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## A literary review on "Siravedha"

### Shekhar Mrigank and Gupta SJ

#### Abstract

Father of ancient surgery, Acharya Sushruta has mentioned various methods of Raktmokshana i.e. Shringa, Jalauka and Alabu etc. Siravedha is one of them. Full description of Siravedha has been given by Acharya Sushruta in Sushruta Samhita Sharira Sthana chapter 8. All the Siras carries all doshas in the body. There is no Sira in the body which carries either the Vayu, the Pitta or the Kapha therefore Siras should be considered as Sarvavaha. According to Ayurveda, disease is the result of prakupita doshas. Siravedha, letting out noxious blood from the body and it will cure the disease or otherwise it will make a clear pathway towards further treatment modalities. Siravedha is the independent procedure or treatment to cure many diseases like gradhasi (sciatica), gout, varicose pain, skin diseases etc. Siravedha is the half treatment of Shalya Tantra.

शिराव्यधिचिकित्साअर्ध शल्यतन्त्रे प्रकीर्तितः॥ सु. शा. 8/23

According to Acharya Sushruta there are 700 Siras in our body but basic Siras are mainly 40. Origin of 40 Siras is nabhi and divided into vatta, pitta, kapha and rakta. There are 98 Avedhya Siras in our body they should not be punctured, if punctured then it will cause the disability or even death.

**Keywords:** siravedha, avedhya sira, sarvavaha, raktmokshana, doshas, noxious blood

#### Introduction

The science of Ayurveda is well recognized system of medicine which is having unique specialty in Shalya Tantra. The concept of Ayurveda has evolved from more than 3000 years. There is a tradition of continuous updating in this Science in form of different Commentaries. Due to different turbulences in country and generation gap these concepts appear to be misinterpreted or less understood, further needs to be studied in a more elaborate way [1]. Acharya Sushruta has described Siravyadha (a type of Raktmokshana) as Ardha Chikitsa in Shalya Tantra [2].

Raktmokshana is one of five Panchakarma procedures or the 5 basic techniques of detoxification. It is made of two words - Rakta i.e. blood and Mokshana i.e. to leave and combining both these words makes the word Raktmokshana which means 'to let out blood' [1].

#### Raktamokshana (blood letting) [1].

Can be broadly classified into two categories:

- Ashastra (performed with the measures other than sharp instruments)
- Jalauka (leech)
- Alabu (bottle guard)
- Shringa (horn)
- Sashastra (performed with sharp instrument)
- Prachhana (scarification)
- Siravedha (venepuncture)

#### Indications [1].

- Five types of Vidradhi (abscess) except Sannipataj Vidradhi
- Kushtha (skin diseases)
- Ekdeshaj Shotha (edema at a single site)
- Shleepada (filariasis)

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- Poisoning
- Arbuda (tumor)
- Granthi (swelling)
- Updansha (chancroid)
- Stanaroga (diseases of breast)
- Gridhrasi (sciatica)
- Vatarakta (gout).

#### Contraindications<sup>[3]</sup>.

- Ksheena (lean and thin, malnourished)
- Pandu (Anaemia)
- Kasa, Swash, Shosha, Jwar
- Upwas, Pakshaghat, Pipasa, Murcha
- Garbhini (pregnant woman)
- Bala, Vriddha, Ruksha, Bhiru
- After Panch Karma

#### Avedhya Sira<sup>[4]</sup>.

Shakha (16) + Koshta (32) + Urdhwajatrugata (50) = 98 (shu. Sha.7)

#### Shakha

{Jaldhara shira (1), Urvi (2), Lohitaksh (1)} ×4 = 16

#### Koshta

Vitap (4), Katiktaran (4), Parshv sandhigat (2), Parshv (2), Vrishti (2), Romraaji (4), Hridya (2), Stanmool (4), Stanrohita (4), Aplaap (2), Apstambh (2)

#### Urdhwajatrugata

Marma sangyak (12), Krikatika (2), Vidur (2), Hanu (4), Rasvaha (2), Vagvaha (2), Nashika (4), Taalu (1), Apang (2), Shabdhvahi (2), Keshant (4), Avart (2), Sthapni (1), Shankh (2), Utkshap (2), Simant (5), Adhipati (1)

Even in those who are prohibited for it, when they are effected by poison or in an emergency, puncturing is not prohibited (can be done).

#### Procedure of Siravedha

##### Purva Karma<sup>[1, 5]</sup>.

- The patient on which Siravedha is to be performed, should be fed with liquid food or Yavagu.
- Snehana (oleation therapy) and Swedana (fomentation therapy) should be performed.
- Vaidhya should gather all the instruments and emergency medicine which may be needed during or after the procedure.
- The patient is made to seat (chair or stool) of the height of forearm in comfortable position facing the East direction.
- The site of puncture should be cleaned properly means there should not be any dust or dirt at the site.
- Tie a knot, not very tight but sufficient to raise the vein (4 Angula above the sight of puncturing).
- The patient is asked to keep his mouth filled with air; this is manipulating the puncturing of vein of the head which are not spreading inward.

##### Pradhana Karma<sup>[1, 5]</sup>.

- Vein is punctured with needle not so slow not so fast in one stroke and blood is allowed to flow.
- When proper puncturing has been done, blood flows out in a stream, for a period of One Muhurta and then its stops.
- Yellow liquid flows out first from flower of Kusumbha

(when crushed), similarly vitiated blood flows out first when veins are punctured.

#### Paschata Karma<sup>[6]</sup>.

After proper puncturing, patient should avoid the following till they obtain the strength or till month as viewed by some authorities; these are- krodha (anger), ayaas (exertion), maithoon (coitus), diwaswapna (day time sleeping), vaga (speaking greatly), byayama (physical exercise), yana (riding), adhyayana (study in high pitch), aasana (sitting long time), chankramana (walking too much), sheeta vata (cold breeze), aatapa (direct sunlight).

#### Samyaka viddha lakshana<sup>[1]</sup>.

- Laghava (feeling of lightness in body)
- Vedana shanti (relief in pain)
- Vyadhivegaparikshaya (relief in concerned disease)
- Manaprasada (feeling of wellness in mind)

#### Atiyoga Lakshana<sup>[1]</sup>.

Symptoms of excessive blood flow-

- Aandhya (blindness)
- Timira (blackouts in front of eyes)
- Akshepaka (seizures)
- Pakshaghata (paralysis)
- Trishna (thirst)
- Daha (burning sensation)
- Marana (death)

This is observed practically also that many times post trauma, the main cause of death is excessive blood loss.

#### Siravedhana Kaala<sup>[1]</sup>.

- Varsha Ritu (rainy season) - When sky is clear that is without clouds and rain.
- Grishma Ritu (summer season) - When the enviroment is cool that is in the morning hours.
- Hemanta Ritu (winter season) - Madhyahana (afternoon time)

#### Pramaana<sup>[7]</sup>.

In persons who are strong, who have great accumulation of Doshas and who are of suitable age (middle age), experts desire, One Prastha of blood be allowed to flow out after venous puncture.

\* The context of Vomiting, Purgation and blood-letting, One Prastha is thirteen and half Pala (540 ml) whereas in other context doses of drugs and medicines, it will be Sixteen Pala (640 ml)

1 Prastha - 13.5 Pala

According to Sharangadhara and Bhaw Prakash -

Uttama: madhyama: hina - 1: ½: ¼ Prastha

Don't remove complete noxious blood, remaining noxious blood should be treated by palliative therapies (ayurvedic formulation).

#### Sthana bhedanusaar siravedha<sup>[8]</sup>.

- In Mamsal Pradesh (muscular area), Puncturing should be of the size of the Yava (barley grains), in other areas it shall be half Yava or One Vrihi (rice) using a Brihimukha Shastra (trocar or puncturing needle).
- Veins on the bones should be punctured to the size of half Yava, using Kutharika Shastra (small surgical axe)

**Siravedha according to diseases<sup>[9]</sup>.**

- Pada daha (burning sensation in the sole), Pada harsha (tenderness/tingling in the soles), Chip (whitlow), Visarpa (erysipelas), Vata shonita (gout), Vata kantaka (sprain of the ankle), Vicharchika (a skin disease), Pada daari (fissures of the soles) - The vein situated 2 Angula (4 cm) above the Chipra Marma (present in between the big toe and its next toe) should be punctured using Vrihimukh Shastra (trocar/thick needle).
- Shleepada (filariasis) -
- Vatta dosha - Vein situated 4 Angula above the Gulfa sandhi (ankle joint) should be punctured
- Pitta dosha - Vein puncture should be done below the ankle.
- Kapha dosha - Should puncture the vein prominent in the big toe.
- Apchi (tumor of the neck) - 2 Angula below the Indravasti Marma.
- Kostruka shirsha (inflammation of the knee joint), Khanjta, Panguta (lameness), Vata vedna (pain) - Puncturing should be done in jagha (calf) 4 angula above the ankle joint.
- Gradhrasi (scitika), Visvachi (pain of arm) - Vein puncture should be done 4 Angule either above or below to Jaanu sandhi (calves)
- Galganda (tumor in the neck) - Vein present at the root (base) of the thigh should be punctured.
- Pliharoga (spleen)- Punctured should be done specially in the left arm, either at the inner side of the elbow joint in the center of the arm or in the area between the little and the ring finger.
- Yakrat daaludar (abdominal enlargement caused by disease of the liver), Kaphodara (abdominal enlargement caused by cough) - puncturing should be done specially in the right arm at the same places like Pliharoga, even in cough and dyspnoea also puncturing should be done in the same places.
- Pravahika (dysentery) and Shool (pain in the abdomen) - It should be done 2 Angula in front of the pelvic (symphysis pubic).
- Parivartika, Updansha Shukdosha (all diseases of the penis) and disease of the semen -it should be done in the Middle vein of the penis.
- Mutra vriddhi (hydrocele) - It should be done on the sides of the scrotum.
- Dakodara (ascitis) - It should be done below the umbilicus, 4 Angula at the left side of the raphae, the abdomen.
- Antarvidraddhi (internal abscess), Parshva shool (pain in the flanks) - It should be done between axilla and breast on the left flank.
- Bahushosa (wasting of the arms), Avabahuka (loss of movement of the arm) - It should be done between two shoulders.
- Tritiyaka jwara (tertian fever) - It should be done middle of the trik (upper back).
- Chaturthaka jwara (quartan fever) - It should be done below shoulder joint on any one side.
- Apasmaara (epilepsy) - It should be done on the vein situated in the middle of the joint of lower jaw (near to ear).
- Unmaada (insanity) - It should be done in the temple and border of hair (in the head), chest, outer angle of the eyes and forehead.
- Jihva and Dant roga (in disease of tongue and teeth) - It

should be done below the tongue (adhojihva).

- Taalu roga (palate) - It should be done at Taalu (palate).
- Karn roga (diseases of ear) and Karn shool (pain) - It should be done above the ears.
- Gandha agrahana (loss of smell perception) Nasa roga (diseases of hte nose) -It should be done at the tip of the nose.
- Timir roga (partial blindness), Akshipaaka (inflammation of eye) - It should be done either at Upanasika (base of the nose), forehead or outer angle of the eye.
- In the diseases of the head, Adhimantha (diseases of the eye) and such others it should be done at these places (base of the nose, forehead and outer angle of the eyes) itself.
- 1 Angula = 2 cm.

**Dusta siravedhan<sup>[10, 11]</sup>.****20 Types**

- Durviddha - Puncture made by a minute sharp instrument blood flow being invisible and having pain and swelling.
- Atividdha - Punctured which is more than the required measurement, blood flow either goes inside the body or flows out in large quantity.
- Kunchitta - Similar to Atividdha.
- Pichchita - Puncture made with blunt instrument, the vein attaining thickness.
- Kuttita - Is that in which puncturing is done often, not getting blood and vein hurt by the instrument.
- Aprasrita - Is that in which blood flow does not occur due to cold, fear or fainting.
- Atyudirna - Is that puncture made by a sharp and thick instrument.
- Anteviddha - Is that puncture which causes scanty flow of blood.
- Parisuska - Is that in which there is depletion (decrease) of blood in the vein but it is filled with air.
- Kunita - Is that in which quarter portion of the vein is puncture and little quantity of blood only flows out.
- Vepita - Is that in which binding is made at improper place, done with trembling hand, giving rise to tremors of the body and loss of consciousness.
- Anutthita viddha - similar to Vepita
- Shastrahta - Is that in which the vein is cut, producing copious flow and stoppage of functions of the body part.
- Tiryak viddha - When the instrument is pushed into the vein through its side and slightly.
- Apviddha- Is using the instrument without making a wound (not puncturing at all).
- Avyadhya - Is that puncture which is not done by the instrument
- Vidruta - Is puncturing done when the physician is unsteady (in his mind).
- Dhenuka - Is that in which the body part is hit greatly many time to raise the vein and flow of blood occurs again and again.
- Punah Punar Viddha - In which the vein is punctured many times because of using a small (minute) sharp instrument.
- Puncture done on ligaments, bones, veins, joints and fatal spots gives rise to pain, swelling, deformity or death.

**Conclusion**

Siravedha is capable of providing relief in many chronic life style disorders and hence should be practice consciously on more and more number of patients with the aim of

standardizing it as one of the treatment modalities.

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