

## CASE STUDY

# Evaluating Panchakarma's Role in Pakshaghata (Stroke) Recovery: A Case Report

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### ABSTRACT

*Pakshaghata, a Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi described in Ayurveda, closely correlates with hemiplegia or stroke in modern medicine. It is characterized by the loss of voluntary muscle function on one side of the body due to aggravated Vata Dosha, often resulting from Dhatukshaya (tissue depletion) and Margavarodha (obstruction of channels). A 54-year-old male with a history of hyperlipidemia and hypertension developed left-sided hemiplegia following a stroke and was treated at the Panchakarma IPD of Parul Institute of Ayurveda. Ayurvedic interventions included Panchakarma therapies such as Abhyanga, Swedana, Nasya with Karpooradi Taila, Basti, and internal medications. Alongside, physiotherapy was administered to enhance neuromuscular coordination and mobility. Significant improvement in muscle power was observed on the affected side post-treatment. The case illustrates how therapies targeting Vata Dosha, such as Nasya and Basti, play a vital role in managing neurological deficits. These interventions not only help pacify aggravated Vata but also promote Dhatu nourishment and functional recovery. This case supports the integration of classical Ayurvedic principles with physiotherapy for effective management of Pakshaghata, emphasizing the relevance of holistic approaches in treating neurological disorders like stroke.*

**Keywords:** Pakshaghata (Stroke), hyperlipidemia, Vata Dosha

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi is Pakshaghata, [1], where the Vata Dosha grants Vishoshana [2] to Sira and Snayu. Half of the body is represented by paksha. Aghata is the voluntary decrease of muscle function. Pakshaghata is Akarmanya Vata Vyadhi. According to Acharya Charaka, it is mostly caused by Margavarodhajanya Vata Prakopa and dhatukshaya, where Avarana of Vata Dosha by other Dhatu and Doshas happens, leading to Karma Kshaya of half of the body associated plus Gouravata.

Acharya Vagbhata explains that when the nerves and ligaments on one side of the body become dry or depleted (Sira Snayu Vishoshana), it can lead to symptoms such as joint dislocation (Sandi Bandha Vimokshana) [3], stiffness or contraction of the limbs, Vaak Sanga. If this progresses to numbness, it may result in complete immobility and ultimately, death.

Acharya Sushruta adds that when the condition is caused by Vata alone, it is difficult to treat (Krichra Sadhya) [4] but still manageable. However, when Vata is combined with other Doshas, the condition has a Sadhya. On the other hand, if Pakshaghata arises due to Dhatukshaya, it is deemed incurable. The treatment of Pakshaghata includes various therapies such as purgation (Virechana), medicated enemas (Basti), nasal therapies (Nasya), external applications, Mrudusamshodhana Chikitsa, Ksheeradhooma, and Shirodhara.

Stroke is the leading cause of neurological disability in adults and the third leading cause of death. [5]

It is in charge of 4.4 million fatalities globally. Stroke is more common in males than in women, and its prevalence rises with age.[6]

Acute disruption of blood flow to the brain tissue is referred to in medicine as a "stroke." Patients with hypertension are more likely to get spontaneous intracerebral bleeding. The major cause of cerebral bleeding is rupture of a variety of microaneurysms. The cerebellar cortex, Pons, and the basal ganglia are the common locations for hypertensive intracerebral haemorrhage. [7]

### CASE REPORT

A 54-year old male patient was admitted in Panchakarma IPD of the Parul Institute of Ayurveda (PIA) in Feb 2025 with UHID no.125003884. He was apparently healthy four years ago but missed his hypertension medication for 4 days. Suddenly, he fell off his bike and was admitted to an hospital, where he was diagnosed with stroke. He remained in the ICU for 6–7 days and was discharged once his vital signs stabilized and returned to normal physiological limits. The patient now presents with weakness in the left lower and upper limbs and is unable to walk without support.

K/C/O -HTN and HYPERLIPIDEMIA Since 5 yrs.

No any drug or food allergy.

O/E

Temp – 98.2° F

P – 76/min

BP - 110/80 mmHg

RS -B/L clear

CVS - S1S2 Normal

CNS - Conscious oriented

### Central Nervous System

Higher-level operations Being completely aware of time, place, and people is known as consciousness. intact memory, amiable behavior, Orientation: completely aware of the time, location, and people.

Table 1: An examination of motor function of upper limb and lower limbs

	Before treatment	After treatment
Muscle power	Rt upper limb:5	Rt upper limb:5
	Lt upper limb:0	Lt upper limb:2
	Rt upper limb:5	Rt upper limb:5
	Lt upper limb:0	Lt upper limb:2
Muscle tone	Rt upper limb: Normal	Rt upper limb: Normal
	Lt upper limb: Hypotonic	Lt upper limb: Hypotonic
	Rt upper limb: Normal	Rt upper limb: Normal
	Lt upper limb: Hypotonic	Lt upper limb: Hypotonic

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

- Panchkarma procedures:

Sarwanga Abhyanga (Oliation) with Mahanarayan taila followed by sarvang swedana (Fomentation).

Bastikarma(Enema) -Anuvasan-60ml, Dashmooladi niruh-350ml

Nasya (Nasal administration) with Karpooradi Taila

- Shaman Aushadhi:
- Tab. Ekanga Veera Rasa 1-0-1 after food
- Tab. Brihat Vata Chintamani with gold 0-1-0 after food
- Tab. Yogaraj Guggulu 1-0-1 after food
- Maharasanadi Kashaya 2tsf -0- 2tsf before food all the above medicines were given for the period of 2.5 months. Physiotherapy for 1hr

### DISCUSSION

Nasya is a powerful Vata-shamaka therapy, particularly effective in treating disorders of the Urdhva Jatrugata (regions above the clavicle). The Shira Pradesh (head region) is considered the primary seat of the Indriyas (sense organs), and the Nasa (nasal passage) is regarded as the gateway to this area. Medicines administered through the nasal route reach the head directly, facilitating both Dosha Nirharana (elimination of aggravated doshas) and Vata Shamana (pacification of Vata) simultaneously.

Nasya therapy using Karpooradi taila[8] stimulates the peripheral olfactory nerves, acting through chemoreceptors that detect aromatic particles. This stimulation activates the olfactory bulbs,

hypothalamus, and limbic system. Furthermore, it influences higher brain centers, including the anterior and posterior pituitary glands, and has a systemic effect on both the endocrine and nervous systems. The Nasya process helps eliminate vitiated Doshas from crucial areas of the body through the nasal passage, thereby addressing the root cause of disease. It also plays a preventive role by reducing the recurrence of symptoms. Karpooradi oil is composed primarily of camphor in a base of either coconut or sesame oil. Camphor is inherently known for its strong healing properties and emits a pleasant fragrance believed to promote positive energy in the environment.

Abhyanga (oil massage) involves the application of Sneha (medicated fats or oils) to the body in the direction of hair growth. This practice strengthens and stabilizes the body, making the Twak (skin) firm and healthy. The oil acts on aggravated Vata Dosha, enhancing the body's ability to endure physical exertion and fatigue—much like how oiling strengthens a pot, leather, or the axle of a cart. In conditions of pure Vata vitiation (without obstruction by other doshas), Snehana (oleation therapy) is the primary line of treatment. It plays a crucial role in pacifying Vata and nourishing the Dhatus, thereby promoting Pushti (nourishment) and Prasada (clarity or purity).[9] With consistent and prolonged application, the medicated oil penetrates deep into the tissues, allowing the therapeutic properties of the herbs to be absorbed through the skin and reach various Dhatus, helping to alleviate disorders associated with them.

Swedana (Fomentation): Swedana therapy induces perspiration and facilitates the removal of bodily toxins, as sweat (Sweda) is considered a form of Mala (waste product). It is closely associated with both Bhutagni and Dhatvagni (metabolic processes). The Ushna (hot) and Tikshna (penetrating) qualities of Swedana drugs enable them to penetrate the Srotas (microcirculatory channels), stimulating the sweat glands and promoting sweating. As these channels dilate, lighter and unctuous Doshas enter and are either directed towards the Kostha (gastrointestinal tract) or expelled externally through the skin's pores, resulting in Srotoshodhana (channel purification). The Doshas brought into the Kostha can be further eliminated through Vamana (emesis) or Virechana (purgation) therapies.[10]

Basti (Enema): When administered into the Pakwashaya (large intestine), Basti spreads its therapeutic potency (Veerya) throughout the body. It mobilizes and gathers accumulated Doshas and waste from regions such as the Nabhi (navel), Kati (waist), Parshva (sides), and Kukshi. Basti also provides internal oleation and facilitates the expulsion of Doshas along with Purisha. As described by Acharya Charaka, Basti is considered equivalent to nectar (Amrutopama) for patients suffering from depleted Majja, Shukra, and Ojas. It possesses nourishing, strengthening, and rejuvenating qualities (Balya, Brimhana, Pushtikara).[11]

Physiotherapy is a clinical discipline grounded in the science of movement, focused on restoring, maintaining, and enhancing an individual's physical strength, mobility, and overall functional health. In therapeutic settings, physiotherapy plays a vital role in increasing joint range of motion and improving muscle flexibility. Its primary goals include promoting joint stability, enhancing muscular elasticity, and facilitating the attainment of delayed developmental milestones. Additional advantages include better blood circulation to all four limbs and temporary pain relief. For individuals with spasticity, techniques such as Range of Motion (ROM) exercises, passive stretching, and peripheral joint mobilization are utilized to enhance mobility and alleviate stiffness. When integrated with Ayurvedic treatments, speech therapy, and other rehabilitative methods, physiotherapy becomes a key component in restoring functional ability and promoting greater independence.[12]

Ayurveda is a holistic medical science that focuses not only on alleviating symptoms but also on addressing the root cause of diseases, ultimately achieving Samprapti Vighatana (disruption of the disease process) and leading to complete healing. In the case of Pakshaghata, Vata Dosha is the primary factor responsible for the condition and must be targeted first in treatment. Vata vitiation (Vata Prakopa) can result from multiple factors, one of which is Dhatu Kshaya (tissue depletion). Vasti therapy, while primarily known for its Vata-pacifying effect, also provides nourishment to the Dhatus and helps balance any associated Pitta or Kapha disturbances, making it a comprehensive and multidimensional therapeutic approach.[13]

In Pakshaghata, the condition initially presents with muscle flaccidity, which may progress to muscle rigidity. Early intervention with localized Abhyanga (oil massage) and Swedana (fomentation) can prevent this progression. In chronic cases, muscle hypertrophy may develop, which can also be mitigated through regular Abhyanga, as it enhances local blood circulation. If the patient experiences pain in the affected area, Swedana offers effective pain relief by promoting relaxation and reducing stiffness.

Ekangveer Ras [14] is a herbo-mineral formulation widely used in Ayurveda for its powerful therapeutic properties. It contains bhasma, an ancient and traditional form of nanomedicine, considered one of the most effective treatment methods in Ayurvedic practice. This formulation is mainly prescribed for neurological conditions such as paralysis, sciatica, and facial palsy. Its composition includes potent herbal

ingredients like Chitrak, Amla, Bhingaraja, Dhatura, Kushta, Black Pepper, Pippali, Ginger, Trikatu, and Triphala, along with mineral-based components such as Vang Bhasma, Abhrak Bhasma, Lauh Bhasma, Shuddha Gandhak, Ras Sindoor, Tamra Bhasma, and Naga Bhasma. Together, these ingredients aid in enhancing motor function and restoring sensory responses.

Tablet Bruhat Vata Chintamani [15], a classical Ayurvedic formulation containing gold, is composed of ingredients such as Swarna Bhasma, Lauha Bhasma, Raupya Bhasma, Abhraka Bhasma, Kumari Swarasa, Abhraka Mukta, Pravala, and Rasa Sindura. Administered once daily with warm water (Ushna Jala), this formulation is described in Bhaisajya Ratnavali under Vataroga Adhikara as a potent Pittasrita Vatahara (alleviator of Vata disorders associated with Pitta) and Rasayana (rejuvenative). Clinically, it is used to manage chronic neurological conditions by balancing aggravated doshas, enhancing vitality, and promoting tissue regeneration.

Tablet Yogaraja Guggulu [16] contains Guggulu, Triphala, Ghrita, Trikatu are Ushna virya, Katu Vipaka, Laghu, Srotodushti hara, Deepaniya, Pachaniya, Marghavarodhahara helps in Pakshaghata.

Maharasnadi Kashaya [17] is an Ayurvedic herbal decoction formulated to help manage inflammatory and painful conditions, especially those involving the joints and muscles. Its main therapeutic action is to balance the Vata Dosha, which governs movement in the body and, when imbalanced, can cause stiffness and joint pain. The herbs in this formulation possess anti-inflammatory properties, help block pain signals, and improve blood circulation to the affected areas. This not only promotes healing and reduces swelling but also supports the repair and strengthening of joint and muscle tissues.

Mahanarayan taila composed of Bilwa, Ashwagandha, Brihatimoola, Gokshura, Shyonaka etc. Mahanarayantaila is used for Abhyang, Paana and Basti in all Vatavyadhi. This Taila properties like Tridosahara, Balya, Vrushya, Rasayana, Brimhana which helps in management of Pakshaghata.

Niruha Basti (Decoction-based Enema): Dashamula Niruha Basti includes components like Madhu, Yogavahi, and substances capable of penetrating fine body channels. These elements support its function as a biological catalyst. Saindhava Lavana (rock salt) contributes with its lightness and ability to balance all three doshas. The interaction of dry and light qualities of Vata with the unctuous properties of Sneha Dravya results in pacification of Vata. The Kalka comprising Triphala and Bala enhances the formulation's efficacy. This type of Basti assists in breaking down bodily waste, regulating doshas, and facilitating their elimination through the decoction (Kwath).[18]

Anuvasana or Sneha Basti (Oil-based Enema): Anuvasana Basti using oils like Sahacharadi Taila, is retained in the body for a specific duration to nourish and protect the intestinal lining (Pureeshadhara Kala). The Guru and Snigdha properties of Bala Taila counteract Laghu and Ruksha qualities of aggravated Vata, leading to its pacification. According to Charaka, the term "Sneham Pachati Pavakah" indicates that the oil is metabolized effectively, allowing the infused substances to bring about the desired therapeutic outcomes.[14]

## CONCLUSION

Pakshaghata is a Vata Pradhana disorder characterized by the loss of function in one half of the body, which can be correlated with hemiplegia of various etiologies. In the present case, it resembles Clumsy Hand Syndrome due to the similarity in clinical presentation. Since Vata disorders predominantly affect the Urdhva Jatrugata region (above the clavicle), Basti and Nasya were employed as the primary treatment modalities. Additionally, Sthanik Abhyanga and Swedana provided significant symptomatic relief. Following the complete course of treatment, the patient achieved significant recovery. This case highlights the effectiveness of Panchakarma procedures in the management of Pakshaghata Chikitsa and should be given vigorously in the patients suffering from stroke and similar ailments.

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