

PREVENTIVE ASPECTS IN OPHTHALMOLOGY AS PER AYURVEDA: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Eye disorders nowadays have increased due to changing lifestyle, therefore prevention of ocular disorders and preservation of ocular health has become essential. Ayurveda science has also given the prime importance to eyes. *Acharya Sushruta* in *Uttartantra* explained in detail about the initial stages (*Purvaroop Avastha*) of *Netraroga* and also the early treatment modalities, such that the further undesirable complications could be stopped. Relation between the occurred diseases and the causes for the same are searched and reviewed from different *Ayurvedic* literatures and online services. A affected *Dosha* and *hetu* for a particular eye disease helps in curing the disease from its root.' *Nidan-Parivarjan*' as stated by *Acharya Sushruta* forms the basis of any treatment. Association of eye diseases with daily work (*Dinacharya*), seasonal regimen (*Ritucharya*), diet (*Aahar*), activities (*Vihar*), mind, occupation, aging process are important. Various methods mentioned in ancient texts like *Kriyakalpa*, *Snana*, *Padabhyanga*, *Abhyanga*, etc. are important for the maintenance of good ocular health. *Yogas* and *Satkriyas* are also beneficial for eye sights.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Netra*, Preventive Ophthalmology, Lifestyle disorders.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda emphasize more on prevention rather than cure of a disease; may it be physical, mental, spiritual, intellectual miseries. Out of all the sense organs, 'Chakshurendriya' is considered to be the most important sense organ because vision is necessary for the overall development of a person. *Acharya Vagbhata*, quoted saying

'the different kind of things in the world will all become one kind only that of darkness, once the vision is lost'. Approximately, 80% of the source of direct knowledge which we gain is due to the eyes. So, one has to take crucial steps to prevent and cure various eye disorders. *Acharya Sushruta* also mentioned various *hetus* and *pathya-apathyas* related to *Netra-vikaras* in detail, applications of which in every case of ocular pathologies

would be fruitful. Vision is also hampered among the other human illness as a consequence of changing lifestyle. Cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, tobacco, junk food, high fat diet, chronic stress, computer work for long time, being exposed to bright light, very near work, etc are few examples which exert damage to the eyes. In order to prevent such kind of eye diseases and to sustain ocular health for a longer period, there are few other localized treatment explained in Ayurveda texts like Kriyakalpa, Yoga, Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Sadvritta, Chakshusya Rasayana drugs.

Acharya Vagbhata once stated, 'all efforts should be made by each and every person to protect the eyes, throughout the life.'¹

1) Netraprakshalana-

Eyes should be washed thoroughly daily by Lodhra or with Amalaki Swarasa in early morning.²

2) Padabhayanga-

As per Ayurveda, foot is in association with the eyes. There are multiple nerve endings as well as plexuses which are in connection with the eyes. So, care should be taken to protect the foots by various methods like Pada abhayanga, Pada prakshalana, Padatradharan.³

3) Anjana-

Daily applying collyrium(Anjana) is one of the best methods to prevent eye diseases.⁴

As per Acharya Charak, Anjana clears all the Doshas from the eyes and the Drishti becomes shiny like a moon.⁵

4) Chatradharana-

Use of umbrella protects the eyes from sunshine, heat, dust, smoke, etc and it is Chakshyushya.⁶

5) Vegadharana -

Suppression of tears, sleep, natural urges due to various reasons like busy work schedule, travelling long, etc leads to multiple eye disorders.

6) Yoga-

Shatkriyas like Netrakriya, trataka helps in improving our vision.

7) Pathya-Apathya-

Acharya Vagbhata and Yogratnakar described in detail, many useful and non-useful things for eyes in detail. These factors play a critical role in preventing the disorders of eyes.⁷

DISCUSSION

Prevention and treatment are equally important in fighting with the diseases of eyes. Various theories have been put forward even in ancient literatures, so that early detection of cause, diagnosis, pathophysiology, prevention, treatment and further complications can be known. In day-to-day life, sedentary lifestyle leads to metabolic disorders, which ultimately have undesirable effects on eyes. Causes mentioned thousands of years ago, can be correlated with today's lifestyle like Swapna Viparyaya (night shift), Shukshma-Nirikshana (watching at vary close distance), smoking, tobacco, stress, etc. Screening of all whether infant, young or old age is a must. Cell-phones and computers are serving the mankind since decades but also have harmful effects when misused. Physical activity also reduces local and systemic inflammation and endothelial dysfunction.⁸

CONCLUSION

It is need of the time, that people should be made aware of eye disorders and its importance as such. Slight modification

daily in our lifestyle can contribute a great in eradicating various ocular pathologies. Different Kriyakalpas like Anjana, Tarpana, Aschyotana, Bidalaka, etc can serve as prevention and treatment both. Recurrence of the same disease and age-related degenerative changes can be prevented by Rasayana Chikitsa.

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