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Maintenance of Ocular Health by Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

There are five sense organs (*Gyanendriya*) in *Ayurveda* i.e., Eye, Ear, Nose, Tongue and Skin among them prime importance is given to eye. It says "*Sarvendriyaanam Nayanam Pradhanam*". A faulty lifestyle has resulted in many eye disorders like Dry eye, Computer vision syndrome, Age related macular degeneration, Cataract, Diabetic retinopathy and many more which adversely effects quality of life. To avoid these lifestyle disorders, prevention of eye disorders and preservation of ocular health has become essential because good vision is necessary for social and intellectual development of humans. But unlikely the preventive aspects of eye health and diseases related to eye has not been given due importance in our day-to-day life. For preventing these eye disorders and for maintaining eye health much more has been described in *Ayurvedic* texts in the form of *Dincharya* (Daily regimen), *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta*, *Swasthavritta* and *Chakshyusya Rasayana*. Many tested procedures like *Anjana* (Collyrium), *Netraprakshalana* (Eye wash), *Snana* (Bath), *Padabhyanga* (Foot massage with oil) are highly effective daily procedures for the prevention of eye disorders and maintenance of good eye health. Various *Yogasana*, *Pranayama*, *Neti* and *Trataka* are also considered beneficial for the eye health. The aim of this article is to spread awareness among society about the maintenance of eye health and prevention of eye disorders.

Key words: Preventive ophthalmology, Ayurveda, Lifestyle eye disorders, Eye care

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the ancient system of medicines which focus not only in cure of the disease but also prevent the humanity from physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual miseries. In all the five sense organs eyes are given prime importance because vision is crucial for social and intellectual development of the person. Ayurvedic science offers many effective techniques for

maintaining good visual health. These *Ayurvedic* approaches can be easily practiced in day-to-day life to prevent lifestyle related eye disorders. *Shalaky Tantra* is one of the eight main branches of *Astanga Ayurveda*, devoted to eye care and management of eye disorders. According to our ancient text, three factors being responsible for the causation of all types of eye disease-

1. Incompatible contact of eye with visual objects (*Asatmyendriyarthasamyoga*)
2. Misuse of intellect (*Pragyaparadha*)
3. Abnormal cycles of seasons (*Rituviparyaya*)

Person should avoid these three factors and make constant efforts to protect the eyesight. Eye is a source of direct knowledge and it is a guide to avoid wrong deeds. It is proved that about 80% of the knowledge we gain is through the eye. The existence of a person in the universe is directly influence by the eye. A faulty lifestyle has been linked to many human diseases like Diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disorders and kidney

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disorders. Vision is also affected as consequences of faulty lifestyle. Clinical conditions which may occur due to faulty lifestyle are Age Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD), Diabetic/Hypertensive Retinopathy, Computer Vision Syndrome and many more.^[1] For preventing these eye disorders and maintaining ocular health *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) and specific therapies like *Kriya Kalpa* are described in ancient text. Eye diseases can be prevented and good vision can be restored by following these methods in day-to-day life like *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta* and *Swasthavritta*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A comprehensive study was done on the illustrate related to various preventive eye care in *Ayurveda*. Descriptions were gathered from different *Ayurvedic Samhitas* and late research papers. The findings were analyzed in perspective of present-day phrasing and research to comprehend integrative methodologies in eye care.

DISCUSSION

The Ayurveda has two objectives “*Swasthasya Swaasthyarakshnam Aaturasya Vikara Prashamanam Cha*” to maintain the positive health in the individuals who are healthy and to treat the persons who are suffering from disease. Ayurveda has given more importance on prevention of disease.

Kriya Kalpa-Tarpana - It is the procedure in which the medicated ghee is kept in eye for a specific time by special arrangement. It gives nourishment to the eyes and cures *Vataja* and *Pittaja Netra Rogas*. *Tarpan* is used in the management of progressive refractive errors, computer vision syndrome (CVS), tiredness of eyes and retinal disorders.

Putapaka - *Putapaka* procedure is same as *Tarpana* procedure but the medicine used is extracted from herbs by *Putapaka* procedure. Usually, it is carried after *Tarpana*. Indication for rejuvenation of eyes.

Seka - In this procedure thin stream of medicine is poured (according to *Doshas*) on closed eye

continuously from four inches height for a stipulated time. It is indicated in acute and severe affections of the eye.

Aschyotana - The medicated drops (*Ghritha Manda*) are put in open eye from the height of two inches. It is indicated as first line treatment in all ocular inflammatory conditions.

Anjana - *Anjana* is a method in which the medicine is applied in muco-cutaneous junction (eyelid). There are two types of *Anjana* described, first is *Sauviranjana* which is applied on daily basis in day time, second is *Rasanjana* which is applied at 5th and 8th day, at night time to evacuation of excess *Kapha Dosha* because the eye is *Pitta* predominant in nature and should be protected from *Kapha Dosha*. *Acharya Charaka* coated the gold and other metal ornaments are cleaned by means of oil, cloths and hair brush similarly if we apply *Anjana* regular basis clean the eye which make the eye shine like the bright moon in the clear sky.^[2] Regular practice of *Srotoanjana* is found to be not only useful for good appearance of eyes but also removes burning sensation, itching, dirt, moistness and pain of eyes.

Dinacharya - Ayurveda describes some daily regimen modalities for prevention and promotion of eye health and management of eye disorders.

Netraprakshalana (Eye wash) - Washing face and eyes with decoction of bark of *Kshiri Vraksha* or decoction of *Lodhra (Symplocos racemosa)*, with *Amalaki (Emblia officinalis)* decoction or with cold water helps in maintaining the constant clear vision.^[3]

Ushajalapana (Water intake in early morning & Nasajalapana) - Daily intake of water in early morning either mouth or through nose purify the whole GIT and ensure good vision.^[4]

Snana (Bathing) - Bathing with cold water from the head always promotes eye health but bathing with warm water on head always makes unhealthy effect on eyes. Hot water is preferably for body bath and cold water for head bath.^[5]

Padaprakshalan - Washing of feet with clean water is good for clear vision.^[6]

Padabhyanga - Regular application of oil over soles is good for improving the vision. Hence, every person should practice regularly massage over soles with oil, washing them well & should use foot wears for preventive and promotive health care of eye problems.

Padatra Dharan - wearing of footwear is good for eye sight.^[7] Taking care of foot is also essential as foot is connected to the eye.^[8]

Nasya - In this procedure medicines or medicated oil are applied through the nostril is called *Nasya*. Nose is a natural gateway to brain, due to anatomical connection the medicine applied through the nasal cavity reaches at the "Sringatak Marma" which is the seat of all the centers of eye, ear, nose and tongue.^[9] *Pratimarsha Nasya* is indicated in daily basis because of devoid of any complication and administered at any time. The finger should be dipped in oil and drop should be instilled into the nostril. Practices of *Nasya* in proper time mentioned in the text prevent the disease of eye, nose and ear.^[10]

Use of umbrella - Use of umbrella protects the eyes from sun shine, heat, dust and smoke and it is good for eye (*Chakshushya*).^[11]

Dhoompana - Inhalation of smoke and exhalation is known as *Dhoompana*. *Dhoompana* has been instructed to be taken by both mouth and nostril. If it is taken out through nostril, then it is harmful for eye.^[12] *Acharya Charak* described three types of *Dhoompana Prayogika*, *Snahik* and *Virechnik*. *Prayogika Dhoompana* is advised to use daily and it prevents disorders of head & neck region which are caused by *Vata* & *Kapha*. Daily practices of *Prayogika Dhoompana* cure eye ache and discharge of eye.^[13]

Abhyanga - Daily practices of *Abhyanga* is good for improving of vision. *Abhyanga* should be done specially to head, ear and feet.^[14]

Shiroabhyanga - It is the finest therapy for *Vata Dosha* because it involves applying an oily mixture on the head. *Abhyanga* serves as *Dristiprasadana*, nourishing all sense organs.^[15] *Pranavayu* is the *Vata* dosha confined to the eye, and *Pranavayu's* seat is in the head (*Murdha*). When oil is applied to the head, it has a

therapeutic effect that reaches all the way to the brain. The optic nerve is a nerve that connects the eyes to brain. The straight extension of the brain stem, which ends in Retina. As a consequence of the oil being applied to the skull, especially in the *Moordha* area, works on the *Dristipatalam*. As a result, every day *Abhyanga* with oils according to a person's "Prakriti" can be a crucial preventive measure.^[16]

Mukhalepa - *Mukhalepa* is the application of medications to the face in the form of a poultice. Three types of *Mukhalepa* are mentioned in our *Ayurvedic* text *Doshahara*, *Vishahara*, and *Varnakara*. The facial artery, facial nerve, and other face structures. The trigeminal nerve runs over the cheek, with branches leading to the eyes. As a result the medicinal. The eye is also affected by the *Mukhalepa's* value.^[17]

Gandoosha and Kawal - Both of these methods are used to gargle medicinal decoctions. The only difference is in the dosage of the medicine and the techniques used to administer it. The mouth of *Gandusha* is completely filled with therapeutic decoctions. There isn't enough room to rinse your mouth. The pharmaceutical decoction is only retained in the mouth for a short period of time before being spit out.

Vegadharana (Suppression of Natural Urges) - In the context of etiological factors for eye disorders, *Acharya Sushruta* has listed *Vegvinigrahat* (suppression of natural urges), specifically *Baspagrahat* (suppression of tears), while *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned *Nidra* (sleep) and *Baspa Vega* (Suppression of tear urge) as etiological factors. People in the current period have a tendency to repress natural urges for a variety of reasons, including a busy work schedule, frequent travel, and a variety of others factors.

Beneficial (Pathya) food items for eye - According to *Ayurveda*, certain foods are beneficial for the eyes as described in classics *Chakshushya* foods and medicines that can be used on a regular basis. *Lohitasali* (Red rice), *Yava* (Barley), *Mudga* (Green gram), *Varyakulatha* (*Dolichos biflorus*), *Jeevanti* (*Leptadenia reticulata*), *Punernava* (*Boerhavia procumbens*), *Patola* (*Trichosanthes dioeca*), *Kumari* (Aloe vera), *Chandan*,

Karpura, Draksha (Diamond). Old grains such as barley (*Yava*), wheat (*Godhuma*), brown rice (*Shali* & *Shashtika*), kodo millet (*Kodrava*), and green gram (*Mugdha*) with ghee are helpful for eye sight, according to *Ashtanga Hridaya*. *Vagbhata* also mentions wild animal meat, vegetables, pomegranate, sugar, *Saindhava* (rock salt), plums (*Draksha*), and *Rai* water as *Chakshushya*. According to *Bhavaprakasha*, brown rice (*Shali*), green gram (*Mugdha*), barley (*Yava*), flesh of wild animals, especially birds, amaranth varieties (*Vatsuka, Tanduliyaka*), snake gourd (*Patola*), spiny gourd (*Karkatoka*), bitter gourd (*Karavella*), flat beans (*Nishpava*), and *Vartaka's* flesh are the food substances that should be consumed on. All of the foods stated above should be cooked in ghee, according to *Bhavamishra*. All sweet and bitter-tasting foods can be utilized as *Chakshushya Dravaya*. *Yogaratakara* also mentioned both sweet and bitter-tasting foods are good for the eyes

Apathya Ahara for Healthy Eye - *Amla Rasa* (sour), *Lavana* (salt), *Kshara* (alkali), *Katu Rasatmak Ahara*, *Masha* (horse gram), *Kalingaka Patrasaka*, *Phanita*, *Tambula* (Piper betel).

Rasayana Therapy and Eye Health - All *Materia Medica* and therapy procedures that generate *Doshic* balance (somatic and psychological) are equally applicable to the treatment of the eye, including a set of *Materia Medica* termed "*Chakshushya Rasayana*" by our ancient sages. The *Chakshushya* class of drugs has a specific effect on the eye and visual system. *Triphala* is one such combination that can repair *Dosha* imbalances and restore normalcy, as well as having a specific vision-promoting effect.

Eye Exercises - Asthenopic symptom including such as headache, eye aches, and heaviness in the eyes, disorders of the head and other visual structures can be relieved with eye exercises. There are several eye activities that are recommended, such as nine gaze exercise, convergence and divergence exercise, daily early morning sunbath (about for 5 minutes), coming to shade and rinsing the eyes with a diluted solution of *Triphala Kashaya* using eye cups and palming, and so on.

Asanas / Yogic Kriyas - Certain *Yogasanas*, such as 1. *Matasyasana*, can be practiced on a regular basis to maintain ocular health and function. *Sarvangasana* is the second *Asana*. *Surya Namaskar* is the third *Yoga Asana*. *Shavasana* is the fourth pose. *Trataka* (sit in a lotus position and focus your gaze on a small object for as long as possible without blinking) and so on. *Neti Kriya* is the sixth step in the *Yogasana's*.

CONCLUSION

Faulty lifestyle exposures have been proven to be closely linked to eye illnesses. Their causes are the outcome of metabolic alterations driven by growth and ageing processes. Regular and proper eye exercise, Yoga practice, following *Dincharya* and *Ritucharya*, *Anjana*, *Nasya*, healthy food, and other preventive methods described in the literature, as well as certain positive lifestyle modifications, all aid in the prevention of many eye disorders. *Pathya-Apathya* in relation to ocular health play a critical part in protecting the eyes against disease.

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