

**ROLE OF PATHYA APATHYA IN NETHRA SWASTHYA (EYE HEALTH) -A REVIEW****Rajkumar Sharma<sup>1</sup>, Jagdish Nama<sup>2</sup>, Monika Sharma<sup>3</sup>**

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**Article Received:** 08/07/2024 - **Peer Reviewed:** 29/07/2024 - **Accepted for Publication:** 14/08/2024.**ABSTRACT**

Since Ayurveda places a high value on both disease prevention and treatment, it is important to preserve health. Through their explanation of *Pathya Apathya*, the Acharyas have equipped us with the necessary knowledge to prevent and manage lifestyle issues related to eye diseases. Daily observations assessed the effectiveness of specific dietary habits and medications in preventing eye disorders. *pathya apathya* is used to explain certain parts of daily routine. The word "Chakshu" means "which enlightens the mind about its details and illuminates the objects." The term *Chakshushya* is crucial when discussing Pathya and Apathya since it is used in classic literature to describe the effects of consuming specific beneficial regimes (*Pathya*) and nonbeneficial medications and practices (*apthya*), among other things. Various *ahar vargas*, which list the qualities of every food item, have been referenced in ancient scriptures. With this understanding, we may choose our meals carefully and follow a daily routine to maintain *netra swasthya*, or eye health.

**Keywords:** *Pthya, Apathya*, daily regimen, *Nethra Swasthya*, Eye Health**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda is an age-old medical practice that seeks to avoid human suffering from all forms of physical,

mental, intellectual, and spiritual illness in addition to curing disease. The eyes are regarded as the most

significant of all sense organs because vision is essential to a person's intellectual and social growth. Vagbhatacharya correctly quotes it when he discusses the significance of eyes. "The various things in the world will all merge into one kind—that of darkness—once the vision is gone." The statement that "an eye can perceive forms; it adorns the face" is also emphasised. It is a direct source of knowledge and a manual for avoiding bad behaviours. It has been demonstrated that our eyes account for around 80% of the knowledge we acquire.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the eye directly impacts a person's existence and standing in this cosmos. Therefore, a comprehensive explanation of eye problems and their treatment may be found in ayurvedic Samhitas like Sushruta Samhita. The fact that the *Uttaratantra* of the Sushruta Samhita begins with eye disease and has 19 chapters devoted solely to eye disease indicates that Sushruta has placed a greater emphasis on eye health. Thus, it is imperative to make the required efforts to maintain the techniques for preventing eye ailments. Numerous human illnesses have been related to an unhealthy lifestyle, and there has been a lot of emphasis on lifestyle disorders such as kidney diseases, diabetes mellitus, and cardiovascular disorders, as well as ways to prevent them. However, whether preventative measures for eye health and disorders have received enough attention in day-to-day living is uncertain. A poor lifestyle has an impact on vision as well. Tobacco, alcohol, cigarettes, junk food, high-fat diets, prolonged exposure to strong light, prolonged computer use, and chronic stress are a few examples of behaviours that can harm the eyes.<sup>2</sup> A poor lifestyle can lead to a number of clinical disorders, including computer vision syndrome, diabetes/hypertensive retinopathy, and age-related macular degeneration (ARMD). Ayurvedic scriptures suggest that specific lifestyle practices, such as adhering to *dinacharya*, *ritucharya*, *sadvritta* and *Pathya Apayhya* might prevent eye problems and restore healthy vision for a prolonged period of time. Vagbhata correctly points out the need of maintaining eye health and eyesight, saying that "men should make every effort to protect the eyes throughout their lives; for the blind, this world is

useless, and day and night are the same regardless of their wealth.<sup>3</sup> Since numerous lifestyle disorders are present today, adhering to *Pathya Apathya* can help prevent them.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Dosha concept in eyes

*Tridosha (vata, pitta, and kapha)* is the foundation of Ayurveda. It is responsible for the body's regular activities and, when vitiated, leads to disease. Since the function of the doshas varies depending on the organ, there are also variations in the causative factors for dosha vitiation for each organ. Since *Tejas* predominates among all the *Mahabhootas* in the makeup of the eye (*alochaka pitta*), which is thought to be responsible for visual perception, the eyes are particularly vulnerable to kapha.<sup>4,5</sup>

### Samprapti of netra roga

In Ayurveda, the Acharyas described a generalised *samprapti* for all eye diseases. The Doshas vitiated by indulgence in foods and habits particularly harmful to the eyes (*Achaksusya aahara- vihara*) propagate through the channels (*Sira*) towards *uttamanga* (the head) and enter the parts of the eye to produce diseases. In traumatic lesions, vitiation of Doshas succeeds the disease.<sup>6</sup>

### Causes and preventive measures

According to Acharya Sushruta, Chikitsa is a set of equations meant to eliminate the disease's causal elements.<sup>7</sup> When a medical condition seems likely to manifest, a suitable preventative treatment plan should be initiated by Dosha's inclination. If the disease reaches the *vyakta* (manifestation of sickness) stage, even with the etiological variables avoided, it should be treated by restoring the *doshic* equilibrium and counteracting the increased Vata and other doshas. The preventative component of treatment is highly emphasised in Ayurvedic literature, especially in ophthalmology where insufficient prophylaxis of eye illnesses might potentially result in blindness. As a result, eliminating the variables that contribute to the condition should be the initial goal of treatment. Ancient medical experts recommended *aahara* (a certain diet), *aushada* (drugs), and *vihara* (daily routine) in response to these circumstances. *Aahara* and

*vihara* are the three most important in preventing eye disorders.

#### **Ahara (Dietary factors)<sup>8</sup>:**

The basis of all bodily functioning is diet. The following food items are known as "*achakshushya aahara*" or "*apathya* for eyes" since they negatively impact the eyes.

- Sour items like curd, pickles, *vidahi* and *ushana virya aahara* (hot items) which vitiate pitta.
- *Virudha aharam* (like milk with fish, cooled and hot items together)
- Eating before the preceding meal's digestion, or *adhyasanam*, will disrupt the *dushita agni*, which in turn will disrupt the qualities of *raktadhathu*, causing a flaw in its functional ability. This leads to the formation of the *abhishtanda* stage, the first pathogenic alteration that occurs during any eye illness.

Additionally, overeating increases the risk of early ageing, which reduces longevity, according to modern science. Restricted diet consumption is advised because it not only slows down the ageing process but also delays the onset of age-related diseases and the physiological deterioration of various organs and systems. These days, age-related causes of blindness include cataract, corneal scarring, and retinal diseases (ARMD).

#### **Restricted food intake either**

- Increases the efficiency of cellular metabolism or
- May act by lowering the blood glucose levels or
- Decreases the activity of so-called free radicals – the toxic by-products of normal metabolism so can prevent age related diseases.

#### **Vihara (Habitual and occupational factors):**

Specific behaviours and work-related elements have a direct impact on the eyes. These can then result in eye conditions such as:

- Hot water head bath and excessive smoking by vitiating pitta.
- Day time sleep and night awakening by disturbing the normal functions of rods and cones causing eye strain
- Looking at too small or too distant objects, continuously watching moving objects (TV & com-

puter) reading in moving vehicle or in incorrect posture (i.e. too near or at too distant) putting too much eye strain.

- Suppression of urges especially of *nidra* (sleep) & *ashru* (tears) affect the normal function of lacrimal gland and there by moistening of the eye.
- When the body is heated, taking a cold-water bath and sleeping with very high pillows might disrupt circulation, which can impact nutrition and create eye disorders.
- Moreover, excessive light and air pollution are the primary causes of eye disorders. Eyes are exposed to dust and air currents when driving at fast speeds. Additionally, the continual need to adjust to changing directions wears down the eyes, which can lead to traumatic and *Vataja* diseases.

Thus, we ought to make an effort to shield ourselves against all of these major causes of eye disorders. Ayurveda suggests several regular routines to maintain eye health, including as *How anjana* (collyrium) is used *Shalaka* is used to apply *Anjana*. Applying it from the inner to the outer canthus is the proper order. Human eyes are cleaned by it, and as a result, they shine like the full moon in a clear sky.<sup>10</sup>

It is recommended that daily use of *Souveeranjana*, also known as *dincharya*, is the best kind of simple ophthalmic therapy to avoid eye illnesses and preserve healthy visual strength.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Use of nasya (Nasal drops) –**

In particular, *Anu taila nasya* (in the form of *pratimarsa nasya*) is recommended because it acts to clear the *srotas*, hence preventing the build-up of vitiated *kapha* in the eye's *srotas*.<sup>12</sup> It is essential to delaying the ageing process and age-related eye problems.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Proper sleep**

An integral aspect of a healthy lifestyle is sleep. Six to eight hours of sleep per day are required for a normal adult. Because the eyes are completely resting while we sleep, they continue to operate normally.

#### **Care of feet**

Frequent foot massages are recommended due to the belief that the soles of the feet contain *siras*, which are closely related to the eyes. These lead to anom-

lies of the eyes and are vitiated by the accumulation of plaque, assault, trauma from stone, or other particles. The benefits of medicines applied topically, foot massages, external oil applications, etc., are transmitted to the eyes. Therefore, it is essential to use foot protection, wash them thoroughly, and massage them with oil to keep feet clean, healthy, and out of the heat.<sup>14</sup>

### Eyewash

Using an eye wash cup and regularly washing your eyes with *triphala* and *yashtimadhu kwath* is also good for your eyes.

### Eye exercises

Refractive errors can be effectively prevented by moving both eyes up and down, sideways (right-left),

and rotating (clockwise-anticlockwise) and then palming.

### Shatkarmas

Of all the *shatkarma*, *neti* and *tratak* are the finest for the eyes. A fine thread made of 32 *angulas* is used to execute *neti*, which is inserted via one nostril and removed through the mouth. It provides clear vision and dismantles the *kapha dosha*. These days, *jala neti*, which is made with a pinch of salt and luke-warm water, is also used.<sup>15,16</sup> *Tratak* is the act of staring at a small item nonstop until tears form in your eyes. It is said to bestow divine sight and eliminate all eye conditions (*divya drishti*).<sup>17</sup>

**Table 1: Pathya Apathya for Eye diseases<sup>18,19,20</sup>**

Ahara/Vihara (Food/Activities)	Pathya (wholesome diet)	Apathya (Unwholesome diet)
Rasa (Taste)		Amla (Sour), lavana (Salt), Kshara (Alkali)
Sukadhanya (Monocotyledons)	Lohitasali (Red rice), Yava (barley)	Virudhadhanaya (Over ripe/sprouted/germinated cereals)
Simbi dhanya (Dicotyledons)	Mudga (Green gram), Vanyakulattha ( <i>Dolichos biflorus</i> )	Masha (Horse gram)
Shakavarga (Green vegetables)	Jeevanti ( <i>leptadenia reticulata</i> ), Vaastuka ( <i>Chenopodium album</i> ), Punarnava ( <i>Boerhavia procumbens</i> ), Patola ( <i>Trichosanthes dioeca</i> ), Karavella (Bittergourd), Kakamachhi ( <i>Solanum nigrum</i> ), Kumari ( <i>Al-oe vera</i> ), Matsyakshi ( <i>Hincha repens</i> ), Meghanada ( <i>Amaranthus polygonoides</i> )	Kalingaka patrasaka (Hoarrhaena antidysentrica)
Ikshu varga (Derivatives of sugarcane)	Sita (sugar)	Phanita
Sugandhi dravya (aromatic drugs)	Chandana, Karpura	Tambula (Piper betel)
Mamsa varga (Meat)	Mayura (peacock), Kurma mamsa (Turtle flesh), Vihanga mamsa (flesh of birds)	Matsya (fish), Ajangala mamsa (flesh of animals living in semi- arid tropics)
Phala varga (Fruits)	Draksha (grapes), Kustumburu (seeds of coriander), Triphala	
Dugdha (Milk)	Nari paya (human milk), Go dugdha (cow milk), Hasteeni paya (elephant milk)	

Ghrit (Ghee)	Streenam sarpi (ghee prepared from human milk), Ajaghrith (ghee prepared from goat milk).		
Dadhi (Curd)	Aswa dadhi		
Takra (Buttermilk)	Kheerotha takra (butter milk)		
Ahara kalpana (gruel etc)	Peya, vilepi, yusha		
Madya (alcohol)	Atimadyapana (excessive alcohol consumption)		
Sandhana kalpana	Sura, Sukta, Aranala		
Taila (Oil)	Katu taila, pinyaka (oil cake)		
Manasikbhavas (psychological factors)	Mano nivrutti (Self-control), Angra puja (Guru puja) Krodha (anger), Shoka (sorrow), Ashrupaata (continuous crying), abhighata (trauma), Baspanigraha (withholding tears)		
Loha varga	Swarna (gold), Kamsya (bronze)		
Ratna Varga	Mukta (pearl), Vidruma Sphatika (Alum)	(coral) Vajra	(Diamond),
Chikitsa karma	Prapuran, Seka, Pratisarana, Lepana, Ajjapana, Virechana, Nasya, Langhana, Raktamokshana		
Yogasana	Sarvangasana, Bhujangasana Vajrasana, Ushtrasana, Matsasana		
Eye Exercise	Cleansing (Netraprakshalana), Palming, Candle gazing		
Pranayama	Nadisodhana, Sheetal		
Shatkriya	Jala neti, Trataka		

## DISCUSSION

Incorporating the aforementioned techniques and foods into our modern lifestyle can help prevent lifestyle disorders and promote better eye health. Clinical studies have demonstrated the efficacy of *Pa-dabhyanga* in maintaining eye health. Research has demonstrated that regular Anjana Karma practice improves vision. *Kriyakalpas* have demonstrated statistically and clinically significant outcomes in the treatment of numerous eye illnesses as well as in the promotion of eye health.

## CONCLUSION

In addition to the regular routine, the *Pathyas* and *Apathyas* stated can be practiced promoting eye health because they are highly accurate. All that has to be done to incorporate these practices into our dai-

ly activity is a small adjustment. Since prevention is always better than treatment, all recommended actions must be implemented in the modern world where lifestyle-related eye disorders are becoming more common.

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