

Management Of Perennial Allergic Conjunctivitis (*Vataja Abhishyanda*) Through *Ayurveda*– A Case Report

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ABSTRACT

Allergic conjunctivitis is a highly prevalent disease, affecting about 40% of the population. It is characterized by itching, watering, redness, chemosis and lid edema, that arises due to exposure to environmental allergens such as grass or tree pollen, house dust mites, animal dander and fungal allergens. It can either seasonal or perennial. In *Ayurveda*, *Abhishyanda* (Conjunctivitis) is considered to be the root cause of all other eye diseases. It is mentioned under *Sarvagata rogas* (Diseases affecting entire eye) and is classified into the various types depending upon the *Dosha* (regulatory functional factors of the body) involved. *Vataja Abhishyanda* (Allergic Conjunctivitis) is caused due to aggravated *Vata dosha*, causing *Thoda* (pricking type of pain), *Sangharsha* (foreign body sensation), *Vishushka Bhava* (feeling of dryness), *Shishirashruta* (cold, watery discharge) and *Alpa Shophya* (mild chemosis). *Ayurveda* has various treatment modalities and has given significant results. In this present study, A 13-year-old female patient approached the OPD of *Shalakya Tantra* (Branch of *Ayurveda* dealing with diseases above the clavicle), JSS Ayurveda Medical Hospital, Mysuru, India with complaints of itching, redness and watering of right eye since one year. She was treated with *Sadhya virechana* (Therapeutic purgation), *Netra Seka* (Eye irrigation Therapy), *Netra Pindi* (Eye poultice Therapy) and *Shamana Aushadhis* (Palliative medicines). The results were assessed using slitlamp biomicroscopy. The patient had complete relief from the symptoms.

Keywords: Allergic Conjunctivitis, *Vataja Abhishyanda*, *Netra Seka*, *Netra Pindi*

Introduction

Ayurveda has been divided into eight branches namely *Kayachikitsa* (General Medicine), *Baalachikitsa* (Pediatrics), *Grahachikitsa* (Psychiatry), *Urdhwangachikitsa* (Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology and Orodentistry), *Shalya Tantra* (Surgery), *Damshtrachikitsa* (Clinical toxicology), *Jarachikitsa* (Rejuvenative therapy) and *Vrishachikitsa* (Reproductive medicine). Out of these *Urdhwanga chikitsa* or *Shalakya Tantra* branch deals with the diseases that occur above the clavicle involving the eye, ear, nose, throat and head [1]. *Netra* (eye) is considered to be the most important sensory organ. Around 76 diseases of eye [2] have been mentioned in the classics of *Ayurveda* with detailed explanations regarding the symptoms, prognosis and treatment. Despite being written several years ago, these are applicable even in today's world.

Allergic Conjunctivitis is a commonly encountered ophthalmic condition that affects about 40% of the general population [3]. It is also found to occur in 30% of the population among children either alone or in association with Allergic Rhinitis [4]. Allergic conjunctivitis is the hypersensitivity reaction occurring in response to specific environmental antigens such as grass or tree pollen, house dust mites, animal dander and fungal allergens. It can be either Seasonal or Perennial. Symptoms include redness, itching and watering of eyes, associated with nasal discharge and sneezing. Signs such as conjunctival hyperemia, chemosis and lid edema is seen in most patients. It is treated using artificial tears, mast cell stabilizers, antihistamines and topical steroids if necessary [5].

In *Ayurveda*, the diseases of eyes have been mentioned according to the affected part. *Abhishyanda* (Conjunctivitis) is considered to be the root cause of all eye diseases. It has been described under *Sarvagata Rogas* (Diseases affecting entire eye). *Abhishyanda* (Conjunctivitis) is further classified into four types depending upon the *Dosha* (regulatory functional factors of the body) predominance, among which *Vataja Abhishyanda* explains features similar to Allergic conjunctivitis. *Lakshanas* (Signs and Symptoms) of *Vataja Abhishyanda* (Allergic Conjunctivitis) include *Thoda* (pricking type of pain), *Sangharsha* (foreign body sensation), *Shiroabhitapa* (Headache), *Vishushka Bhava* (feeling of dryness), *Shishirashruta* (cold, watery discharge) and *Sthambana* (Stiffness) [6]. *Acharya Vagbhata* also includes *Alpa Shophya* (mild chemosis) and *Nimeshonmeshana Kruchram* (Difficulty in opening and closing of eyelids) [7]. Treatment modalities such as *Nidana parivarjana* (avoidance of etiological factors), *Ama pachana* (Digestion of Metabolic toxin), *Sneha virechana* (A type of therapeutic purgation) and *Netra kriyakalpas* (Topical ophthalmic *Ayurveda* treatments) are mentioned for the alleviation of the condition [8].

CASE REPORT

Chief Complaints

A 13-year-old female patient approached the OPD of *Shalakya Tantra* (Branch of Ayurveda dealing with diseases above the clavicle), JSS Ayurveda Medical Hospital, Mysuru, India with complaints of itching, redness and watering of right eye since one year.

Associated Complaints

She also complains of mild burning sensation in the right eye.

History of Present Illness

Patient was apparently asymptomatic a year ago. Later she developed redness, watering and itching of the right eye. She also complains of mild burning sensation in right eye. She had multiple consultations with the ophthalmologist and was prescribed with topical antihistamine eye drops, prednisolone eye drops but did not find any significant relief. As the symptoms persisted, patient approached our hospital for further treatment. No significant Past History or Family History.

Examination

- General Physical Examination:

Built – Moderate

Appearance – Normosthenic

Nourishment – Well Nourished

Pallor/Icterus/Oedema/Cyanosis/Clubbing/Koilonychia – Absent

- Ashtasthana Pareeksha* (eight folds examination of patient):

Nadi (Pulse) - 80 bpm

Mootra (Micturition) - *Anavila* (Non-turbid), 4-5 times/day

Mala (Bowel) - *Abadha* (Non-constipated), once a day

Jihwa (tongue) - *Alpalipta* (Mild coated)

Shabdha (speech) - *Spashta* (Clear)

Sparsha (touch) – *Prakrutha* (normal)

Drik (eye) - *Vikrutha* (abnormal)

Akrithi (General Body built) - *Madhyama* (Moderately built)

- Sthanika Preeksha* (Local Examination):

Table 1 Shows the General Features examined in the Patient

Table 2 Shows the Slit-lamp Bio-microscopy findings before the Treatment

General Features	
Head posture	Straight and erect
Forehead	Wrinkling present
Face	Symmetrical
Eyebrows	Same level

Table1. General Features examined in the patient

Slit-Lamp Bio-microscopy Examination			
		OD	OS
Eyelid Margin		Normal	Normal
Eyelids		Normal	Normal
Eyelashes		Normal	Normal
Conjunctiva	Palpebral	Hyperaemia +	Normal
	Bulbar	Petechial Haemorrhage + Increased Vascularity	Normal
Sclera		Normal	Normal
Cornea		Normal	Normal
Pupil		3 RRR	3 RRR
Lens		Transparent, Normal	Transparent, Normal

Table 2. Slit-Lamp Bio-Microscopy Examination findings before treatment



Figure 1. Temporal side of Right Eye before treatment



Figure 2. Nasal side of Right Eye before treatment

Investigations

Hematological investigations were carried out (Table 3). Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (ESR) and Absolute Eosinophil Count (AEC) was found to be high, indicative of an Allergic response.

Investigation	Values
Blood Urea	21 mg/dl
Creatinine	0.7 mg/dl
Uric acid	2.8 mg/dl
Hb	12.1 gm/dl
ESR	38mm/hr
RA	Negative
AEC	542 cells/cmm
IgE	84.95 IU/ml

Table 3. Investigation findings before treatment

Treatment

Patient was given *Shodana Chikitsa* (Purificatory therapy) (Table 4), *Netra Kriyakalpa* (Topical ophthalmic *Ayurveda* treatments) (Table 5) and *Shamana Aushadhis* (Palliative medicines) (Table 6) over a span of 8 days.

Shodhana Chikitsa (Purificatory therapy) was done on Day 1. From Day 2 till Day 8, *Netra Kriyakalpas* (Topical ophthalmic *Ayurveda* treatments) and *Shamana Aushadhis* (Palliative medicines) were given.

Treatment	Medication	Duration
<i>Sarvanga Abhyanga</i> (Full Body Massage)	<i>Manjishtadi Taila</i>	One day
<i>Bashpa Sweda</i> (Full Body Sudation)	-	One day
<i>Sadyo Virechana</i> (Therapeutic purgation)	<i>Gandharvahastadi Taila</i> - 40ml	One day

Table 4. *Shodana Chikitsa* Given to the patient

Treatment	Medication	Duration
<i>Netra Seka</i> (Eye irrigation Therapy)	<i>Kashaya</i> of <i>Pachavalkala</i> , <i>Dashamoola</i> , <i>Triphala</i> , <i>Punarnava</i> and <i>Madhu</i> (10ml)	Seven days
<i>Netra Pindi</i> (Eye poultice Therapy)	<i>Kalka</i> of <i>Dadima patra</i> , <i>Kumari</i> pulp and <i>Bilwa patra</i>	Seven days

Table 5. *Netra Kriyakalpas* Done on the Eyes

Medication	Dose	Duration
<i>Amavatari Kashya</i>	5ml BD Before food	Seven days
<i>Tab. Pravala Panchamrita</i>	1 BD After food	Seven days

Table 6. *Shamana Aushadhis* given to the Patient

Result

Patient got complete relief from her symptoms. On examination under Slit-lamp Bio-microscopy (Table 7), hyperemia was absent in the palpebral conjunctiva. Petechial hemorrhages were also found to be nil.

Slit-Lamp Bio-microscopy Examination			
		OD	OS
Eyelid Margin		Normal	Normal
Eyelids		Normal	Normal
Eyelashes		Normal	Normal
Conjunctiva	Palpebral	Normal	Normal
	Bulbar	Normal	Normal
Sclera		Normal	Normal
Cornea		Normal	Normal
Pupil		3 RRR	3 RRR
Lens		Transparent, Normal	Transparent, Normal

Table 7. Slit-Lamp Bio-Microscopy Examination findings after treatment

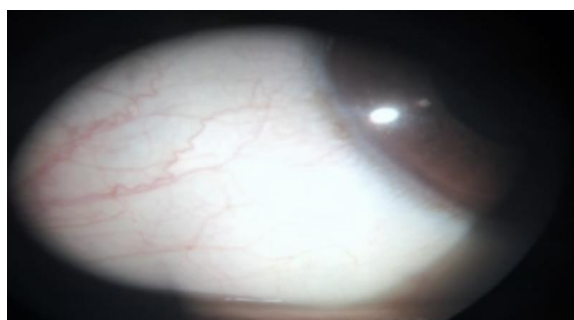


Figure 3. Temporal side of Right Eye after treatment

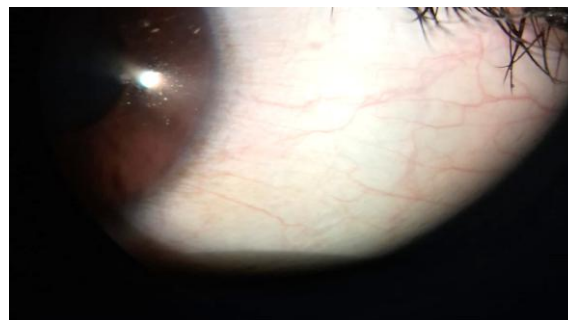


Figure 4. Nasal side of Right Eye after treatment

Discussion

Ayurveda Acharyas (Scholars) have explained a detailed line of treatment for Vataja Abhishyanda (Allergic Conjunctivitis) which involves *Nidana parivarjana* (avoidance of etiological factors), *Ama pachana* (Digestion of Metabolic toxin), *Sneha virechana* (A type of therapeutic purgation), *Raktamokshana* (Blood-letting therapy) and *Netra kriyakalpas* (Topical ophthalmic *Ayurveda* treatments).

In this case, the treatment was started with *Sadyo Virechana* (Immediate therapeutic purgation) with *Gandharvahastadi Taila*. The complaints were long standing and hence *Shodana Chikitsa* (Purificatory therapy) in the form of *Sadyo Virechana* (Immediate therapeutic purgation) was adopted to eliminate the *Ama Doshas* (Metabolic toxins). As the condition is *Vata dosha pradhana*, *Sneha virechana* (A type of therapeutic purgation) is preferred. The main constituents of *Gandharvahastadi Taila* [9] are *Eranda* (*Ricinis communis*), *Yava* (*Hordeum vulgare*) and *Nagara* (*Zingiber officinalis*). These drugs have the properties of *Vata kaphahara* (pacification of vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha dosha*), *Deepana* (enhancement of metabolic fire) and *Vatanulomana* (elimination of flatus, faeces, urine, etc) [10,11].

After *Shodhana Chikitsa* (Purificatory therapy), *Sthanika Upakramas* (Localized treatments) were given. *Netra kriyakalpas* are specialized topical ophthalmic *Ayurveda* treatments and are seven in number [12]. *Netra Seka* (Eye irrigation Therapy) reduces the inflammation by facilitation by drainage. It also causes vasodilation leading to increased absorption of the drugs [13]. *Panchavalkala* is a compound having the combination of five medicinal barks. It contains tannins, phytosterols and glycosides which are attributed to its *Shotahara* (reduces oedema/inflammation), anti-inflammatory and wound healing actions [14]. *Dashamoola* (group of ten medicinal root plants) has the properties of *Tridosha Shamaka* (Acts on all doshas), *Vedanasthapana* (reduces pain) and *Shodana* (Purification). Chemical constituents such as premnine,

marmesin, solanine etc contribute to anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties ^[15]. *Triphala* is a group of three medicinal fruits which is a widely used formulation in *Ayurveda*. Major constituents include tannins, gallic acid, ellagic acid which are potent Anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory ^[16]. *Punarnava* (*Boerhaavia diffusa*) contains punarnavoside, quertin, punarnavine which contribute to the anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial and *Rasyana* (Rejuvenative) properties ^[17]; while *Madhu* (Honey) pacifies *Pitta Dosha*, is *Ropaka* (Healing) and has anti-microbial properties ^[18]. By virtue of the above-mentioned properties of the drugs, there is reduction in the inflammation of the conjunctiva, leading to the alleviation of the symptoms.

Netra Pindi is a procedure in which the paste of the medicaments, are placed in a cotton cloth or gauze piece. Poultices are prepared and placed over the closed eyelids. This facilitates local increase in temperature thereby causing vasodilation. Vasodilation helps in relieving congestion, irritation and other inflammatory responses ^[19]. *Dadima* (*Punica granatum*) has the properties of *Rakta-Pitta Prashamana*, *Daha Shamana* (Reduces burning sensation) ^[20] and the leaves contain tannins such as punicolin, punicafofin; which contribute to the anti-inflammatory and healing properties ^[21,22]. Studies have shown that the leaves of *Bilwa* (*Aegle marmalos*) contain rutin, skimmianine, eugenol which are responsible for the anti-oxidant, analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties ^[23]. *Kumari* (*Aloe vera indica*) pulp consists of C-glucosyl chromone, sterols such as lupeol which actively contribute to the anti-inflammatory action. Acemannan, a complex carbohydrate accelerates wound healing and contains sulphur, salicylic acid which are potent antiseptics. The pulp is also soothing, maintains skin integrity and decreases erythema ^[24].

Internally *Amavatari Kashaya*, a proprietary medicine having ingredients such as *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*), *Kokilaksha* (*Asteracantha longifolia*) and others, acts as *Deepana* (Enhances digestive fire), *Pachana* (Facilitates proper digestion) and breaks down the *Ama* (Metabolic toxins) ^[25]. *Pravala Panchamrita* is a classical herbomineral compound that reduces burning sensation, and inflammation ^[26,27].

Conclusion

Vataja abhishyanda (Allergic conjunctivitis) is a commonly occurring eye condition not only in adults but also in children due to seasonal allergens or can also be perennial. In this case report, the having perennial allergic conjunctivitis had complete relief from the symptoms. *Shodhana karma* (Purificatory therapy) done before adopting *Netra kriyakalpas* (Topical ophthalmic *Ayurveda* treatments) is essential for proper *Samprapti Vighatana* (breakdown of pathogenesis). Using fresh, locally available drugs for *Netra Pindi* (Eye poultice Therapy) gives significant results. Thus, it can be concluded that management of allergic conjunctivitis can be achieved through *Ayurveda*.

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