

International Research Journal of Ayurveda & Yoga

Vol. 6 (6),147-151, June,2023

ISSN: 2581-785X : <https://irjay.com/>

DOI: [10.47223/IRJAY.2023.6624](https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2023.6624)



Panchakarma for Health & Diseases: A Brief Review.

Rohan Agalcha¹, Sarvesh Kumar Singh², Kshipra Rajoria³ Mini Rathi⁴

1-PG Scholar P.G. Department of Panchakarma, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

2-Associate professor, P.G. Department of Panchakarma, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

3-Assistant professor, P.G. Department of Panchakarma, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

4-PG Scholar, P.G. Department of Panchakarma, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Article Info

Article history:

Received on: 30-04-2023

Accepted on: 09-06-2023

Available online: 30-06-2023

Corresponding author-

Rohan Agalcha, PG Scholar P.G. Department of Panchakarma, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Email: rohanagalcha@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Ayurveda aims to cure the patient's illness while also safeguarding the health of a healthy person. Healthy attributes and *Chikitsa Siddhanta* have been suggested as ways to achieve the same. In these methods, Panchakarma plays a significant role. Through a series of unique processes known as Panchakarma, one can improve one's physical appearance and gain new attributes. *Vamana, Virechana, Niruha Basti, Anuvasana Basti, and Nasya* are the names of these five karmas. In addition, Panchakarma also takes into account actions like *Shirodhara, Abhyang, Swedan, Katibasti, Patrapind Swedana, Shirolep*, etc. Currently, the likelihood of contracting an illness has grown owing to the decline of routine and placing a premium on money above health. In such a situation, these diseases can be avoided by increasing the immunity of the body by using *Panchakarma*

Material and Methods: Online database related to *Panchakarma* on Ayush research portal, PubMed, Google Scholar, Research Gate, & Scopus was searched. Classical such as *Bruhatrayi and Laghutrayi* were also reviewed.

Result and Discussion: Ayurvedic Panchakarma treatment is useful at treating chronic illnesses and keeping people in a healthy state. This modality has great promise; hence it is important to support research into this area.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Panchakarma, Virechana, Vamana, Basti, Nasya*

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Statistics report 2023, though the overall population health has improved over 7 decades but still issues like management of non-communicable diseases, impact of COVID-19, ¹climate change and health are fetching concerns of mankind.¹ In such situations, various guidelines by WHO are being released at times. But still in an era of fast-growing competition, the health status specially in developing countries needs improvement. Ayurveda is known to have its primary aim as to preserve the health of a healthy

individual. *Panchakarma* therapy in Ayurveda is known to fulfill the needs of healthy as well as diseases individuals. Therefore, a study was needed to find out the possibilities of *Panchakarma* therapy in health and diseases.

Although, it is mentioned in the Samhitas that Ayurveda originated from the remembrance of Brahma, but the knowledge has been validated from time to time by Acharyas by examining it through various evidences. The purpose of Ayurveda is to protect the health of a healthy person and to remove the disease of the patient. To fulfill



the same, healthy virtues and *Chikitsa Siddhanta* have been described as means. Panchakarma has an important place in these means. Panchakarma is a set of special procedures by which new qualities are acquired by removing unwanted defects of the body. Although the name Panchakarma reflects the five number of these Karmas (procedures), but Panchakarma itself contains many small auxiliary deeds. The name Panchakarma is coined mainly because of the special power of health care and disorder control in five karmas. These five karmas are *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Niruh Basti*, *Anuvasana Basti*, and *Nasya*. Apart from this, deeds like *Shirodhara*, *Abhyang*, *Svedan*, *Katibasti*, *Patrapind Svedan*, *Shirolep* etc. are also included in Panchakarma.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Literary search related to *Panchakarma* was done in the published Ayurvedic database on the online platform such as Ayush research portal, PubMed, Google Scholar, Research Gate, & Scopus. The information about *Panchakarma* was also researched in *Bruhatrayi* (*Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, & *Ashtanga Hridayam*) and *Laghutrayi* (*Bhavaprakash*, *Madhava Nidan*, & *Sharangdhar Samhita*). After elimination of unconcerned data, final literature was then extensively reviewed and result were drawn.

What is Panchakarma: Panchakarma include main procedures as named above. In *Vamana* method, defects located in the upper part of the body are removed by controlled vomiting. Which can also be called controlled emesis or induced emesis in English. This *Karma* is prescribed for the control of *Kapha Dosha*. Similarly, when the defects in the lower part of the body are removed by controlled defecation, it is called *Virechana*.² This *karma* is the treatment of *Pitta* defects.³ The *Basti* process has special significance in Ayurvedic texts. While most of the *Acharyas* have described the *Basti Karma* as a half of complete treatment modalities whereas, some have described it as complete medicine.⁴ In this process, drugs are inserted through the rectal route which can also be called medicated enema in common language. Although *Basti karma* is mainly used in diseases caused by *Vata* defects, this process is also helpful in removing *Pitta* and *Kapha* defects.⁵ There are 2 important types of *Basti Karma*. The first is *Niruha Basti*. In *Niruha Basti*, the *Kwatha* (decoction) made of disease-appropriate medicines is cultured by a certain process and inserted into the patient's body. And the second is the *Anuvasana Basti*. In

this, medicinal substances such as ghee, oil and fat are administered. The head in the body is said to be *Uttamanga* meaning the most important part in human body. It is also mentioned that nasal passage is entry door into head.⁶ When the drug is given to the body through the nose, that process is called *Nasya Karma*. Diseases of the head are prevented and treated by *Nasya karma*.

Clinical significance of Panchakarma: According to *Acharya Charaka*, the disequilibrium in *Dosha* causes diseases. May it be natural by the seasonal alteration of body's physiology or may it be pathological by following sedentary lifestyle, these *Doshas* are regulated using *Panchakarma*. The disease caused by the Physiological vitiation of *Vata*, *Pitta*, & *Kapha* are treated by *Basti*, *Virechan*, & *Vaman* in the *Varsha*, *Sharad*, & *Basant* seasons respectively.⁷ These vitiated *Doshas* if not removed, get lodged in the *Dhatu*s and cause diseases to get more difficult to treat. *Panchakarma* along with the *Poorva Karma* and *Pradhana Karma* helps in mobilizing the *Doshas* and expel them out resulting in complete elimination of disease.⁸

Panchakarma for health:

The *Panchakarma* procedure are not only therapeutic interventions but also preventive steps to live a healthy life. *Abhyanga* (oil massage) is one of the best practices that leads to elimination of fatigue. According to the classical texts of Ayurveda, *Abhyanga* acts as an anti-aging agent.⁹ Moreover, *Abhyanga* in foot soles is seen good for the eyesight.¹⁰ *Pratimarsha Nasya* is advised to be performed daily at 14 different time points to remain prevented from various diseases.¹¹ *Udwartana* (powder massage) is good for losing fat, getting strong body, and increases skin health.¹²

Seasonal variation in the environment leads to accumulation and vitiation of *Doshas* in the healthy individuals. The *Vata Dosha* gets accumulated in the *Grishma Ritu* (summer season) and becomes vitiated in the *Varsha Ritu* (rainy season) therefore *Basti Karma* is performed in rainy season for elimination of vitiated *Vata Dosha*. Similarly, *Pitta Dosha* gets accumulated in *Varsha Ritu* and gets vitiated in *Sharad Ritu* (Autumn) therefore *Virechan Karma* is advised for elimination of *Pitta Dosha*. The cold weather in the *Hemant & Shishir Ritu* (winter) leads to the accumulation of *Kapha Dosha* in healthy individuals and the *Kapha* gets vitiated in the *Basant Ritu* (Spring) therefore *Vamana Karma* is done for the elimination of *Kapha Dosha*. These *Panchakarma*

procedures can be performed in accordance to the season to prevent from the diseases of the respective *Dosha*.

Panchakarma not only removes disease causing elements from the body but also helps in acquiring useful qualities. The process of *Shodhana* (systemic purification) by *Panchakarma* is performed before the use of *Rasayana* & *Vajikarana* to amplify their efficacy. The above process can be understood by a simple example as a clean cloth readily get colored with dye as compare to a dirty cloth.¹³ Healthy couple ready to conceive are advised to undergo *Panchakarma* procedure as it leads to *Beej Shuddhi* i.e., it improves the quality of sperm and ovum.

Evidence based effect of *Panchakarma*:

To determine the impact of *Vamana* procedure on various illnesses during the *Vasanta* season, a pilot research study was conducted. The outcomes were highly significant, as 58% symptomatic alleviation was attained.¹⁴

Diseases of respiratory system such as Bronchial Asthma have been seen to be treated successfully through *Panchakarma*. In a study on patients of Bronchial Asthma, *Vamana* with *Ikshvaku Ksheera Yoga* has shown statistically highly significant reduction in breathlessness, cough, rhonchi, and significant changes in lung function tests.¹⁵ Diseases of circulatory system such as Hypertension, arteritis, atherosclerosis etc are well managed by *Virechan Karma*. According to a case study, Vasculitis was successfully managed by *Virechana Karma* and *Basti karma*. The case study showed that early stages of vasculitis may be satisfactorily managed with *Panchakarma* procedure. However, the study also suggests further research on the disease.¹⁶ Another study on 42 patients receiving *Abhyanga* and *Swedana* showed that the procedures led to decrease in systolic blood pressure and pulse rate as their long-term effect.¹⁷ *Virechana* has been demonstrated to be useful therapy for obesity because it lessens the colonisation of aerobic bacteria. The gut flora dysbiosis was corrected after *Virechana* and during follow-up visits as well, which activated the body's weight reduction mechanism and reduced the signs and symptoms of obesity. Due to a decrease in *Escherichia coli* colonisation and effectiveness against gut flora dysbiosis, *Virechana* is useful in the control of obesity.¹⁸ The *Panchakarma* procedures such as *Virechan* and *Basti* are effective while treating Autoimmune pancreatitis. IgG, HbA1c, triglycerides, low density lipoprotein (LDL), and body mass index (BMI) all decreased in a study where Patient was treated with classical *Virechana* and *Madhutailika Basti*. This shows

that *Virechana* and *Basti* can be effectively planned in patient with AIP associated with other disorders.¹⁹ Another chronic disease of GIT was managed by use of *Panchakarma* procedure. A patient suffering from Hirschsprung disease (*Pakvasayagata vata* in Ayurveda) was treated with *Shashtikashali pinda swedana* (sudation with medicated cooked bolus of rice) and *Matra basti* (enema with medicated oil) with *Ashwagandha taila* showed good improvement in the symptoms.²⁰ When it comes to locomotor system, *Panchakarma* can be effective significantly if the disease is identified early. There are several case reports that shows successful management of diseases like lumbar and Cervical Spondylosis, Sciatica Pain, Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, And Avascular Necrosis. *Panchakarma* therapy proved satisfactory management of chronic disorders. According to a study, when a patient suffering from Limb girdle dystrophy was treated with *Shalishastika Pinda Swedana* and *Mustadi Yapana Basti* showed symptomatic improvement and reduction in S.CPK level.²¹ *Panchakarma* procedures such as *Shalishastika pinda svedana* and *Mustadi yapana basti* when given along with oral Ayurvedic medicines in the rare hereditary condition-Spondyloepiphyseal Dysplasia Tarda, was found to be effective in its management. Kyphosis, scoliosis, and pain were moderately reduced.²² A study on patients suffering from cervical spondylosis, *Nasya Karma* with *Dhanwantaram Tailam* (21times *Aavartita*) along with oral medication. Assessments were done regarding pain, tenderness, radiation of pain, numbness, range of movements and hand grip strength. These were done before treatment, before *Nasya*, after treatment and after 1month follow-up. The statistical hypothesis was tested using paired 't' test and 'Z' test for proportion. The trial proved that conventional management along with *Nasya* was more efficacious than conventional management alone in reducing the signs and symptoms of cervical spondylosis.²³ Numerous studies using *Panchakarma* therapy as the cornerstone of the therapy have been carried out across the nation in various institutions. People suffering from mental depression have received treatment for their mental disorders at any stage, thanks in large part to *Panchakarma* therapy. When compared to the various forms of treatment used throughout the world, *Panchakarma* has successfully and permanently addressed depression illnesses.²⁴

DISCUSSION

This was a brief review to find out the usefulness of *Panchakarma* therapy in health and diseases. After the

COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a shift while making first choice of treatment. Not many, but a considerable portion of the population want to be treated with Ayurveda. *Panchakarma* is a multi-dimensional modality that helps to both healthy and diseased people. This study was a review that aimed at finding out application and effectiveness of *Panchakarma* in health and diseases. In Ayurveda, there are only two types of diseases mentioned by the *Maharishis*, the first is those diseases which are related to *Shashtra Karma* (surgery) and the second is those which are related to *Panchakarma* and medicine. Diseases arise from *Shareerika* and *Manasik Doshas* (Psycho-somatic origin). Physical diseases arise due to lack of harmony between *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. By *Panchakarma*, these defects are removed and the *Dosha* equilibrium is established, so that the diseases are completely eliminated. In the past, the COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted life all over the world. At that time, people in India got special help in fighting this disease through Ayurveda. Such disasters have been described in *Acharya Charak* by the name of *Janpadodhvansa* *Panchakarma* finds the first place in its management strategies.²⁵ In the treatment of various types of chronic diseases such as Psoriasis, Avascular Necrosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Osteoarthritis, Obesity, Bronchitis, Paralysis, Mental Depression, etc., the common man has to face difficulties financially. At the same time, these diseases can be easily controlled using *Panchakarma* and the patient benefits. This is confirmed by the results of research work being done on these diseases in various Ayurvedic institutions. At present, due to the deterioration of routine and prioritizing earnings over health, the chances of a person to catch a disease have increased. In such a situation, these diseases can be avoided by increasing the immunity of the body by using *Panchakarma*. Therefore, *Panchakarma* can be done in both healthy and sick states. And experts of the field also recommend undergoing *Panchakarma* treatment from time to time. These five *Karmas* are performed in patients after examining the patient in various ways. Ayurveda *Samhitas* comprise of special texts sections dedicated for the execution of *Panchakarmas*. For example, the “*Siddhi Sthana*” (a compilation of chapters) in the *Charaka Samhita* composed by *Acharya Charaka* specifically depicts the wisdom of *Panchakarma*. The preparation before the use of these deeds is called *Poorkarma* and only after it is successfully done, the main *Panchakarmas* can be done. Therefore, it becomes necessary to undergo all these *Panchakarmas* duly after consultation of an expert and under their supervision because inattention can be harmful in these deeds. However, the safety of *Panchakarma* should not be questioned as these procedures when performed with proper operating procedures, are found to be safe as documented in the classical texts of Ayurveda.

Moreover, various studies to validate the safety and efficacy of *Panchakarma* are still being carried out at various national and international research institutes.

CONCLUSION


Panchakarma therapy of Ayurveda is effective in managing Chronic ailments and maintains the healthy state of the individuals. This modality has tremendous potential therefore research to explore this field should be encouraged.

Acknowledgment- Nil

Conflicts Of Interest- Nil

Source of finance & support – Nil

ORCID

Rohan , <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4413-648X>

REFERENCES

1. World Health Statistics, building on past Achievements to prepare for the next stage of global health: Chapter 3; page 72. Available from – <https://www.who.int/data/gho/publications/world-health-statistics>
2. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editor. (1st ed.). *Caraka Samhita of Caraka, Kalpsthana*; Madanakalpa Adhyaya: Chapter 1, Verse 4. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, 1981; 890.
3. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editor. (1st ed.). *Caraka Samhita of Caraka, Sootrasthana*; Maharoga Adhyaya: Chapter 20, Verse 16. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, 1981; 404.
4. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editor. (1st ed.). *Caraka Samhita of Caraka, Siddhisthana*; Kalpanasiddhi Adhyaya: Chapter 1, Verse 40. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, 1981; 971.
5. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editor. (1st ed.). *Caraka Samhita of Caraka, Siddhisthana*; Bastisootreeya siddhi Adhyaya: Chapter 3, Verse 26. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, 1981; 994.
6. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editor. (1st ed.). *Caraka Samhita of Caraka, Siddhisthana*; Trimarmeeya siddhi Adhyaya: Chapter 9, Verse 88. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, 1981; 1070.
7. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editor. (1st ed.). *Caraka Samhita of Caraka, Sootrasthana; Navegan dhaaranrya* Adhyaya: Chapter 7, Verse 46. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, 1981; 168.

8. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editor. (1st ed.). *Caraka Samhita of Caraka, Sootrasthana*; Chikitsa praabhriteeya Adhyaya: Chapter 16, Verse 20. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, 1981; 320.
9. Gupta A, Upadhyaya Y, editor. (1st ed.). *Ashtang Hridayam of Vagbhata, Sootrasthana; Dinacharya Aaddhyaya*: Chapter 2, Verse 8. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Prakashana, 2009; 24.
10. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editor. (1st ed.). *Caraka Samhita of Caraka, Sootrasthana; Maatraashiteeya Adhyaya*: Chapter 5, Verse 91. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, 1981; 129.
11. Sharma A, editor. (1st ed.). *Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta, Chikitsasthana; Dhoomanasyakavalgraha Chikitsa Adhyaya*: Chapter 40, Verse 51. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surabharti Prakashan, 2018; 500.
12. Gupta A, Upadhyaya Y, editor. (1st ed.). *Ashtang Hridayam of Vagbhata, Sootrasthana; Dinacharya Aaddhyaya*: Chapter 2, Verse 15. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Prakashana, 2009; 26.
13. Sharma A, editor. (1st ed.). *Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta, Chikitsa sthana; Sarvopaghaata shamaneeya Rasayan Adhyaya*: Chapter 27, Verse 4. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surabharti Prakashan, 2018; 384.
14. Rawal M, Chudasma KM, Vyas RV, Parmar BP. Effect of Vasantic Vaman and other Panchakarma procedures on disorders of various systems. *Ayu*. 2010 Jul;31(3):319-24. doi: 10.4103/0974-8520.77160. PMID: 22131733; PMCID: PMC3221065.
15. Patil SG, Thakar AB. Efficacy of *Vamana Karma* with *Ikshvaku Ksheera Yoga* in the management of *Tamaka Shvasa* (bronchial asthma). *Ayu*. 2017 Jan-Jun;38(1-2):10-14. doi: 10.4103/ayu.AYU_95_13. PMID: 29861586; PMCID: PMC5954254.
16. Singh SK, Rajoria K, Sharma S. An ayurvedic approach in the management of Siragatavata complicated with Dusta Vrana. *J Ayurveda Integr Med*. 2021 Jan-Mar;12(1):151-155. doi: 10.1016/j.jaim.2019.10.006. Epub 2020 Mar 9. PMID: 32165016; PMCID: PMC8039341.
17. Rastogi S, Chiappelli F. Hemodynamic effects of Sarvanga Swedana (Ayurvedic passive heat therapy): A pilot observational study. *Ayu*. 2013 Apr;34(2):154-9. doi: 10.4103/0974-8520.119669. PMID: 24250123; PMCID: PMC3821243.
18. Chaturvedi A, Nath G, Yadav VB, Antiwal M, Shakya N, Swathi C, Singh JP. A clinical study on *Virechana Karma* (therapeutic purgation) over the gut flora with special reference to obesity. *Ayu*. 2019 Jul-Sep;40(3):179-184. doi: 10.4103/ayu.AYU_302_19. Epub 2020 Aug 8. PMID: 33281395; PMCID: PMC7685265.
19. Patil RP, Patil PD, Thakar AB. *Panchakarma* in autoimmune pancreatitis: A single-case study. *Ayu*. 2019 Oct-Dec;40(4):242-246. doi: 10.4103/ayu.AYU_15_20. Epub 2021 Jan 14. PMID: 33935442; PMCID: PMC8078606.
21. Singh SK, Rajoria K. Ayurvedic management of chronic constipation in Hirschsprung disease - A case study. *J Ayurveda Integr Med*. 2018 Apr-Jun;9(2):131-135. doi: 10.1016/j.jaim.2017.11.004. Epub 2018 May 29. PMID: 29853328; PMCID: PMC6033722.
22. Rajoria K, Singh SK, Dadhich S. Ayurvedic management in limb girdle muscular dystrophy - A case report. *J Ayurveda Integr Med*. 2022 Jan-Mar;13(1):100486. doi: 10.1016/j.jaim.2021.07.002. Epub 2021 Dec 24. PMID: 34961685; PMCID: PMC8728082.
23. Singh SK, Rajoria K. Ayurvedic management of spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia tarda, a rare hereditary disorder. *J Ayurveda Integr Med*. 2016 Oct-Dec;7(4):249-254. doi: 10.1016/j.jaim.2016.10.002. Epub 2016 Nov 25. PMID: 27890699; PMCID: PMC5192282.
24. Radhika C, Kumar GV, Mihirjan K. A randomized controlled clinical trial to assess the efficacy of Nasya in reducing the signs and symptoms of cervical spondylosis. *Ayu*. 2012 Jan;33(1):73-7. doi: 10.4103/0974-8520.100316. PMID: 23049188; PMCID: PMC3456869.
25. Ranjan M Dr, Sharma AK Prof; *From 5th World Ayurveda Congress 2012 Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. 7-10 Dec 2012. PA01.38. Role of panchakarma therapies in depressive disorder. Anc Sci Life*. 2012 Dec;32(Suppl 1):S88. PMCID: PMC3800970.
26. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editor. (1st ed.). *Caraka Samhita of Caraka, Vimaanasthana*; Janapadodhwansaneeya Vimana Adhyaya: Chapter 3, Verse 13. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, 1981; 694.

How to cite this article: Agalcha R, Sarvesh Kumar Singh SK, Rajoria K, Rathi M “Panchakarma in health and diseases: A review” *IRJAY*. [online] 2023;6(6):147-151. Available from: <https://irjay.com>. DOI link- <https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2023.6624>