



Ayurveda- A Guide to Prevent Lifestyle Related Eye Disorders

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Abstract:

With prompt economic development and increasing westernization, man has become his own rival by creating lots of hazards like inappropriate working patterns, unmanaged urbanization, and ineffective lifestyle transformations. In the past few decades, prevalence of lifestyle related diseases has reached alarming proportions. In this fast and advanced life we rarely pay attention to the health of the most precious organ “Eyes”. Ayurveda is an integral and most ancient form of medical stream which is primarily aimed at prevention of disease & promotion of positive health. Its holistic approach towards positive life style creates its inevitable significance in the present scenario. Thorough eye care is described under “*Shalakyta Tantra*” (one of the eight branches of *Ayurveda*). Vedic science offers many safe, effective and simple techniques for maintaining visual health. These primitive approaches can be easily practiced in everyday life to prevent lifestyle related eye disorders. *Ayurvedic* perceptions regarding maintenance of eye health and prevention of eye disorders are explored in this article.

Keywords: *Kriya-kalpas, Shalakyta, Netratarpana, Trataka, Padabhayanga.*

INTRODUCTION

Lifestyle diseases characterize those diseases whose occurrence is primarily based on the daily habits of people and are a result of an inappropriate relationship of people with their environment^[1]. According to Ayurveda diseases due to ‘*Prajnaparadha*’^[2] which results in disharmony of *doshasin* body are life style disorders. The branch of *Shalakyta Tantra* is one among *Ashtang Ayurveda*, which specializes in the treatment of *Urdhvajatrugata* (Part of the body above clavicle and sternum manubri) *Rogas*^[3]. In *Uttratantra* of *Sushruta Samhita*, first 19 chapters have been devoted to the prevention and cure of eye diseases, which indicates the significance of *Netrarogavigyan* (Ophthalmology). Eye disorders are much more important than any other physical disability, since the loss of vision tantamount to the obliteration of the world.

Various causative factors which are mentioned by ancient *Acharyas* thousands of years ago, are presently the most common cause for ocular disorders, some of which with their correlation with modern life style are mentioned below:

1. *Ushnabhitaptasya Jalapraveshat*^[4]- Sudden change in temperature may damage the functioning of vessels and lead to the weakness of the ocular tissues. It may interrupt with lacrimation, accommodation, pupillary and fixation reflexes. In present era, drinking cold drinks immediately after exposure to hot environment, entering in Air Conditioned area soon after exposure to sun are few reasons for eye disorders.

2. *Swapanaviparyayat*^[4] Abnormal sleeping patterns like *diva swapna* and *nisi jagarana*. Suppressing the sleep causes dryness in eyes. In present era night shifts, night parties are few instances of altered sleeping habits. It may cause hyperaemia of conjunctiva, dry eye syndrome, reflux lacrimation, styes

3. **Klesha**^[4]Modern lifestyle has become synonym of stress. Both physical and mental stress may lead to eye disorders. Blepharospasms may occur as a result of increased stress. The spasms cause the eyelid to twitch uncontrollably which leads to poor depth perception and decreased vision. Stress may cause dilation of pupil. Dilated pupils allow more light to enter in eyes need to react quicker, potentially leading to light sensitivity, headache.

4. **Vega vinigraha**^[4]Suppression of natural urges lead to diseases of eye. Suppression of urges causes *vataprakopa*, leading to weakness of ocular tissues and strain to eyes. Prolonged office duties, class room, meetings and even TV programs are responsible nowadays for suppression of natural urges.

5. **Dhoomanishewanat**^[4]Excessive exposure to smoke, noxious gases and other pollutants can cause also result in eye ailments. Smoking, air pollution from vehicles, factories cause *vata* and *pitta dushti* which is a major cause of dry eye, age related macular degeneration, Cataract, macular degeneration, uveitis.

6. **Sukshmanireekshanat**^[4]Watching minute objects for long duration. This causes strain to ciliary muscles, lens and extra-ocular muscles leading to eye strain, headache, blurred vision, watering in eyes and early need of presbyopic addition. In this modern era, excessive use of computers, mobiles, reading on video display screens are some of the major causes.

Ayurveda is not merely a system of medicine in the conventional sense of curing disease, but it is also a way of life that teaches us to maintain and protect health. The holistic approach of *Ayurveda*, targeted towards physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being makes this science a great preference in lifestyle disorders.

MAINTAINENCE AND PROMOTION OF HEALTHY EYES THROUGH AYURVEDA

Ancient *ayurvedic* treatises dwelt at length on the care and nurturing of eyes. Vedic science offers many safe, effective and easy techniques for eye care. These primitive approaches can be easily practiced in everyday life to overcome various lifestyle related ocular disorders.

Dincharya(Daily Regimen):

Dincharya for maintaining eye health is stated in ancient texts. *Acharya Shushruta* start daily regimen with *Netraprakshalana* (eye wash) whereas *Acharya Charak* recommend *Anjana*.

- a) **NETRA PRAKSHALANA**^[5]: After getting up from bed in the morning ,washing eyes with the *swaras* of *Amalaki* or decoction of *Lodhra*.
- b) **ANJANA**^[6]: Application of *ayurvedic* formulations along the inner surface of the eyelids. It is best simple procedure to prevent eye diseases.
- c) **ABHAYANGA**^[7]: Daily application of medicated oil on head especially *Murdha* region, is a preventive measure for eye disorders. It acts as *drishtiprasadan*.
- d) **SHEETODAK SHIRA SNANA**^[8]: Hot water for head wash may adversely affect hair and eyes . Thus, cold water should be used for head wash.
- e) **NASYA**^[9]: Instillation of *ayurvedic* medicines through the nasal route to nourish the organs above clavicle. A person who regularly practices *nasya* can never suffer from diminished vision or loss of vision.
- f) **PADABHAYANGA**^[10]: Regular massage of feet with oil is indicated as *drishtiprasadan*.
- g) **PADAPRAKSHALAN**^[11]: Washing and cleaning of foot also acts as *drishtiprasadan*.
- h) **CHATRA DHARANA**^[12]: Use of umbrella while going out has *Chakshushya* effect as it protects eyes from dust , sunshine and heat.
- i) **NETRA-TARPANA**: It is a restorative *Ayurvedic* treatment that bathes the entire eye socket in a pool of lukewarm *ghrita*, this helps to nourish dry eyes, cleanse and soothe itchy eyes, *ghrita* cools the *pitta* and

lubricates *Vatadosha*. It is recommended for many ocular disorders. Moreover, it provides nourishment to ocular tissues.

Yoga Asanas for healthy Eyes:

Trataka and *Netikriya* help to improve vision and prevent eye disorders. *Shirshasana* and *Suryanamaskara* are another important *asanas*, which are proven to be very beneficial for eyes. These *asanas* boost circulation to the blood vessels and capillaries, relax the eyes, and over a period of time, are reported to even improve vision.

PATHYA AND APATHYA AAHARA FOR HEALTHY EYES^[13,14]:

PATHYA

Lohitashali (red rice), *yava*(barley), *mugda*(green gram), *vanyakultha* (*Dolichos biflorus*), *sita*, *kumara* (*Aleovera*), *jeevanti* (*Leptadenia reticulata*), *punarnava* (*Boerhavia procumbens*), *patola* (*Trichosanthes dioica*), *karvella* (bitter gourd), *vastuka*, *flesh of birds*, *draksha*, *triphala*, seeds of coriander, *go dugdha* (Cow's Milk), *ajaghrita*, *takra* (Buttermilk), *peya*, *vilepi*, *yusha*.

APATHYA AAHARA

Amla, *Lavana*, *Katu Rasa*, *Kshara*, *Masha*, *Matsya* (fish), *go dadhi*(curd), *Atimadhyapaan*(excessive alcohol intake), *Tambula*(Piper Betel).

Over consumption of too spicy food, junk food, fast food, food which is stored for long duration, and stale food should be avoided.

Vihara:

- During work gentle "Palming" for just few minutes can keep many eye ailments away, resulting in relaxed and healthy eyes. This is simply rubbing the palms together for few seconds and gently placing them over eyes, it provides deep rest that blocks outside stimulation.
- Staying awake into the fiery *Pitta* hours of late night leads to over exertion. So, it is better to sleep early and wake up in *Brahmamuhurata* (*early morning*). This is not only good for eyes but it is also good for entire body and calm mind.
- Stress is one of the causes of eye disorders, so it can be overcome through *Dhyana*(meditation).
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THERAPEUTIC PROCEDURES

"*Kriyakalpas*"^[15]: Ayurvedic therapeutic measures adopted for the treatment of eye diseases and to promote eye health are known as *Kriyakalpas*. *Tarpan*, *Putapak*, *Seka*, *Aschotana* and *Anjana* are included under this.

DISCUSSION

In the present scenario the lifestyle of people is occupied of hectic schedules. Eye disorders are most likely to occur in certain occupations e.g. prolonged exposure to computer screens, late night duties etc.

From the foregoing it is clear that thousands of years ago, *Ayurvedic* treatises had very broad knowledge regarding Eyes including its disorders & treatment. The teachings and principles which were put forth in ancient times to keep one's health disease free, the exact same philosophy is implicated in modern times.

But to lead a luxurious life in the present era, money has got precedence, in running after this precedence man has scarcity of time for personal life. This scarcity of time progresses with negligence of health. *Ayurveda's* simplicity, inclination towards natural modalities and a consideration of *mansikstithi* (psyche), besides other causes of an ailment are possibly the best reason explaining its popularity. Changes should be made in diet, behaviour and life style. While adopting the adjustments one can best follow the principles of *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Sadavrutta* (good conduct), *Rasayana* (anti-aging regimen) and

AacharaRasayana(good behavioral changes).Prevention is the objective. *Dinacharya*, *Sadavrutta*, *AcharaRasayana*, *Shodana*are the methodologies.Refinements in lifestyle through “Ayurveda” can help us to get a new remoulded pair of Eyes.

Few modifications in our daily routine can keep us away from common eye problems. Ayurveda is a treasure of herbal formulations and other therapeutic measures, but keeping modern life-style in mind, where man has lack of time for himself, measures which can be easily incorporated in routine are discussed here.

CONCLUSION

For eye disorders, a few simple regimens like *Anjana* (Collyrium), *Nasya* (nasal application of drugs), *Abhyanga* (Oil massage), *Snana* (Bath), *Padabhyanga* (Foot massage with oil) are promoted as effective measures for the prevention of lifestyle related ocular disorders and maintenance of eye health. Various *Yogasanas* and *Shatkriyas* are also said to be beneficial for the health of eyes. A practice of such simple techniques along with appropriate lifestyle modifications along with inclusion of proper diet and exercise can prevent ocular diseases as is seen in this review.

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