THERAPEUTIC USES OF NASYA KARMA: CONCEPTUAL CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Nasa (Nose) is an Indriya, which works not only to perceive the smell but also to provide the main breathing pathway, along with this, Nasa is one of the drug administration pathways. Acharyas have been placed Nasya as one of the Panchkarma procedures, which signify the importance of Nasya as Shodhana Karma (Purification procedure) especially for Urddhva-jatruagara Vikara (disease which affect the body above clavicle). Nasya Karma is a therapeutic measure in which the drug (Medicated Oil/Ghee/Decoction/Powder/Smoke etc.) is administered by Nasa (Nose) essentially to remove the vitiated Dosha found in Shira and its constituent parts. Indirectly, by enhancing the functions of the endocrine glands and nervous system, Nasya can operate on the entire body. In classics Nasya is mentioned in different type of supra-clavicular as well as in systemic diseases. So present review article focused on the therapeutic uses of Nasya Karma in different diseased condition which are proven by clinical researches.

KEYWORDS: Nasya, Panchakarma, Shira, Urddhva-jatruagara Vikara.

INTRODUCTION

Nasa (Nose) is an Indriya, which works not only to perceive the smell but also to provide the main breathing pathway, along with this, Nasa is one of the drug administration pathways. A particular Nasya procedure has been defined in Ayurvedic texts, the literary sense of which is in the Nasa or the things that are beneficial to the Nasa. The word Nasya has been derived from "Nasa" Dhatu which denotes the sense of Gati (motion) Nasa Gatayu. Nasyas textual description indicates that the medications or medicated Sneha, delivered through the nose, are called Nasya. In Classics, synonyms of the term Nasya are mentioned as Shirovirechana, Shiroyireka, Murdha Virechana, Nastakarma, Navana etc. Acharya Sushruta defined the idiom Shirovirechana as a separate variety of Nasya Karma.[1] Meaning of the label Virechana is to eliminate the morbid Dosha from the body. Thus, Shirovirechana or Murdhavirechana makes sense for elimination of morbid Dosha particularly from the Shira (Head) or parts situated above the clavicle. The sentence "Nastah Pracchardana" was applied to Nasya by Acharya Charaka[3] which denotes Shodhana (purification) by Nasya. By glimpse of all these facts, it can be said that Nasya Karma is a therapeutic measure in which the drug (Medicated Oil/Ghee/Decoction/Powder/Smoke etc.) is administered by Nasa (Nose) essentially to remove the vitiated Dosha found in Shira and its constituent parts. Indirectly, by enhancing the functions of the endocrine glands and nervous system, Nasya can operate on the entire body.

Nose is anatomically connected with cranial cavity and other organs like eyes, ears, pharynx etc. So the administered drug through this route can work as medicament for disorders affecting all these structures.[3] Acharyas have been placed Nasya as one of the Panchkarma procedures, which signify the importance of Nasya as Shodhana Karma (Purification procedure) especially for Urddhva-jatruagara Vikara (disease which affect the body above clavicle). Nasya is the only approach which can directly influence Indriya doshas and helps in rapid action of administered drug.[4]
Types of *Nasya Karma*[^5-9]

| Types of Nasya Karma | Types of Nasya Karma |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| **Charaka Samhita**  | **Sushruta Samhita**  |
| Navana, Avapeeda, Dhmapana, Dhuma Pratimarsha | Shirovirechana and Snehana |
| Further classified into 5 types: Nasya, Avapeeda, Pradhamana, Shirovirechana, Pratimarsha | Virechana, Brimhana, Shamana |
| **Ashtanga Hridaya** | **Kashyapa Samhita** |
| **Sharangadhar Samhita** |

**Pranidana Kala (Suitable Time For Nasya Karma):** *Nasya* should generally be delivered in *Pravrita, Sharada* and *Vasanta Ritu*, according to *Acharya Charaka*, but *Nasya* can be operated in any season in emergency conditions, which are defined by *Acharya* as being.[^10]

| Season       | Nasya Pranidana Kala            |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Grishma Ritu | Purvahana (Morning)             |
| Shita Ritu (Shishira & Hemanta) | Madhyahana (Afternoon)         |
| Varsha Ritu | Adurdina Kala (day should be clear from clouds) |

*Acharya Sushruta* stated that *Nasya* should usually be performed empty stomach at the time of meal; *Sushruta Acharya* also listed the *Nasya Karma* time schedule according to *Doshaja Vikara* i.e. ^[11]

| Doshaja Vikara | Time for Nasya |
|----------------|----------------|
| Vataja vikara  | Aprahana (Evening) |
| Pittaja vikara | Madhyahana (Afternoon) |
| Kaphaja vikara | Purvahana (Morning) |

In the case of *Vataja Shiroroga, Hikka, Aptanaka, Manyastambha* and *Swarabharansa*, *Acharya Vagbhatta* specified a specific schedule for *Nasya Karma* such as *Nasya* should be given daily in the morning and evening. *Acharya Vagbhatta* also describes time for *Nasya* according to *Doshaja Vikara* and *Ritu* i.e.^[12]

| Doshaja Vikara & Season | Time for Nasya |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Vataja vikara, Grishma Ritu | Sayankala (Evening) |
| Pittaja vikara, Shishira & Hemanta Ritu | Madhyahana (Afternoon) |
| Kaphaja vikara          | Pratah (Morning)  |
| Swastha, Sharada & Vasanta Ritu | Purvahana (Morning) |
| Varsha Ritu             | Atapa            |

**Probable Mode of Action of Nasya Karma**

There is no specific explanation available in *Ayurvedic* classics concerning the mode of action of the *Nasya Karma*. According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Nasa* is the portal (gateway) of *Shirah*[^13], the drug given through the nose as *Nasya* enters the brain and removes only the morbid *Doshas* responsible for creating the disease. According to all the *Acharyas Nasa* is said to be the portal of *Shira*, It does not mean that any anatomical channel connects directly to the brain but it might be connected pharmacodynamically through blood vessels or through nervous system (olfactory nerve etc.)

*Acharya Vagbhatta* has described mode of action of Nasya Karma i.e.^[14]
In our classics, there are different indications and contraindications for Nasya Karma, but general indications for Nasya which are stated in Charaka Samhita are - Shirostambha (stiffness of head), Manyastambha (cervical spondylosis), Danta Stambha, Danta Shoola (toothache), Hanugraha (lock jaw), Pina (rhinitis), Galashudika (tonsillitis), Galashaluka, Timira, Vartmaroga, Vyanga, Upajihvika, Ardhavabhedaka (migraine), Grivaroga (neck disease), Skandharoga (shoulder pain), Ansashula (pain at scapular region), Mukharoga (oral disease), Karnashoola (otalgia), Nasa Shoola (nasal disease), Akshishoola (eye pain), Shahirshoola (head ache), Ardita (bell's palsy or facial paralysis), Apatantraka, Apatantraka (epilepsy), Galaganda (goiter), Danta Harsha (numbness in teeth), Danta Chala, Netra Roga, Arbuda, Svarabhedha, Vaggraha, Gadgadatva, Krathana etc. 

Nasya Karma Yogya and Ayogya (Indication and Contraindication For Nasya Karma)

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Contraindication For Nasya

Bhuktabhakta, Ajirni, Pita Sneha, Pita Madhya, Pita Toya, Snehadi Patukamah, Snatah Shirah, Snatukamah, Kshudarta, Shramarta, Matta, Murcchita, Shastraandahrita, Vyavayaklanta, Vyavayaklanta, Navajvara Pidita, Shokabhitapta, Virikta, (Shuddha), Anuvasita (Datta Basti), Garbhini, Navapratishayarta etc. 

Various clinical studies are being carried out to demonstrate the efficacy of Nasya Karma in various diseased conditions, some of which are described here.

Cervical Spondylosis (Manyastambha)

A single case study was carried out on a female patient suffering from cervical spondylosis. She was subjected to Ksheera Bala Taila Nasya and Manya Basti by Nirgundi Taila for 15 days. Patient assessment was based on the effect of therapy on the disease’s signs and symptoms. It has been observed that cervical spondylosis can be successfully treated by Nasya and Manya Basti. A further clinical research on cervical spondylosis was performed in which patients receiving Nasya along with oral drugs reported more successful outcomes. A case series was reported on the efficacy of Nasya Karma in cervical spondylosis, in which Nasya Karma was administered with Anutaila for the first 3 days and 101 with Avaritta Kshirabala Taila for the next 4 days. Cervical spondylosis has been shown to be a Kapha-Vata dominant condition, preceded by Nasya with Avaritta Kshirabala Taila which pacify Vata Dosha by Brimhana & Nasya with Anutaila pacify Kapha with profuse secretions.
Frozen Shoulder (Apabahuka)

A clinical trial of 15 patients with signs and symptoms of Apabahuka (frozen shoulder) was performed. These cases were submitted to Marsha Nasya with Laghumasha Taila for seven days at doses of 6, 8, or 10 drops, as required by the patients. It was noted that when used as Marsha Nasya, Laghumasha Taila show Brimhana effect, provided a moderately significant result in the signs and symptoms of Apabahuka (frozen shoulder). A further clinical trial was performed on 30 Apabahuka (frozen shoulder) patients and Nasya (Partimarsa) Karma with Vatada Taila (almond oil) was administered for 15 days. An efficient treatment modality for Apabahuka has been found. A clinical study was performed on 15 diagnosed cases of Apabahuka, treated with Nasya with Dashamoooladi Yakama Sneha along with Maharasnadi Kwatha with Yogaraja Guggulu as Shamana Aushadhi. Statistically, better outcomes were observed.

Myopia (Timira)

In order to determine the function of Tarpana Karma with and without Nasya Karma, a clinical analysis on the 30 diagnosed cases of myopia was carried out. Nasya with Abhijita Taila, followed by Tarpana with Mahatriphaladya Ghrita, was administered in Group A and Tarpana with Mahatriphaladya Ghrita in Group B. In this research, Tarpana with Nasya Karma was found to be more effective in treating the signs and symptoms of the disease.

Chronic Sinusitis (Dushta Pratishyaya)

A clinical trial was performed in which 31 chronic sinusitis patients were randomly classified into three groups: A, B, and C. Trayodashanga Kwatha with Madhu was orally administered in group A; Pradhamana Nasya with Trikatu & Triphala Churna was administered in group B; and Pradhamana Nasya was initially administered in group C (combined group), followed by oral Trayodashanga Kwatha with Madhu. Total relief was seen in group A in 10 percent of patients; marked progress was seen in group B in 81.82 percent of patients; and significant relief was seen in group C in 60 percent of patients. Group C showed percentage-wise better outcomes for most of the symptoms compared to the other groups (Group A and Group B).

Coma

In order to assess the efficacy of Nasya, a single case study of a female patient suffering from coma along with two years of history of hypertension was performed. Acute infarction in the right middle cerebral artery (MCA), diffuse cerebral cortical atrophy, was observed in radiological tests. She was treated with Trikatu Churna (powder) Pradhama Nasya, followed for seven days by Dhumpana (fumigation) with Sanghyasthapana (consciousness restorative) medicines. The outcome of this management was noticeable, as it resulted in positive improvements from 3 to 11 in the Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS). This case report has been shared to provide proof that Nasya Karma can restore consciousness in a comatose patient.

Psychosomatic Disorder

An article on the effectiveness of Brimhana Nasya in psychosomatic disorders was published which showed that Nasya is considered a drug delivery port for the brain and intranasal delivery bypasses the blood brain barrier to target the central nervous system, reducing drug systemic exposure and thus reducing systemic side effects. Stress and the brain have a close relationship with each other, to provide brain nourishment; stress may be separated from the root and helps to avoid psychosomatic disorders.

Facial Paralysis (Ardita)

A clinical research was performed on 20 diagnosed cases of facial paralysis that were randomly divided into two classes. The control group was given Anu Taila Nasya and the trial group was given Mashadi Taila Nasya for 15 days at a dosage of 6 drops per nostril. Both drugs were found to be equally successful, but Anu Taila Nasya was much more effective in comparison. Another pilot study was performed on 6 diagnosed Ardita (facial paralysis) patients who administered Kukutanda Swedana along with Ksheerbala Taila Nasya and demonstrated high efficacy in Ardita management.

Allergic Rhiinitis (Anurjata Janita Pratishyaya)

A clinical research was performed on 69 allergic rhinitis patients. Patients were chosen and divide into 3 groups at random. For 14 days, Group A received Shunthi Taila Nasya with oral drug Shuddha Haridra 2 gms TDS for 21 days, Group B received Pradhama Nasya with Katphal churna till Samayaka Shuddhi Lakshana was obtained, followed by oral drug Shuddha Haridra 2 gms TDS for 21 days, and Group C received oral drug Shuddha Haridra 2 gms TDS for 21 days. The two trial drugs used for Nasya Karma were found to provide better results compared to the oral drug group. Another study was performed on 32 allergic rhinitis patients diagnosed randomly into two groups. Haridra Khanda in group A and Pippalyadi Taila Nasya in group B were administered for two months with the oral drug Haridra Khanda. It was concluded that patients in group B showed a marked improvement in allergic rhinitis signs and symptoms.
Hair Fall (Khalitya)

A research on the efficacy of Nasya with Shadbindu Taila in management of Khalitya was conducted and it was found that Nasya with Shadbindu Taila provided substantial relief in the signs and symptoms of Khalitya, primarily in hair fall and hair breakage.[33] Another clinical trial was performed on 15 hair-falling patients. Nasya Karma was administered to these patients with Chandanadhya Taila for 15 days at a dosage of 8 drops per nostril. It was reviewed that Nasya Karma given significant result in hair fall. [32]

Peenasa Roga

A clinical research on 100 diagnosed cases of Peenasa Roga was performed. Selected patients were divided randomly into two classes. In group A patients treated with Sneha, Swedana and Nasya Karma with Nirgundi Taila (4 drops in each nostril) and in group B patients treated with Sneha and Swedana, the period for both groups was seven days. Group A was found to display substantially improved results in Peenasa Roga signs and symptoms. [33]

Suryavarta

A clinical research was performed to assess the efficacy of Nagara Ksheera Nasya and Vacha Pippali Avapeedana Nasya in the treatment of Suryavarta in 40 diagnosed cases of Suryavarta. It was found that both groups provided significant results, but the impact of Vacha Pippali Avapeedana Nasya in Suryavarta management was comparatively better. [34] Another clinical study was examined, which administered Shodhana Karma (Virechana and Nasya Karma) along with oral Shamana drugs (Pathyadi Kwath and Shirashooladi Vajra Rasa) on 50 diagnosed cases of Suryavarta. Suryavarta was found to be successfully controlled by this administration. [35]

Migraine (Ardhavabhedaka)

Nasya with Kumkumadi Ghrita was given for 7 days in a female patient diagnosed with migraine. Because Tridosha Shamaka property of Kumkumadi Ghrita, migraine was successfully managed by its Nasya.[36] A clinical trial was performed on 33 migraine-diagnosed patients, which classified into three groups. Patients in group A received Nasya with Kumkumadi Ghrita, patients in group B received Shirodahara with Dashmoolashrita Ksheera and patients in group C received tab propranolol 40 mg bd of and diclofenac 50 mg bd. The therapy period in all three groups was 21 days. The study concluded that migraine management by Nasya with Kumkumadi Ghrita was more effective. [37] Another clinical research was performed on 20 cases of migraine. These patients were treated with Nasya with Swarasa of Acalypha Indica linn patra along with oral drug Panchgavya Ghrita. It was noted that this treatment modality was highly effective for migraine cases. [38]

In Gynecological Disorders

A review article published on the effectiveness of Nasya Karma in gynecological disorders (such as menorrhagia, oligomenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, PCOD and Infertility etc.) which based on that all the symphony of menstrual cycle is under the control of Pituitary hormones which is situated at the base of brain. Nasya is considered as the gateway of Sirah i.e., brain thus Nasya helps to regulate hypothalamo-pituitary-ovarian axis and establishment of normal menstruation. Hence Nasya is the best remedies to manage gynecological disorders. [39]

CONCLUSION

There are many forms and methods of administration of Nasya Karma in various diseases are described in classics. But we can find out that there is wide variability and lack of proper understanding all along the country. The method of administration of Nasya needs to be standardized according to a universally accepted standard operative procedure (SOP). The mode of action of Nasya also should be properly understood by suitable research methodologies. As the nasal drug route is very promising in nature, in future it is imperative to say that newer methods of Nasya or advanced methods for trans nasal drug administration should be developed by collaborative or integrative approach. It can be concluded that if Standard operative procedure is used in giving this therapy i.e., Nasya, then it will provide all the benefits given in Classics. Hence standardization of the various form of Nasya procedure and there uses in different diseased condition which mentioned in classics is must so as to achieve maximum efficacy.

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