

Marma-Based Viddha Karma in Shalakyia Tantra: An Evidence-Oriented Perspective on Its Use in Diseases of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Head

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ABSTRACT

Viddha Karma is a para-surgical therapeutic procedure described in Ayurveda under *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting), involving precise puncture of specific anatomical sites to alleviate vitiated *Doshas*, particularly *Rakta* and *Pitta*. A detailed account of *Shastra* and *Ashtavidha Shastra Karma* is available in our *Samhitas*, which serve as the foundation for various medical and surgical interventions. Many modern surgical techniques can be correlated with these classical descriptions. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, a surgical procedure is carried out in three main phases, collectively termed *Trividha Karma*: *Poorva Karma* (pre-operative preparation), *Pradhan Karma* (the main operative procedure), and *Paschat Karma* (post-operative care).¹

INTRODUCTION

It is explained in *Sushruta Samhita*, one of the principal classics of *Ayurveda*, where therapeutic puncturing of selected veins or localised sites is recommended to eliminate vitiated blood and *Doṣas*, especially in disorders predominantly associated with *Rakta* and *Pitta*². This procedure is employed not only in generalized systemic illnesses but also holds special importance in *Śālākya Tantra*, the branch of *Ayurveda* concerned with disorders occurring above the clavicle—mainly affecting the eyes (*Netra*), ears (*Karna*), nose (*Nāsā*), and oral cavity (*Mukha*). In the *Śālākya* portions of *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya* and *Suśruta Samhitā*, numerous indications of *Viddha Karma* are found for conditions such as *Abhiṣyanda* (conjunctivitis), *Adhimantha* (glaucoma-like presentation), *Karna Śūla* (otalgia/ear pain), *Pīnasa* (rhinitis), and *Danta Śūla* (toothache). The method consists of puncturing particular veins or *marmas*, selected according to *doṣic* predominance and anatomical considerations, and it demands a sound

grasp of classical literature along with refined clinical expertise^{3,4}. Relevance of *Viddha Karma* in *Śālākya Tantra*, the branch of *Ayurveda* concerned with disorders of the head and sense organs—*Netra* (eyes), *Karna* (ears), *Nāsā* (nose) and *Mukha* (oral cavity)—provides detailed descriptions of the use of *Viddha Karma* in a wide range of conditions. Its importance can be outlined as follows:

- **In *Netra Roga* (eye disorders)**

Viddha Karma is indicated in diseases such as *Arma*, *Abhisyanda* and *Adhimantha*.

It is performed to:

- Relieve venous and capillary congestion
- Reduce inflammation and pain
- Eliminate vitiated Rakta from the periorcular region
- In *Karna Roga* (ear disorders)

Viddha Karma finds application in:

- *Karna Śūla* (severe earache)
- *Karna Nāda* (tinnitus)
- *Karna Śrava* (ear discharge)

By improving local circulation and reducing congestive pathology, it helps in alleviating pain and associated symptoms.

- In *Nasa Roga* (nasal disorders)

It is utilised in:

- Chronic nasal obstruction and heaviness
- *Pīnasa* (rhinitis)
- *Nāsā Śoṣa* (nasal dryness)

The procedure aids in decongesting the nasal passages and correcting Rakta–Pitta vitiation at the local level.

- In *Mukha Roga* (oral disorders)

Viddha Karma is recommended in:

- *Danta Śūla* (toothache)
- *Oṣṭha Śoṭha* (swelling of lips)
- Other acute inflammatory conditions of the oral cavity

Carefully chosen intra-oral or perioral sites help in rapid reduction of pain, swelling and local heat.

Overall, the site-specific approach, minimal invasiveness, and quick symptomatic relief offered by *Viddha Karma* make it highly significant in *Śālākya Tantra*, where fine anatomical structures, functional sensitivity and targeted therapeutic interventions are of paramount importance.

Viddha Karma can be related to some modern procedures, such as:

- Acupuncture: Comparable in terms of stimulating specific points and influencing energy pathways in the body.
- Microneedling: Uses multiple fine needle punctures to enhance circulation and trigger tissue repair.
- Minor surgical techniques: Such as venesection, incision, or drainage, which help in relieving localized congestion or inflammation.

These parallels help in understanding *Viddha Karma*'s possible mode of action and therapeutic usefulness from a modern biomedical viewpoint.

Aim and Objectives

Aim

To systematically review the concept of *Viddha Karma* in *Shalaky Tantra* with special emphasis on its clinical relevance.

Objectives

1. To identify and analyze classical textual references related to *Viddha Karma* in *Shalaky Tantra*.
2. To study its indications, methods, contraindications, and the types of instruments used.
3. To evaluate available clinical studies and therapeutic outcomes in ENT and ophthalmic disorders.

Rationale for the Review

Although *Viddha Karma* is extensively described in Ayurvedic literature, there is a lack of organized reviews and scientific assessments focusing on its application in *Shalaky Tantra*.

- Current clinical use is largely based on traditional experience, anecdotal reports, or limited observational studies.
- Comprehensive, pooled data regarding indications, techniques, anatomical points, treatment results, and safety aspects of *Viddha Karma* in head-and-neck disorders are scarce.
- Modern research approaches such as systematic reviews and meta-analyses are minimally applied, even though they could help validate, refine, and standardize this ancient procedure for wider acceptance and integration into present-day healthcare practice.

II. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Procedure of *viddha karma*:-

Can be divided into three steps

1. *Poorva karma*(Pre procedure)
2. *Pradhan Karma*(Main procedure)
3. *Paschat Karma*(Post Procedure)

Requirements for this *chikitsa*⁵

1. A room
2. B. P. apparatus
3. Needles- Needle No-26 and 1/2 length.

Contra-Indications

Rainy or cloudy day, extreme cold environment, immediately after meal.

Selection of patient

1. Patient should mentally fit and physically strong .
2. Patient who has a history of any skin diseases at the site of puncture should be avoided.
3. Who has a history of uncontrolled diabetes and hypertension should be avoided.
4. Children above the age of 10 years .
5. Contraindicated in Pregnancy.

Procedure of *Viddha Karma*

Viddha Karma is one of the eight main surgical procedures (*Aṣṭavidha Śāstra Karma*) described in *Ayurveda*.⁶ It is a low-cost treatment that acts quickly and is done using needles of different sizes⁷. The points for *Viddha Karma* are selected in relation to the *Marma* points⁸, and the type of needle used depends on which *Doṣa* is disturbed. Different points are chosen according to the disease, and each site has a specific needle size⁹.

Before pricking, the selected area is first cleaned with spirit and then painted with povidone-iodine solution. The needle is then inserted at the selected points and kept there for about 15–30 seconds. After that, it is slowly removed in a clockwise direction.

Practical depth of insertion

- In muscle (*Mānsa*) – the puncture depth should be equal to 1 *yava* (one barley grain).
- In bone (*Asthi*) – the puncture depth should be about ½ *yava* (half a barley grain).
- In skin (*Tvak*) – the puncture depth should also be about ½ *yava*.¹⁰
- (in millimetres)
- Skin – insert about 2–4 mm.
- Muscle – insert about 4–6 mm.
- Bone, joint and ligament – insert about 6–10 mm.¹¹

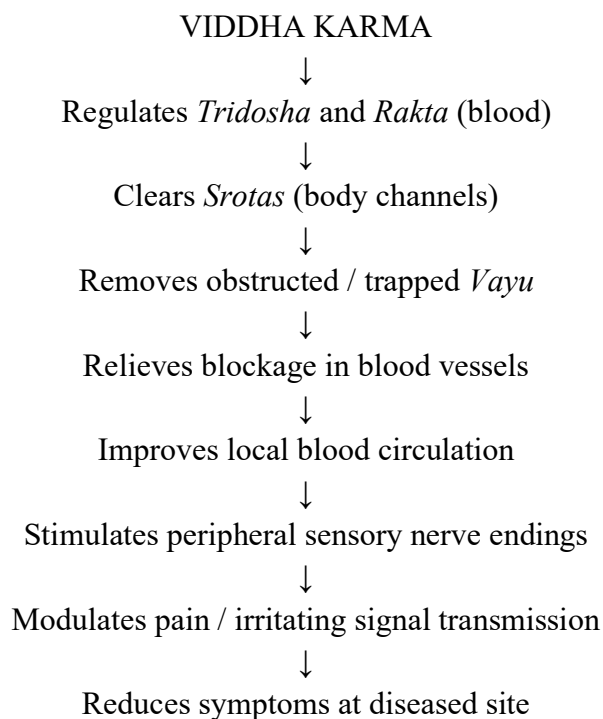
A. *Viddha* / *Siravedha* Sites in Eye (*Netra*)

- **.*Shankha Pradesh* (Temporal region)**
- Text base: *Siravedha* at *Shankha* for *Netra–Shira–Karna* related pain and disorders.
- Approx. location: Soft area at the side of the forehead, above and slightly behind the outer corner of the eye (lateral canthus).
- Use: *Adhimantha*, *Arma*, *Abhishyanda*, *Netra-janya Shirashula*.
- ***Avarta* / *Lalat* (Forehead / Frontal region)**
- Text base: Frontal venesection mentioned for *Shira-roga* and eye-related headache.
- Location: Center of the forehead, above the point between the eyebrows (*Bhrumadhya*), over a visible vein.
- Use: Headache associated with *Netra roga*, frontal heaviness.
- ***Bhrumadhya* (Between the eyebrows)**
- Text base: Region around the eyebrows (*Bhru*) is mentioned in *Siravedha* of *Urdhvajatru*.
- Location: Midpoint between the two eyebrows.
- Use: Congestive eye conditions, heaviness in eye and forehead.
- ***Bahya-Kaksha* (Outer canthus region)**
- Text base: Lateral orbital / temporal surface venesection for *Netra–Shira* disorders.
- Location: Half to one *angula* (finger breadth) lateral to the outer canthus, over superficial veins.
- Use: *Arma*, *Sirajala*, *Abhishyanda* with marked congestion.
- **Sira around *Karna–Netra sambandha sthana* (Temporo-auricular region)**
- Text base: Sushruta includes the *Karna–Netra* area in *Urdhvajatru Siravedha*.
- Location: Above and slightly behind the ear, in line with the outer canthus.
- Use: Severe eye pain radiating to temporal and auricular region.

B. Viddha / Siravedha Sites in ENT (Karna–Nasa–Mukha)

- **Prishtha-Karna (Retro-auricular region) – Karna Roga**
 - Text base: Sushruta mentions *Siravedha* around the ear (Karna) for *Karna-shula* and *Karna-roga*.
 - Location: Behind the ear, over superficial veins on the mastoid region.
 - Use: *Karna-shula* (ear pain), *kshobha*, congestion-type ear disorders.
- **Upashira around Karna-Mula (Base of the ear)**
 - Text base: Ear-root venesection in *Urdhvajatru* disorders.
 - Location: Just in front of and below the ear (preauricular region).
 - Use: *Karna-shabda*, *Karna-kshveda* (tinnitus-like symptoms) with local congestion.
- **Nasa-Mula / Nasa-parshva (Root and sides of nose) – Nasa Roga**
 - Text base: Sushruta describes *Siravedha* around the nose (Nasa) for *Pratishyaya* and related *Shira-roga*.
 - Location:
 - At the root of the nose (*Nasa-mula*), and
 - About one *angula* lateral to each ala of the nose.
 - Use: *Pratishyaya*, *Pinasa*, *Nasa-gata shotha* with frontal heaviness.
- **Lalat and Bhru-madhya – Nasa / Shira / Sinus involvement**
 - Text base: Frontal and supraorbital region *Siravedha* as per *Shiroroga-Chikitsa* in Sushruta.
 - Location: Above the medial end of the eyebrows, over supraorbital veins.
 - Use: *Dushta Pratishyaya*, frontal sinus-type headache.
- **5.Ganda Pradesh (Cheek region) – Mukha Roga**
 - Text base: Venesection at Ganda for *danta–mukha–ganda vikara*.
 - Location: 2–3 cm lateral to the angle of the mouth on the cheek, over a visible superficial vein.
 - Use: *Dantashula*, *ganda-shotha*, *mukh-abhitapa* with vascular congestion.

MODE OF ACTION-¹²



SUITABLE TIME FOR VIDHA KARMA

Vidha Karma may be performed in *Varsha Ritu* when the sky is clear (without clouds), in *Grishma Ritu* when the weather is comparatively cool, and in *Hemanta Ritu* preferably during the afternoon.¹³

DISCUSSION

In *Vidha Karma*, a fine hollow needle is inserted at specific points described by *Acharya Suśruta*, such as *Āpaṅga*, *Lalāṭa*, and *Upanāsikā*. In ocular disorders, *Vāta Doṣa* is primarily aggravated, accompanied by disturbances in *Pitta* and *Kapha Doṣa*, while *Rakta Dhatu* also becomes involved.

When the needle is introduced at the points *Āpaṅga*, *Lalāṭa*, and *Upanāsikā*, the patient experiences a sense of lightness in that region, which results from *Vātānulomana*, meaning the normalisation and pacification of *Vāta*. The eyes are considered the seat (*Āśraya Sthāna*) of *Alochaka Pitta*, and *Rakta Dhatu* serves as the supporting site of *Pitta Doṣa* according to the principle of *Āśraya-Āśrayī Bhāva*.

During *Vidha Karma*, there is inevitably a mild or subtle exudation of blood (*Sūkṣma/Avyakta Rakta Srava*). The stimulation of sensory nerve fibres at the peripheral level helps in reducing the flow of painful or irritating signals from the diseased area, which forms the primary mechanism of action of this procedure.

CONCLUSION

Vidha Karma is often mistaken for acupuncture, which is widely practiced in Chinese medicine, but its basic principles are quite different. *Vidha* points are related to *Marma* points, and the procedure is performed using specific hollow *Vidha* needles. The concept of these points is influenced by cell morphology as explained in *Vaisheshik Darshan*, a philosophical school also accepted in *Ayurveda*.

Although *Vidha Karma* is not very commonly practiced in India, some *Ayurvedic* physicians are now using it and obtaining rapid and satisfactory results in patients. These outcomes highlight the practical value of ancient *Ayurvedic* knowledge. As *Vidha Karma* shows promising therapeutic effects, there is a need for larger clinical studies with proper scientific evaluation to further validate and standardize this procedure.

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