

## CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF NASYA KARMA AND ITS VARIOUS APPLICATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* is the science of life that aims to maintain the health of the healthy and cure the diseases in the diseased. One specific branch of *Ayurveda* is *Panchakarma* which is a set of five therapeutical procedures that does bio-purification of the body. By performing *Panchakarma* procedures, the accumulated toxins in the body are removed and restore balance to the *Tridosha* in the body, essentially restoring health. One of these procedures in *Panchakarma* is *Nasya Karma*. *Nasya Karma* is the procedure whereby medicines in various forms are administered through the nose. The nose is considered as the gateway to the brain and more so, the consciousness. When medicine is administered through the nose, it pervades the channels up to the *Sringataka Marma* and spreads throughout the interior of the head and brain, it reaches all channels related to the eyes, ears and oropharynx and removes the accumulated *Dosha* there, hence alleviating the diseased conditions. For removal of the accumulated *Dosha*, medicine in the form of *Taila* (oil) *Swarasa* (extracted juice) *Kwatha* (decoction) or *Churna* (powder) are administered through the nasal cavity for management of *Urdwajatrugata Roga*. In this article, an attempt has been made to compile the relevant information from previous research done, *Ayurveda* classical texts and published materials from reputed sources.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda*, *Nasya Karma*, *Panchakarma*, Nasal pathway.

## INTRODUCTION

*Nasya Karma* is an important therapeutic procedure wherein medicated drugs are administered through the

nasal cavity to treat *Urdwajatrugata Roga* and other disorders of the head region. In *Ayurveda*, the *Shira*

(head) is considered one of three vital organs of the body. This is because the head is where the *Prana* (vital force) resides and is the seat of the *Indriya* (sense organs), hence the head is considered as the *Uttamanga* (superlative organ). Since the nose is the gateway of the head, it is highly effective in curing diseases related to the head. *Nasya Karma* cleanses and opens the channels of the head, thereby improving the oxygenation process and enhancing the *Prana*, which has a direct positive effect on the functioning of the brain<sup>1</sup>. It is highly effective if performed regularly because it nourishes the eyes, nose and ears, keeping them functioning at their optimal capacities. It also helps prevent early greying of hairs on the head and beard/moustache. In today's fast-paced lifestyle and due to intake of junk food, irregular eating habits, tobacco, alcohol, stress, sleeping disorders, use of steroids and oral contraceptives etc. *Urdwajatrugata Roga* are manifested. Since these diseases are more frequent in today's society it is the need of the day to know the treatment protocols available to deal with such diseases in an effective manner.

### Materials and Methods

The materials and methods adopted for this article have been collected from various scientific sources such as previous research conducted on the topic, *Ayurveda* classical texts and published materials from reputed sources.

*Nasya Karma* is one of the five therapies among the *Panchakarma* therapies. It is a procedure where medicated drugs are administered through the nasal route for the treatment of *Urdwajatrugata Roga*. *Urdwanga Chikitsa* is an important branch of *Astanga Ayurveda*, and *Nasya Karma* is the main therapeutic procedure since it addresses diseases of the head, which are above the clavicle region eg. *Nasa, Mukha, Netra*.

### Nasya Karma Classification

The classification of *Nasya Karma* according to various *Ayurveda Acharya*, mode of action, method of administration, a form of drug administered are all mentioned in the table below.

S. No.	Acharya	Types	Classification	Name
1.	Charaka	3 Types <sup>2</sup>	Mode of Action	a) <i>Rechana</i> b) <i>Tarpana</i> c) <i>Shamana</i>
		5 Types <sup>3</sup>	Method of Administration	a) <i>Navana</i> b) <i>Avapidana</i> c) <i>Dhmapana</i> d) <i>Dhuma</i> e) <i>Pratimarsha</i>
		7 Types <sup>4</sup>	According to the part of the drug used	a) <i>Phala</i> b) <i>Patra</i> c) <i>Mula</i> d) <i>Pushpa</i> e) <i>Niryasa</i> f) <i>Twaka</i>
2.	Sushruta	5 Types <sup>5</sup>	-	a) <i>Shirovirechana</i> b) <i>Pradhamana</i> c) <i>Avapida</i> d) <i>Nasya</i> e) <i>Pratimarsha</i>

3.	Vagbhata	3 Types <sup>6</sup>	-	a) Virechana b) Brmhana c) Shamana
4.	Kashyapa	2 Types <sup>7</sup>	-	a) Shodhana b) Poorana
5.	Sharangdhara	2 Types <sup>8</sup>	-	a) Rechana b) Snehana

The classification of *Nasya Karma* according to *Acharya Charaka* can be understood in the following ways.

### **Rechana Nasya (Virechana Nasya)**

The *Rechana Nasya* indicates the elimination of the vitiated *Dosha* from *Urdwajatrugata* part of the body. For this, *Churna* (powder) of the needed medicine or *Sneha* made with *Shirovirechana* pharmaceuticals is employed.

Indications: *Kaphaja Shiroroga* like *Stambha*, *Supti* and *Gaurava* of *Shira*. *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata* mentioned the indications in *Sleshma Abhivyapta Talu*, *Sleshma Abhivyapta Kantha* and *Shirokrimi*, *Arochaka*, *Sula*, *Shirogurava*, *Pinasa*, *Pratishaya*, *Urdwajatrugata Kaphaja Vikara*<sup>9</sup>, *Urdwajatrugata Sopha*, *Praseka*, *Vairasya*, *Arbuda*, *Dadru* and *Ko-tha*<sup>10</sup>.

### **Tarpana Nasya**

*Tarpana Nasya* according to *Charaka*, *Snehana Nasya* by *Sushruta* and *Sharangdhara* and *Brmhana Nasya* by *Vagbhata* may be considered as synonyms of each other. The *Sneha* prepared with *Vatapittahara* drugs and drugs of the *Madhura Skanda* should ideally be used<sup>11</sup>. According to *Vagbhata*, the *Sneha* prepared with *Snigdha* and *Madhura* drugs or with those drugs indicated for that particular disease should be used.

**Indications:** *Vatika Shiroroga*, *Dantapaka*, *Kespata*, *Darunaka* and other *Vatapittaja Roga*. *Sushruta* advised *Snehana Nasya* for promoting strength and increase the strength of vision. *Charaka* advised that it can also be used for the management of *Shirakampa* and *Ardita*<sup>12</sup>.

### **Shamana Nasya**

*Shamana Nasya* is used for the alleviation of *Dosha* that is situated in the head region. *Shamana Nasya* has been described by *Charaka* and *Vagbhata* only the *Sneha* that is prepared with the suitable palliative drugs should be used here.

**Indications:** Used to stop bleeding in *Raktapitta*, also indicated in *Akala Valita*, *Palitya* and *Khalitya*, *Darunaka*, *Raktaraji*, *Vyanga* and *Nilika*<sup>13</sup>.

### **Navana Nasya**

*Navana Nasya* is one of the important and applicable therapies of *Nasya Karma*. *Navana Nasya* is generally the *Snehana Nasya* and is generally known as *Nasya Karma*.

### **Snehana Nasya**

*Snehana Nasya* gives strength to all the *Dhatu* and is used as a *Dhatuposhaka* therapy.

### **Shodhana Nasya**

*Sushruta Shirovirechana Nasya* type is included in *Shodhana* type of *Navana Nasya*. It eliminates the vitiated *Dosha* situated in the *Urdwajatrugata* region.

### **Avapidana Nasya**

It is a type of *Shodhana Nasya* where the extracted juice of leaves or paste of the selected drug is used.

Indications: *Manas Roga*, *Apasmara*, *Shirovedana*, *Moha*, *Citta Vyakulavastha*, *Murccha*, *Sanyasa*, *Bhaya*, *Krodha*, *Bhiru*, *Sukumara*, *Krisa*, *Stri*, *Raktapitta*, *Visha*, *Abhigata*, *Apatantraka*.

### **Pradhamana or Dhmapana Nasya**

It is another type of *Shodhana Nasya* where medicated fine powder is blown into the nose. *Charaka* referred to it as *Dhmapana* and *Sushruta* as *Pradhamana*. Indications: *Mano Vikara*, *Krimi*, *Visha*, *Ati Utklishta Dosha Sajna Nasa*

### **Dhuma Nasya**

*Dhuma Nasya* is described as medicated smoke that is inhaled through the nostrils and exhaled through the mouth. The inhalation of *Dhuma* through the mouth is known as *Dhumapana* and is not included in *Nasya Karma*. Inhalation of *Dhuma* through the mouth and exhalation through the nose is highly contraindicated in the classical texts as it is harmful to eyesight.

**Indications:** Shiroroga, Nasaroga and Akshiroga.

**Marsha Nasya**

According to Vagbhata, the installation of 6 to 10 drops of Sneha into the nostrils is known as Marsha Nasya. It gives quick results and is more effective than Pratimarsha Nasya but has Vyapad (complications).

**Pratimarsha Nasya**

Pratimarsha Nasya can be administered daily in all seasons both in the morning and evening time. It is usually administered in the dose of two drops in the morning and 2 drops in the evening.

**Indications:** Bala, Vriddha, Bhuru, Sukumara, Daurbalya, Kshata, Trishna, Mukhasosha, Valitya, Palitya.

**Time of Administration of Nasya Karma<sup>14</sup>**

Charaka indicated that Nasya should be administered in Pravrut, Sharad and Vasanta Ritu. However, in emergency conditions, it may be administered in any season by creating artificial conditions of the indicated seasons.

Ritu (Season)	Time of Administration of Nasya Karma
Grishma	Before Noon (Morning)
Sheeta	Noon
Varsha	Day- the sky should be clear of rain-bearing clouds
Sharad + Vasanta	Morning
Shishira + Hemanta	Noon
Grishma + Varsha	Evening

**Dose of Nasya Karma<sup>15</sup>**

The dose of the Nasya drug depends on the drug used in it and the type of procedure planned. Charaka has not mentioned the dosage of Nasya, but Sushruta and Vagbhata have mentioned the dosage in the form of

Bindu (Drops). The rule of thumb is that one Bindu means the quantity of liquid that falls from the finger after dipping the first two phalanges of the Pradesini (Index) finger<sup>16</sup>.

S. No	Nasya Type	Dose (Bindu in each nostril)		
		Hrusva	Madhyama	Uttama
1.	Snehana	8	16	32
2.	Shodhana	4	6	8
3.	Marsha	6	8	10
4.	Avapidana	4	6	8
5.	Pratimarsha	2	2	2

**The procedure of Nasya Karma:** The procedure of Nasya Karma is conducted in the following three steps:

**Purva Karma**

Before the administration of Nasya Karma, all the essential required equipment and materials should be gathered and arranged. There should be the provision of a special room to conduct Nasya Karma that is free from dust, direct flow of air, with appropriate lighting, Nasya table, Nasya Dravya (the drugs required for Nasya Karma i.e., Kalka, Churna, Kshira, Kwatha,

Udaka, Sneha, Dhuma etc.), Nasya Yantra, Pichu or Sutika (dropper). For Pradhmana Nasya a specific Dhumayantra is required. Along with the mentioned items, an attendant should be present, dressing materials, spittoon, napkins, bowls and towels.

The patient should be properly prepared by ensuring that they fully understand the proper procedure of Nasya Karma and are willing (consent) to follow through with the procedure. The patient is then advised to pass the natural urges before lying down on the Nasya table. Mridu Abhyanga should be done on the

scalp, forehead, face and neck for approximately 10-15 minutes using medicated oils. *Mridu Swedana* should be done for the liquefaction of the *Dosha*. Care must be taken while administering *Mridu Swedana* since *Swedana* should not be done on the head region according to *Ayurveda* classical texts.

#### **Pradhana Karma**

The patient should be asked to lie down in a supine position on the *Nasya* table with the head being in *Pra-lambita* (hanging downwards) not excessively extended or flexed. The reason for this is that if the head is not properly lowered the administered drug may not reach the target and if it is lowered too much then there is the risk of the drugs reaching the brain and getting stuck there. The eyes of the patient should be covered with cotton or cloth. Then the physician should raise the tip of the nose with the left thumb and with the right hand, administer the drug by pouring it into the nostrils. The drug should neither be too much nor too little but in the proper dosage. It should be lukewarm, according to the patient's tolerance. The patient should be advised to be calm and composed during the *Nasya Karma* process and avoid speaking, laughing, sneezing and shaking of the head during the entire duration.

#### **Paschat Karma**

After the administration of the *Nasya* drug the patient should be asked to lie in a supine position for approximately 1 minute, the feet, shoulders, palms and ears should be massaged during this time<sup>17</sup>. If there is an excess of the administered drug, it should be spat out and not swallowed<sup>18</sup>. Medicated *Gandusha* and *Dhuma* are then administered to expel out any remaining *Kapha Dosha* which may be lodged in the *Kantha* and *Sringataka Marma*. The patient should then be advised to stay in a room devoid of wind, to have a light diet and warm water.

#### **Signs & Symptoms of Samyak, Ayoga and Atiyoga Nasya Karma**

In properly administered *Samyak Nasya Karma*, there is the feeling of lightness in the head and chest region, all the five sense organs function properly and all channels of the body are clear and open<sup>19</sup>. In *Ayoga* (insufficient administration) of *Nasya Karma*, there is the feeling that something is choking the throat region,

heaviness and excessive salivation in the mouth<sup>20</sup>. In *Atiyoga* (excessive administration) of *Nasya Karma*, there is a severe type of pricking pain present in the head, eyes, temporal region and ears<sup>21</sup>.

#### **Probable Mode of Action of Nasya Karma<sup>22</sup>**

The passage of drugs through the nasal mucosa is the first step in the absorption in the nasal cavity. Un-charged as well as small particles easily pass through the mucus while charged as well as large particles are more difficult to cross. The following are two mechanisms to think about:

-The first mechanism of drug absorption involves an aqueous route of transport (paracellular route). The paracellular route is slow and passive. -The second mechanism includes the transport of the drugs through a lipoidal route (transcellular route). The transcellular route is responsible for the transport of lipophilicity.

#### **Nose-to-brain drug delivery**

There are most likely three mechanisms at work in the direct nose-to-drug delivery; there could be at least one intracellular transport mediated route and two extracellular transport mediated routes.

#### **Intracellular Transport**

The intracellular transport route is a long one, with intranasally delivered drugs typically taking hours to reach the olfactory bulb. The olfactory neuron in the olfactory epithelium could uptake the molecules by such processes as endocytosis, which could reach the olfactory bulb by axonal transport.

#### **Extracellular Transport**

The two likely extracellular transport-based routes could justify the rapid entrance of the drug into the brain, which can occur within minutes of intranasal drug administration.

The first extracellular transport-based route, the intranasally administered substance, first crosses the gap between the olfactory neurons in the olfactory epithelium which are subsequently transported to the olfactory bulb. In the second extracellular transport-based route, the intranasally administered substances may be transported along the trigeminal nerve to bypass the blood-brain barrier. After reaching the olfactory bulb or trigeminal nerve region, the substance may enter into other regions of the brain by diffusion which may



also be facilitated by the “perivascular pump” that is driven by arterial pulsations.

### Effect on Drug Absorption and Transportation

Keeping the head in a lowered position and retaining the medicine in the nasopharynx helps in providing sufficient time for the local drug absorption. Any liquid soluble substance has a greater chance for passive absorption directly through the cell of the lining membrane. On the other hand, *Abhyanga* and *Swedana* also enhance drug absorption.

### DISCUSSION

The nose is the gateway to the brain, and with *Nasya Karma*, medicines can be administered according to the disease condition. With the many classifications and types of *Nasya Karma* mentioned, as well as various forms of medicine administration, it is a very good treatment modality available in the quiver of *Panchakarma* therapies. When the patient is examined and the specific type of *Nasya Karma* is selected, the process of performing it is easily carried out systemically viz *Purva Karma*, *Pradhana Karma* and *Paschat Karma*. The probable mode of action suggests that this procedure is effective in achieving the desired results to treat or prevent diseases associated with the head and neck region, by nourishing the channels of the head and reaching to the target organ to be treated.

### CONCLUSION

From the research gathered, it can be concluded that *Nasya Karma* is a wide spectrum therapy available for diseases of the head and neck region, and the method of performing the therapy is relatively easy and highly effective while following all required protocols.

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