Nasya – An Ayurvedic Therapeutic

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Abstract

Nasya is a kind of Panchkarma treatment for body cleansing used in Ayurvedic medicine. Administration of drugs by the route of nasal cavity is termed as nasya, nāvana, nasya karma are synonymous to nasya. The nose is the gateway into the head, the sinuses and deeper into the lungs. Different types of nasya come under two main categories, which are Shamana and Shodana. Shamana nasya helps to pacify an imbalance and is generally more calming and nourishing to nervous system. On the other hand, Shodana Nasya helps to remove the imbalanced excess from the body, therefore more detoxifying and clearing for the channels of the head. In present review article, we have tried to understand the mode of action i.e. pharmacodynamics of Nasya kama.

Keywords Nasya, Nasya kriya, Nasa, Gateway, Shiras, Olfactory nerve.

INTRODUCTION

Nasya or nasya karma is the therapeutic procedure used in Ayurveda to cure many local and systemic diseases. In this procedure, medicine or medicated oil is administered in a specific manner in the nose1. Ayurveda consideres two type of Indriyas, one Gyanendriyas and other one is Karmendriyas. Nasa is one among the five type of Gyanendriya. The function of Nasa is not only olfaction and respiration but also included as a route of drug administration. Nasa is described as a gateway for Shiras i.e. head. Ayurveda had given the prime importance to the Shiras, considering it as one among the three vital organ of body. Shiras is called as Uttamanga due to the centre of prana i.e. life and seat of indriyas2.

Hence drug given via the nose directly reaches to head.

TYPES OF NASYA

Acharya Charaka classified Nasya karma in five types3.-

Naavan- medicated oil is used

Avapidha- extract of medicine is used

Dhamapan- medicated fine powder is used with the help of a hollow tube

Dhoom- medicated fume is used

Pratimarsha- medicated oil is used with the help of finger in the form of drop

Acharya Sushruta also divide Nasyakama into five type4.-
**Nasya**- also called Tarpan or Vrahan nasya. Oily or lipid medicines are used.

**Shirovirechan**- pungent or astringent medicines are used to pull out vitiated doshas

**Pratimarsha**- medicated oil is used with the help of finger in the form of drop

**Avapidha**- extract of medicine is used

**Pradhmana**- medicated fine powder is used with the help of a hollow tube

**MODE OF ACTION**

According to Acharya Charaka, nasa is the gateway or portal of the Shiras. The medicine administered via nose in form of nasya, directly reaches to the brain and eliminate the vitiated doshas just as the ishika is taken out after removing the fibrous coating of munja (a type of grass) adherent to it⁵.

Acharya Vagbatta had told in Astanga Samgraha that Nasa being the entry of Shiras, the drug given via it reaches to Shrighatak marma and spread into the Murdha i.e. brain reaches at a junctional area of Netra(eye), Shrota(ear) and Kantha (throat) shiramukhas i.e. opening of vessels and remove the vitiated i.e. disease causing doshas present above supraclavicular region and expel them out from uttamaṅga⁶.

Acharya Sushruta, the great ancient surgeon, has written about the type and position of Shrighatak marma in brief. It is a sira marma present in the middle of confluence of siras supplying nourishment to the nose, ear, eyes and tongue fatal point inside the head⁷. If Nasya kama especially Shodana Nasya, is done in excess amount, it will lead to Mastulingh (C.S.F.) to flow out. This is the best example to proof Nasa as a portal to the Shiras⁸.

Nose is richly supplied by blood vessels and and nerve plexus of olfactory nerve along with ophthalmic and maxillary branch of trigeminal nerve. So drugs given via this route do function by direct diffusion (from high concentration to low concentration), by vascular system and by neurological stimulation or neurological pathway.

**Direct diffusion of drug**- Lipid soluble substances have great affinity for passive diffusion from the nasal mucosa. Therefore, medicated oil i.e. Snehik Nasya will get absorbed easily and elicit rapid action, according to their properties. The cilia of the olfactory cells and perhaps the body of olfactory cells contain relatively large quantities of lipid materials⁹. This concludes
that to get the desired action, the drugs for nasya karma should be lipid soluble.

**Vascular pathway** - The venous drainage of nose occurs in facial vein along with inferior ophthalmic vein. The facial vein has no valve it communicates freely with the intracranial circulation at its commencement and by the supraorbital veins, which are connected with the ophthalmic vein, a tributary of the deep facial vein, which communicates with pterygoid plexus with the cavernous venous sinus\(^\text{10}\). Therefore, drugs which absorb into nasal vasculature will also show the effect on intracranial organ along with meninges due to common venous drainage.

**Neurological pathway** - The olfactory nerve differs from the other cranial nerves in its close relation with the brain. It is connected with the higher centres of the brain, hypothalamus, epithalmus, limbic system along with parts of basal ganglia. Therefore, drugs administrated through nose will also stimulate higher centres of brain will directly influence their function, for example, control of hormone secretion, regulation of state of consciousness along with behavioural and emotional patterns. It also regulates the Autonomic nervous system which is the major regulator of visceral activities such as heart rate, movement of food through G.I.T. and contraction of bladder.

**CONCLUSION**

On the bases of above description, it is clear that nasya has both local and systemic effect. Systemic effect is due to the neurological, vascular and diffusion pathway. With the use of *nasya kriya*, endocrinal, neurological and vascular activities can be control, which can be used in prevention and cure of several diseases.
REFERENCES


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