

Ayurvedic Insights into Urdhwajatrugata Vikara through Pratimarsha Nasya

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In this highly competitive age, maintaining a healthy lifestyle poses a significant challenge. Ayurveda, with its focus on personalized wellness and preventive measures, offers a comprehensive approach in maintaining a healthy life. Ayurveda provides detailed guidance on preventive measures, including Dinacharya (daily routine), Ritucharya (seasonal regimen), Rasayana (rejuvenation), and Yoga (physical exercise). In addition to these preventive aspects, factors like Ritushodhana, which involves seasonal body purification, play a crucial role. There are five types of Shodhana procedures, and Nasya is one among them. Nasya is primarily recommended for addressing Urdhwajatrugata Vikaras, in which Doshas are eliminated through the closest and most accessible opening, which is nose. Pratimarsha Nasya is a unique form of Snehana Nasya, featuring low doses and minimal risks. It can be safely administered on a daily basis and is suitable for all seasons. Pratimarsha Nasya is administered by dipping the finger in the necessary Snehana (oil or medicated substance) and then gently instilling it into each nostril. Acharya Vagbhata has elaborated that Pratimarsha Nasya can be performed at 15 different specific times, offering users the flexibility to choose the timing that best suits their individual requirements. Acharya also opines that Pratimarsha Nasya is suitable for individuals throughout their lives much like Matra Basti. Through daily practice, it offers similar benefits to Marsha Nasya, without the associated Vyapats (complications) commonly found in the latter. This study endeavours to provide a conceptual analysis of the role of Pratimarsha Nasya Karma in addressing Urdhwajatrugata Roga by drawing insights from various Ayurvedic literature sources as well as contemporary scientific perspectives.

Keywords: Pratimarsha Nasya, Ritushodana, Matrabasti, Marsha Nasya, Ayurveda

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Introduction

Acharya Charaka opines that the *Shiras* is regarded as one of the three vital organs of the body. It is the seat of *Prana* (life force) and the centre for all the *Indriyas* (senses), making it the most important organ, often referred to as *Shirasah Uttamangatvam*.^[1]

Panchakarma as explained in our texts is a comprehensive set of five therapeutic procedures designed for the bio-purification of the body. Through these procedures, accumulated toxins are effectively eliminated, helping to restore balance to the body's *Tridosha's* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*) and thereby promoting overall health. Among these five procedures, one of the key treatments is *Nasya Karma*, which focuses on cleansing and nourishing the nasal passages to treat conditions affecting the head and neck region. *Pratimarsha Nasya*,^[2] a unique form of *Snehana Nasya*, involves administering small doses of medicated oil or substances through the nasal passages. It is praised for its dual properties of *Snehana* (nourishment) and *Shodhana* (purification). Safe for daily use and suitable in all seasons, *Pratimarsha Nasya* is an ideal preventive measure against many modern lifestyle-related disorders. With increasingly sedentary and system-bound lifestyles, people are exposed to activities harmful to health, such as reduced physical activity, poor dietary choices, prolonged screen exposure, and high levels of stress. These habits can be detrimental, but adherence to *Ayurveda* practices, including *Dinacharya* (daily routines) and *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimens), can help mitigate their impact. *Pratimarsha Nasya* is an easy, self-administered treatment that helps prevent disease and maintain overall health without complications, making it a vital part of a holistic health care regimen.

Objectives

1. To understand the various utilities of *Pratimarsha Nasya* in *Urdhwajatrugata Roga*.
2. To study the mode of action of *Pratimarsha Nasya*.

Materials and Methods

All the classical textbooks and various commentaries of *Ayurveda*.

Pratimarsha Nasya

Pratimarsha Nasya is performed by dipping the index finger up to 2 *Anguli Parva* in the *Nasya Dravya* and instilling it into each nostril, lubricating the nasal passage with gentle massage over the root of the nose and face. When *Pratimarsha Nasya* is practised regularly and correctly, it offers numerous health benefits, including the maintenance of sensory wellness of eye, nose, and ear, and also helps to alleviate conditions like cervical spondylosis, headaches, and facial paralysis, and supports individuals with hemiplegia, Parkinson's disease, and other mental health issues.

Dose of *Pratimarsha Nasya*^[3]

The dose of *Pratimarsha Nasya* is two *Bindhu Pramana*. The *Sneha* should reach the nose, but it should not be too much in quantity producing secretion in throat. Here one *Bindu* can be considered as 0.5ml.^[4]

Indications of *Pratimarsha Nasya*^[5]

Pratimarsha Nasya can be given to any age group, at any time & any season & also on *Durdina*. It can be given to *Bala* (children), *Vridha* (old aged person), *Bhiru* (fearing/fearful person), *Sukumara* (delicate or tender person), *Durbala* (weak patient) & also to the patients suffering from *Mukha Shosha* (dryness of mouth), *Kshata* (wounded), *Kshama* (emaciated), *Trishna* (thirsty), *Pidita* (tired), *Valita* (toneless skin) & *Palita* (greying of hair).

Contraindications of *Pratimarsha Nasya*^[6]

It is contraindicated in *Dushta Pinasa* (chronic sinusitis), in *Madyapi* (intoxicated by alcohol), *Badhira* (deafness), *Krimi* (head diseases infested with worms), *Utklishta Dosha* (in whom there is severe vitiation of *Dosha*) and also in *Bahudoshaavastha* where there is involvement of more than one *Dosha* in the disease manifestation. It should not be given to the above mentioned as the *Matra* of *Pratimarsha Nasya* is insufficient to eliminate the *Dosha* from the body of the diseased.

Different *Kalas* for the administration of *Pratimarsha nasya*

Acharya *Susrutha*^[7] & *Sharangadhara*^[8] has mentioned 14 favourable times for administration of *Pratimarsha Nasya* whereas Acharya *Vagbhata*^[9] has mentioned 15 different times for same.

Each of them has been clearly described in the table given below.

Talpouthitena (after getting up in morning) Make head light and pleases the mind.	Adhvaparishrantena (after long walking/travelling) Tiredness will be relieved. Remove exertion and stiffness in body.	Bhuktavata/Bhojana mouttara (after food) Cleans the channels (Srotas - Shuddhi) Lightens the body
Prakshalitadantena (after brushing teeth) Denture will become strong and also keep the mouth fresh. Produces good smell	Mutratyagoparanta (after micturition) Reduce heaviness of eyes Decongestion of eyes	Chharditvata (after emesis) Remove the secretion which stick in throat and produces interest in food. Remove Vata, Kapha and fatigue.
Gruhanirgacchataha (before going outside to daily works) The Taila will be deposited in the nostril and produces Klinnata (moisture) in the nasal mucosa and upper respiratory tract. Protects the nose from fumes and other particles.	Malatyagoparanta (after defecation) Reduce heaviness of eyes Decongestion of eyes.	Divaswapnautathena (after day dreaming /after getting up from day sleep) Removes heaviness of the body. Improves concentration of mind by dissolving Mala
Vyayamouttara (after exercise) Tiredness will be relieved Removes exertion and stiffness in body.	Kavala (after gargling of mouth) Improves eyesight (Drishti Prasadana)	Sayan kala (in the evening time) Cleaning of respiratory tract. Sound sleep at night. fresh and early awakening in the morning
Vyavayouttara (after coitus) Reduces the weakness which is produced by sexual act.	Anjana (after collyrium application) Improves eyesight (Drishtiprasadana)	Hasya Kala (during laughing) It strengthens vision and Pacifies Vata dosha This Kala is mentioned by Acharya Vagbhata.

Administration of Nasya[10]

The individual should start by sitting or lying down in a comfortable position. Warm oil is then gently administered into each nostril which is of 2 Bindu Pramana.

Discussion

Acharya charaka states that "Nasahi Shiraso Dwaram.[11]

Indicating that *Nasa* (nose) serving as the primary gateway to the *Shirah* (head), as mentioned in the *Charaka Samhita*, *Siddhi Sthana*. This underscores the significance of the nose in facilitating the medicines directly to the head. **Acharya Sushruta**, recognized *Shringataka Marma* as a crucial *Shira Marma* (vital point of the head), which is formed by the convergence of blood vessels that supply the nose, ears, eyes, and tongue.

Anatomically, the nose is intricately connected to the brain through a network of blood vessels, the olfactory nerve plexus, the ophthalmic and maxillary branches of the trigeminal nerve[12] in **Ashtanga Sangraha**, commentator *Indu* specifies that the *Shringataka Marma* is located on the inner side of the middle part of the head, similarly *Acharya Vagbhata* discusses *Nasya Karma*, as nose serves as a passage to the head, substances administered through the nostrils can access the *Shringataka Marma* within the head.

Nasya Karmukata (probable mode of action)

The most appropriate explanation of the mode of action of *Nasya Karma* is provided by *Acharya Vagbhata*. [12]

When *Nasya Dravya* (medicated substance) is administered into the nasal cavity, it travels through the *Srotas* (nasal passages) and reaches the root of the *Shringataka Marma*. Here *Indu* the commentator of *Astanga Hrudaya* comments *Shringataka Marma* as *Shiraso Antar Madyah* which can be co related to cavernous sinus which marks its presence in middle cranial fossa, in relation with the *Murdha* (head), *Netra* (eyes), *Shrotra* (ears), and *Kantha* (throat) through its extensions known as *Sira Mukhas* (openings of channels).it removes the morbid *Doshas* from *Urdwajatru Pradesha* and expels them from the *Uttamanga*.

This concept is further supported by *Acharya Charaka* by illustrating an analogy of **Munjaishika Nyaya**[13] where *Ishika* is the pith and *Munja* is a type of grass.

Here *Acharya* is explaining that the medicine administered through the nose draws out the morbid *Doshas* exclusively as the *Ishika* (pith) is taken out of *Munja* without damaging the surrounding fibrous material adhered to it. Only the morbid *Doshas* are drawn out from the *Shiras* without causing any damage to structures of brain.

Acharya Susruta has also described *Shringataka Marma* as the *Sira Marma* and *Sadyo Pranahara Marma* which is formed by union of *Siras* of ear, nose, throat and eyes and injury to these *Marmas* are considered to cause immediate death.[14] This anatomical and functional connection explains both the pharmacokinetics (path of the drug movement) and pharmacodynamics (action at the target sites) of *Nasya Karma*.

Effects of *Nasya Karma* on the Neurovascular Junction[15,16]

Administration of *Nasya* leads to momentary hyperaemia (increased blood flow) due to vasodilation of cerebral capillaries. This vasodilation causes temporary fall in arterial pressure, creating a pressure difference between cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) and cerebral arteries. The increased CSF pressure compresses arteries, resulting in transient cerebral ischemia, which triggers Cushing's reflex (ischemic response). During this reflex, both sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems become activated:

Sympathetic Activation: The sympathetic nervous system stimulates alpha-1 adrenergic receptors, leading to constriction of peripheral arteries, increased vascular resistance, elevated blood pressure, and enhanced cardiac output. This ensures increased circulation of blood to the brain.

Parasympathetic Response: In response to the induced hypertension, the parasympathetic system (via the vagus nerve) induces bradycardia (slowing of heart rate) to restore homeostasis. Additionally, Cushing's reflex is associated with alterations in respiratory patterns. Given these physiological responses, it can be hypothesized that *Nasya Karma* may momentarily influence the permeability of the blood-brain barrier (BBB), thereby allowing the selective absorption or excretion of certain substances administered through this therapy.

Effect at the Neuro endocrinal and Neuropsychological Levels

In *Nasya Karma*, two major nerves are primarily influenced:

1. Olfactory Nerve (Cranial Nerve I)

Olfactory nerve, derived from embryonic nasal placode, possesses unique ability to regenerate as it does not originate from brainstem.

It is purely sensory in function and arises from the olfactory mucosa located in the upper part of the nasal cavity. The nerve fibres pass through the cribriform plate of the ethmoid bone and synapse at the olfactory bulbs, transmitting olfactory information to the brain via the olfactory tract.

2. Branches of the Trigeminal Nerve

Nasociliary nerve and Nasopalatine nerve provide general sensory innervation to the nasal cavity. Additionally, posterior nasal branches of the maxillary nerve contribute to sensory input. Sympathetic and parasympathetic innervations, primarily from the facial nerve, also supply the nasal region. These innervations establish close anatomical and functional connections with the limbic system and hypothalamus, which are crucial centres for emotional regulation and autonomic control.

The Limbic System includes:

The limbic lobe, Hippocampal formation, Amygdala, Septal area are interconnected through major pathways such as the fornix, mammillo thalamic tract, stria terminalis, and cingulum. Together, they govern emotional responses (such as fear, anger, and psychiatric functions), memory formation (both recent and long-term), visceral functions (like regulation of food and water intake), and sexual behaviour. The hypothalamus and limbic system also exert regulatory control over endocrine secretions and autonomic nervous functions. Thus, through these pathways, the pharmacodynamics of *Nasya Karma* can be understood as influencing both neuroendocrinal and neuropsychological domains.

There are two major transportation pathways:

Vascular Pathway:

The venous drainage from the nasal cavity flows into the facial vein. Notably, the absence of valves in these veins allows for bidirectional blood flow. This permits substances from the nasal area to reach the Para nasal sinuses and the cavernous venous sinuses of the brain, especially influenced by posture.

Lymphatic Pathway:

Extensions of the arachnoid matter (meningeal sleeves) project into the sub mucosal area of the nasal cavity via the olfactory nerve.

This anatomical feature facilitates a lymphatic connection between the nasal mucosa and the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), enabling direct exchanges between nasal contents and intracranial structures.

Thus, *Nasya Karma* leverages both vascular and lymphatic routes to allow therapeutic substances to interact with the central nervous system, enhancing its neurovascular, neuroendocrinal, and neuropsychological effects

Various *Acharyas* have mentioned the use of different medicated oils for *Pratimarsha Nasya* to treat several *Urdhwajatrugata Roga*. Among these, **Anu Taila**, mentioned in the *Charaka Samhita*, is commonly used to treat and prevent a wide range of conditions affecting the head and neck.

Mahamasha Taila is particularly beneficial for *Badhira*, *Karnashula*, and *Karnanada*. **Ksheerabala Taila** is indicated for treating *Ardita* and other *Manya* disorders. **Triphala Taila** is directly recommended for conditions like *Shiroroga*, *Pratishyaya*, *Khalitya*, and *Palitya*. **Prapaundarikadi Taila** in *Khalitya* and *Palitya*. **Karpasastyadi Taila** in *Ardita* and **Bringaraja Taila** *Nasya* in *Darunaka*.

Various Clinical researches support the traditional benefits of *Pratimarsha Nasya*. For example, **Yashtimadhu Taila** has demonstrated notable improvement in patients suffering from *Khalitya*. [17]

Similarly, in cases of respiratory disorders, the combination of *Shadbindu Taila Nasya* and oral *Ghrita Bhrishta Haridra* has proven to be more effective in managing *Vataja Pratishyaya* (allergic rhinitis) than oral therapy alone. [18]

In addition to its therapeutic uses, *Pratimarsha Nasya* is also recognized for its preventive value. It is safe, simple to administer, and suitable for people of all ages and seasons, as recommended in classical *Samhitas* for daily use. [19]

On a deeper level, it is believed to regulate **Prana Vayu** (life force) and harmonize the mind and consciousness, thereby promoting mental clarity and emotional balance. [20]

However, despite its wide-ranging benefits, broader public acceptance and integration into contemporary preventive healthcare practices remain limited due to a lack of awareness. [21]

Conclusion

Acharya Vagbhata emphasizes the centrality of *Pratimarsha Nasya*, highlighting its suitability from birth to old age. *Acharya* moreover opines that *Pratimarsha Nasya* is appropriate throughout life just like *Matra Basti*. [22]

Presenting benefits like that of *Marsha Nasya*, it does not require any *Yantrana* (control) and it has no *Vyapads* like that of *Marsha Nasya*. Its regular practice offers both curative and preventive benefits, enhancing oxygenation and positively influencing brain function.

Pratimarsha Nasya is beneficial if done on a regular basis, because it keeps the eyes, nose and ear healthy as it is mainly indicated in the diseases of *Urdhwajatru* where head is the vital part of central nervous framework that governs overall bodily functions.

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