

## **AYURVEDIC PREVENTIVE METHODS FOR OPHTHALMIC DISORDERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Ayurveda* is a philosophy of life with holistic approach which plays an important role in prevention of blindness. “The eyes are the window to the soul,” Good vision is crucial for social and intellectual development of human being prevention of ocular disorders and preservation of ocular health has become essential, as changing lifestyle has resulted in many eye disorders and brought miseries to daily life. *Ayurvedic* classics prescribe several preventive and curative measures for eye diseases including dietary advices. Preservation of eye health in relation to certain factor like-relation of eye diseases with mind, diet and activities, sleep daily and seasonal regimen related to the eye health, occupational eye health and disorders, aging process & poor vision and *Rasayan* (rejuvenation) therapy for preserving good vision. Many of the classic explained *chakshushya* food items and drug which can be regularly used & dietary & behavioral practices which are harmful for the eyes. *Ghee*, asparagus, amaranths, snake gourd, green gram, radish, flesh of birds, red rice, pomegranate, wheat etc. Time tested procedures like *Anjana*, *Aschyotan*, *snana*, *padabhyanga*, *Nasya*, *Abhyanga* are highly effective daily procedures for the maintenance of eye health. Various *yogasan* & *satkriya* are also effective for ocular health.

**Keywords:** Preventive ophthalmology, Eye care, *Ayurveda*, *Chakshushya*, Life style eye disorder

### **INTRODUCTION**

Eyes hold special status among all the sense organ because good vision is crucial for social and intellectual development of human being. Hence eyes are the most precious gift of God to mankind. According to *vagbhata Acharya*, stating the importance of eyes “Once the vision is lost,

the different kind of things of the world will all become one kind only that of darkness.” It is also emphasized than “An eye can perceive forms, it adorns the face.” The existence and status of a person in this universe is directly influence by the eye. The importance of *Netra* in

all sense organs is quoted in *Ayurved* by "Sarvindriyanam madhye naynsya pradhanatavata"<sup>1</sup> *Shalakra tantra* is one among eight specialties of *Ashtang Ayurveda* which deals with *urdhawajatrugata Vyadis*<sup>2</sup>, *susruta* has given more importance to eyes disease and out of which 19 chapters are devoted only to eye diseases. The importance of eye health and vision is rightly quoted by *vagbhata* . "All effort should be made by men to protect the eyes, throughout the life; for the man who is blind this world is useless, the day & night are the same even though he may have wealth"<sup>3</sup>. So, one has to take necessary efforts to take care of the methods for prevention of eye disease. A faulty life style has been linked to many human illnesses and much has been emphasized about life style disorders like cardiovascular disorder. DM Kidney diseases & their preventive methods. Vision is also affected as consequences of faulty like style. Smoking, cigarette, tobacco, alcohol consumption high fat diet, prolong exposure to bright light, working in computer for long time are few examples which experts damage to the eye. For preventing these types of eye diseases and for maintaining ocular health much has been described in text of *Ayurved*, in the form of *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya* & specific therapies like *kriya kalpa* are useful to restore eye health and proper vision. The *kriya kalpa* is built from two words *kriya* & *kalpa*. *Kriya* means therapeutic procedures used to cure the diseases and *kalpa* means practical. *Acharya Shushruta* mentioned five *kriya kalpa* i.e. *Seka*, *Aaschyotana*, *Anjana*, *Tarpana* and *Putapaka*<sup>(4)</sup>. The eye disease can be prevented and proper vision can be restored for long time by following certain points in daily life like *dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *sadvritta* and *swasthabritta* & taking

*chakshyusya rasayan* drugs described in *ayurvedic* texts.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

### *Dinacharya* (Daily Regimen)

*Sushruta Samhita Chikitsasthan* 24<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Sushruta* advised for *Netra prakshalan* with *Lodhra Kasaya*. (*symplocos racemosa* decoction). So the daily regimen can be summarized in a more practicable way as follow.

- ***Netra Prakashalana*** – Washing eyes with decoction of *Lodhra* or with *Amalaka*. *Embllica swarsa* after getting up from bed in the morning.<sup>5</sup>
- ***Kriya Kalpa***
  - ❖ ***Anjana* (collyrium) :-**  
It is indicated when *doshas* are located only in eye & when the signs & symptoms get started. It has *lekhan* property.

### **Mode of Action:-**

In this application of medicine to the internal surface of lid margin from *kaneenika sandi* to *apanga sandi* with the *anjana saalaka*. So its bioavailability is more due to more tissue contact time.

*Sourveeranjan* or *darvi rasa kriya* can be mixed with honey can be applied in the eye for *kapha sodhana* as eye is *pitta* predominant in nature and should be protected from *kapha dosha*. So daily practice of *anjana* as *Dinacharya* is best simple ophthalmic medication to prevent eye diseases.<sup>6</sup>

### ❖ ***Tarpana* :**

**Mode of action:-** in this process the oily (*ghee*) substance is kept in eye for specific time by special arrangement .simple *ghee* or oil is used as a medicine which is in form of suspension .so its particles do not leave eyes and contact time is more and more drug is absorbed. It

will cross corneal epithelium barrier easily due to its lipophilic property.

It gives nourishment to the eyes and cures the *vata pitta vikara*. It is indicated mainly in *Tamiyati, Rukshata, Sushka Netra, Ati darana, Pakshmpat & Ati Rugonta*.<sup>7</sup>

❖ **Putpaka :**

**Mode of action:-** procedure is same as *tarpana* but medicine preparation is *swarasa* extracted by *putpaka vidhi*. Contact time is same as *tarpana* but absorption is more than *tarpana* because it is suspension of fat water soluble contents so having both lipophilic and hydrophilic property to penetrate cornea.

Its indication is same as *tarpana*.

❖ **Seke:**

**Mode of action:-** in this process medicine is poured on closed eye (on eye lid) continuously from four inches height for specific time according to *dosha* so the medicine is absorbed through skin of lids.

It is indicated in acute condition.

❖ **Aschyotana :**

**Mode of action:-** the medicated drops put into eye from the height of two inches on open eye. Decoctions of raw drugs are used as medicine so its tissue contact time is very less and it gets diluted with tears and drains into NLD.

It is indicated as first procedure in all eye diseases.<sup>8</sup>

**Abhyanga:-**

*Abhyanga* is a procedure in which oil is applied in the head. Oil is best for *vata dosha*. The *vata dosha* confined to eye is *pranavayu* and the seat the scalp, the medicinal effects reaches up to the brain. The optic nerve to which ends in *dristi patalam* (Retina) is the directed extension of brain stem. Oil applied over the head especially at the region of *mourdha* acts on the *dristi patalam* through the optic nerve. So, daily appli-

cation of oil. Selected and medicated according to "*Prakriti*" of person is a preventive measure of the eye diseases.<sup>9</sup>

**Padavyanga, Padaprakshalan & Padatra Dharan :-**

Taking care of foot is also essential as foot is connected to the eye. Foot is the end organ and so the nerve endings of the foot reflect on the eye via sympathetic and para sympathetic supply. So foot should be kept clean, *abhyanga* & footwear should be used to avoid physical injuries to the foot as *padavyanga, padaprakshalaya & padatra dharan* has *chakryushya* effect.

**Use of Umbrella**

Holding an umbrella during summer is beneficial to eye.

**Jala Neti –**

Improve eye sight; pure water should be taken through nasal orifice in the early morning immediately after getting up to achieve extraordinary eye sight like that of great serpents. He will sign of aging like graying of hair or wrinkling of skin.

**Caksusya**

Symbolizes promotion of the eye sight. Which is good for *caksus* (eye) is *caksusya*. *Caksusya* is the activity that enhances visual activity through *Nadi prasadana*.

*Acarya dalhana* has explained that there is *Nadi* that traverses from the feet to the eye and hence medicines applied over the soles of feet transcend to the eyes.

**Caksusya Varga –**

Milk and milk products provide all the nutrients for the proper functioning of eye. Cow's milk butter & *ghee* are useful in visual disturbances it is advised to drink milk at night.

### Yoga & eye health:-

Yoga therapy is found to be useful in the management of such eye diseases.

#### **Kriyas:**

*Kapalabhati* & *neti* reduce sinusitis & headache by reducing *kaphadosha* & give a clear vision.

#### **Trataka:-**

*Trataka* is a special type of *kriya* which is exclusively meant for eye disorders.

*Hathayoga pradheeping trataka* eradication all types of eye disorders and drowsiness. *Trataka* means gazing a minute object. Best object for *trataka* is *ghee* lamp. One has no gaze the tip of the flamp without blinking the eye.

### DISCUSSION

*Ayurveda* is a philosophy of life which explained well about the health maintenance of else. Present day lifestyle choice i.e. low activity level, sedentary life style & progressive weight gain also contribute significantly to the risk of developing the metabolic syndrome which consequently has their ill effect on the most vital organ eye. Apart from the treatments daily & seasonal regiments, *pathyapathya* are support measures for well being. The causative factor for eye diseases explained in the classical form exactly f the present day lifestyle practices which in turn generate eye disease. Diet resembles the spicy & junk food by activities *swapna viparyaat*, *atimadyapaana*, *manasika – kopa, shoka, klesha*. Other activities like reading while travelling produces difficulty in accommodation and thus causes ailments of vision, prevention of disease is possible by lifestyle regulation & adopting *Ayurvedic* Principle<sup>10</sup>. *Kriya Kalpa* has a major role as a remedy for lifestyle induced eye diseases.

*Kriya Kalpa* such as *Aschyotana Anjana* are both prevention as well as treatment modalities

eye diseases due to ageing process are inevitable but can be delayed by taking *chaksyushya Rasayana*.

### CONCLUSION

Various lifestyle exposures are found closely associated with eye diseases. Their causes are pursued to be the result of metabolic changes influenced by processes of growth & aging. The prevention modalities advocates in *Ayurveda* such as *Aschyotana*, *Anjana Yogasanas* etc. along with a few positive life style modifications may help considerably reducing the impact of ocular diseases in general population.

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**Source of Support: Nil**

**Conflict Of Interest: None Declared**

How to cite this URL: Amit W. Chandankhede & Chandrashekar Mule: Ayurvedic Preventive Methods For Ophthalmic Disorders . International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2017 {cited December, 2017} Available from:

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