

DEFINITION, TYPES AND ADVANTAGES OF VASTI CHIKITSA (THERAPEUTIC ENEMA) ACCORDING TO VARIOUS AYURVEDIC TEXTS: A REVIEW

***Dilip K. Upadhyay**

Assistant Professor In Dept. of Panchakarma, Apex Institute of Aayurvedic Medicine &
Hospital Chunar, Mirzqpur, U. P.

Article Received on
07 June 2023,

Revised on 27 June 2023,
Accepted on 17 July 2023,

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr202313-29120

***Corresponding Author**

Dilip K. Upadhyay

Assistant Professor In Dept.
of Panchakarma, Apex
Institute of Aayurvedic
Medicine & Hospital
Chunar, Mirzqpur, U. P.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a science based on a variety of treatment principles. It has its own characteristics for understanding disorders; therefore treatment options are also thoroughly presented. In general, this science has features that do not just cover diseased people, but also emphasises a healthy lifestyle. When it comes to the therapy of disorders, it is divided into two sections: samshoshodhana and samshamana. Samshodhan is a more sophisticated but effective process that is primarily covered by panchkarma procedures. Panchkarma consists of five supreme procedures: vaman, virechana, vasti, nasya, and raktamokshana. The vasti is the most important of these. Ayurveda considers vasti to be half of a remedy. It is particularly beneficial for

Vata vyadhis. Among the three doshas, the Vata dosha is known as pradhana dosha. It regulates the body's natural operations as well as the karma of the Kapha and pitta doshas. When it becomes vitiated, several functions become disrupted, resulting in a variety of illnesses.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Panchakarma, Vasti, Vata, Samshodhana.*

INTRODUCTION

Vasti Chikitsa, also known as Basti, is a prominent therapeutic procedure in Ayurveda, the traditional system of medicine originated in India thousands of years ago. Vasti Chikitsa is considered one of the Panchakarma therapies, which are aimed at detoxifying and rejuvenating the body. The word "Vasti" literally means "bladder" or "bag," and in this context, it refers to the use of medicated enemas for healing purposes. Vasti Chikitsa involves

the introduction of herbal oils, decoctions, and other therapeutic substances into the rectum through the anus. It is believed that this procedure helps in balancing the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) and removing toxins from the body. Vasti Chikitsa is considered a highly effective treatment for various disorders, particularly those related to the digestive system, reproductive system, and musculoskeletal system. It is believed to nourish and strengthen the body tissues, improve digestion, eliminate accumulated waste, and restore the balance of doshas.

There are different types of Vasti Chikitsa, including Sneha Vasti (oil enema), Kashaya Vasti (decoction enema), and Uttara Vasti (vaginal or urethral enema). The choice of ingredients and their proportions vary depending on the individual's constitution and the specific health condition being treated.

The term 'Vasti' is derived from the verb root 'Vas' which has following meanings:

1. Vasu-Nivase-which means to reside, to stay, to dwell.
2. Vas-Acchaadne-which means to cover or wrap.
3. Vas-Vasne-Surabhikarane -which means to give fragrance.

'Vasti' word is formed from the root 'vas' by adding to it 'tich' pratyaya and belongs to masculine gender. The root 'vas' denotes to dwell, to reside or to produce effect of aromatic smell.

- Vasti Vastehavrotimutram- It denotes an organ, which covers the urine.
- Vastinabhiadhobhagasthane- It denotes an organ situated below the umbilicus, which holds the urine.
- Ausadhadanarthedrevyabhede- It denotes an instrument used for the administration of the medicine.

Ayurveda considers vasti to be half of a remedy. It is particularly beneficial for Vata vyadhis. Among the three doshas, the Vata dosha is known as pradhana dosha. It regulates the body's natural operations as well as the karma of the Kapha and pitta doshas. When it becomes vitiated, several functions become disrupted, resulting in a variety of illnesses.

As a result, vasti is the greatest panchkarma procedure for pradhana dosha. Vasti does whole-body shodhna while also playing samshamana, whereas other therapy modalities primarily perform biopurification. The numerous combinations of medicines in vasti are responsible for this multidimensional effect.

Types of Vasti

There are several types of vasti or enemas used in Ayurvedic medicine, each with its unique properties and indications. Here are some common types of vasti.

1) Asthapana Vasti or Niruha Vasti

When Kwatha is pradhana or main dravya in Vasti, Vasti is called Asthapana Vasti. It expels the doshas out of body or expells the diseases out of body so called “Niruha”.

It stabilizes the age so called as “Asthapana”.

2) Anuvasana Vasti

When Sneha is the main dravya, the Vasti is called as Anuvasana Vasti. Without causing any problem it remains inside and can be given daily is called Anuvasana.

It is of 3 types

- A) Sneha Vasti: Here Sneha matra is 1/4th to that of Niruha Vasti. Niruha matra=12 prasruti, Sneha Vasti matra= 3prasruti.
- B) Anuvasana Vasti: Here quantity of Sneha is ½ to that of Sneha Vasti matra i.e. 1½ prasruta
- C) Matra Vasti: Here quantity of Sneha is ½ to that of Anuvasana Vasti i.e. ¾ prasruta.

Types of Vasti according to different Acharyas.

Acharya Charaka	Acharya Sushruta	Acharya Vagbhatta	Acharya Vriddha Vagbhatta	Acharya Sharangdhara	Miscellaneous
1. Asthapana 2. Anuvasana 3. Uttara Vasti	1) Vataghna 2) Pittaghna 3) Kaphaghna 4) Raktaghna 5) Piccha 6) Sangrahika	1) Utklesana i 2) Dosahara 3) Samana 4) Vataghna 5) Pittaghna 6) Kaphaghna	1) Vataghna 2) Pittaghna 3) Kaphaghna 4) Vajikarana 5) Piccha Vasti 6) Sangrahika 7) Samsodhana 8) Lekhana 9) Utklesana 10) Bramhañ 11) Dahaghna	1) Sodhana 2) Samana 3) Dipana 4) Picchila 5) Utklesana 6) Dosahara 7) Braimhañ 8) Lekhana	(1) Madhutailika (2) Siddha (3) Yuktaratha (4) Yapana (5) Piccha (6) Picchila (7) Vaitarna (8) Kshara (9) Ardhmatrik

Some special actions of Vasti

A) Action of Vasti on Sarvasharira

According to Acharya Sushruta, even though Vasti is administered in pakvashaya, Virya performs its sarvdaihika karma and influences all three doshas in a similar fashion to how the Sun, despite its position in the sky, causes evaporation of water on the earth.^[1]

The Virya of Vasti dravya supplied through the Vasti into the Pakvashaya enters the entire body via the channels (Srotasa), much as the active ingredients in water poured at the tree's root reaches the entire plant.^[2]

By virtue of its Virya (potency), Vasti administered into Pakvashaya draws dosha/mala (morbid stuff) from all over the body, from the foot to the head, just as the Sun in the sky draws moisture from the soil by its heat.^[3]

B) Action of Vasti on Vata

Vata is thought to be the body's primary controller. If Vata, alone or in combination with other doshas, becomes vitiated, Vasti, by evacuation or removal, normalises Vata's path, as well as Pitta's, Kapha's, and faeces'.

C) General promotive Karmas of Vasti

Sustains age, Provides better life, improves strength, digestive power, voice and complexion.

Perform all functions, Provide firmness, corpulence quality, Laghuta in Sharira by removing morbid matter from all over body, restores normalcy, and increases relish.

D) Vasti against diseases

Relieves stiffness, contractions and adhesions, effective in paralytic conditions, effective in dislocations and fracture conditions, effective in those conditions where Vata aggravated in Shakha/extremities, relieves pain, effective in disorders of GI tract, effective in diseases of Shakha and Kosta, effective in the diseases of vital parts, upper extremities and localized or general part, beneficial to debilitated and weak persons, arrests premature old age and the graying of hair.

E) Preventive effects

Vasti taken in Sadharana ritus maintains Swasthya of Swastha persons. Beneficial in constipation. Effective to purify various systems of the body.

F) Effect on Mastishka and Mana

Improves intellectual power, provides clarity of mind, improves clarity of sense organs, induces sound sleep, lightness, exhilaration, invigorates eyesight, and pleases the mind.

G) Age is not a contraindication

Vasti is non antagonistic to healthy, diseased and old persons, applicable in all seasons.

Vasti can be administered in child and older person too because it is free from complications.

DISCUSSION

Vasti Chikitsa, also known as Basti or Ayurvedic enema therapy, is a therapeutic procedure described in Ayurveda, the traditional system of medicine from India. It involves the administration of herbal decoctions, oils, ghee, and other substances through the rectum to promote healing and balance in the body. In Ayurveda, Vasti is considered one of the most important and powerful treatments. It is believed to be effective in treating various diseases by directly influencing the doshas (energetic forces) and promoting the elimination of toxins from the body. The Vasti therapy is based on the principles of balancing the Vata dosha, which is considered the primary dosha responsible for many ailments. The procedure of Vasti administration follows a specific protocol. It typically starts with a preparatory phase called Snehana (oleation), which involves internal and external oil applications to lubricate the body and facilitate the elimination of toxins. This is followed by Swedana (sudation), which includes steam therapy or applying heat to the body to open up the channels and promote detoxification. The actual Vasti procedure involves the careful insertion of a lubricated tube into the rectum, through which the herbal substances are slowly introduced. The patient is then advised to hold the enema for a specific duration, allowing the medicinal properties of the substances to be absorbed by the body. After the therapy, the patient is advised to rest and follow a specific diet and lifestyle regimen to support the healing process.

In Ayurveda classics, detailed descriptions of Vasti Chikitsa can be found in texts like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya. These texts discuss the indications, contraindications, preparation of herbal decoctions, appropriate dosages, and the therapeutic benefits of Vasti in various diseases. Before undergoing Vasti Chikitsa, a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner assesses the patient's health condition, including their medical history and current symptoms. The treatment is then tailored to suit the individual's needs, and it is typically administered over a series of sessions. It is important to note that

Vasti Chikitsa should be performed by a trained and experienced Ayurvedic practitioner to ensure safety and effectiveness. While Ayurveda has been widely practiced and appreciated for its holistic approach to healthcare, it is always advisable to consult with a qualified healthcare professional before undergoing any new treatment.

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