

**VIRECHANA A BIOPURIFICATORY METHOD IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW**Abhinav<sup>1</sup>, Amrit Godbole<sup>2</sup> V. K. Srivastava<sup>1</sup>, J. S. Tripathi<sup>3</sup>

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**ABSTRACT**

*Virechana* is one kind of *Shodhana Karma*. The act of expelling *Doshas* through “*Adhobhaga*” is known as *Virechana*. *Virechana* is a therapeutic medicated purgative therapy that is meant for expelling out vitiated *Dosha* and *Mala* (waste material) through the anal route. This therapy is indicated for bio-purification and detoxification of body in many diseased conditions as well as for healthy individuals too as preventive measure. It is worth mentioning that *Virechana Karma*, in contrast to modern purgatives, is not merely an act to open the bowel, however a complete therapeutic measure which has systemic as well as local effects. This reality is additionally supported by the etymological consideration of the word “*Virechana*”, its wide range of indications the specific classical method, and mode of action given in *Ayurvedic* literature. In addition to the adequacy and popularity, the *Virechana Karma*, is considered as the best treatment for morbid and increased *Pitta Dosha* and it is more useful in eliminating the diseases originated from the vitiated *Pitta*. It is less complex procedure than *Vamana*, has less probability of complications and should be possible effectively, so it is widely utilised as *Sodhana* therapy in routine.

**Keywords:** Adhobhaga, Doshas, Shodhana, Karma, Virechana

## INTRODUCTION

Virechana is known as the process which is applied for the elimination of vitiated *Doshas* (morbid humors) through the *Adhobhaga*. *Acharya Chakrapani* while commenting on *Adhobhaga* explains it as the *Guda* (anal route). In certain circumstance the removal of *Dosha* through both their course i.e. 'Urdhva' and 'Adho' are together known by the term *Virechana*. As per assessment of *Gangadhara*, "Dosha nirharana from any route of the body is termed as *Virechana*".<sup>[1]</sup> Panchakarma section of ayurvedic management deals with elimination of the toxic morbid matters formed inside the body as a result of day to day activity. These morbid matters interfere with the metabolic fire i.e. *Agni* and carries out various ailments such as *Amavata*, skin diseases

like psoriasis, and Diabetes mellitus etc. Therefore, *Virechana* has an important role in cleansing of the body and maintenance of health.

**Classification of Virechana Dravya:-** Classification of *Virechana Dravya* can be done with various viewpoints as under.

1. Depending upon the origin and part used.
2. Depending upon intensity of action.
3. Classification on base of *Kalpna*.
4. According to safety of their use.
5. According to seasons.

### I. Depending upon the origin and part used

**a) Animal Origin**<sup>[2],[3],[4],[5]</sup>:- Urine; Milk; *Takra*

### b) Plant Origin: - Table 1: Virechana dravya and their parts used as per Ayurveda samhitas

Part Used	Charaka <sup>6</sup>	Sushruta <sup>7</sup>	Vagbhata <sup>8</sup>
<i>Mula</i> (root)	<i>Hastidanti</i>	<i>Snuka</i>	<i>Salaparni</i>
<b>(Mulini dravyas)</b>	<i>Shyamatrivritta</i>	<i>Shyamatrivritta</i>	<i>Prasnaparni</i>
	<i>Shweta</i>	<i>Raktamula</i>	<i>Kantakari</i>
	<i>Saptala</i>	<i>Saptala</i>	<i>Vartaki</i>
	<i>Danti</i>	<i>Danti</i>	<i>Gokshura</i>
	<i>Gavakshi</i>	<i>Gavakshi</i>	<i>Punarnava</i>
	<i>Visanika</i>	<i>Swarnakshiri</i>	<i>Vastuka</i>
	<i>Avartaki</i>	<i>Dravanti</i>	<i>Salavriksha</i>
	<i>Dravanti</i>	<i>Chitraka</i>	
		<i>Kusa, Kasa</i>	
		<i>Kinihi</i>	
<b>Phala (fruits)</b> <b>(PhaliniDravyas)</b>	<i>Sankhini</i>	<i>Puga</i>	<i>Triphala, Pilu,</i>
	<i>Vidanga</i>	<i>Eranda</i>	<i>Eranda, Priyala</i>
	<i>Anupklitaka</i>	<i>Haritaki</i>	<i>Badara</i>
	<i>(Madhuyasti)</i>	<i>Amalaki</i>	<i>Kuvala</i>
	<i>Prakirya</i>	<i>Bibhitaka</i>	<i>Karkandhu</i>
	<i>(Latakaranja)</i>	<i>Nilini</i>	<i>Kashmari</i>
	<i>Abhaya</i>	<i>Chaturangula</i>	<i>Puga</i>
	<i>Antahakotarpushpi</i>	<i>Kampillaka</i>	<i>Parusaka</i>
	<i>Kampillaka</i>		<i>Vidanga</i>
	<i>Aragawadha</i>		<i>Draksha</i>
<i>Udkirya</i>		<i>Nil</i>	
		<i>Putikaranja</i>	
		<i>Yashtimadhu</i>	
<b>Kshira(latex/milk)</b>	<i>Snuhikshira</i>	<i>Saptacchada</i>	<i>Saptaparna</i>
	<i>Arkakshira</i>	<i>Jyotishmati</i>	<i>Jyotishmati</i>
<b>Tvacha(bark)</b>	<i>Putika</i>	<i>Kampillaka</i>	<i>Kampillaka</i>
	<i>Tilvaka</i>	<i>Ramyaka</i>	<i>Lodhra</i>
		<i>Patala, Tilvaka</i>	<i>Mahanimba</i>

## II. Classification depending upon intensity of Action: -

1. **Mrudu Virechaka Drugs** - The drugs which are mild in action causing lesser degree of purgation, has to be given in low dosage and which are combined with drugs having antagonistic action.

**Indications:** *Alpa Dosha*, unknown *Kostha*, *Purva shodhita* weak patients, *Mrudu Kostha* patients e.g. *Draksha*, milk, warm water<sup>9</sup>.

2. **Madhyama Virechaka Drugs** - The drugs which are moderate in qualities and action are known as *Madhyama Virechaka*.

**Indications:** *Madhyama Roga*, *Madhyama Bala*<sup>10</sup>, e.g. *Trivrita*, *Katuki*, *Aragwadha*<sup>11</sup>.

3. **Tikshna Virechaka Dravya:** The drugs which induces several motions and eliminates the *Doshas* in large quantity in quick and gentle way without causing *Glani* (uneasiness), pain in precordial region or anus or any other internal organ are termed as *Tikshna virechaka*<sup>12</sup>.

**Indication:** *Balavana*, *Krura kostha* e.g. *Hema kshiri*, *Danti* etc. e.g. *Danti*, *Jayapala*.

## III. Classification on the basis of Kalpana:-

Various pharmaceutical preparations of drugs are prepared for enhancing the potency, shelf life and convenience. *Acharya Sushruta* has given eight preparations as follows in context of *Virechana kshira yoga*. *Madhya yoga*, *Ghrita yoga*, *Taila yoga*, *Mutra yoga*, *Mamsa Rasa yoga*, *Bhakshanna yoga*, *Avaleha yoga*. Besides these few other *Kalpana* like *Kashaya*, *Panaka*, *Tarpana*, *Shadava*, *Raga*, *Yavagu*, *Modaka*, *Dadhi* etc.

## IV. Virechana Drugs according to the safety of their use<sup>13</sup>

- 1) **Mrudu Virechana** - They are mild in nature and may be used in *Mrudu Kostha* e.g. *Aragwadha*.
- 2) **Sukha Virechana** - The drug which cause *Samyaka virechana* without any complications may be referred as *Sukha virechana*. e.g. *Trivrita*.
- 3) **Tikshna Virechana** -The drugs of this group are drastic in their action, e.g. *Snuhi Kshira*.

**Table 2:** Virechana Drugs according to Seasons<sup>14</sup>:-

Hritu →	Varsha	Sharada	Hemanta	Shishira And Vasanata	Grishma	All seasons
<b>Dravya</b>	<i>Trivrita</i>	<i>Trivrita</i>	<i>Trivrita</i>	<i>Trivrita</i>	<i>Trivrita</i>	<i>Trivrita</i>
	<i>Kutaja</i>	<i>Duralabha</i>	<i>Chitraka</i>	<i>Pippali</i>		<i>Danti</i>
	<i>Bija</i>	<i>Musta</i>	<i>Patha</i>	<i>Nagara</i>		<i>Hapusha</i>
	<i>Pippali</i>	<i>Sharkara</i>	<i>Jivaka</i>	<i>Saindhav</i>		<i>Saptala</i>
	<i>Shunthi</i>	<i>Bala</i>	<i>Sarala</i>	<i>Shyama</i>		<i>Katuki</i>
		<i>Chandana</i>	<i>Vacha</i> ,			<i>Svarnakshiri</i>
			<i>Hemakshiri</i>			
<b>Anupana</b>	<i>Draksha swarasa &amp; madhu</i>	<i>Yashtimadhu</i> in <i>draksha</i> decoction	Warm water	<i>madhu</i>	<i>sharkara</i>	<i>Bhavana</i> with <i>Go-mutra</i>

Some of the *Agrya* drugs mentioned in classics are<sup>15</sup>:-

*Mriduvirechana* – *Aragwadha*, *Sukhavirechana* – *Trivrit*, *Teekshnavirechana* – *Snuhi*, *Purishajanana* – *Yava*.

According to *Sushruta*<sup>16</sup>:- *Mula Virechana*-*Arunabhatrivritmula*, *Twakvirechana*- *Tilwaka*, *Phala Virechana* – *Haritaki*, *Tailavirechana* – *Erandataila*, *Swarasavirechana* – *Karavellaka*

**Guna (properties) of Virechaka drugs:** The *Virechanadravyas* having the properties such as *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, *Sukshma*, *Vyavayi* and *Vikasi*<sup>17,18,19</sup>.

**Ushana**– The power to produce sweat is due to *Ushnaguna*.

**Tikshna** -The power to perform *sodhana* process is due to *tikshna*.

**Sukshama**– *Sukshma guna* has power to produce *vivarana*.

**Vyavayi** – Expensiveness is the property in virtue of which a drug or a substance instantaneously permeates the whole organism and is subsequently digested.

**Vikasi**– Emanativeness is somewhat identical in its virtue with expensiveness with the exception that it permeates the organism in its undigested state and tends to disintegrate the root principles of the body.

They get quickly circulated into large and small capillaries of the body due to its *vyavayi* and *vikasi* properties. It permeates all over the body. By virtue of its *ushna* and *tikshna* qualities, the gathered *doshas* get liquefies and breakup into small pieces at cellular level. It detaches the *Malas* from *Dhatus* because of its *Vikasi guna*. Due to activity of *Sukshma guna* and *Anupravana* properties the *Malas* or *Doshas* float, because body has already got *Samyaka snigdhatta* and passes through smallest capillaries and eventually

reaches to *Pakvashya*. Detached *Malas* would not be obstructed even in the smallest capillaries. (*asajjannamiti- Na kwachidapisanghacchati*), Due to predominance of *Pruthvi* and *Jalamahabhuta* in *virechanadravyas*, these *Gunas* acquires the *Gati* (movement) of *Dravya* are towards *Adhovhaga* i.e. anal route. Where a prior *Snehana* is done, *Doshas* cannot stuck up in the *Srotas* or tissues (*Dhatu*); just as Honey cannot adhere itself to a vessel coated with oil. From *Kostha* downward passage is facilitated by the influence of the region wise dominating *Bhoota* matters.

**Shuddhi Lakshana: Chaturvidha Shuddhi Lakshana** - *Chakrapani* has categorized this assessment by naming as *Antiki*, *Vaigiki*, *Maniki* and *Laingiki* criteria<sup>20</sup>.

**Table 3:** Types of *Shuddhi* after *Shodhana Karma*

<i>Shuddhi Prakara</i>	<i>Pravara Shodhana</i>	<i>Madhyama Shodhana</i>	<i>Avara Shodhana</i>
<i>Vaigiki</i>	30 <i>Vegas</i>	20 <i>Vegas</i>	10 <i>Vegas</i>
<i>Maniki</i>	4 <i>Prastha</i>	3 <i>Prastha</i>	2 <i>Prastha</i>
<i>Antiki</i>	<i>Kaphanta</i>	<i>Kaphanta</i>	<i>Kaphanta</i>
<i>Langiki</i>	<i>Samyaka</i>	<i>Samyaka</i>	<i>Samyaka</i>

### 1 *Prastha* = 13.5 *Pal* (648 gm)

There is a lot of controversy regarding these criteria as which is the best one. Different scholars have given several explanations. After detailed explanation regarding these four criteria, *Chakrapani* counts *Antiki shuddhi* under *Laingiki* one<sup>21</sup>. *Chakrapani* at last accepted *Laingiki shuddhi* is most acceptable one and important in assessing the *Shodhana* procedure.

**Vaigiki Criteria** - After the administration of the medicine however counting the *Vegas*, the first 2 – 3 *Vegas* which are mixed with *Mala* should not be counted. The cleansing may occur in varying number of *Vega* which are influenced by the issues like body consistency, age and strength of an individual drug and vitiation of *Doshas* (amount of *Vitiated Doshas*).

**Maniki Criteria** – *Maniki Shuddhi* is distinguished as the *Shuddhi*, in which the proportion of *Avara*, *Madhyama* and *Pravara Shuddhi* are 4, 3 and 2 *Prastha* respectively. This criterion appears to be impractical as these days it is very hard to survey in

different conditions. *Vaigiki* and *Maniki* criteria are significant for select the *Samsarjana krama*. In fact, “*Jaghyanyadi shuddhi*” must be decided for *Samsarjana krama* and this is to be decided on the basis of *Vega* and *Mana*. Since the number of *Vega* and expelled humor (*Dosha*) is going to disturb our body physiology right from *Agni* (digestive juices) to homeostasis of all the physiological process, nourishment of body, electrolyte balances etc. To accomplish these requirements and to act according to state of *Agni*, *Samsarjana Krama* should be pursued. **Antiki Criteria** – *Antiki Shuddhi* is much the same as indicator of any titration reaction, it implies this is the stage where we have to stop as our ultimate aim is achieved, we must not go beyond this stage otherwise condition will be worsened.

**Laingiki Criteria** - The sign and symptoms described under the head of *Samyaka – Lakshana* can be considered under *Laingiki* criteria. This criterion is observed to see whether our *Karma* has reached to our

ultimate goal of *Shodhana* or not, as we have to act further for treatment regimen.

**Explanation** - *Chakrapani* had stated that *Jaghanya*, *Madhyama* and *Avara shuddhi* to understand the

proportion of *Dosha* vitiated inside the body which is eliminated out.

**Table 4:** *Samyaka Yoga Lakshanas:-*

<b>Lakshana</b>	<b>Charaka</b>	<b>Sushruta</b>	<b>Vagbhata</b>
<i>Srotovishuddhi</i>	+	-	-
<i>IndriyaPrasada</i>	+	-	-
<i>Urjas</i>	+	-	-
<i>Laghuta</i>	+	+	-
<i>Agnivridhi</i>	+	-	-
<i>Anamayatva</i>	+	+	
<i>Vit-Pitta-Kapha-VataKramenaPrapti</i>	+	+	-
<i>Vatanulomana</i>	+	+	
<i>Absence of AyogaLakshana</i>	-	-	+
<i>Manahprasada</i>	-	+	-
<i>Dourbalya</i>	+	-	-
<i>Glani</i>	+	-	-
<i>Ruchi</i>	+	-	-
<i>Hrdaya-Varna Vishuddhi</i>	+	-	-
<i>Kshudha – Trshna</i>	+	-	-
<i>Vegapravartanam in Proper time</i>	+	-	-

## DISCUSSION<sup>22,23,24</sup>:-

The evacuative therapy eliminates excreta, alleviates diseases, improves power and complexion and, if administered properly endows the individual with a long life. In the person whose belly has been evacuated, the body fire is enthused, diseases get pacified, normalcy is maintained, sense organ, mind, intellect and complexion are enhanced, strength, nourishment, progeny and potency are formed, the old age does not get his hold easily and the man lives long free from disorders. Hence, one should use the evacuative therapy timely and properly. Proper application of purgation gives clarity of intellect, power in sense organs, firmness in dhatus, strength, stimulation of digestive fire and delayed senility.

### Probable mode of action of *Virechana*:-

**Ayurvedic View<sup>25,26</sup>:-**The properties of *Virechana Dravyas* are *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, *Sukshma*, *Vyavayi*, *Vikasi* etc. are mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classics which play a vital role in the mode of action of *Virechana Karma*.

(1) *Ushna* – *Ushnaguna* has *Agneya* property & hence “*Vishyandana*” occurs i.e. ‘*Vilininam*

*kurvanti*’ (*Chakrapani*). Hence, it facilitates movement of morbid *Doshas* towards *Kostha*. It also assists to *Tikshana* property to perform its action.

- (2) ***Tikshana*** - *Tikshna* property performs the function of “*Sanghatabhedana*”, ‘*Chakrapani*’ quoted the word ‘*Vicchindayanti*’ (*Ch. Ka. 1/5 - Chakrapani*). It means to break the complex morbid matter into smaller molecules. According to *Dalhana*, it is responsible for quick excretion. Thus, *Tikshna* property breaks the *Mala* and morbid *Dosha* in micro form.
- (3) ***Sukshma*** - *Sukshmaguna* due to its *Anupravanabhava*, i.e. “*Anutvat Pravanabhavach*.....it helps to dilate the channel and to pass the drug into micro-channel. This property helps to remove the morbid matter from micro-channels and brings them to *Kostha* for expulsion.
- (4) ***Vyavayi*** - Due to this, drugs spreads quickly throughout the body & starts their action before its digestion. Due to *Vyavayi guna*, *Virechaka* drugs spreads all over the body without changing their

form. Some scholars included this property under 'Drava' property.

- (5) **Vikasi** - Due to this property drugs loosens the *Dhatu Bandhana*<sup>27</sup>. It creates the *Dhatu Shaithilyata (Dalhana)*. Hence drugs initiate their action without being digested. From all these properties *Doshas* are driven to *Koshta*.

Now from above description of *Virechana Dravya*'s properties it can be conclude that due to their *Vyavayi, Vikasi, Sukshma, Guna, Virechana* drugs reaches to the micro channels and by virtue of its *Ushna, Tikshna Guna* it scrapes out and liquefies morbid *Mala* and compact *Doshas*. In this way, *Virechana* Drugs brings *Shakhagat Mala* to *Koshta* and consequently expels out form the body.

## CONCLUSION

*Virechaka* drugs carry out the *Virechana* due to the *Prabhava* (potency) of drug rather than its above properties. No doubt these properties help to do so but drug should have that *Prabhava*. The drugs which are having *Jala* and *Prithvi Mahabhutas* dominancy have a natural tendency to go downwards and thus they can assist in induction of *Virechana*. If drugs are having all above said properties but if it is not having *Virechaka Prabhava* then it will not induce the *Virechana*. Hence, we can say, drugs act by its active principle can be said as *Virya* or *Prabhava* not by property, but properties assist in carrying the function of drug. It can be summarized that the above-mentioned properties of drug reach *Hridaya* by *Swaveerya* & then with the help of the large & small *Dhamanis* it pervades the whole body. Due to *Agneya* property, it causes *Vishyandana* i.e. oozing of *Doshas* & by *Tikshna* property causes *Vicchandana* (disintegration) of *Doshas*.

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