

PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTION OF VAMANA DRUGS

¹Sharma Ravidutt ²Gaur Bhaskar ³Parida Akhilanath ⁴Jena Satyasmita ⁵Gupta Arvind Kumar

1. P.G. Scholar, Dept. Of Panchakarma, VYDS Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Khurja
2. P.G. Scholar, Dept. Of Panchakarma, VYDS Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Khurja
3. Reader, Dept. Of Panchakarma, VYDS Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Khurja
4. Lecturer, Dept. Of Prasutitantra and Streeroga, VYDS Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Khurja
5. Lecturer, Dept. Of Samhita-siddhant, LHSPG Ayurvedic College, Pilibhit

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has its own principles of treatment. The basic principle, of all *Ayurvedic* treatments, is to augment the deficiency, to suppress the aggravation and reduce the increment of *Doshas* and also maintain the equilibrium of *Doshas* in the state of health. *Vamana* occupies the place of uno among all the elimination therapeutic techniques and requires special care during the process. It must be conducted under the supervision of practically trained physician; otherwise a number of complications will arise. *Vamana* is indicated for elimination of *Doshas* not only in disease states but also in healthy persons where *Kapha* is aggravated within normal limits such as in *Vasanta Ritu* for prevention of disease and maintenance of health. There are six *vamana* drugs are described by *Acharya Charaka* acting through *Ushna*, *Teekshana*, *Sookshama*, *Vyavayi*, *Vikasi* and *Saratva gunas*. These drugs act as a primary choice in different disorders.

Keywords: *Vamana*, *Ayurvedic treatment*, *Dosha*, *Kapha*

REVIEW: Elimination of *Doshas* can bring down the elevated state to normalcy. There are five unique procedures of elimination in *Ayurveda* and *Vamana* is one of them. It should always be preceded by suitable *Poorvakarmas* in order to mobilize the *Doshas* from the discrete parts of the body (*Shakha*). It is believed that imbalanced *Doshas* spread from the *Koshtha* to the *Shakha* and thus be able to produce various types of diseases depending upon the *Dosha Dushya – Adishthana* pattern. To eradicate the imbalanced *Doshas*, it is essential to mobilize the vitiated *Doshas* in the *shakha* and to bring them back from *shakha* to the *Koshtha*, so that they may be easily expelled out by *Vamanadhi Samshodhana Karmas*.ⁱ It is believed that *Snehana* makes these *Doshas* softened and *Swedana* helps in mobilization and liquification, of these

Doshas making them to flow back to the *Koshtha*. Therefore, appropriate *Poorvakarma* in the form of *Snehana* and *Swedana* is always according to *Doshas*. *Vamana* should be conducted when *Kapha* is vitiated; *Pitta* occupies the place of *Kapha* and *Vata* predominant *Kapha* stateⁱⁱ.

There are six emetic drugs are said in *ayurvedic* classic *Charaka Samhita*.

EMETICS:

1. **MADANAPHALA** (Randia dumatorum)
2. **JEEMUTAKA** (Luffa echinata)
3. **ISHWAKU** (Lagenarea leucantha)
4. **DHAMARGAVA** (Luffa aegyptioca)
5. **KUTAJA** (Holarrhena antidysentrica)
6. **KRITAVEDHANA** (Luffa acutangula)

Basing on these six drugs, *Acharya Charaka* has described 355 formulations in ‘*KALPASTHANA*’

Table .1 Classification of formulations for Vamana

Type of Formulation	Phala	Jeemutaka	Ikshwaku	Dhamargava	Kutaja	Krita-vedhana
<i>Kashaya</i>	9	19	9	20	9	22
<i>Matra</i>	8	8	8	-	-	-
<i>Ksheera</i>	4	6	8	4	-	4
<i>Ghrita</i>	1	1	1	1	-	1
<i>Phanita</i>	1	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Churna</i>	1	-	-	-	5	-
<i>Ghreya</i>	1	-	1	-	-	1
<i>Varti</i>	6	-	-	-	-	6
<i>Leha</i>	20	-	5	10	-	8
<i>Modaka</i>	20	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Utkarika</i>	20	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Shadava</i>	10	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sashkuli</i>	16	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Apupa</i>	16	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Suramanda</i>	-	1	1	1	-	1
<i>Swarasa</i>	-	4	-	-	-	-
<i>Dadhimastu</i>	-	-	1	-	-	-
<i>Takra</i>	-	-	1	-	-	-
<i>Palala</i>	-	-	1	-	-	-
<i>Taila</i>	-	-	1	-	-	-
<i>Vardhamana</i>	-	-	6	-	-	-
<i>Mandha</i>	-	-	1	-	-	-
<i>Mamsarasa</i>	-	-	1	-	-	7
<i>Pallava</i>	-	-	-	9	-	-
<i>Sakridrasa</i>	-	-	-	12	-	-
<i>Kalka</i>	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Anna</i>	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Salila</i>	-	-	-	-	3	-
<i>Krisara</i>	-	-	-	-	1	-
<i>Picha</i>	-	-	-	-	-	10
<i>Ikshurasa</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	133	39	45	60	18	60

Adding can alter the drugs of Low potency or by processing with the drugs having the similar properties. Similarly higher potency drugs also can be altered by adding or processing with the drugs having the opposite qualities.

In VATA predominant disorders, emetics should be steeped with, *Tushodaka*, *Maireya*, *Dhanyamla*, *Phalamla*, *Amla Dadhi Sura*, *Sauveeraka* etc.

In PITTA predominant disorders, *Draksha*, *Amalaki*, *Madhu*, *Madhuka*, *Parushaka*,

Phanita, Gokshura etc, will be used for steeping and rinsing the effect.

In *KAPHA* predominant disorders steep the emetics with *Madhu, Mutra Vargas* and the decoctions prepared with *Kaphahara* drugs.ⁱⁱⁱ

Properties and mode of action of vamana drugs Bhautika Constitution

Though all *Vamana* drugs are *Panchabautika* in their constitution, *Agni* and *Vayu Mahabhoota* are dominant in their constitution^{iv}. *Sushruta Samhita*, *Astanga Sangraha* and *Ashtang Hridaya* are also of the same opinion. *Chakrapani* while commenting on the constitution means that *Vamana* drugs are particularly *Agneya*^v. The *Urdvagati* (upward movement) caused by *Vamana* drugs is done due to the dominance of *Agneya* and *Vayu Mahabhoota*.^{vi}

A. GUNA

1. *Ushna*
2. *Teekshna*
3. *Sookshma*
4. *Vyavayi*
5. *Vikasi*

Apart from these *Gunas Saratva Guna* is mentioned by *Sushruta*^{vii}.

1. USHNA: It is *Agneya*, which produces *Dahana, Pacana, Swedana* and *Vivarana*^{viii}. *Katu, Amla, Lavana, Rasas* are *Ushna* with increasing potency respectively. *Ushna* drugs play important role in the process of *Visyandana* of the *Doshasanghata* responsible for the disease. *Chakrapani* mentions that *Vishyandayati* means “*Vilinam Kurvanti*”^{ix}.

According to Apte, *Vilinam* means to dissolve or to liquefy. In this way due to *Ushna* property, the drugs used in the *Vamanakarma*, liquefy the *Doshasanghata*. In modern Parlance it may be like the action of catalytic agents, which may be converting the saturated compounds in to the unsaturated one or in the form, in which they are more reactive.

2. TEEKSHANA: Produces *Daha, Paka* and *Srava*. *Teekshana* is responsible for the act of *Vicchindana*. *Chakrapani* says that *Vicchindanti* is nothing but the breaking down of the morbid matter into the small possible particles^x. *Teekshana* is also *Agneya*; because of this *Doshas* oozes out immediately. It produces *Shodhana, Pachana, Chedana* and *Sravana* of *Doshas* in their places.

On the basis of the above, it can be said that due to *Teekshana* property *Vamana* drugs breakdown the *Doshasanghata* already softened by *Agneya* property in to the smaller particles. These smaller particles may either be water soluble or in such a form so that they may be taken out from the diseased place, can be brought to the blood circulation where they may be brought into *Koshhta* and *Amashaya* in the case of *Vamana* due to the *Anu Pravanabhava* of the drugs^{xi}.

3. SUKSHMA: Due to this *guna* the drugs can pass through minute *Srotas, Vayu, Akasha* and *Agni Mahabhoota* are dominant in its *Bhoutika* Constitution. It has been mentioned that *Vamana* drugs enter *Sthoola* and *Anusrotas*. *Sharangdhara* has mentioned that *Vamana* drugs having this property can enter smallest *Srotas* of the body^{xii}.

Vamana drugs after breaking the *Doshasanghata* by its *Ushna* and *Teekshana* properties, due to their *Anu Pravanabhava* and *Poorvakarma* brings the *Dosha* again into the *Koshtha* without sticking to the channel as honey runs through the walls of the earthen vessel which has been anointed with *Sneha*.

4. VYAVAYI: *Vyavayi guna* of the drugs act directly on the body. It is generally considered that as soon as these types of drugs are ingested, their action starts first then it's *Pachana*^{xiii}. Due to this property

the *Vamana* drug get absorbed and then act quickly. *Dalhana* says that due to this property *Vamana* drugs spread in to the body without changing its form^{xiv}. In other context, he also mentions that *Vamana* drugs are circulated due to *Vyavayi* property and its *Pachana* occurs afterwards like that of *Madya* and *Visha*^{xv}.

5. VIKASI: The drugs, which are having *Vikasi guna*, produce *Shaithilyata* in the *Sandhi* and *Oja* is separated from the *Dhatu*^{xvi}. *Vikasi* are those drugs, which loosens the *Dhatu Bandhana*. *Vamana* drugs due to this property also pervade through whole body without its digestion, such that of *Vyavayi*. Loosening of *Dhatu Bandhana* is nothing but *Dhatu Shaithilya*^{xvii}.

6. SARATVA: Due to this *guna*, *Anulomana* is possible^{xviii}. At other juncture *Dalhana* describes that *Anulomana* is nothing but *Vata* and *Mala Pravartanam*^{xix}. *Gayadasa* another expounder is of the same opinion that *Saratva* is *Visravana* i.e., sliding, spreading. It is possible that due to *Saratva Guna* *Mala* which is brought towards the *Koshtha* from *shaka* may be evacuated. Thus removal of *Dosha* may be enhanced.

B. VIRYA: *Vamana* drugs have *Ushna Virya* due to this *Dahana*, *Svedana*, *Vivarana* and particularly *Pachana* occurs. Drugs first enter the *Hridaya* by potency where from they are circulated through *Dhamani* to *Sthula* and *Anu Srotas* of the body.^{xx} Thus *Ushna Virya* helps the *Vamana* drugs in their circulation all over the body and also in breaking down the *Dosha Sanghata*.

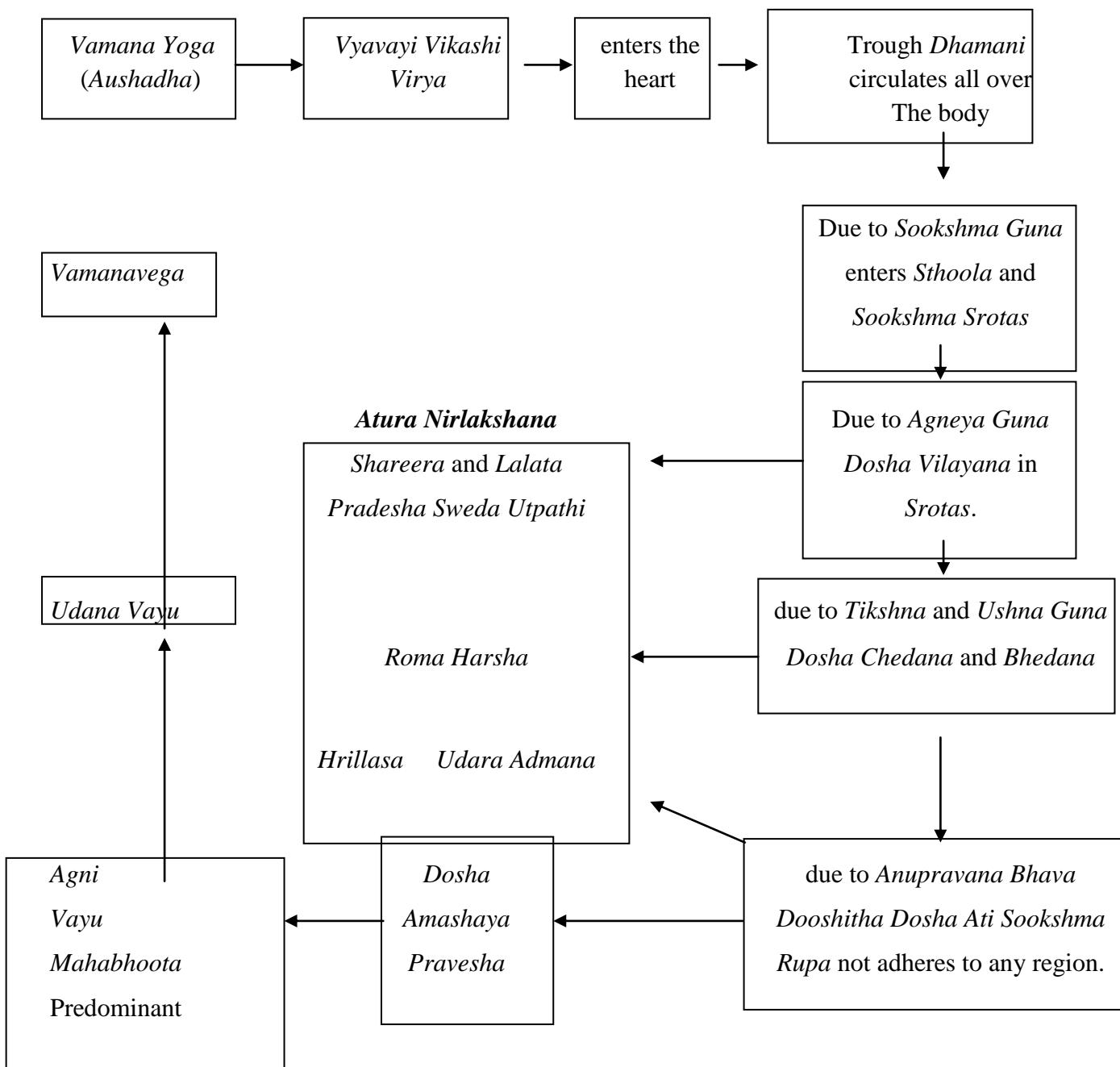
C. VIPAKA: *Vipaka* of *Vamana* drugs seems not to play much role in *Vamana Karma*, because *Vyavayi guna* gets the drugs absorbed without their digestion.

D. PRABHAVA: The main action of *Vamana* is due to its *Prabhava*.

“*Urdva – Anulomana – yatcha – tat prabhava Prabhavitam*” i.e. the action of *Vamana* and *Virechana* drugs are mainly due to their *Prabhava*^{xxi}.

Elaborating *Prabhava* of *Vamana* drugs, *Chakrapani* says that due to dominance of *Agni* and *Vayu Mahabhuta* in their *Panchabhautika* constitution, there is a tendency of *Urdva Gati* of *Vamana* drugs. It may be initiated by *Udana Vayu*. However he says that it is the *Prabhava* of drugs that have important role in *Urdhvagati*^{xxii}.

ILLUSTRATING VAMANA DRAVYA KARMUKATHA SCHEMATICALLY



DISCUSSION: *Vamana* is usually the first major procedure in *Panchakarma* therapy and is the best treatment for *Kapha Dosha*. In addition, it has been described as very much useful in many diseases also.

Vamana is defined by *Charaka* as “A process in which waste products (*Dosha*) are eliminated through upper

channels i.e. mouth”. *Chakrapani* mentions that *Urdhvabhaga* should be considered as *Urdhvamukha*.

Vamana Karma is not merely a gastric lavage as done now a day to empty the content of stomach, but it is a complete management of systemic diseases caused by *Kapha*. *Amashaya* particularly *Urdva Amashaya* is the seat

of action of *Kapha*. The active principle of *Vamana* drug taken orally is absorbed from the stomach into circulatory system wherefrom it is circulated to all over the body. On reaching at the site of lesion (*Dosha Sanghata*), which is at the cellular level, it breaks the nexus of *Dosha* and brings back the toxic substances thus released into the stomach, wherefrom they are expelled out of the body by the action of vomiting.

Further, generally it is considered that the drug given orally cures the diseases originating from the stomach in better way, as it is the main seat of *Kapha*. Mild inflammation is must for purification action. It is noticed that most of the drugs employed in *Vamana* have mild irritation effect and produced mild inflammation facilitates the quick absorption of the active principles (*Virya*) of the drug in the initial stage. Later on it facilitates the excretion of the morbid matters, which generally are not supposed to be excreted out. It is possible only because inflammation increases the permeability of the capillaries, which in turn allow the absorption as well as excretion of the substances, which are not allowed in normal conditions.

The softening (*Visyandana*) action of the drugs may be understood from the example of fatty degeneration. In fatty degeneration, the saturated molecules are chemically inert and do not respond to any chemical reaction. But if the suitable catalytic agent is applied, then it will later on react to the other chemicals also to break them in smaller molecules. The smaller molecules thus formed can be driven out of the cell due to the normal function of the cell or by the action of drug

and thus the cell is freed from the harmful substance leading to the cure of the degeneration.

The *Vamana* drugs are given in full stomach when the pyloric end of stomach remains closed and all the local activities of the *Vamana* drugs are limited to the stomach only. As the drugs have irritant action, so a mild inflammation of the stomach mucosa is produced. It will increase the permeability of the capillaries of the stomach, which in the beginning facilitated the absorption of the active principles of the drug and later on facilitates the excretion of the toxins and metabolites into the stomach where from they are thrown out of the body by the process of vomiting. The process of emesis therapy is considered complete as soon as the pyloric valve opens which is evident from the appearance of bile in vomitus due to the flux of anti peristalsis set during the process of vomiting.

Thus, we can say that it removes *Doshas* by its specific action very precisely and brings health back to normal.

CONCLUSION: The *vamana* is the process to eliminate excess *Kapha Dosha* mainly and also *Pitta* up to some extent because area of working of *Vamaka* drugs is *Amashaya*. *Vamaka* Drugs act through its *gunas* and remove extra amount of *Doshas* especially *Kapha*. Balanced *Kapha* maintains *Agni* which is supreme for healthy functioning of the body.

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Corresponding Author:

Dr.Ravidutt Sharma,P.G. Scholar, Dept. Of Panchakarma, VYDS Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Khurja
Email: akg101081@gmail.com

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None

Declared

Cite this Article as :[Sharma Ravidutt et al : Pharmacological Action of Vamana Drugs] www.ijaar.in : IJAAR VOLUME III ISSUE XII Jan –Feb 2019 Page No:1734-1741