



AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO PRESBYOPIA

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Abstract

Eye is the most highly specialized sense organ serving the most vital function of providing sight to living creatures. Presbyopia is a refractive condition which is very common that occurs with age. The prevalence of presbyopia is higher in societies in which larger proportions of the population survive into old age. It is an inability to accommodate the near object distinctly due to hardening of the lens and weakening of the ciliary muscles. Though modern medical science has made tremendous, remarkable progress and advances in the field of ophthalmology in the recent time, the importance of *Ayurvedic* treatment in the diseases of eyes cannot be ignored. In *Ayurveda*, Clinical features related to visual disturbances are seen only in *Drishtigata rogas*. Hence all cases of visual disturbances can be correlated under the broad heading of *Timira – Kacha - Linganasha* complex. The part of clinical feature of *Timira* (First & Second *Patala*) can be correlated with Presbyopia.

Key Words: Presbyopia, *Timira*

Introduction

Presbyopia is not an error of refraction but an anomaly of accommodation due to age. Which usually occur at the age of fourty years, when the least distance of distinct vision recedes beyond twenty five c.m. from the eye due to decrease in the elasticity and plasticity of the lens and age related decrease in the power of ciliary muscles¹. So here age is the major risk factor for development of Presbyopia, although the condition may occur prematurely as the result of factors such as uncorrected hypermetropia, premature sclerosis of the lens, chronic simple glaucoma and pre senile weakness of ciliary muscle².

Blurring hypermetropia, premature sclerosis of the lens, chronic simple glaucoma and pre senile weakness of ciliary muscle². Blurring of vision while reading books to start with in the evening and in dim light and later even in good light. The vision improves if the book is held further away from the eye and disease appear early in persons doing too much near work³. Other common symptoms are delays in focusing at near or distance, ocular discomfort, headache, squinting, fatigue or drowsiness from near work, increased working distance, need for brighter light for reading and Diplopia. Such problems are likely to be greater when patients become fatigued, for example, at the end of the day or the end of the work week.

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Concepts of Timira: *Timira* is one such eye disease, which starts from *Avyakta darshana* and ends in complete loss of vision i.e. *Linganasha*. Its literally meaning is darkness. Its clinical features based on involvement of *Patalas* & vitiation of *Doshas*. So the treatment of the *Timira* depends upon the stage and dominance of particular *Doshas*. In *Amarakosha*, the meaning of *Timira* is given as darkness⁴

Etiology of Timira:

Acharya Charaka has broadly classified the causes as misuse, overuse and disuse of the senses and has regarded as “Volitional transgression”. i.e. excessive gazing at the over brilliant object is excessive use, avoiding looking altogether is disuse and seeing too near, too distant, fierce, frightful, wonderful, disliked, disgusting, deformed and terrifying objects is perverted use of objects⁵.

Acharya Sushruta and others have also described Excessive looking at distant objects and Concentrating on minute objects are the causes for eye diseases⁶. Eye can visualize the things up to some distance without any strain, but gazing at the very distant objects for a long time results into eye strain & later leads to eye disorders. in professions like astronomers, Scientists in the observatories, personnel from military at boarder, personnel from Railway, Merchant Navy to see signals or distant object

continuously. Observing the minute things regularly causes strain to the ciliary muscles and lens results in visual problems e.g. Pathology technicians, Diamond Cutter, Wrist watch repairers, Tailors, ladies doing embroidery work etc.

Samprapti: The *Vimarga Gamana* of increased *Doshas* through *Siras* towards *Drishti* & localization in *Patalas* is said to be the *Samprapti* of *Timira*. The localization of *Doshas* in the *Patalas* further prevents the functional capacities of *Patalas* and leads to blurred vision or *Avyakta Darshana*⁷.

Treatments of Timira: The treatments of *Timira* can be broadly divided into:-

- *Nidana Parivarjana:* *Nidana Parivarjana* is the basic treatment and very important to treat the disease⁸. Avoidance from the etiological factors like Excessive or deficient or wrong use of senses, *Diwaswapna*, *Vegavarodha*, *Atimaitihuna*, *Viruddhahara* etc.
- *Kriyakalpas:* In *Ayurvedic* classics various therapeutic procedures are explained which are said to improve or enhance the visual acuity as well as improve the health of the eye. *Kriyakalpa* is one such group of special methods of drug administration locally into the eye for the treatment for eye diseases. As *Panchkarma* is the basis of *Kayachikitsa*, similarly the *kriya kalpa* is the basis of the treatment of eye diseases. Its include

Tarpana, Putapaka, Seka, Aschyotana and Anjana. in which *Tarpana* is foremost procedure for *Timira* and provides *Vatashamaka* effect and nourishment to the eyes and improves visual acuity.

- *Shanshamana Chikitsa: Triphala* is said to be the drug of choice in case of *Timira* with various *Anupanas* (vehicles) according to the involvement of *Doshas*. In *Pittaja* type mixed with plenty of Ghee regularly; similarly in *vataja* type, it should be taken with oil and in *kaphaja* one with plenty of honey properly⁹. Other *chakshushya rasayana* compounds came into *Ayurvedic* literature after 16th century viz. *Saptamrita Lauha* etc. many mineral and animal drugs e.g. *Yashada* etc. is termed as *Chaksushya*.
- *Virechan Karma: Virechana* is said to be ideal for *Anulomana* of *Doshas* specially vitiated *Pitta*, as eye is the sight of *Pitta* predominance. In *Vataja Timira* castor oil mixed with milk is applicable; *Triphla ghrita* is a general evacuative particularly in diseases of *Rakta* and *Pitta*; in *kaphaja* type, *Virechan* with Ghee processed with *Trivrit* is recommended while in *Tridoshaja*, oil processed with the *Trivrita* is useful¹⁰.
- *Nasya Procedure:* Good numbers of *Nasya* yogas are also described for *Timira* because nose is a gateway of drug

administration in case of *Urdhwajatrugata rogas & Nasya* is the only procedure which directly influences all *Indriyas*¹¹.

DISCUSSION

Timira, Kacha and *Linganasha* are the progressive stages of a disease. According to *vagbhatta*,

When the *Malas (Doshas)* moving in the *shiras* get localized in the first *patala* the person sees the objects hazy & sometimes see the object clearly without any obvious causes. *Avyakta Darshana* especially for near objects, a symptom produced due to affliction of first *Patala*¹².

When the vitiated *Doshas* invade Second *Patala*, the patient complains of Inability to thread a needle, Appearance of near objects as distant and Appearance of distant objects as near¹³. Due to accommodative failures, it is the common complaint of *Presbyopia*. So considering these views, it can be concluded that *Timira* at the stage of second *Patala* involvement can be correlated to *Presbyopia*.

The vitiated *Doshas* will produce absence of parts of objects when they are situated in the third *Patala* and vision is obstructed completely when the disorder advances to the fourth *Patalas*, this condition is known as *Linganasha*¹⁴.

CONCLUSION

Timira is a disease when the vitiated *Doshas* are situated in the first and second *Patala*. The disease progresses to *Kacha* and *Linganasha* when the *Doshas* involve third and fourth *Patala* respectively. The clinical picture of vitiated *Doshas* in first and second *Patalas*, which are analyzed here, simulates very much with Presbyopia. According to *Vagbhata*, All efforts should be made to strengthen because once the vision is lost the different kinds of things of the world will all become of one kind- that of darkness¹⁵.

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