



A Critical Review on the Effect of Nasya in Systemic Diseases

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ABSTRACT

Nasya is a key element in Ayurvedic medicine, involving the therapeutic use of medicated substances administered through the nose. It's effective for various upper body issues like headaches, chronic rhinitis etc. The action of nasya in whole body is also a known phenomenon. Its efficacy is compared to basti karma, emphasizing the need for in-depth study in various systemic diseases as per Ayurvedic classics. A review of Ashtangahridaya for nasya in diseases other than that of the upper body revealed 47 different entries. Such indications are analysed based on the dosha involved and samprapti of the disease. The evident of action of nasya is appreciated in diseases like vatavyadhi, unmada, apasmara, visha and so on, which affect the whole body. Adopting the same would greatly benefit the Ayurvedic practitioners.

INTRODUCTION

Nasya is an integral component of Ayurvedic medicine and is included in the Panchakarma therapy. It involves the administration of medicated substances through the nasal passage for therapeutic purposes. The term "nasya" originates from "nasa," meaning nose, and this treatment modality can be traced back to ancient texts like the Rigveda. In Nasya, medications like oil, ghee, decoctions, powders, or smoke are introduced through the nostrils. This method goes beyond the nasal passages, affecting the entire body by enhancing the endocrine glands and nervous system. In Ayurveda, nasya is regarded as an effective method for addressing various upper body health conditions¹, such as facial paralysis, headache, chronic rhinitis, and hemiplegia. The concept of treating the upper part of the body, referred to as shiras, is compared to nourishing the roots of an inverted tree, with the potential to benefit the entire body.

The therapeutic effects of Nasya are twofold: it directly removes vitiated doshas from the head (shira) and its associated parts, while also indirectly influencing the functions of the entire body. The anatomical connection of the nose to various cranial structures, such as the eyes, ears, and pharynx, means that drugs administered through this route can have a therapeutic impact on these related organs.² Nasya is noted for its ability to influence sensory organs and facilitate the rapid action of administered drugs. With numerous synonyms in Ayurvedic texts, such as Shirovirechana, Shirovireka, Murdha Virechana, Nastahkarma, and Navana, Nasya has a rich history and remains a crucial element in traditional Indian medicine for a wide range of health conditions. The ease of administration makes Nasya one of the simplest procedures that a patient can follow by himself. Its efficacy is compared with that of basti karma. Thus, it becomes necessary that the effects of nasya karma in various systemic diseases are thoroughly studied from the classics of Ayurveda.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, a systematic review is conducted by screening Ashtangahridaya, a classic Ayurvedic text, focusing on references to nasya. This review encompasses nasya karma in the context of various diseases, except that of the upper body. The references are thoroughly collected and analysed. It considered both standalone nasya treatment and nasya in combination with other Ayurvedic therapies.

RESULTS

As mentioned above, the references pertaining to diseases other than that of Urdhvanga are collected for the analysis. A total of 47 such entries are recognized. The results of the review are represented below in tabular form.³

Sl. No.	Nasya Yoga	Indications	Reference
1.	Haridra+Sinduvara+Vacha+Tanduliyaka+ Kukkutanda+Bakuchi	Amashaya and Pakvashaya gata visha	Ah.Su.7/26

2.	Tikshna Navana	Atinidra	Ah.Su.7/62-63
3.	Shiro virechana, Snaihika and Shamana nasya	Shiroruk, Gaurava, Shunyata, Daha etc.	Ah.Ci.1/125-126
4.	Nasya yogas mentioned in Unmada	Vishamajvara	Ah.Ci.1/164
5.	Hingu+ Vyaghri Vasa, Purana Ghrita+ Saindhava, Simha Vasa+ Saindhava	Vishamajvara	Ah.Ci.1/161-162
6.	Vasadi yoga+Ksheera, Ksheera+Sita, Jala+Sita, Dadima pushpa rasa, Amrasthi rasa	Nasagata Raktapitta	Ah.Ci.2/47
7.	Rasnadi Ghrita	Kasa, Vataroga	Ah.Ci.3/6-8
8.	Guda+Shunthi, Lashuna+Nari Ksheera, Palandu+Nari Ksheera, Madhu+Stanya, Ghrita manda+Saindhava etc.	Shvasa	Ah.Ci.4/47-50
9.	Ksheeraghrita, Ikshu rasa	Trishna	Ah.Ci.6/66
10.	Tikshna Nasya	Kaphaja Trishna	Ah.Ci.6/74
11.	Bilvadi taila	Vataja Hridroga	Ah.Ci.6/27
12.	Manusha Ksheera Nasya	Mada, Murcha	Ah.Ci.7/104
13.	Tikshna Nasya	Sanyasa	Ah.Ci.7/110
14.	Snaihika Navana	Vatavyadhi	Ah.Ci.21/3
15.	Mahasneha	Vatavyadhi	Ah.Ci.21/29
16.	Tikshna Avapida, Pradhamana	Vegantara in Vatavyadhi	Ah.Ci.21/31
17.	Sneha Nasya	Avabahuka	Ah.Ci.21/44
18.	Hingvadi Ghrita or Taila	Graharoga, Unmada, Apasmara	Ah.Ut.5/2-8
19.	Gajahvadi Kalka	Graharoga	Ah.Ut.5/8-9
20.	Siddharthaka Ghrita	Graharoga, Unmada, Apasmara, Jvara	Ah.Ut.5/10-13
21.	Siddharthaka Agada	Graharoga, Unmada, Apasmara, Javara	Ah.Ut.5/13-14
22.	Siddharthakadi Guda	Graharoga, Dushta vrana, Unmada, Sarpa visha	Ah.Ut.5/15-17
23.	Hingvadi Ghrita	Deva Graha	Ah.Ut.5/29-30
24.	Vacha+Hingu+Lashuna+Basta mutra	Deva Graha	Ah.Ut.5/31
25.	Shvetapatradi Nasya	Naga Graha	Ah.Ut.5/33-34
26.	Mutra+Ghrita+Ksheera	Yaksha Graha	Ah.Ut.5/35-36
27.	Haritakyadi Nasya	Yaksha Graha	Ah.Ut.5/36-37
28.	Naktamaladi Agada	Rakshasa Graha	Ah.Ut.5/41-43
29.	Naktamaladi Ghrita	Rakshasa Graha	Ah.Ut.5/43-44
30.	Haridradi Navana	Pishacha Graha	Ah.Ut.5/47
31.	Tikshna Navana	Unmada	Ah.Ut.6/20
32.	Avapidaka nasya, Pradhamana with Sarshapa	Unmada	Ah.Ut.6/41
33.	Pitta of Kapila Go, Shrigala, Bidala	Apasmara	Ah.Ut.7/29-30
34.	Godhadi Taila	Apasmara	Ah.Ut.7/30
35.	Triphaladi Taila	Apasmara	Ah.Ut.7/31-32
36.	Agada Nasya	Tririyi Vishavega	Ah.Ut.35/18
37.	Avapidaka Nasya	Saptama Vishavega	Ah.Ut.35/20
38.	Tikshna Avapidaka Nasya	Shashtha Vishavega of Rajiman sarpa	Ah.Ut.36/81
39.	Chandrodaya Agada	Sarvavisha, Graha, Maraka	Ah.Ut.35/32
40.	Kushtha+Madhu	Darvikara Visha	Ah.Ut.36/57-58
41.	Agada Nasya	Tritiya Vishavega of Darvikara sarpa	Ah.Ut.36/75
42.	Tikshna Agada Nasya	Saptama Vishavega of Darvikara sarpa	Ah.Ut.36/77
43.	Bilvumuladi Yoga	Sarpa-Luta-Vrishchika Visha, Jvara, Visucika	Ah.Ut.36/84-85
44.	Agada Nasya	Ugra Vrishchika Visha	Ah.Ut.37/39
45.	Agada Nasya	Luta Visha	Ah.Ut.37/85
46.	Sinduvaramuladi Agada	Mushika Visha	Ah.Ut.38/32
47.	Tuvaraka Taila (Rasayana)	Rasayana, Vali, Palitya	Ah.Ut.39/95

DISCUSSION

Nasa is said to be one of the routes of drug administration, and is chosen in Urdhvajatrugata vyadhi.⁴ This review revealed that it can be a useful treatment modality in diseases affecting other than Jatrurdhva viz., Jvara, Shvasa, Vatavyadhi, Unmada, Apasmara, Graha, Visha etc. It can be noted that even in the above-mentioned diseases, Nasya is mostly advised when one or more organs in the shiras are afflicted. In conditions like graha, visha and few vatavyadhi, nasya is specifically used for its beneficial actions all over the body.

Jvara

It is a popular opinion that Jvara chikitsa is a chapter which consists the treatment principles of all diseases. The principles of administration of Nasya are seen in Jvara chikitsa also, where vairechanika, snaihika and shamana type of Nasya are advised as per the conditions developed after acute phase of Jvara. It must be noted that Nasya is not mentioned in ama-jvara, but only in jirna-jvara.

Raktapitta

Raktapitta is a bleeding disorder where in the blood (Rakta) vitiated by Pitta flows out of the orifices (openings) of the body. In case of Urdhvaga Raktapitta where blood is oozing out through Mukha, Nasa, Karna or Akshi, Nasya is administered. The medicines used instantly pacify the sthanika dosha by their shita virya and stambhana karma. Thus, the life of patient is saved by arresting this excessive bleeding.

Kasa- Shvasa

Kasa and Shvasa are both Pranavaha Strotovikara. The pratiloma gati of vata is the main source of these diseases. These diseases originate in amashaya and manifests in the respiratory channel. Prana and Udana Vata are clearly vitiated. The gati of Vata must be corrected. If kapha and amadosha are present, they have to be expelled too. The combination of drugs mentioned in the treatment of these diseases appear to be doing both the functions. Hence nasya proves to be an excellent mode of treatment here, performing both actions.

Trishna

Trishna word in Ayurveda is interchangeably used for physiological as well pathological thirst. Vata and pitta are the two Dosha inseparably involved in causing Trishna⁵ as they have shoshana guna (property to absorb the water element). Administration of medicines having saumya guna helps in mitigating vata-pitta. As nasa is close to udakavaha srotomula, the medicines are given through nasya also.

Mada-Murcha-Sanyasa

In Mada, Murcha and Sanyasa there is involvement of Rasavaha and Raktavaha srotas along with samjnavaha srotas leading to confusion and may cause shock or syncope. Tikshna Nasya (penetrating nasal administration) in the form of Pradhmana (nasal inhalation of powdered drugs), Navana, or Avapidana with drugs like Vidanga, maricha, Vacha etc. act as beneficial to clear the srotas and overcome the avarana. The Pradhmana Nasya has been mentioned as 'Sarvasharira Shroto shodhaka'⁶ (purifying all channels in the body). This context clearly enlightens the fact that emergency management is described in Ayurveda.

Vatavyadhi

It is established that Vata is the driving force behind nerve impulses and also that the central nervous system can be considered as the seat of Vata. Therefore, the terminology Vatavyadhi mainly comprises a broad spectrum of diseases of the Central Nervous System. Dhatushayajanya Vatavyadhi can be treated by controlling the vitiation of Vata and correcting the obstruction of Dhatu. Margavrodhanya Vatavyadhi can be treated by removal of obstruction and correcting the direction of flow of Vata. Both tikshna and snaihika nasyakarma are mentioned in various vatavyadhis accordingly. In majority of cases, it is brimhana nasya that controls vata dosha by its Sneha guna.

Unmada- Apasmara- Graharoga

Apasmara is described as loss of Smriti and consciousness associated with Bibhatsa Chesta⁷. Loss of consciousness is one of the important signs in apasmara whereas in unmada, there is only impairment of buddhi, not a loss of it. Graha consists of a lot of varieties and is agantuja in nature. Together, these three diseases are included under Graha branch of Ayurveda. Almost 30% of the nasya yoga are found in these chapters. Nasya is used in these diseases to keep the consciousness and intellect intact.

Visha

Another major chunk of nasya is found in the chapters dealing with visha chikitsa. Nasya with agada is done to prevent the spread of the toxins to deeper tissues during successive visha vega. It is also used after visha vega is stopped to nullify the variety of poisons present in the body. Visha can quickly spread all over the body, and nasya is used in tackling it. This also serves as evidence that nasya can act throughout the body.

CONCLUSION

Nasya is a vital part of Ayurvedic medicine, a component of Panchakarma therapy. Its efficacy in various upper body diseases is stated in our classics and reaffirmed by many studies of our time. But the role of nasya in managing other diseases needs to be adopted and explored. Its usage as mentioned in Ashtangahridaya is discussed in this study. Diseases like vatavyadhi, unmada, apasmara require constant mitigation of dosha. Nasya, which is comparatively a simpler procedure among the panchakarma maybe readily adopted for this purpose.

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