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A review of lekhana karma's function in dushta vrana management

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Abstract

Lekhana Karma, one of the therapeutic procedures under Shodhana in Ayurveda, is aimed at eliminating excess body fat, deranged Doshas, and accumulated waste products (Malas). The term "Lekhana" implies scraping, symbolizing the removal of pathological substances. This article explores the concept of Lekhana Karma, its mechanisms, indications, and the specific Dravyas and Shastras used. It also discusses the role of Lekhana in managing Dushta Vrana and its modern clinical relevance. A comprehensive literature review has been undertaken using classical Ayurvedic texts and modern scientific journals to understand the therapeutic efficacy and future scope of Lekhana Karma.

Keywords: Lekhana karma, obesity, dushta vrana, shodhana, lekhana dravyas, ayurvedic detox

Introduction

Lekhana Karma is classified under Shodhana procedures in Ayurveda, which are primarily aimed at the elimination of excess body fat, vitiated Doshas, and unwanted metabolic by-products (Malas). The term "Lekhana" is derived from the root word "Likh," meaning to scrape or remove. In this context, it indicates the therapeutic scraping away of harmful elements from the body. This karma plays a vital role in the management of metabolic disorders and conditions such as obesity, high cholesterol levels, and related complications. The therapeutic effect of Lekhana is utilized in multiple treatment modalities, including oral administration, external therapies, and Panchakarma procedures ^[1, 2].

Objective of the study

The primary objective of this review is to understand the conceptual and practical aspects of Lekhana Karma in Ayurveda. Specific aims include:

- To understand the classical references and definitions of Lekhana Karma.
- To explore the therapeutic indications and pharmacological actions of Lekhana Dravyas.
- To review the usage of Shashtra in surgical applications of Lekhana.
- To study the symptoms of Dushta Vrana where Lekhana therapy is applicable.
- To correlate Ayurvedic principles with modern interpretations.

Methodology

All mentions of *Dushta Vrana* and *Lekhana Karma* originate from the *Sushruta Samhita*, where their roles are discussed in detail, particularly emphasizing the importance of *Lekhana Karma* in facilitating the wound healing process.

Dushtavrana

The term *Vrana* is derived from its characteristic of affecting a specific body part and leaving a permanent scar that remains visible throughout the individual's life ^[3]. It is also associated with the disruption or damage of body tissues (*Gatra Vichurnana*) ^[4]. Vranas are broadly categorized into two types based on their causative factors: *Agantuja* (externally caused or traumatic, also called *Sadyovrana*) and *Nija* (internally caused, also referred to as *Shareeraja* or *Doshaja*). Improper diet (*Mithya Ahara*) and lifestyle habits (*Mithya Vihara*) lead to the aggravation of the *Tridoshas*, resulting in *Nijavranas* ^[5]. Typically, an *Agantuja Vrana* evolves into a *Nijavrana* after seven days. If the vitiated Doshas are not managed, such wounds may progress into *Dushta Vrana* ^[6]. (chronic or infected wounds).

Dushta vrana lakshana ^[7]

Dushta Vrana refers to chronic, non-healing wounds characterized by:

- Foul-smelling discharge (Durgandha)
- Excessive pain (Toda)
- Discoloration (Vaivarnya)
- Raised or depressed wound bed
- Inflammation and swelling
- Presence of slough and pus According to Ayurveda, these wounds are caused by vitiated Doshas and require thorough Lekhana and Shodhana therapy to restore healthy tissue.

Lekhana karma

Lekhana Karma is considered one of the specialized therapies under Shodhana. Its mechanism involves removing excess fat, toxins, and pathological elements from the body. The action of Lekhana Dravyas is described as “Shoshana” (absorptive), “Lekhana” (scraping), and “Kaphahara” (reducing Kapha). According to classical literature, these substances possess properties such as Tikta (bitter), Kashaya (astringent), Ushna (hot), Ruksha (dry), and Laghu (light), which collectively contribute to the Lekhana effect. This karma is applied in various forms like internal administration (oral intake of Lekhana Dravyas), external applications (Udvartana), and therapeutic procedures (Vamana and Virechana) ^[8].

Indication for Lekhana Karma in Vrana ^[9]

Lekhana Karma is primarily indicated in conditions involving excess Kapha and Meda (fat). Some of the classical and modern conditions where this therapy is beneficial include: - Sthoulya (obesity) - Medoroga (lipid disorders) - Prameha (diabetes mellitus) - Dushta Vrana (non-healing ulcers) - Ama conditions (accumulated toxins) - Kapha-dominant disorders - Skin diseases (like psoriasis and eczema) - Metabolic syndrome - Cardiovascular disorders associated with hyperlipidemia It also plays a role in preventive healthcare by maintaining metabolic balance and preventing lifestyle-related disorders.

According to Acharya Dalhana, Niravasheshalekhana denotes total scrapping of the Vrana, Sulikhitalekhana denotes mild scrapping, and Samalekhana denotes excessive scrapping.

Lekhana Karma is performed with the following instruments (Shastra)

Ardhadara, Karapatra, Vruddhipatra, Nakhasra, Mudrika, and Mandalagra ^[10].

Shastra Abhave

According to Acharya Sushruta, in situations where surgical instruments (*Shastra*) are unavailable, materials such as *Kshouma* (linen), *Plota* (rags), *Pichu* (cotton pads), *Phena* (sea foam), *Yavashuka* (alkaline preparation from barley), *Saindhava Lavan* (rock salt), and *Karkashapatra* (rough leaves) are recommended for use. *Lekhana Karma* also incorporates substances of mineral origin, including *Seesa* (lead), *Kamsya* (bronze or bell metal), *Srotonjana* (collyrium), *Vidruma* (coral), *Kasisa* (green vitriol), *Krishnaloharajah* (iron filings), *Tamra* (copper), and *Shankha* (conch shell) ^[11]. Furthermore, as stated in the *Uttaratantra*, specifically in the *Lekhyarogapratishtya Adhyaya*, Acharya Dalhana suggests that in conditions dominated by *Vata-Kapha doshas*, as well as in hard and stubborn cases (*Kathina* and *Daruna*), *Lekhana* should be carried out using surgical instruments. Conversely, in disorders associated with *Pitta-Rakta doshas* or in soft-

tissue conditions (*Mriduvartma*) ^[12, 13] the use of leaves like *Shephalikadi Patras* is advised.

Lekhana dravyas

Dravyas or medicinal substances that produce Lekhana effects are numerous and widely described in classical texts. These substances are usually Ruksha (dry), Tikshna (penetrative), and possess Katu (pungent) or Tikta (bitter) tastes. Some important Lekhana Dravyas include:

1. **Triphala:** Known for its rejuvenating and detoxifying properties.
2. **Guggulu:** Commonly used in Medoroga due to its scraping action.
3. **Mustaka:** Effective in eliminating excess fat and toxins.
4. **Haridra:** A potent anti-inflammatory and metabolic stimulant.
5. **Chitraka:** Enhances digestion and removes Ama.
6. **Vacha:** Improves metabolism and has a scraping effect.
7. **Shilajit:** Known for its adaptogenic and lipid-lowering properties. These Dravyas can be administered in various forms, including decoctions, powders, oils, and formulations like Kshara and Guggulu preparations ^[14, 15].

Mechanism of action

Lekhana Karma works through a combination of pharmacodynamic and physiological processes. The Lekhana Dravyas stimulate Agni (digestive fire), enhance metabolic rate, and facilitate the breakdown and excretion of fat and toxins. Their Ushna (hot) and Tikshna (sharp) properties allow for better penetration into tissues, promoting the mobilization of stored fat and Kapha. The Ruksha (dry) and Laghu (light) qualities help in absorbing excess fluid and reducing heaviness. Additionally, the purificatory actions through Panchakarma help in resetting metabolic functions and restoring doshic balance.

Modern correlation

The principles of Lekhana Karma align with several modern therapeutic strategies used for weight reduction, detoxification, and metabolic correction. Many Lekhana Dravyas have been scientifically studied and found to possess hypolipidemic, anti-obesity, and hepatoprotective effects. For instance: - Guggulu has been proven to reduce LDL cholesterol and improve lipid profile. - Triphala demonstrates antioxidant and digestive-enhancing activities. - Haridra contains curcumin, which has anti-inflammatory and insulin-sensitizing effects. Ayurvedic Lekhana therapies like Udvartana are comparable to lymphatic drainage and dry massage techniques used in modern physiotherapy and weight management programs. Thus, integrating Ayurvedic and modern approaches can offer a holistic management plan for lifestyle disorders.

Discussion

Lekhana Karma is a valuable tool in Ayurvedic practice for managing obesity, metabolic dysfunction, and lifestyle-related diseases. Its basis lies in age-old principles that remain relevant in today's health scenario. The understanding of Dosha-Mala-Meda interactions, along with targeted use of specific Dravyas, offers a comprehensive strategy for internal purification and metabolic optimization. Contemporary studies also validate the efficacy of these herbal medicines and procedures, confirming their clinical utility. However, standardized protocols, dosage, and long-term safety need further exploration through clinical research ^[16, 17].

Results

Lekhana Karma, as described in Ayurvedic literature, offers a well-structured approach to managing metabolic and Kapha-related disorders. Its significance is amplified in the context of rising obesity and lifestyle diseases globally. By integrating classical knowledge with modern scientific validation, Lekhana Karma can be positioned as a complementary therapy for effective disease management and prevention. Further research and awareness can help in its broader clinical adoption and acceptance in integrative medicine.

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