

PHARMACODYNAMICS (KARMUKTA) OF VIRECHANA KARMA

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Article Received on
06 June 2020,

Revised on 26 June 2020,
Accepted on 16 July 2020

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20208-18113

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ABSTRACT

‘‘Tatra Doshaharanam Adhobhagam Virechanasanjnakam’’ - Charak. Kalpa. ¼ Virechana is a therapeutic procedure by which the *Doshas* are eliminated through the *Adhomarga* i.e. *Guda*. Though *Virechana* influences *Tridoshas*, it mainly eliminates *Pitta Dosha*. *Virechana Dravyas* possesses the qualities of *Ushna*, *Tikshana*, *Sukshma*, *Vyavayi*, *Vikasi* having predominance of *Prithvi*, *Ap Mahabhutas* and by *Adhobhaghara Prabhava*, it performs *Virechana Karma*. In the present scientific era of modern technologies it is a need to re-evaluate the *Karmukta* of *Virechana Karma* in light of modern pharmacodynamics. *Virechana Dravya* produces bowel evacuation by neural control and functional movements. The various classifications of *Virechana Dravyas* and their mode of action in *Ayurvedic* lines in light of modern pharmacodynamics will be presented in detail in this paper. Eg. A drug which is having action on the gall bladder stimulates it to contract and expels the bile into duodenum whereby the bile salts

enhances the peristalsis causing laxation which action is called as pitta *Saraka* possessed by *Katuka Rohini* [*Picrorrhiza kurra*].

KEYWORDS: *Pitta; Virechana; Adhobhaghara.*

Panchakarma therapy is one of the important branches of *Ayurveda* which deals mainly with elimination of the vitiated *Doshas* from the body; so that, the disease is cured completely.

“*Tatra Doshaharanam Adhobhagam Virechanasanjanakam*” Cha.Kal.1/4.

Virechana Karma is a therapeutic procedure by which the *Doshas* are eliminated through the *Adhomarga* i.e. *Guda*. It is different from ordinary purgation in method & purpose. *Virechana Karma* is induced by physician by administering drugs for the benefit of the patient to get rid off his disease.^[1] Though *Virechana* is aimed mainly for the elimination of *Pitta Dosha*, it also influences *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* elimination. Hence many times it is prescribed as general line of treatment for *Vata Vyadhis* and special treatment for some *Kapha Vyadhis*. Thus, the scope of *Virechana* therapy is much wider.

The *Virechana Dravya* possesses the qualities of *Ushna*, *Tikshana*, *Sukshma*, *Vyavayi*, *Vikasi* having predominance of *Prithvi*, *Ap Mahabhutas* and *Adhobhagahar Prabhava* by which it produce *Virechana*. According to the classics, for the therapeutic action of *Virechana Dravya* it is stated that, the *Virya* of the drug initial reach to the heart and spread all over the body. From the heart, possessing *Sukshma* and *Vyavayi* properties it will reach to macro and micro channels i.e. *Sthula* (molecular level) and *Sushma* (cellular level) *Srotas*. At the cellular and molecular levels, it breaks and liquefies the complexes of the *Dosha* by means of *Ushna* and *Tiksha Gunas*. Having *Vikasi Guna* it detaches the *Malas* from the *Dhatu*. The *Mala* which is get separated from the *Srotasas*, due the influence of *Vatadosha* reaches to the *Pakwashaya* for the elimination. Because of its *Adhobhagahara Prabhava*, the *Doshas* are thrown in the downward direction & expelled through anus.^[2]

Virechana Dravya produces bowel evacuation by neural control, functional movements & absorption of water. The probable pharmacodynamics of *Virechana Karma* in modern pharmacology can be –

1. Drug having action on the gall bladder stimulate it to contract & drains the bile into duodenum whereby the bile salts enhances the peristalsis causing laxation which action is caused by *Pittasaraka*.
2. The natural polysaccharides & cellulose derivatives increases the content of bowel, softens the faces & facilitates colonic transit. In this way *Virechana* drugs acts act as *Purishajanaka*.
3. After taking *Virechana Dravya*, various enteric peptides are released from the gut mucosa into the blood. These peptides affect small intestinal & there occur colonic smooth muscle contractions. They are either stimulatory or inhibitory in function.

Excitatory - Acetylcholine, 5-HT [5-HT₄ receptors present in gastrointestinal tract & facilitate secretion & peristalsis]

Inhibitory – VIP (Vasoactive Inhibitory Polypeptide), Noradrenaline.^[3]

4. *Virechana Dravya* stimulates the nerve ending & terminates mainly in myenteric plexus. The stimulation of myenteric plexus increases the activity of gut.
5. Increasing propulsive activity as primary action & then allowing less time for absorption of water as a secondary effect.^[4]
6. Laxatives modify the fluid dynamics of the mucosal cell & may cause fluid accumulation in gut lumen by one or more of the following mechanisms:-
 - A. Enhancing PG synthesis in mucosa which increases secretion.
 - B. Structural injury to the absorbing intestinal mucosal cells.
 - C. Stimulating adenylyl cyclase in crypt cells – increasing water & electrolyte Secretion.^[5]

According to the effect, the *Virechana Karma* is classified into 4 types - *Anulomana*, *Sramsana*, *Bhedana* and *Rechana*.^[6]

Anulomana- In these therapeutic effective measures, the *Virechana* drug will do *Malapaka* and removes *Vibanda* of *Malas* to expel them downwards by restoring normal peristalsis. Its action is like that of carminatives where drug promote expulsion of gases and fecal matter from gastrointestinal tract with regular movements.

Sramsana- In these therapeutic effective measures, the *Malas* which remain attached to the *Koshta* will be expelled downwards without *Paka* (Digestion) by increased peristalsis. Its action is like that of drastic purgatives where drug act on intestine which stimulates the myenteric plexus. This increases peristalsis and then propulsive power and expels numerous, copious semiliquid stool with pain & tenesmus.

Bhedana- In these therapeutic effective measures, the *Ghana*, *Sanchita* and *Baddha Malas* get break and will be expelled downwards by increased peristalsis and secretion. Its action is like that of cathartics, where the drug stimulates motor activity which increases the peristalsis and secretory activity of mucosal cell which further responsible for breakdown of *Ghana*, *Sanchit*, *Baddha-Malas* & expulsion of stool.

Rechana- In these therapeutic effective measures, the *Pakwa* and *Apakwa Malas* or *Doshas* will be expelled downwards in liquid form by increased peristalsis and retaining water in the intestinal lumen. Its action is like that of purgatives where drug increases propulsive activity as primary action & allowing less time for absorption of water.

So, by understanding the above description of action of different *Virechana* types, it has been seen that, the *Anuloman* and *Sramsana* are have similar therapeutic effective measures like Laxative described by modern pharmacologist; and *Bhedana* and *Rechana* have similar therapeutic effective measures like Purgatives described by modern pharmacologist.

CONCLUSION

- The action of all laxatives & purgatives are more or less similar but the difference is that laxative is milder in action & eliminate soft but formed stool. But purgatives and cathartics are strong in action resulting in more fluid evacuation.
- Action of *Virechana Karma* in terms of modern pharmacodynamics is occur due to increase peristalsis, enhanced secretion & decreased intestinal absorption.

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