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A Critical Review of *Vataja Abhishyanda* with Special Reference to Allergic Conjunctivitis

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Abstract:

This article presents a detailed review of Vataja Abhishyanda, one of ocular diseases described in Ayurveda, and correlates it with Allergic Conjunctivitis in modern ophthalmology. Based on classical Ayurvedic principles and supported by current understanding of allergic eye diseases, the article aims to establish diagnostic similarities and propose integrative therapeutic measures. A combination of Shamana and Shodhana chikitsa, along with Kriyakalpa procedures, is discussed in the management of Vataja Abhishyanda. This study emphasizes the relevance and efficacy of Ayurvedic interventions in managing allergic ocular conditions, particularly when integrated with modern practices.

Keywords: *Vataja Abhishyanda, Allergic Conjunctivitis, Ayurveda, Kriyakalpa, Shalakyantra, Eye Disorders*

Introduction:

Ayurveda, Indian system of medicine describes eight principal branches (*Ashtanga Ayurveda*), one of which is *Shalakyantra*. *Shalakyantra* deals with the diagnosis and treatment of disorders affecting the organs located above the clavicle, especially the eyes, ears, nose, and throat. Among ocular diseases, *Abhishyanda* occupies a significant place and is classified based on the predominant *Dosha* involved: *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, and *Raktaja*.

Vataja Abhishyanda is characterized by typical *Vata* symptoms in the eyes such as pain, roughness, pricking sensation, and photophobia. In contemporary medicine, Allergic Conjunctivitis is a common non-infectious ocular condition resulting from hypersensitivity reactions, presenting with itching, redness, and watery discharge. Although the pathogenesis differs, the symptomatic presentation shares striking similarities with *Vataja Abhishyanda*. This article aims to examine

Vataja Abhishyanda in detail and correlate it clinically with Allergic Conjunctivitis, emphasizing Ayurvedic approaches for management.

Nidana (Etiology)

According to Ayurveda, *Vataja Abhishyanda* results from the aggravation of *Vata dosha* due to factors such as:

- Excessive exposure to cold wind (*Sheeta Vata*)
- Dry and irregular lifestyle (*Vata-prakopaka ahara-vihara*)
- Overexertion and sleeplessness
- Suppression of natural urges

In modern medicine, Allergic Conjunctivitis is an immunological condition predominantly due to:

- Exposure to different allergens like flower pollen, dust mites
- Immune hypersensitivity (Type I reaction)
- Seasonal or perennial environmental factors

Samprapti (Pathogenesis)

In *Vataja Abhishyanda*, the vitiated *Vata* causes disturbance in *Rasa* and *Rakta dhatu* of the eye. The qualities of *Vata*—*ruksha* (dry), *laghu* (light), *sheeta* (cold), and *chala* (mobile)—manifest in the ocular tissues, resulting in dryness, pain, and discomfort.

In Allergic Conjunctivitis, allergens activate mast cells leading to IgE-mediated histamine release, causing vasodilation, itching, and increased tear secretion. This immune-inflammatory cascade mimics the features described in *Vataja Abhishyanda*, such as irritation, foreign body sensation, and photophobia.

Lakshana (Clinical Features)

Ayurvedic Features of *Vataja Abhishyanda*:

- *Toda* – pricking or piercing pain
- *Ruja* – aching pain
- *Harsha* – photophobia
- *Sankocha* – contraction of eyelids
- *Rukshata* – dryness
- *Avila Darshana* – blurred vision
- *Alpa Srava* – minimal discharge, often thin and watery

Features of Allergic Conjunctivitis:

- Intense itching
- Redness and congestion
- Watery or mucoid discharge
- Foreign body sensation

- Photophobia
- Lid swelling (in severe cases)

Bheda (Types and Differential Diagnosis)

Ayurveda classifies *Abhishyanda* into four primary types:

- *Vataja*: Predominantly dry, painful, minimal discharge
- *Pittaja*: Burning sensation, yellow discharge, redness
- *Kaphaja*: Heaviness, thick white discharge, itching
- *Raktaja*: Redness, bleeding, burning, photophobia

Allergic Conjunctivitis closely resembles *Vataja* and *Kaphaja Abhishyanda*, depending on the chronicity and symptom dominance. However, acute allergic reactions with dryness, pricking pain, and photophobia are more in line with *Vataja Abhishyanda*.

Chikitsa (Management)

Ayurvedic Management:

***Shamana Chikitsa* (Palliative Therapy):**

- Internal medications: *Triphala Ghrita*, *Punarnavadi Kashaya*, *Dashamoola Kwatha*, *Yashtimadhu Churna*, *Haridra Khanda*
- Diet: *Vata*-pacifying – warm, unctuous, nourishing food, avoiding cold, dry items

***Kriyakalpa* (Local Therapies):**

- *Anjana* – medicated collyrium (e.g., *Saindhava Anjana*)
- *Aschyotana* – eye drops (e.g., *Triphala*, *Daruharidra*)
- *Tarpana* – retention of medicated ghee in the eye
- *Nasya* – nasal administration of herbal oils (e.g., *Anu Taila*)

Shodhana Chikitsa (Purificatory Therapy):

- *Virechana* – especially with *Pitta* association
- *Basti* – systemic regulation of *Vata*

Modern Management:

- Topical antihistamines (e.g., Olopatadine)
- Mast cell stabilizers
- Lubricating eye drops
- Corticosteroids (short-term)
- Allergen avoidance

Role of Diet and modern lifestyle

- Avoid *Vata*-provoking foods such as dry, cold, stale
- Maintain regular sleeping habits and wake up timings
- Avoid excessive mobile phone, tablet, Computer viewing time

- Eye washing with *Triphala-kwath*

Research and Case Studies:

Different studies and case reports demonstrate the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatments such as *Triphala Ghrita Tarpana*, *Anjana*, and *Nasya* in managing allergic ocular conditions. Results show reduction in itching, redness, and discomfort without side effects commonly seen in corticosteroid therapy.

Discussion:

The similarity between *Vataja Abhishyanda* and Allergic Conjunctivitis has been established and this can help in change in management of allergic conjunctivitis. Ayurveda focuses on root cause, balances *dosha*, and offers local and systemic therapies. *Ayurvedic chikitsa* provides a holistic and sustained approach in contrast to symptomatic relief from antihistamines.

Conclusion:

Vataja Abhishyanda has significant clinical similarity with Allergic Conjunctivitis. Ayurvedic management, rooted in the principles of *Shamana*, *Shodhana*, and *Kriyakalpa*, is effective complementary or alternative therapy. An integrative approach can enhance symptomatic relief, reduce recurrence, and minimize dependence on corticosteroids.

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