

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JALAUKAVACHARANA AND SIRAVEDHA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF VARICOSE VEINS

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ABSTRACT

Varicose veins are dilated, tortuous superficial veins commonly affecting the lower limbs due to venous valve incompetence and chronic venous hypertension. In Ayurveda, varicose veins can be correlated with **Siragranthi** and **Raktadushti**, described in classical texts like Sushruta Samhita and Charaka Samhita. Among the Shodhana therapies, **Jalaukavacharana (leech therapy)** and **Siravedha (therapeutic venesection)** are important Raktamokshana procedures indicated in vascular disorders. This article presents a comparative evaluation of both procedures in the management of varicose veins.

KEYWORDS: Varicose Veins, Siragranthi, Jalaukavacharana, Siravedha, Raktamokshana, Ayurveda.

1. INTRODUCTION

Varicose veins are a chronic venous disorder characterized by:

- Dilated superficial veins
- Leg heaviness
- Pain and burning sensation
- Edema
- Hyperpigmentation
- Venous ulcers (advanced cases)

Modern management includes:

- Compression therapy
- Sclerotherapy
- Laser ablation
- Surgical ligation

However, recurrence and post-procedure complications remain concerns. Ayurveda offers minimally invasive blood-letting therapies aimed at correcting vitiated Rakta and relieving venous congestion.

2. Ayurvedic Concept of Varicose Veins

According to Sushruta, **Siragranthi** refers to dilated, knotted veins caused by vitiation of **Vata and Rakta**.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis)

- Vata aggravation → causes dilation and tortuosity
- Rakta dushti → causes inflammation and discoloration
- Kapha involvement → heaviness and swelling
- Obstruction in Siravaha Srotas

Thus, treatment includes:

- Raktamokshana
- Vata-Rakta shamana
- Shothahara therapy

3. Jalaukavacharana (Leech Therapy)

Classical Reference

Described in detail in Sushruta Samhita under Raktamokshana procedures.

Procedure

- Application of medicinal leech on affected vein
- Leech sucks impure blood
- Detachment after sufficient bloodletting

Mechanism of Action

Ayurvedic View

- Removes vitiated Rakta
- Pacifies Pitta and Rakta
- Reduces Shotha (inflammation)

Modern View

- Leech saliva contains:
 - Hirudin (anticoagulant)
 - Anti-inflammatory substances

- Vasodilators
- Improves microcirculation
- Reduces venous congestion

Advantages

- Mild and safe
- Suitable for delicate patients
- Effective in inflamed varicose veins
- Useful in venous ulcers

Limitations

- Slow process
- Requires multiple sittings
- Risk of infection if not sterile

4. Siravedha (Therapeutic Venesection)**Classical Reference**

Strongly advocated by Sushruta as the best treatment for Rakta Dushti.

Procedure

- Identification of affected vein
- Controlled venesection
- Removal of vitiated blood

Mechanism of Action**Ayurvedic View**

- Rapid elimination of vitiated Rakta
- Reduces venous pressure
- Corrects Vata obstruction

Modern Correlation

- Reduces venous congestion
- Decreases local pressure
- Improves circulation
- Relieves heaviness and pain

Advantages

- Immediate relief
- Effective in severe congestion
- Reduces venous pressure quickly

Limitations

- Invasive
- Not suitable in anemia or elderly frail patients
- Requires surgical skill

6. Clinical Indications**Jalaukavacharana Preferred In:**

- Early varicose veins
- Associated dermatitis
- Venous ulcers
- Burning sensation

Siravedha Preferred In:

- Severe venous congestion
- Marked pain and heaviness
- Thickened, tense veins

7. DISCUSSION

Both procedures aim at removing vitiated Rakta and relieving venous stasis. Jalaukavacharana acts gently and also provides anti-inflammatory biochemical benefits through leech saliva. Siravedha provides rapid decompression of engorged veins.

In modern understanding:

- Jalaukavacharana improves microcirculation and prevents clot formation.
- Siravedha reduces venous hypertension mechanically.

Combination therapy may offer better outcomes in selected patients.

8. CONCLUSION

Jalaukavacharana and Siravedha are effective Ayurvedic Raktamokshana procedures for managing varicose veins (Siragranthi). Jalaukavacharana is safer and suitable for inflammatory and ulcerative conditions, whereas Siravedha is more effective in severe venous congestion. Proper patient selection based on Dosha predominance and disease severity is essential for optimal outcomes.

Further controlled clinical studies are required to establish standardized protocols and evidence-based validation.

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