

Understanding the Concept of *VastiKarma* in Ayurveda

Udaya Ganesha B*

* S.J.S.A.C & Hospital, Chennai, T. N., India

Abstract

Vasti Karma is one of the major *Panchakarma* very commonly used in all kinds of *Vaticailments*. Acharyas have opined *Vasti karma* as half or complete line of treatment. *Vasti karma* is narrated after *Virechana karma* in the sequence of *Panchakarma*. Ayurveda has laid emphasis on prevention is better than cure. If one adopts himself in different *shodhana* modalities according to the natural variations of season there may not be occurrence of any pathology.

Keywords

Vasti Karma, Basti, Panchakarma, Shodhana, Virechna karma



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INTRODUCTION

Vatadosha among the three doshas will be controlled and balanced by means of *Vastikarma*¹. *Vasti karma*² is the major *Panchakarma* explained after *Virechana karma*. Location of *Vata* is in the *pakwashaya*, *vasti karma* administered will reach *pakvashaya*; it is below the *pittasthan* there by it is explained after *Virechana karma*. *Vatadosha* is the responsible factor for the movement of other two *doshas*. *Vata* is controlled by means of *Vastikarma*, other two *doshas* also can be controlled. *Vata* is the major culprit in causing diseases as there are 80 varieties of *Vatic* ailments may origin in our body. *Vastikarma* is capable of counteracting the *Vatadosha* there by brings homeostasis among the three *doshas*.

Definition of Vasti Karma:

Literally the word *Basti* or *Vasti* means Urinary Bladder. That which retains or collects urine. In the context of *Panchakarma*, *Vasti Karma* means enema therapy. *Vastidravya* (Enema material) was administered by animal urinary bladder in olden days, hence it has got the name *VastiorBasti karma*. Acharya Charaka³ defined *Vasti karma* as the therapy which while moving in the umbilical region, lumbar region, sides of chest and pelvic

region churns up the stool including all the other morbid matter located there and appropriately eliminates them with ease after nourishing the body. The word *Vasti* came because the medicine administered with bladder or the medicine will reach the bladder.

Types of Vasti Karma:

Broad classification of *Vasti karma* includes external and internal. Externally *Kati Vasti* (Oil is made to retain on Low back), *Janu Vasti* (Oil is made to retain on Knee), *Uro Vasti* (Oil is made to retain on Chest), *Shiro Vasti* (Oil is made to retain on Head), *Nabhi Vasti* (Oil is made to retain on Umbilicus), *Greeva Vasti* (Oil is made to retain on Neck) etc. Internal classification of *Vasti* basing on the medicine used include *Asthapana/Nirooha /Kashaya Vasti* (Decoction Enema) and *Snehavasti/Anuvasana Vasti/Taila Vasti* (Fat Enema). Even *Uttara Vasti* (through genitals) also comes under the internal mode of administration of *Vasti*. Here after different classification of *Vasti Karma* will be depicted.

Classification based on *Adhishtana* (Site of Application) includes *Pakwashayagata*, *Garbhashayagata*, *Mootrashayagata* and *Vranagata*.

Table01 Classification of *Basti*⁴ basing on the number of *Vastis* administered according to Charakacharya:

Type of Vasti	Anuvasana	Asthapana	Total
Yoga Vasti	05	03	08
Kala Vasti	10	06	16
Karma Vasti	18	12	30

Table02 Classification of *Basti* basing on the number of *Vastis* administered according to Kashyapa:

Type of Vasti	Anuvasana	Asthapana	Total
Yoga Vasti	5	3	08
Kala Vasti	12	3	15
Karma Vasti	24	6	30

Table03: Classification basing on *Karma* (Action)^{5,6}:

Sl No	Name of the Vasti	Action/Karma
1	Shodhana	Elimination of doshas
2	Lekhana	Scraping Medas
3	Snehana	Oleates the body
4	Brimhana	Nourishes the body
5	Utkleshana	Excitation of Dosha
6	Doshahara	Elimination of Doshas

Table04: *AnushangikaBheda* (Special Classification):

Sl No	Name of the Basti	Action/Function
1	ArdhamatrikaVasti	Improvesshukra and ojus
2	Ksheeravasti	Varna and Balaprada
3	MootraVasti	Lekhana karma
4	PicchaVasti	Raktasthambhana
5	RaktaVasti	Replace the lost rakta
6	Siddha Vasti	Increases bala and varna
7	Vaitaranavasti	In amavata and katigraha
8	YapanaVasti	Rejuvenation
9	YuktarathaVasti	During excess travel

Table05: Classification of *Vasti* based on the quantity^{7,8,9}:

Sl No	Name of theVasti	Quantity
1	DwadashaPrasritaNirooha	12 Prasrita
2	Prasritayogeeyavasti	4 to 10 Prasrita
3	PadaheenaVasti	1/4 th less than DwadashaPrasrita

Table06: Classification of *Sneha Vasti*¹⁰:

Sl No	Name of theVasti	Quantity
1	SnehaVasti	6 Pala
2	AnuvasanaVasti	Half of Snehavasti

3	MatraVasti	Half of Anuvasana
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Table07: Composition of *NiroohaVasti* and its quantity:

Sl No	Name of the VastiDravya	Quantity Acc to Charaka	Quantity Acc to Sushruta
1	Makshika(Honey)	4Pala	4Pala
2	Lavana(Rock Salt)	1Karsha	1Karsha
3	Sneha(Fat mateial)	4Pala	6Pala
4	Kalka(Paste of Drugs)	2Pala	2Pala
5	Kwatha(Decoction)	10 Pala	8Pala
6	AvapaDravya(Additives like Dhanyamla, Kanji, Gomootra,Mamsa Rasa etc)	4 Pala	4Pala
7	Total Quantity	24 Pala	24 Pala

Table08: *AsthapanaVastiMatra* according to Age¹¹:

Age	Quantity
1 year	Half prasrita
1 to 12 years	increase ½ Prasriti each year
12 th year	6 Prasrita
12 to 18 years	increase 1 Prasrita a year
18 th Year	12 Prasrita
18 to 70 years	12 Prasrita
Above 70 years	10 Prasrita

Table09: *AnuvasanaVastiMatra* according to Age:

Age	Quantity
3 years	3 Karsha
4 to 5 years	1 Pala
6 to 11 years	1Prasrita
12 to 15 years	2 Prasrita
Above 15 years	4 Prasrita

Table10: Complications of *Nirooha Vasti*¹²:

Sl No	Name of the Vyapat
1	Ayoga (Absence or inadequate action)
2	Atiyoga (Over action)
3	Klama(Fatigue)
4	Adhmana (Distention of Abdomen)
5	Hikka (Hiccup)
6	Hritprapti (Cardiac arrest)
7	Oordhwata (Upward movement)
8	Pravahika (Gripping Pain)
9	Shiroarti (Headache)
10	Angarti(Bodyache)
11	Parikartika (Cutting pain in anus)
12	Parisrava (Excessive discharge)

Table 11: Complications of *VastiNetra* (Enema Nozzle)¹³:

Sl No	Characters of VastiNetra	Complications
1	Hriswa (Smaller in size)	Aprapti (Enema not reaching the destination)
2	Deergha (Longer in size)	Atigati (Enema reaching far above)
3	Tanu (Thinner in shape)	Kshobha (Cause irritation)
4	Sthula (Thicker in shape)	Karshana (Bruising the rectal wall)
5	Jeerna (Worn out)	Kshanana (Causing injury to rectum)
6	ShithilaBandhana (Loosely fixed)	Srava (Leakage of enema fluid)
7	ParshwaChidra (Holes in the side)	GudaPeeda (Causing pain in the rectum)
8	Vakra (Curved)	Jihmagati (Tortuous passage of the fluid)

Table 12: Complications of *VastiPutaka* (Enema Bag)¹⁴:

Sl No	Characters of VastiPutaka	Complications
1	Vishama (Irregular in shape)	GatiVaishamya (irregular flow)
2	Mamsala (Fleshy)	Visratwa (Fleshy smell)
3	Chinna (Torn)	Srava (Leakage)
4	Sthula (Thicker in shape)	Dorghraha (Difficulty to handle)
5	Jaalika (Multiple pores)	Nisrava (Exudations of enema fluid)
6	Vatala (Presence of air bubbles)	Phenila (Frothiness of fluid)
7	Snigdha (Unctuous)	Chyuti (Slippery)
8	Klinna (Putrified)	Aharyatwa (Inability to hold)

Table 13: Defective techniques employed by the Physician¹⁵:

Sl No	Defective Techniques by the physician
1	Savata (Pushing enema with air)
2	Atidruta (Pushing rapidly)
3	Utkshipta (Injecting in upward direction)
4	Tiryak (Oblique insertion)
5	Kampita (Shaking while injecting enema)
6	Ullupta (Frequent pressing the enema bag)
7	Atiga (Excess insertion of the nozzle)
8	Bahyaga (Not pushing inside)
9	Manda (Compressing slowly)
10	Ativega (Compressing with force)

Table 14: Complications of *Sneha Vasti*¹⁶:

Sl No	Complications of SnehaVasti
1	VatavritaSneha (Occlusion by Vata)
2	PittavritaSneha (Occlusion by Pitta)
3	KaphavritaSneha (Occlusion by Kapha)
4	AnnvritaSneha (Occlusion by food)
5	PureeshavritaSneha (Occlusion by Faeces)
6	AbhuktaPraneeta (Administration in empty stomach)

DISCUSSION

Probable mode of action of Vasti Karma:

Vasti (Medicated enema) lodged in the colon, by its potency, draws morbid doshas located in the entire body right from the foot to head just as sun situated in the sky absorbs all the moisture in the earth. As a piece of cloth soaked in the water mixed with the powder of kusumbha (a vegetable dye) sucks up the pigments, similarly from the body in which both (nutrients and morbid matter) are liquified (because of oleation and fomentation therapy), only the morbid matter get eliminated by NiroohaVasti.

Administration of SnehaVasti (Fat enema) will conquer over the qualities of vata such as dryness, lightness, cold, rough, minuteness and unstable by respective opposite qualities of unctuous material (Snehadravya used for Vasti).

CONCLUSION

The disease which are of Shakha (peripheral tissues), Koshta (Alimentary tract), Marma (Vitals), Oordhwanga (Upper part of the body) or Sarvanga (whole body) will result by the aggravation of Vata. This aggravated vata can be controlled or pacified by means of Vasti karma. Hence it is also known as Ardha Chikitsa (Half line of treatment) or Sampoorna Chikitsa (Complete treatment).

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