibrium.

Pathya-Apathya: reduces recurrence by controlling dietary and lifestyle factors responsible for Dosha aggravation.

Thus, the approach does not merely aim at temporary relief of burning or acidity but addresses the Ayurvedic concepts of Dosha, Agni and Nidana involved in the disease process.

COMTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE:

Symptoms of Urdhwaga Amlapitta such as heartburn, acid regurgitation, sour eructation and retrosternal burning may overlap with manifestations of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). However, Amlapitta is an Ayurvedic diagnostic construct and should not be considered identical to GERD solely on the basis of symptomatic similarity. Contemporary investigations may be used when clinically indicated, particularly in patients presenting with persistent symptoms or alarm features.

IMPORTANCE OF PATHYA-APATHYA:

Diet and lifestyle modification form an important component of management.

Patients may be advised to avoid individual dietary triggers, excessive spicy and oily food, overeating, irregular meals and eating immediately before sleep. Appropriate meal timing, adequate sleep and a disciplined daily routine may support the maintenance of Agni and reduce recurrence.

DISCUSSION:

The Ayurvedic management of Urdhwaga Amlapitta should be individualized according to Dosha, Agni, Bala and disease stage. Virechana is particularly relevant where Pitta predominance and suitability for Shodhana are established.The subsequent administration of Shamana Chikitsa provides a complementary approach by pacifying residual Dosha and supporting digestive function. This sequential strategy reflects the broader Ayurvedic principle of removing the aggravated Dosha when indicated and subsequently maintaining physiological equilibrium.However, clinical use of Virechana requires appropriate patient selection, qualified supervision and adherence to classical procedural principles. It should not be performed routinely in every patient presenting with acidity or reflux symptoms.

CONCLUSION:

Urdhwaga Amlapitta represents a clinically relevant Ayurvedic disorder associated with disturbed Agni and Pitta predominance. Virechana followed by Shamana Chikitsa offers a theoretically rational therapeutic approach in appropriately selected patients by combining Pitta Shodhana with subsequent Dosha pacification. Integration of appropriate Pathya-Apathya and lifestyle modification may further support long-term management. Well-designed clinical studies are required to establish the efficacy and safety of this sequential therapeutic approach.

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