

MONTH: JULY: AUG -2015

VOLUME: 3, ISSUE: 2

ISSN: 2348-1846



Punarna V

TITLE

VIRECANA KARMA: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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**AN INTERNATIONAL PEER REVIEWED AYURVED JOURNAL
ON LINE BI-MONTHLY AYURVED JOURNAL**

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**VIRECANA KARMA: A CRITICAL REVIEW****AGARWAL PRATEEK¹, SIPIKA SWATI²****¹ Department of Kayachikitsa, ² Department of Stree Avum Prasuti Tantra, Faculty of Ayurveda IMS, BHU, Varanasi, India.****ABSTRACT:**

In Ayurveda Samsodhan is considered as main therapy in most of the disease. According to Acharyas disease pacified with the help of Samana therapy (Diet and exercise) may occur again but that by Samsodhan therapy (Purification of body) never. Virecana Karma is very gentle purificatory procedure, has less possibility of complications and could be done easily, so it is widely used as Samsodhana therapy in routine purposes. It is more acceptable to all age group & all classes of patients. In addition to the acceptability and popularity, the Virecana Karma, is considered as the best treatment for morbid and vitiated Pitta Dosa, Àma and Malas. Pitta is closely related with Agni, which is responsible for the digestive and metabolic processes in the body. It is worth mentioning that Virecana Karma, unlike the modern purgatives, is not merely an act to open the bowel, but is a complete therapeutic measure which has systemic as well as local effects.

KEY WORDS: Pitta, Samsodhan, Virecana

INTRODUCTION

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According to Caraka, the Virecana drugs first get absorbed and then reaches to heart, Dhamani, macro and micro channels of the body and reach where Dosas are accumulated^[1]. They soften the compactness of the Dosas and break the bigger molecules to smaller ones, so that

they may be excreted secreted out in to intestine. The process occurs in a disciplined way by separation (*Viyojana*) and combination (*Samparcana*). The action of *Virecana* up to this stage is known as its systemic effect and it is obviously governed by *Viyojana* and *Samparcana* components of *Virecana*^[2].

When the *Dosas* or *Malas* are excreted into intestine, they are evacuated through the lower portion of the gut by purgation. This may be called as local action of *Virecana* and is governed by its "Rikir" component (Singhs 1976). The word "Praskandana" and "Recana" are also used for *Virecana Karma* in classics^[3].

DEFINITION

The act of expelling *Dosas* through "Adhobhaga" is known as *Virecana*^[4]. Here the meaning of "Adhobhaga" is "Guda" commented by *Cakrapani*.

LITERATURE

Virecana drugs according to their mode of action

Sarangdhara has classified the drugs on the basis of mode of action. A group of drugs known as "Virecanopaga" by *Caraka Samhita* may also be added to this classification as a fifth group.

(a) Anulomana (Sara)

The drugs which move the *Malas* downwards after digesting them and breaking their consistency are known as *Anulomana*. e.g. *Haritaki*. Sa. Pu. 4/4

Sushruta considers *Sara* as the synonyms of *Anulomana*. According to *Dalhana*, *Anulomana* causes expulsion of *Vata* and *Kapha* (Su. Su.46/529). *Bhavmisra* mentions that "Malanam" means undigested *Dosas*. "Bhitva Bandhanam" means removal of *Bandhana* of *Vayu* and 'Adhonayet" means to bring the *Mala* downwards. These drugs cause *Anulomana* of the *Pratiloma* movement of *Dosas* or *Malas*^[5].

(b) Sramsana

The literary meaning of *Sramsana* is to slip or to fall down^[6]. The drug which brings the semi-digested and sticky *Malas* without causing their digestion is known as *Sramsana* e.g. *Àragvadhā*. *Bhavaprakasa* mentions the "Adi" in the word *Maladi*, denotes *Kapha* and *Pitta*. In the context of *Jvara Cikitsa*, it has been mentioned that *Sramsana* eliminates the *Pitta* and *Kapha* situated in *Pakvasaya*. Ca. Ci. 3/172.

(c) Bhedana

Literary meaning of *Bhedana* is breaking, splitting, piercing, dividing, separations etc. According to *Sarngadhara*, the drug which disintegrates the "Abaddha" (unformed), or "Baddha"

(formed) or '*Pindita*' (dried faecal mass) forms of *Malas* by facilitating penetration in to it and then evacuating through the lower gut, is known as *Bhedana* e.g. *Katuki* (Sa. Pu.4/6).

Katuki is the drug representing *Bhedana* as well as *Dipana* properties and it is considered as cholagogue i.e. *Pitta Virecana*. Obviously the *Bhedana* represents both systemic as well as local actions of the drug. *Caraka* has described a group of drugs named as "*Bhedaniya*". This includes *Suvaha* (*Tévéta*), *Arka*, *Urubuka* (*Eranda*), *Agnimukhi* (*Kalihari*), *Citra* (*Danti*), *Citraka*, *Cirabilva*, *Īankhini*, *Sakuladani* (*Katuki*) and *Svarnaksri* (Ca. Su. 4/9).

(d) **Recana**

The drug which eliminates digested (*Pakvam*) and Undigested (*Apakvam*) *Malas* or *Dosas* by making them watery through the lower gut is known as "*Recana*". e.g. *Trivrita*. (Sa. Pu.4/7).

Adhamalla, while commenting on this verse mentions that the drug which eliminates undigested or digested *Dosas* and *Malas* by making them liquid (*Dravabhavam*) is known as *Recana*; the drug not only liquifies the *Mala*, but also eliminates it quickly (*recayati*).

The '*Recana*' and "*Virecana*" words seem to be similar but the *Virecana* represents the complete therapy. While the

Recana is the action of some types of drugs used in *Virecana*

(e) **Virecanopaga**

The *Virecanopaga Gana* described in *Caraka* has been considered as helping in inducing *Virecana*. *Cakrapani* comments that the drugs like honey, helps emetics in performing ideal *Vamana* and known as *Vamanopaga*. Likewise in the case of *Virecanopaga* i.e. the drugs which help the *Virecana* drugs in their *Virecana* action, may be known as *Virecanopaga*.

The drugs *Draksha*, *Kashmarya*, *Parushaka*, *Abhaya*, *Amalaka*, *Vibhitaka*, *Kubala Badara*, *Karkandhu*, and *Pilu* (Ca. Su. 4/13) are described in this category.

Virecana Drugs according to intensity of action

These suggest the degree of potency of the drug.

(a) **Mridu Virecana - Ca. K. 12/56.**

The drug which is *Manda* in *Virya* or when combined with opposite *Virya*, or given in low dosage, given to the *Ruksha* patient and causes less purgation is known as *Mridu Virecana*. Those drugs are specifically indicated in weak patients having mild nature of disease and are not so effective in *Balavana* patients. These drugs may also be given to the patients who have been *shodhita* previously or having *Alpa Dosa* or whose *Kostha* is

unknown. *Caraka* is of the view that the physician should not hesitate to use *Mridu Virecana* drugs in weak patients having more *Dosa* because repeated elimination of *Dosa* in small quantity may cure the disease. (Ca. K. 12/56-58, 67-69).

The patient who have not taken *Virecana* drugs in past and whose *Kostha* is unknown in such patients *Sushruta* recommends the use of *Mridu Virecana* drugs in the beginning and after knowing the *Kostha*, (Su. Ci. 33/44).

Sarangadhara recommends the use of *Mridu Virecana* drugs in *Mridu Kostha*. *Laksha*, milk, warm water, castor oil (Sa. U. 4/13-14). Drugs effective in *Mridu Kostha* are *Guda*, *Sugarcane* juice, *Mastu*, *Ulloditadadhi*, *Payas*, *Ksira*, *Sarpi*, *Kasamari*, *Téphala*, *Pilu* and *Taruna Madya* (Ca. Su. 13/66-67).

(b) **Madhya Virecana**

The drugs which are moderate in qualities are known as *Madhya Virecana* drugs. The drugs slightly exposed to water, heat or organisms, not produced in good *Desha* and *Kala* and not having all the required properties and given comparatively in less quantity to the patient and not properly *Snehita* and *Svedita* patient works as *Madhya Virecana*.

The drugs are specifically indicated in the patients having *Madhya Roga*

(disease with moderate symptoms). The administration of these drugs in *Balavana* patient is useless because they are unable to eliminate *Dosa* completely (Ca. Ka. 12/55-68). *SÁrangadhara* recommends the use of *Trivrita*, *Katuki* and *Áragvadha* for *Madhya Kostha*. (Sa. U. 4/13-14).

(c) **Tikshna Virecana**

The drugs which causes numerous (*Mahavega*) motions and eliminates the *Dosa* in large quantity by quick (*Kshipra*) and gentle (*Sukha*) purgation without causing either much *Glani* (depression) and pain in heart area or anus or harmful to internal organs, is known as *Tikshna Virecana*^[7].

According to *Caraka*, the drug which has been kept away from water, heat and organisms, cultivated in proper *Desha* and *Kala* and which has been given *Bhavana* with the drugs of same *Virya* acquires the *Tiksha* properties. This type of drugs having all the required properties, when given in prescribed dosage to the patient who has been well *Snehita* and *Svedidata*, then it causes *Tikshna Virecana* (Ca. K. 12/51-54).

Caraka recommends the use of these drugs in the strong (*Balavana*) patients presenting all the symptoms of the diseases. i.e. *Tikshna Vyadhi* (Ca. K. 12/58). It has been further mentioned that the use of these drugs should be avoided in

Durbala (weak), *Sodhita*, and patient having *Alpa Dosa* and whose *Kostha* is unknown, otherwise it may cause untoward effects to these patients (Ca. K. 12/68). *Sushruta* is of the view that *Tikshna* drugs given in *Mridu Kostha* having *Diptagni* passes out quickly without eliminating *Dosha* properly (Su. Ci. 33/35). *Snuhi Kshira* is considered as the best amongst these drugs (Ca. Su. 25/40). The other drugs like *Hemakshiri*, *Danti*, etc .recommended in *Krura Kostha* may also be included in this group (Sa. U.4/14) Therefore, *Krura Kostha* is the best indication for *Tikshna Virecana* drugs.

Virecana from ruksha and snigdha point of view

The use of *Sneha virecana* and *Ruksa Virecana* has been recommended in many places in *Ayurveda*^[8].

The drugs used in the form of oil or the preparation containing *Sneha* is known as *Sneha Virecana* e.g. Castor oil. *Vagbhata* recommends the use of *Sneha Virecana* in all patients except *Snigdha* patients (A.H. Su. 18/51).

The use of *Sneha Virecana* in the patients who have been given higher dosage of *Sneha* is contraindicated because, due to this, the movable *Dosha* may again adhere in the *Srotas* (Su. Ci. 33/41) (Ca. Si. 6/9).

The preparations, which do not contain *Sneha*, may be known as *Ruksha Virecana*. Its use has been recommended in the *Snigdha* patients who have been comparatively taken more *Sneha* (Ca. Si. 6/9)^[9].

Table No 1: VIRECANA DRUGS ACCORDING TO SEASONS (SA. U. 4/21-27)

	<i>Varsa</i>	<i>Sarad</i>	<i>Hemanta</i>	<i>Sishira and Vasanta</i>	<i>Grisma</i>	All seasons
Preparations	<i>Trivrita Kutaja Bija Pippali Sunthi</i>	<i>Trivrtta Duralabha Musta Sharkara Bala Candana</i>	<i>Trivrtta citraka Patha Jivaka Sarala Vaca, Hemaksiri</i>	<i>Trivrtta Pippali Nagara Sindhu Syama</i>	<i>Trivrtta</i>	<i>Trivrtta Danti Hapusa Saptala Katuki Svarnaksiri</i>
<i>Anupana</i>	<i>Draksa Rasa and Honey</i>	<i>Yasti in Draksa decoction</i>	Warm water	Honey	Sugar	Bhavna

DOSAGE OF VIRECANA DRUGS

Matra of the *Virecana* drug should be in such a quantity, that the desired effect of *Sodhana* may be achieved and may be able to eliminate *Dosas* from body, but should not produce the symptoms of *Ayoga* or *Atiyoga*. This should be decided according to *Àtura bala*, *Agni*, *Kostha* and *Aushadhi*. While describing the process of *Virecana* the dose mentioned of *Trivrtta yoga* is one *Aksha (Tola)*.

PROCEDURE OF VIRECANA KARMA

PURVAKARMA

Astanga Hridaya mentions that after *Vamana* procedure, the patient should be administered again *Snehana* and *Svedana* then *Virecana* should be administered^[10]. According to *Caraka*, after *Vamana* the *Snehapana* should be started from 9th day in *Pravara Suddhi*. According to *Sushruta* the *Virecana* should be given on 15th day after *Vamana*. it means *Snehapana* starts from 9th day and complete the *Snehana* by 11th day then 3 days gap will be there before *Virecana*. In these 3 days *Drava*, *Ushna*, diet should be given along with *Abhyanga* and *Svedana*. If *Virecana* is to be given without *Vamana*, then following *Purvakarmas* are necessary. The dose of *Virecana Yoga* should be decided according to *Vyadhibala*, *Purushabala* and

Agnibala (Su. Su.39/10) if the dose given more than *Vyadhibala*, may cause another *Vyadhi*. If it is more than *Agnibala* it may cause *Ajirana*, *Vishtambha*, and if it is more than *Purusha bala* then it may cause *Atipravritti* or *Apravritti*. So, the dose should be in *Sama Pramana* only.

PRADHANA KARMA

This includes administration of *Virecana Yoga*, observations specially for *Aushadha Jirnata*, observations of *Suddhi Lakshanas* and management of *Vyaapada* if occurs.

(1) Administration of Virecana Yoga

The *Yoga* is given to the patient (Ca. Su. 15/17):-

- (i) After *Samyak Snehana* and *Svedana*.
- (ii) While the patient is cheerful, slept well and has fully digested his previous meal (*suprajirnabhakta*) *Virecana* is performed on empty stomach.
- (iii) After assessing the psychological condition of the patient (*Manasamabhisamiksya*).
- (iv) *Krit Homa Bali* etc., on *Iksa Tithi*, *Muhurta*
- (v) After *Svastivacana*

About the time of giving *Virecana*, *Vagbhata* mentions, '*Sleshma Kalegate*' means after passing '*Sleshma Kala* i.e. after 10 a.m., but not before 9 a.m. in any case.

Just after administration of *Virecana Yoga*, cold water is sprinkled on the face to avoid vomiting. The patient is asked to gargle with hot water and asked to have fragrance of flowers. He should be protected from direct cold wind and should take rest in bed. He is advised not to retain *Vegas* as well as do not make *Pravahana*. Hot water should be given frequently to

the patient to prevent *Vibandha* and due to its *Vatanulomana* and *Yogavahi* actions, *Virecana* occur quickly.

If *Virecana* does not occur then hot water should be given and *Svedana* should be done on the abdomen by the heat produced with friction of both palms on *Pani Tapai* Ca. *Jathargni Svedayet* (A.S.Su. 27)^[11].

During all the time *Vaidya* should concentrate on the symptoms of *Jirna Lakshanas*, *Suddhi Lakshanas*, *Vyapada* etc.

OBSERVATIONS

(A) Aushadha Jirna Lakshanas

These are *Vatanulomana*, *Svasthya*, *Kshudhā Trishna*, *Urjamanasvita*, *Indriya Laghuta* and *Udgara Suddhi*. (Ca. Si. 6/26). *Ajirna Lakshana* are *Klama*, *Daha*, *Angasadana*, *Bhrama*, *Murcha*, *Siroruja*, *Arati* and *Balahani*.

If *Aushhadi Jirna Lakshanas* are available, but *Hrtidosa Lakshanas* are not found then *Virecana Yoga* should be given next day. Even then *Virecana* does not occur then *Snehana* and *Svedana* should be done again and thereafter *Virecana* drug should be administered after 10 days. (A.H.Su.18/36, 37, 38).

(B) Héenadosha Lakshanas

The *Virecana* is considered as *Kaphanta* and *Hrtidosa*, when *Vit*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* come out one by one in sequence. *Gatra Daurbalya* and *Laghuta* are the associated symptoms. After getting these symptoms if *Virecana* does not stop then *Vamana* should be given (Ca. Si. 6/21).

(C) Suddhi Lakshanas

Four types of *Suddhi* viz. *Laingiki*, *Àntiki*, *Vaigiki* and *Maniki* should be observed according to *Cakrapani*, but the importance should be given to *Laingiki Suddhi*.

Table No. 2 :ANTI KI, VAIGIKI AND MANIKI SUDDI AND VIRECANA KARMA

<i>Suddhi</i>	<i>Pravara</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>	<i>Avara</i>
<i>Vaigiki</i>	30 vegas	20 vegas	10 vegas
<i>Maniki</i>	9 prastha	3 prastha	2 prastha
<i>Antiki</i>	<i>Kaphanta</i>	<i>Kaphanta</i>	<i>Kaphanta</i>

Laingiki Suddhi, Lakshanas are given in table. Thereafter the *Ayoga* and *Atiyoga* symptoms mentioned in the texts have been presented in the tabular form. In the

last the various types of complications which may occur during *Virecana* are depicted.

Table No.3: According To Sarangdhara

<i>Kalpana</i>	<i>Hina</i> for <i>Mridu</i> <i>Kostha</i>	<i>Madhyam</i> for <i>Madhyam Kostha</i>	<i>Uttam</i> for <i>Krura</i> <i>Kostha</i>
<i>Kvatha</i>	8 tolas or 80 ml	4 tolas or 40 ml	2 tolas or 20 ml
<i>Kalka, Curna, Modaka</i>	4 tolas or 40 gms	2 tolas or 20 gms	1 tolas or 10 gms

It is better to add honey before using these preparations (Sa. U. 4/16-17).According to **Kostha in Su. Ci. 33**

1, 2 and 3 *Tolas Matra* is mentioned for *Mridu, Madhyama* and *Krura Kostha* respectively.

MODE OF ACTION OF VIRECANA [12]

Action of *Virecana Karma* can be divided in the following two ways.

Both the actions and related factors are being described here in detail. (Ca. K. 1/5).

- (1) **Systemic** - by which it brings down the morbid *Dosha*, particularly *Pitta* from the body to *Amasaya* or *Pakvasaya* i.e. GIT.
- (2) **Local evacuate:** Which is concerned with the evacuation of these *Dosha* in form of *Mala* from the gut by Purgation.

- (I) *Virecana Yoga*, gets absorbed and due to *Virya*. It reaches to the *Hridaya* (Heart), then the *Dhamanies* (arteries) and thereafter it reaches to *Sthula* and *Anu Srotas* i.e. Macro and Micro channels of the body.

- (II) The *Vyayayi Guna* of drug is responsible for quick absorption.

(III) The *Vikasi Guna* causes softening and loosening of the bond.

(IV) Due to *Usna Guna*, the *Dosha Sanghata* (compactness) is liquified (*Visyandana*).

(V) Action of *Tikshna Guna* is to break the *Mala* and *Dosha* in micro form. According to *Dalhana* it is responsible of quick excretion.

(VI) Due to *Sukshma Guna* by reaching in micro channels, disintegrates endogenic toxins which are then

excreted through microchannels (*Anupravana Bhava*).

(VII) Due to *Prabhava* mainly and also due to *Prithivi Jala* Constitution finally *Virecana* occurs. This is the evacuant action.

From the above description, a hypothesis can be postulated that due to the *Virya* of the *Virecana* drugs softening, disintegration, liquification occurs of those endogenic metabolic products which cannot be excreted through body secretions as such.

CONCLUSION

Virecana Karma is very gentle purificatory procedure than *Vamana Karma*, has less possibility of complications and could be done easily, so it is widely used as *Samsodhana* therapy in routine purposes. It is more acceptable to all age group & all classes of patients. In

addition to the acceptability and popularity, the *Virecana Karma*, is considered as the best treatment for morbid and vitiated *Pitta Dosha*, *Àma* and *Malas*. *Pitta* is closely related with *Agni*, which is responsible for the digestive and metabolic processes in the body.

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