

Anorectal Diseases: An Ayurvedic Review

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ABSTRACT

Anorectal diseases are a group of disorders that affect the anal canal and rectum, commonly including hemorrhoids, fissures, and fistulas. Ayurveda provides a detailed classification, etiology, and therapeutic approach to these diseases, often termed as Arsha, Parikartika, and Bhagandara respectively. Management in Ayurveda includes both internal and external medications, Shodhana (bio-cleansing therapies), surgical techniques like Ksharasutra, and lifestyle correction. The Ayurvedic approach addresses the root cause and emphasizes long-term relief and prevention. This review presents a concise yet comprehensive understanding of anorectal diseases from the Ayurvedic perspective with a correlation to modern concepts.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Anorectal diseases, Arsha, Bhagandara, Parikartika, Ksharasutra

I. INTRODUCTION

Anorectal diseases constitute a significant portion of clinical practice in both surgical and non-surgical disciplines. Conditions such as hemorrhoids, anal fissures, fistula-in-ano, and rectal prolapse are not only distressing but also impact the patient's quality of life by interfering with daily activities, dietary habits, and psychological well-being. Despite advancements in modern surgical techniques, high recurrence rates, postoperative complications, and limited emphasis

on causative factors pose considerable challenges in long-term management.

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, offers a holistic and patient-centered approach to anorectal disorders. Classical texts like Sushruta Samhita, Charaka Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya provide elaborate descriptions of conditions such as Arsha (hemorrhoids), Parikartika (anal fissure), Bhagandara (fistula-in-ano), and Gudabhrmsha (rectal prolapse), along with detailed insights into their etiopathogenesis, symptomatology, and management strategies.

The Ayurvedic system emphasizes not only the treatment of presenting symptoms but also the correction of underlying doshic imbalances, lifestyle modifications, and dietary regulation to prevent recurrence. Therapeutic modalities such as Shamana (palliative), Shodhana (purificatory), and surgical procedures like Ksharasutra and Agnikarma represent a unique blend of medical and para-surgical approaches, many of which are now gaining scientific recognition.

Aim & Objective

- To present a detailed and structured Ayurvedic review of anorectal diseases.
- To analyze types, pathogenesis, diagnostic parameters (Nidana Panchaka), and Ayurvedic as well as evidence-based management strategies.

Ayurvedic Classification of Anorectal Diseases

| Sr. No. | Ayurvedic Name | Modern Equivalent | Signs | Primary Involvement | Doshic |
|---------|----------------|---------------------|--|---------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Arsha | Hemorrhoids (Piles) | Mass protrusion, pain, bleeding, itching | Vata, Pitta, (Tridoshaja) | Kapha |
| 2 | Bhagandara | Fistula-in-ano | Chronic pus discharge, sinus tract, pain | Pitta, Kapha | |
| 3 | Parikartika | Anal fissure | Sharp cutting pain during/after defecation, bleeding | Vata | |

| Sr. No. | Ayurvedic Name | Modern Equivalent | Signs | Primary Involvement | Doshic |
|---------|----------------------|-------------------|---|---------------------|--------|
| 4 | Gudabhramsha | Rectal prolapse | Protrusion of rectum, difficulty in defecation | Vata | |
| 5 | Guda Vidradhi | Anorectal abscess | Painful perianal swelling, pus formation, fever | Pitta, Kapha | |

Nidana Panchaka in Anorectal Diseases: A Brief Review

Nidana Panchaka is a fundamental diagnostic framework in Ayurveda, consisting of five key elements that help in understanding the causes, symptoms, pathogenesis, and treatment of diseases. This approach is particularly useful for managing anorectal diseases such as hemorrhoids (Arsha), fistula-in-ano (Bhagandara), anal fissures (Parikartika), rectal prolapse (Gudabhramsha), and anorectal abscesses (Guda Vidradhi).

1. Nidana (Causative Factors)

Anorectal diseases are primarily caused by improper diet (spicy, dry, constipating foods), lifestyle (sedentary habits, straining), and environmental factors (stress). These lead to Vata, Pitta, and Kapha imbalances, affecting the anal region.

2. Purvarupa (Prodromal Symptoms)

Early signs include mild discomfort, itching, bleeding during defecation, and incomplete bowel evacuation. Recognizing these signs early helps in preventing the disease from progressing.

3. Rupa (Main Symptoms)

Symptoms include:

- Arsha (Hemorrhoids): Pain, swelling, bleeding.
- Bhagandara (Fistula-in-ano): Pus discharge, pain.
- Parikartika (Anal fissure): Sharp pain, bleeding.
- Gudabhramsha (Rectal prolapse): Protrusion of rectal tissues.
- Guda Vidradhi (Anorectal abscess): Pain, redness, fever.

4. Upashaya–Anupashaya (Therapeutic Response)

Therapeutic tests such as sitz baths, laxatives, and oil applications help confirm diagnoses. Relief from these therapies supports conditions like hemorrhoids, while aggravation often correlates with constipation or straining.

5. Samprapti

Tridosha vitiation (especially Vata and Pitta) plays a central role. Chronic constipation, straining, suppression of urges, or heavy food leads to Dosha imbalance and Rakta Dushti. Local tissues (Guda region) become weak or inflamed, leading to disease formation.

Example: **Arsha** – Apana Vata obstruction, Rakta Dushti → venous engorgement

Bhagandara – Infection → Pitta-Kapha aggravation → abscess → fistula tract

II. DISCUSSION

The Ayurvedic approach to anorectal diseases is both medical and surgical.

Ksharasutra therapy, a unique Ayurvedic method for treating Bhagandara, has been validated by scientific studies for its high success rate and minimal recurrence.

Parikartika is managed effectively with internal Snehana, Virechana, and local application of soothing Ghritas or Tailas.

Arsha is classified as Sadhya or Asadhya depending on type, chronicity, and constitution; managed with oral medicines, Kshara application, or Agnikarma.

Ayurveda emphasizes **Ahara-Vihara (diet and lifestyle)** in both prevention and cure, recommending fiber-rich diets, adequate hydration, timely bowel habits, and avoidance of irritants. Evidence-based studies support the use of Ayurvedic interventions like Triphalachurna, Jatyadi Taila, and Panchavalkala decoction in clinical practice.

III. CONCLUSION

Anorectal disorders are complex, painful conditions often managed symptomatically in modern medicine. Ayurveda offers a deeper, cause-based approach combining Shamana, Shodhana, and surgical therapies like Ksharasutra and Agnikarma. The integration of Ayurvedic principles with current scientific evaluation can enhance the management of anorectal diseases. With proper documentation and clinical trials, Ayurveda has the

potential to contribute significantly to global proctology.

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