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Scope of Ayurvedic Nasal Instillation Therapy (*Nasya Karma*) in Cosmetology: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Cosmetics has become an important & influential part of human's daily life in today's world due to one's tendency for self-care & regard as it boost their confidence and self-esteem. The increase in daily use of these various cosmetics has also garnered a lot of increased demand in pharmaceutical industry; resulting into various harmful & chemical drug practices for monetary gain also leading to lots of side effects of such cosmetics on human skin. The beauty ailments that commonly affect people are hair fall, greying of hairs, dandruff, acne, melasma, minor skin and oral disorders. These problems are not only difficult to treat but also requires a lot of expenses too. *Ayurveda* has mentioned various methods to tackle these problems as *Ayurvedic scholars* has put heavy weightage on importance of beauty; external as well as internal in both male and female and has described treatments for these ailments in ancient texts such as *Nasya Karma* [Ayurvedic Nasal Instillation Therapy]. *Nasya* is one of famous *Panchakarma* procedure used for management of above mention cosmetic ailments. It is a procedure in which herbal drug [oil/decoction/extract/powder] is instilled through nasal route and is highly appreciated for its therapeutic value in diseases related to *Urdhava-Jatrugata* [above clavicle region]. In this article, we have discussed various types and probable action of *Nasya Karma* [Ayurvedic Nasal Instillation Therapy] in these disorders and how this single *Ayurvedic* procedure can be a one stop solution for multiple beauty ailment and can be helpful in reaching the goal of enhancement of beauty with assurance of safety and prevention from any harmful effect.

Key words: *Nasal Instillation Therapy, Nasya, Cosmetics, Ayurved, Urdhava-Jatrugata Roga, Panchakarma*

INTRODUCTION

Cosmetology is the study and application of various beauty treatments and has been described as a science related to alteration of one's appearance & beauty modification. Various substances / preparations / procedures like hairstyling, manicure-pedicures, skin cares & cosmetics are used to help in improve the

quality of skin, hairs, nails, teeth etc to change the appearance and enhance the beauty. Use of cosmetics not only treat cosmetic problems and enhance beauty but it also boosts one's self-esteem & confidence by making them feel good and confident about themselves which also improve their social interaction. Currently it is one of the most famous career options in USA with 19% of average yearly growth. But with increased popularity also comes the repercussions of this career i.e., side effects of various cosmetics procedures. Many salon products like hair colouring, keratins, relaxers, nail treatments used for cosmetic purpose contains various harmful chemicals like dibutyl phthalate, formaldehyde, lye, ammonia, coal tar leading to increased incidents of skin allergies and dermatitis. Regular use of Toxic trio [toluene, dibutyl phthalate, formaldehyde], a chemical composition used in various nail paints and polishes, nail removers and hair dyes has been proven to cause various health hazards in the person.^[1]

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Various harmful effects of these chemicals lead to the need of a safe alternative which can not only treat the various cosmetic problems but also not create any harmful or adverse effect on skin and body. Here *Ayurveda* comes as a safe option as it not only has various treatment for same but also has been proven to have near to no side effect on the body and health. In *Ayurveda*, *Su-Mukha*, *Su-Bhaga*, *Su-Darsana*^[2] are the terms described in texts to describe beauty and is also related to types of *Prakruti-Sara-Samahana* [physical build & appearance] etc. *Dincharya*^[3] [daily regimen] and *Ritucharya*^[4] [seasonal regimen] are concept of daily activities & procedures to enhance internal and external well-being of person indicating the importance of cosmetics in that time period. Various *Ayurvedic* scholars has also described the concept of specific diet regimen i.e. *Pathya-Apathya* [proper diet regimen] as an important factor for wellbeing of body. *Panchakarma* procedures like *Snehana* [olation therapy], *Swedana* [sudation therapy], *Basti* [medicated enema], *Nasya* [nasal instillation therapy], *Lepa* [topical application of herbal drugs] etc are also described in various ayurvedic texts to treat various beauty related ailments and enhance beauty. *Rasayana*^[5] [rejuvenation therapy] concept is one the most important concept of *Ayurveda* which focuses on the rejuvenation and retention of young age and health and has also described the importance of beauty.^[6]

Nasya Karma [Ayurvedic Nasal Instillation Therapy] is a procedure in which there is administration of different types of medicines and medicated oils are done through nasal passage. The derivation of *Nasya* is from word "*Nasa*" which means nose and structures related to nose. *Nasya Karma* is indicated in *Urdhwa-Jatrugata* disorders [disorders related to above clavicle] and also cures various ailments related to skin, hair and mouth including many cosmetic/beauty ailments like hair fall, greying of hairs, dandruff, acne, melasma, minor skin disorders and oral disorders which have been described as *Khalitya*, *Palitya*, *Darunaka*, *Yuvanpidika/Mukhadushika*, *Vyanga*, *Twakagata Kshudra-Roga* and *Mukha-Rogas* respectively in ayurvedic texts and are also indication

of *Nasya Karma* procedure^[7] too. Ayurvedic scholar *Acharya Vagabhatta* has described the importance of *Nasya Karma* with term "*Nasa Hi Shiraso Dwaram*" which means nose is the gateway to brain which sums up to that the medicine administered through the nasal cavity enters the *Shira* i.e. head and decreases the *vitiated doshas* [a factor described in *ayurveda* responsible for the disease cause].

AIM

To study scope and its probable mode of action of *Nasya Karma* in various cosmetic ailments.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The literary research data for this article was collected through various *Ayurvedic* classical texts, *Samhitas*, commentaries, published books and journals. Online research was done through help of Google Scholar, Research Gate, PubMed, online journals related to Cosmetology and *Nasya Karma*.

Nasya Karma

The term *Nasya* has been derived from word *Nasa Dhatu* which has an inherent means sense of motion described as *Nasa Gatayu*. It is one of panchakarma procedure in which administration of herbal drugs in various form is done through nasal route. *Nasya Karma* has been mentioned as many terms like *Shiro-Virechana*, *Murdha-Virechana*, *Nasta-Karma*, *Navana-Karma* in various ancient texts by different Ayurvedic scholars. This procedure is used in various diseases to remove the morbid doshas from *Shira* [head] which is the causation of the pathogenesis of the disease in one.

Classification of Nasya Karma

Nasya karma has been classified into different types by various *Acharyas* depending upon the drug material, action and source etc. The types of *Nasya Karma* have been described in the table below^[8-12]

Table 1: Classification of Nasya Karma according to various Acharyas

On the basis of Aasharya Bheda:	Phala, Patra, Moola, Kanda, Pushpa, Niriyasa, Twaka.
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On the basis of Karma Bheda:	
Name of the Acharya	Classification & Description of Nasya Types
Charaka	<p><i>Navana</i>: A <i>Nasya</i> type in which medicated oils or ghee are used as instillation drug.</p> <p><i>Avapeeda</i>: <i>Nasya</i> type in which extracts of various herbal drugs are used.</p> <p><i>Dhmapana</i>: In this type, medicated herbal drugs in form of powder are blown into nostrils by help of a bilateral pipe.</p> <p><i>Dhumapana</i>: In this type, smoke of medicated herbs is inhaled and exhaled to remove morbid <i>Doshas</i> [<i>Kapha</i>].</p> <p><i>Pratimarsha</i>: It is a <i>Nasya</i> type in which lower quantity of medicated oil is used so it can be used by person on daily basis.</p>
Susuruta	<p><i>Snehana</i> - These <i>Nasya</i> are divided on the basis of <i>Nasya</i> drug dosage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Marsha</i>: Proper doses of <i>Nasya</i> drug is given as: 10 <i>Bindu</i> in optical <i>Shudhi</i>, 8 <i>Bindu</i> in average <i>Shudhi</i> and 6 <i>Bindu</i> in suboptimal <i>Shudhi</i>. ▪ <i>Pratimarsha</i>: In this, lower quantity of medicated oil is used i.e., 2 <i>Bindu</i> only on daily basis. <p><i>Shirovirechana</i> - In this type, various drugs are used to remove the vitiated <i>Kapha Dosha</i> from the head in diseases related to above clavicle region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Avapeeda</i>: <i>Nasya</i> type in which extracts of various herbal drugs are used. ▪ <i>Pradhamana</i>: In this type, medicated herbal drugs in form of powder are blown into nostrils by help of a bilateral pipe. ▪ <i>Shiro-virechana</i>: In this type, various drugs are used to remove the vitiated <i>kapha dosha</i> from the head in diseases related to above clavicle region.
Vagabhatta	<p><i>Virechana</i>: It is a type of <i>Shodhana Nasya</i> in which extract/decoction of drugs with purgatory property are used.</p>

	<p><i>Brihamana</i>: It is a type of <i>Nasya</i> used for the nourishing [<i>Brihamana</i>] purpose.</p> <p><i>Shamana</i>: This <i>Nasya</i> is used for palliative purpose as <i>Doshas</i> are not much vitiated and drugs used doesn't have elimination property.</p>
<i>Kashyapa</i>	<p><i>Brihamana</i>: It is a type of <i>Nasya</i> used for the nourishing [<i>Brihamana</i>] purpose</p> <p><i>Karshana</i>: It is a type of <i>Nasya</i> used for the elimination of <i>doshas</i> [<i>Dosha-Karshana</i>].</p>
<i>Sharangadhara</i>	<p><i>Rechana</i>: In this <i>Nasya</i> type, drugs with purgative property are used to eliminate the vitiated <i>Doshas</i> from the head.</p> <p><i>Snehana</i>: In this type, oil or medicated oil is used for the <i>Nasya</i> procedure.</p>
<i>Videha</i>	<p><i>Sangya-Prabodhaka</i>: In this type, <i>Nasya Karma</i> is performed with consciousness enhancing drugs</p> <p><i>Stambhana</i>: It is a <i>Nasya</i> type used for the cessation of vitiation of <i>Doshas</i>.</p>

Scope of Nasya Karma in various cosmetic ailments

Nasya Karma In Hair fall

Hair fall is one of a prominent problem faced by young adults in today's time due to increased levels of work induced stress and nutrient deficient diet along with secondary factors like pollution etc. In *Ayurveda*, symptoms of hair fall are related to a disease called *Khalitya* in which there is vitiation of *Pitta Dosha* along with *Vata* in hair follicles leading to the obstruction of those follicles which further lead to obstruction of channels resulting in cessation of growth of new hairs. *Ayurvedic* studies such as:

- Use of *Bhringaraja Taila Navana Nasya*^[13]
- Use of *Narikela oil Nasya*^[14]
- Use of *Shadha-Bindu Taila Nasya*^[15]
- Use of *Yasti-Madhu-Kadi Taila Nasya*^[16,17]
- Use of *Chandanaadyama Taila*^[17] has been conducted which has shown significant result in symptoms of hair fall.

Various Acharya has also mentioned same Nasya Karma in Khalitya such as Shadha-Bindu Taila Nasya [Bhavamishra], Yasti-Madhu-Kadi Taila Nasya [Chakradatta], Chandana-Aadya Taila [Vagabhatta].

Nasya Karma In Premature Greying of Hair

Apart from hair fall, premature greying of hair is another hair problem seen mostly in young adults due to various factors such as dietary factors, stress related factors like depression, anxiety and others factors like smoking, pollution etc. In Ayurveda, there is a disease mentioned Palitya resembling symptoms of premature greying of hair occurring due to the vitiation of dominant pitta dosha along with Agni due to improper diet causing increase in hot property [Ushna] which carried by Vata Dosha to the scalp region leading to localization of Doshas in hair follicles resulting in greying of hair. There have been various oils mentioned in Ayurvedic texts for Navana and Pratimarsha Nasya Karma in Palitya management such as:

- Bhringaraja Taila/Ghritta
- Vidarigandha Taila
- Prapaoundrikadi Taila
- Nimba Taila
- Maha-Nila Taila
- Chandanaadya Taila
- Neeladi Taila
- Ksheeradi Taila
- Jala-Nasya Rasayana [nasal instillation of water before sunrise]^[18,19]

Nasya Karma In Dandruff

Dandruff is one of the major hair problems that today's youth is facing in now time. It is a disorder common in youth and adult population with up to 50% occurrence^[20]. It is a disorder in which there is deposition of white flakes in the scalp region along with itching. It can be further cause for hair thinning and hair fall. In Ayurveda, it is co-related with Darunaka^[21] having symptoms same as dandruff and occurs due to the vitiation of Vata and Kapha Doshas and is

considered under Kshura-Rogas [Minor Diseases]. Acharya Charka has mentioned used of Tarpana or Snehana Nasya [oleated nasal instillation] in Urdhwa-Jatrugata [diseases above clavicle]. The studies like

- Use of Prapoundrika Tailam Nasya as add on therapy,^[22]
- Navana Nasya with Bhringarajadi Tailam^[23]
- Use of Chandana-Aadya Tailam^[24]
- And use of Pradhamana Nasya with Sariva Powder, Manjishtha Powder and Saindhavam along with Dhumpna with Vacha & Sunthi Churna^[25] has shown positive results in the management of dandruff.

Nasya Karma in Acne

Acne also known as *acne vulgaris* is a most common skin disease seen among teen and adult age group falling under 12-25 years old with average of 80% prevalence and consisting of symptoms like inflammatory/non-inflammatory lesions [papules/pustules/nodules] similar to symptoms of diseases mentioned in Ayurvedic texts like Mukhadushika or Yuvanpidika in which the eruptions resemble thorns of Shalmali tree [*Salmalia malabarica*] occurring due to the vitiation of vata and kapha dosha along with Rakta dhatu leading to this condition.^{[26] [27]} The causes responsible for pathogenesis of *acne vulgaris* like sebum, hormonal, bacterial, genetics causes are also mostly common in both modern and Ayurvedic texts.

Acharya Vagabhatta has mentioned use of Nasya Karma in Urdhwa-Jatrugata diseases like acne.^[28] Also there has been studies like use of Kumkumadi Tailam Marsha Nasya Therapy^[29] and Gotukola Nasyam Therapy^[30] has been in management of acne and has shown significant effect.

Nasya Karma In Melasma

Melasma is a common skin disorder characterised by hyperpigmentation of skin, most prevalent in women of child bearing age. It resembles with Ayurvedic disease called Vyanga which comes under category of Kshudra-Rogas [minor diseases] which occurs due to

the vitiation of *Pitta* [*Bhrajaka*] and *Vata* [*Udana* & *Vyana*] *Dosha* along with *Rakta Dhatu*.^[31] Use of *Bhrungaraja Swasrasa Nasya* or *Nasya* with milk & water has been mentioned in *Samhitas*. The number of clinical studies has been done in melasma showing the positive and remarkable effect of *Nasya Karma* in melasma such as:

- Use of *Yashtiyaadi Tailam Shaman Nasya* ^[32,33]
- Use of *Kumkumaadi Tailam Marsha Nasya*^[34]
- Use of *Kumkumaadi Taila Nasya* along with *Kumkumaadi Mukha-Abhayanga*^[35]
- Use of *Taila* prepared from powder of *Sariva*, *Manjishta*, *Daruharidra*, *Yashtimadhu*^[36]
- Use of *Kanaka Tailam Nasya*^[37]
- Use of *Panchanimba Tailam Nasya*^[38]

Nasya Karma In Minor Skin Disorders

In *Ayurveda*, there has been mention of *Kshudra-Rogas* which comprises of number of minor disorders related to body, from which *Twakagata Kshudra-Rogas* held more importance due to cosmetic value. Apart from *Khalitya* [hair fall], *Palitya* [greying of hair], *Vyanga* [melasma], *Mukha-Dushika* & *Yuvanpidika* [acne vulgaris] and *Darunaka* [dandruff], there are several other *Twakagata Kshudra-Rogas* like *Tila-Kalaka* [moles], *Mashaka* [elevated moles], *Nyaccha* [hyperpigmented birth marks], *Neelika* [hyperpigmented patches on part of body other than face], *Jatumani* [birthmarks] which has no negative physical effect on body but can be a subjective issue related to self-confidence due to its cosmetic impact on one's psychology. *Nasya karma* can be used as add on therapy to enhance the effect and impact of primary treatment as *Acharya Vagabhatta* has mentioned use of *Nasya karma* in *Kshudra-Rogas*.^{[39] [40] [41]}

Nasya Karma in Oral Disorders

Oral hygiene is an important part of daily life and improper daily regimen habits can lead to a various oral related disease. Oral disorders are described as *Mukha-Roga* in the *Ayurvedic* texts which comes under the above clavicle disorders [*Urdhwa-Jatrugata Roga*] and consists of variety of various oral disorders. They mainly comprise of diseases related to lips [*Oshta*],

cheeks [*Ganda*], tongue [*Jiwha*], teeth [*Dant*], gums [*Dantmoola*] and throat [*Kantha*]. According to *Ayurvedic* texts, *Mukha-Roga* mainly occur due to the *Kapha* dominant *Doshas* in the mouth region leading to various oral diseases.^[42]

In *Astanghridyam*, *Acharya Vagabhatta* has described various formulations for *Nasya* therapy in various diseases^[43] such as:

- *Anu Tailam Nasya* and *Nasya* with oil processed from *Triphala*, *Yashtimadhu*, *Kamala* and *Padhamakhya* in *Sheetada*.
- *Vatahara Siddha Tailam Nasya* in *Vataja Oshtha Roga* and *Vataja Mukha-Paka*.
- *Kaphahara Tailam Nasya* in *Kaphaja Oshtha Roga* and *Galashundika*.
- *Nasya* With *Kakalayaadi Gana Dravya+Milk Oil* in *Danta-Vestha*.
- *Nasya* with oil processed from *Yashtimadhu*, *Lodhra*, *Krishna* and *Shweta Sariva*, *Agaru*, *Chandan*, *Gairika* and *Mishri* in *Saushira Roga*.
- *Shiro-virechana nasya* with *Madhura-Gana* processed *Ghritta* in *Upakusha*.
- *Avapidaka Nasya* in *Krimi-Danta Roga*.

DISCUSSION

The drug medication [oils/extracts/powders etc.] administered through nasal cavities permeates *Shrinagataka Marma*^[44] which is a type of *Sira-Marma* [junction point of sensory organs] that disseminates throughout the above clavicle region via taking routes through eyes [*Netra*], ears [*Shrota*] and throat [*Kantha*] and facilitate the elimination of deep-seated vitiated *Doshas* from head. *Acharya Indu* has explained the importance of this *Marma* [vital point] with term "*Shirso Antardhyanam Murdha*" which is a place of *Shringataka Marma*.^[45] Along with that, the specific drugs [*Shovirechana Gana Dravyas*]^[46] used for the preparation of *Nasya* in *Ayurveda*, possess several properties that contribute to their therapeutic effects. These properties include:

- *Ruksha* [drying effect]: These drugs have a drying effect, which helps in the absorption of excess

fluids and toxins from the intestines facilitating their elimination through bowel movements.

- *Laghu* [light effect]: These drugs are considered light in their quality, which means they are easily digestible and do not cause heaviness or obstruction in the digestive tract.
- *Ushna* [hot effect]: These drugs have hot potency, which helps to stimulate metabolism [*Agni*] and promote the breakdown of toxins and undigested food particles.
- *Tikshna* [penetrating effect]: These drugs have a penetrating quality which allows them to reach deep into the tissues and remove toxins from the body's channels [*Srotas*].
- *Rechana* [purgative]: The primary property of these drugs is ability to induce purgation or bowel movements, aiding in the elimination of accumulated waste and toxins.
- *Deepana* [appetizer]: These drugs enhance digestion and increase appetite, helping to restore proper digestive function.
- *Vatanulomana* [*Vata*-regulating]: These drugs have the ability to regulate the *vata dosha*, which governs the movement of air and waste in the body, promoting smooth and regular bowel movements.
- *Anulomana* [downward-directing]: These drugs have the property of directing the flow of energy and materials in a downward direction, facilitating the elimination of toxins through the lower digestive tract.

These specific properties and effects of *Shiro-Virechana Dravyas* helps in the elimination of *Doshas* from the head in various diseases and also helps in enhance the effect of nasal instillation procedure depending on the individual herb, dosage and type of nasal administration.

Probable mode of action of Nasya in cosmetic ailments

To fully elucidate the potential of *Nasya* in the domain of cosmetology, it is imperative to comprehend the intricate mechanisms governing the absorption of

nasally administered therapeutic agents into the systemic circulation. The nasal mucosa presents a multifaceted array of barriers and pathways that modulate the absorption kinetics. The initial step in nasal absorption mandates the permeation of the drug through the mucus layer, a viscous secretion primarily composed of the glycoprotein mucin. Mucin exhibits a propensity for binding solutes, thereby potentially impeding their diffusion across the mucus stratum. Furthermore, environmental variables such as pH and temperature can induce conformational alterations in the mucus layer, further impacting drug absorption dynamics.

Two predominant mechanisms have been elucidated for the absorption of nasally administered drugs:

- **The Paracellular Aqueous Pathway:** This mechanism involves the sluggish and passive transport of hydrophilic compounds through the aqueous channels between adjacent epithelial cells. An inverse log-log correlation has been established between intranasal absorption and the molecular weight of water-soluble compounds, with drugs exhibiting a molecular weight exceeding 1000 Daltons demonstrating poor bioavailability via this route.
- **The Transcellular Lipoidal Pathway:** This mechanism governs the transport of lipophilic drugs across cellular membranes. The rate of absorption through this pathway exhibits a dependency on the lipophilicity of the drug. Additionally, drugs can traverse cellular membranes through active transport facilitated by carrier proteins or by transiently modulating the integrity of tight junctions between cells.

To gain entry into the systemic circulation, intranasally administered therapeutics must traverse the mucus layer, a viscous secretion primarily composed of mucin glycoproteins. Subsequently, these agents can access the CNS through two primary neural pathways:

- **The Olfactory Pathway:** The olfactory nerve, innervating the nasal cavity, provides a direct neural conduit to the CNS. Drugs can traverse this pathway through transcellular passive diffusion, a

process wherein lipophilic molecules diffuse across cellular membranes via an active transport mechanism mediated by carrier proteins.

- The Trigeminal Pathway: The trigeminal nerve, also innervating the nasal cavity, offers an alternative neural route for CNS delivery. Through this pathway, drugs can undergo paracellular passive diffusion, a process involving transport between adjacent cells, or transcytosis facilitated by vesicle carriers, a mechanism more amenable to hydrophilic molecules.

The selection of the delivery route is contingent upon the physicochemical properties of the therapeutic agent. Lipophilic drugs, such as those employed in *Snehana Nasya*, exhibit a predilection for transcellular passive diffusion via the olfactory pathway, while hydrophilic agents may preferentially traverse the trigeminal pathway through paracellular or transcytotic mechanisms. By exploiting these neural pathways, *Nasya* formulations can effectively circumvent the blood-brain barrier, a formidable obstacle in conventional drug delivery to the CNS. This unique attribute of intranasal administration holds significant promise for the development of targeted therapies in neurological disorders and cosmetic applications involving CNS modulation.

Nasya karma also ensures the smooth functioning of brain and whole body by eliminating the vitiated doshas of head [*Uttamanga*]. Regular use of *Pratimarsha Nasya* is beneficial in above mentioned all ailments and can also be helpful in other disorders related to above clavicle regions like eye disorders, nasal disorders, auditory disorders and disorders related to head.

CONCLUSION

Cosmetology has seen a surge in popularity leading to the increased use of various cosmetic products and treatments which contain harmful chemicals that can cause adverse effects on the skin, hair, and overall health but *Ayurveda* offers a safe and effective alternative to address cosmetic concerns without causing harmful side effects. *Nasya Karma* has shown

promising results in managing various cosmetic ailments. It is believed to target the *Shringataka Marma*, facilitating the elimination of vitiated doshas from the upper body and has been found effective in treating hair fall, greying of hair, dandruff, acne, melasma and other minor skin disorders as well as oral disorders. Overall, *Nasya Karma* presents a promising Ayurvedic approach to addressing various cosmetic ailments while minimizing the risk of adverse effects associated with conventional cosmetic treatments.

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