A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY OF ROLE OF AYURVEDIC OIL BASED NASAL INSTILLATION (NASYA) IN CASES OF BELL’S –PALSY

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ABSTRACT

Bell’s palsy (BP) is the most common form of peripheral palsy of the facial nerve. Prognosis for recovery is good for most patients; in few cases, different grades of residual impairment persist. Panchakarma, in association with drug administration, aims to improve outcomes and prevent residual impairment. Panchakarma (Penta bio-purificatory methods) appears to be effective in the severe and less severe cases of bell’s palsy resulting in complete recovery without any evidence of residual palsy. Panchakarma techniques like nasya have a definite role in relieving the patient of any social stigma due to residual impairments.

Keywords: Bells’ palsy, nasya, panchakarma, residual impairment.

INTRODUCTION:

Bell’s palsy is defined as an idiopathic lower motor neuron type of facial nerve palsy. A viral mechanism with herpes simplex is postulated and widely accepted, but the exact etiology still remains unclear. Usually the course is benign, with full recovery in 2–3 weeks time. However, some cases remain complicated without complete resolution of symptoms.

The need to accurately classify these patients and provide early panchakarma therapy along with drugs is needed to prevent any persistent or residual impairment.

In all cases of bells palsy nasya can provide extreme benefit in reducing the physical and social impairments commonly observed in patients suffering from Bell’s palsy. Nasya is one of the panchakarmas mentioned in Ayurveda. It is a process by which medicated oil is administered through the nostrils. If ‘Nasyakarma’ is done properly and regularly it keeps the person's eye, nose and ear unimpaired. It also prevents the early graying of hair. It will ensure growth of hair and alleviate diseases like cervical spondylitis, headache, facial paralysis, diseases of nose, coryza, and sinusitis.

Materials and method:

A retrospective study of thirty six patients with bell’s palsy treated in the panchakarma department with nasya was done during a period of two years from 2011 -2013, of which twenty eight patients showed complete recovery within 3 weeks of nasya. Five patients took 6 weeks and one patient recovered completely only after ten weeks of treatment. There was no evidence of any residual impairment. Patients followed up for the next one year did not show any signs of recurrent disease.

Procedure: Nasya karma is a method of panchakarma in which medicated oils are instilled in to the nose, this has an excellent role in improving the functions of the facial muscle in cases of bell’s palsy. Prior
to nasya, purvakarma or pre purification measures are done like snehana (oleation), sweda (sudation), to face, forehead, head, ears, neck. This prior snehana (oleation) and swedana (sudation or sweating) will help to loosen the adhesive doshas (Impurities), thereby facilitating the subsequent treatment. After the purvakarma, pradhanakarma or the main procedure is done. Patient is made to lie down in supine position, with head at a lower position by keeping a pillow below the neck. The oil is first kept over hot water to warm it and then is made to slowly flow into one nostril keeping the other nostril closed. The procedure is then repeated for the other nostril. For administration of the drug a pichu (cotton swab) or a nadi (tube) may be used. The sole, shoulder, neck, ear, and palm are gently massaged after the administration of the drug. The patient must spit out all the impurities that reach his mouth. Swedakarma should be repeated after the nasya treatment. The process should be repeated for twice or thrice if necessary. The treatment should be given daily for continuous two weeks^3^.

**RESULTS:** From the retrospective study of the data showing treatment of cases of bell’s palsy with nasya, it was found to be highly effective (p>0.5). nasya karma was found to provide complete cure in patients of facial paralysis without any residual impairment or recurrences.

**DISCUSSION:**

Evidence of knowledge of facial paralysis has been known since ancient times and has been transcribed in present day scientific literatures. Ancient cultures like the incas, Egyptian, Greeks and the Indians had a fair beat of understanding of this medical condition and attempted medical interventions at that time.

The great Indian sage Caraka describes the etiology and management of Arditavata (Facial palsy) in his medical tomes. He described the clinical features of ardita with symptoms manifested such as face, nose, eyebrows, and jaws become distorted, food in the mouth looses direction, tongue becomes crooked on trying to lift up, and voice becomes weak, hearing weakness.

Caraka attributes the root cause of Ardita to highly vitiated vata dosha, Whereas ayurvedic experts like Shodhala classifies ardita on doshic influence of kapha and pitta rather than vata. Susruta describes medication for aardita in his su sruta sthana, giving special emphasis on nasya.

**Nasya** is regarded as patient friendly because it can be done even in the comfort of patient’s residence, Moreover the use of nasya medication has not been reported to have any side effects. The usual dose varies between two to ten drops in each nostril thrice daily.^4^ **Mode of action-Nasya karma** – The nasya dravya medicine acts at sringataka marma (A main vital point situated on the surface of the brain, corresponding to the nerve centers which consists of nerve cells and fibers responsible for the function of speech broca’s center, smell, vision, taste and hearing.), From where it spreads into various strotasas (vessels and nerves) and brings out all the vitiated doshas.

The drugs by general blood circulation after absorption through mucous membranes, Direct pooling into venous sinuses of brain via inferior ophthalmic veins, Absorption directly into the cerebrospinal fluid, Many nerve endings which are arranged in the peripheral surface of the mucous membrane, olfactory, trigeminal, are stimulated by the nasyakarma and im-
Pulses are transmitted to the central nervous system. Most of the drugs used in nasayakarma have katu (Pungent), uzhna (hot), and theekshna (sharp) properties. These drugs produce draveekaranam (liquefaction) and cheedanam (expulsion) of vitiated doshas. The kashayarasa (astringent taste) drugs produce astringent effect, while madhura rasa (sweet) drugs produce a cooling and nourishing effect.

**CONCLUSION:**

Disorders of the facial nerve, including paralysis, are not rare and have a variety of potential causes. The appropriate diagnosis and treatment are very important for achieving the best possible recovery of facial nerve function.

Patients suffering from Bell’s palsy will benefit from specific panchakarma therapy like Nasya, designed to improve physical functioning as well as social well-being of patients. The administration of nasya along with drugs during early stage of the disease helps in preventing the occurrence of any residual impairment in the patient thus improving the treatment outcome.

**REFERENCES**

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