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# Insight on *Raksha Karma* with Sterilization

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda the science of healthy living encompasses of various branches of therapeutic aspect. Shalyatantra is one of them which involves surgical and parasurgical interventions. For the success of surgical line of treatment Acharya Sushruta has advised *Raksha Karma* which is equivalent term for Sterilization. Acharyas mentioned various *Dhoopana* with *Rakshoghna Dravyas* for the sterilization of OT rooms, surgical ward, Neonatal ward and *Labour* ward to protect from *Atura* macro and microorganisms and for instruments sterilization by *Agni* (Heat), *Kahaya* (Decoction) and *Atapa* (Sunlight) etc. Nowadays Sterilization procedure is done with the same basic principles of Ayurveda i.e. Heat, Chemicals or Radiation.

**Key words:** Ayurveda, Sterilization, Rakshakarma

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science which mentioned two principal treatment modalities which are *Aushadhis* and *Shashtrakarma*. *Rakshakarma* is equivalent term for sterilization; there are scattered references in Ayurvedic classical texts in that Acharya Sushruta was the one who has explained *Rakshavidhana* which can be correlated with Sterilization.<sup>[1]</sup>

In Sushruta Samhita various *Yantras* and *Shastras* has been described by Acharya Sushruta.<sup>[2]</sup> For the success of surgery they have explained various method of sterilization like *Dhoopana* with

*Rakshoghna Dravyas* such as *Guggulu* (Comiphora mukkul), *Agru* (Aquilaria agollocha), *Sarjarasa* (Vateria indica), *Vacha* (Acorus calamus), *Sarshapa* (Brassica nigera), *Lavana*, *Nimba* (Azardirecta indica) mix in cow ghee, *Kashaya*, *Parisheka*, *Agnitapta*, *Atapa* etc *Rae* also used.<sup>[3,4]</sup>

Acharya Sushruta has explained *Rakshakarma* in *Shashti Upakrama* i.e., 60 *Upakrama*. Acharya Sushruta explained *Dhoopana*, *Mantras*, *Yamas* and *Niyamas* for *Vranita*. To protect from *Nishacharis Saptoupakramas* has been explained in the treatment of *Vranashotha* such as *Shodhana* followed by *Ropana Karma*. There will be no *Ropana* success without *Shodhana* karma so sterilization is important in wound healing.<sup>[5]</sup> Acharya *Kashyapa* has explained about *Dhoopa Kalpa* as a chapter. He has mentioned various formulation of *Dhoopana* of *Vastra*, *Kumaragara* etc.<sup>[6]</sup> In Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana, Acharya Charaka has given explanation about *Dhoopana Karma* for the prevention of *Vrana*, various *Dhoopana Dravyas* has mentioned like *Agru*, *Guggulu*, *Chandana* etc.<sup>[7]</sup>

Sterilization is the process of freeing an article, a surface or a medium of all microorganisms both in vegetative and in spores states by removing or killing

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them. For the success of any surgical treatment Sterilization is of prime importance.<sup>[8]</sup> There are millions of microorganisms around us in environment, on clothes etc. The dead cells fallen from the surface of the body carries thousands of such organisms. These organisms are harmful and pathogenic especially on wounds, incision, scars and they end up in complications.<sup>[9]</sup> Sterilization can be done by (A) Physical method (dry heat, moist heat). Autoclaving – most common method used for surgical sterilization, it is done by steam under pressure. In this procedure water boils and its vapour pressure equals with surrounding atmosphere. When pressure increases inside a close vessel the temperature of water also increases and saturated steam has better penetrating power. Uses: For the surgical instrument like syringe, needles, linen suture material, gowns, swab, dressing material and gloves. Radiation method (Ionizing and Non ionizing method) (B) Chemical method: Gas sterilization – Ethyleneoxide, formaldehyde, betapropiolactone etc. all these gases are used to fumigate OT, wards, blankets, pillows. These gases are irritant to eyes. (C) Mechanical method here filtration is used for sterilization. The microorganisms are physically removed by absorption on the filter medium or by mechanisms. OT sterilization consists 4 zones: outer zone, restricted zone or clean zone, aseptic zone, Disposal zone. There are different methods and machines for sterilization of OT to make it infection free by fumigation, ultraviolet rays, radiations etc. Importance of Sterilization: Prevents the growth of diseases, Prevents the spread of diseases, Prevents double surgeries.

## DISCUSSION

For the success of any surgical treatment, sterilization is of prime importance. Lack of sterilization leads to complications like infection, impaired wound healing etc. Acharya Sushruta explained *Rakshakarma* under the heading of *Shashti Upakrama* to protect *Atura* from *Nishacharis*. In Sushruta Samhita, methods of sterilization (*Raksha Karma*) have been mentioned sporadically under various diseases and to maintain health. They have explained various methods of

sterilization like: *Dhoopana*, *Parisheka*, *Agnitaptha* and Mantra etc. Acharyas mentioned *Dhoopana Karma* for *Vranitagara*, *Sutikagara*, *Kumaragara* etc. with *Rakshoghana Dravyas*.

## CONCLUSION

Sterilization has major share in Success of surgical management. In olden days *Raksha Karma* concept was explained by our Acharyas which is now said as sterilization in modern science. Standardization of Ayurvedic sterilizing agents as well as methods needs further research. Role of *Rakshaartha Mantras*, *Homa* needs further research.

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