

Role of *Panchakarma* in Facial Nerve Palsy (Bell's Palsy): A Case Report

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Panchakarma* (Penta biopurification) and allied therapies are a boon for Ayurvedic physicians. *Ardita* is one among the *asheeti vata vikara* (80 disorders of morbid *vata*) that affects *uttamanga*. Symptoms of *Ardita* mimic those of Bell's palsy. We will get a description of *Ardita* in various Ayurvedic literatures.

Case description: A 22-year-old female patient approached the *Panchakarma* OPD of the Rajeev Institute of Ayurvedic Medical Science and Research Centre, Hassan, with the complaint of deviation of mouth towards the right side, unable to close the left eye, and unable to raise the eyebrows on the affected side with pain and swelling below the left ear towards the left cheek up to the angle of mouth. A neurologist in the city diagnosed the condition as Bell's palsy and informed the patient that complete recovery is not possible. With the ray of hope, she approached the *Panchakarma* department for better treatment. Bell's palsy or facial nerve palsy is a condition where the functions of the facial nerve are paralyzed. In this case study, various *Panchakarma* therapies, such as *Shirovasti* (medicated oil retained on the head) and *Ksheeradhooma* (vaporized medicated milk), are initially administered for 1 week, followed by *Nasya* (errhine therapy/nasal medication) and *Kukkutanda Pinda Sweda* for the latter half.

Results: Patient was completely recovered in a short span of 18 days of treatment. House–Brackmann grade came from V to I (score 2/8 to 8/8) after the complete course of treatment.

Conclusion: Ayurveda has a potential line of approach that can manage conditions like facial nerve palsy (Bell's palsy) vis-à-vis *Ardita* effectively.

Keywords: *Ardita*, Bell's palsy, Case report, Facial nerve palsy, *Ksheeradhooma*, *Kukkutanda Pinda Sweda*, *Moordhni Taila*, *Panchakarma*.

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INTRODUCTION

Acharya Charaka mentioned the treatment principle of *Ardita* as *Navana* (*Nasya karma*), *Moordhni Taila* (various modes of application of oil on the head), *Tarpana* (irrigation of medicated ghee¹ on the eye), *Karna poorana* (pouring of medicated oil in the ear), *Nadee sweda* (medicated vapors), and *Upanaha* (application of warm medicinal paste made up of meat of animals living in marshy land).¹

Acharya Vagbhata has mentioned the treatment principle of *Ardita* as *Navana* (*Nasya karma*), *Moordhni Taila* (various modes of application of oil on the head), *Akshi Tarpana* (irrigation of medicated ghee on the eye), and *Shrotra Tarpana* (pouring of medicated oil in the ear). Furthermore, it is mentioned that any *Shotha* (Swelling) then *Vamana* (emetic therapy), and if symptoms like *Daha* (burning sensation) and *Raga* (Redness) are present in a patient, should perform *Siravyadhana* (blood letting therapy).²

Ardita is one among the 80 *Vataja nanatmaja vikaras* (80 disorders of morbid *Vata*).³ Clinical features of *Ardita* mentioned by Acharya Charaka are seen in one half of the face, trunk, extremities, or it is restricted to the face only.⁴ It affects one side of the face according to Acharya Sushruta, whereas Acharya Vagbhata mentioned that it involves one half of the face along with one half of the body.^{5,6}

Facial nerve palsy or Bell's palsy is the most common cause of facial weakness. It is a common lower motor nerve paralysis of the seventh cranial nerve (facial nerve) of unknown cause.⁷

There will be flaccid muscle paralysis unilaterally, which is responsible for facial expression in Bell's palsy patients.⁸

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Any attempt to do facial movement asymmetry shows clearly, and on the affected side, it is unable to perform.⁹

Bell's palsy is more often seen in females aged 17–30 years, which is the common cause of paralysis of the facial nerve.^{10,11}

The annual global incidence of Bell's palsy is between 11 and 40 per one lakh people.¹²

A complete recovery is possible from Bell's palsy by the usage of corticosteroids and antiviral acyclovir as per the conclusion of an evidence-based review by the first American Academy of Neurology (AAN) in 2001.

Table 1: The details of symptoms

Sl. No.	Complaints/events	Duration/date
1.	Fever	5/1/2023
2.	Deviation of angle of mouth	5/1/2023
3.	Occasional headache	5/1/2023
4.	Deviation of angle of mouth	12/1/2023
5.	Difficulty to close left eye	12/1/2023
6.	Occasional headache	12/1/2023
7.	Mild swelling below the left ear	12/1/2023

Table 2: The details of the *Panchakarma* therapy

Sl. No.	Name of the treatment	Days
1.	<i>Rasna Choorna+Gandharvahastadi Eranda Taila-Talam</i>	1–4
2.	<i>Ksheeradhooma</i> —Kind of <i>Nadi sweda</i>	5–11
3.	<i>Shirobasti</i> with <i>Dhanvanthara Taila</i>	5–11
4.	<i>Kukkutanda Pinda Sweda</i> —Bolus prepared from hen's egg	12–18
5.	<i>Nasya</i> with <i>Dhanvantara 101</i> —4 drops on each nostril	12–18

CASE DESCRIPTION

A 22-year-old female patient approached the *Panchakarma* OPD of Rajeev Institute of Ayurvedic Medical Science and Research Centre, Hassan, with the complaint of deviation of the mouth towards the right side, unable to close the left eye, and unable to raise the eyebrows on the affected side with pain and swelling below the left ear towards the left cheek up to the angle of the mouth. The patient had the above symptoms 1 week earlier, due to which she approached a neurologist and was diagnosed with Bell's palsy. The above symptom did not subside due to which she approached Rajeev Ayurveda Hospital, Hassan, for better treatment. During the period, there was an extreme cold climate. The patient had a history of viral fever. The patient's symptoms are mentioned in Table 1.

Clinical Findings

Ashtavidha Pareeksha

- *Nadi*: 72/min
- *Mootra*: 3–4 times/day
- *Mala*: Soft, once daily
- *Jihwa*: *Alipta*
- *Shabda*: *Sphuta*
- *Sparsha*: *Anushna Sheeta*
- *Drik*: *Prakrita*
- *Akriti*: Well-built

Dashavidha Pareeksha

- *Prakriti*: *Kapha-Pitta*
- *Vikriti*: *Kapha-Vata*
- *Sara*: *Madhyama*
- *Samhanana*: *Madhyama*
- *Satmya*: *Sarvarasa*
- *Satwa*: *Madhyama*
- *Vaya*: *Yuva*
- *Ahara Shakti*: *Madhyama*
- *Vyayama Shakti*: *Madhyama*
- *Pramana*: Height—5 feet 7 inches; weight—59 kg

General Examination

- BP—130/80 mm Hg, temp—98.6°F, heart rate—70 beats/min, pulse rate—68/min.
- Appetite—good, bowel—regular, formed, once daily, sleep—adequate, urine—2–3 times/day.
- Menstrual history: Regular, 3–4 days/28 days.

Systemic Examination

- Respiratory system: Normal vesicular breath sounds heard, no added sound

- Cardiovascular system: S1 and S2 sounds heard, no murmur
- Per abdomen: Soft, nontender, no organomegaly

Central Nervous System (Higher Mental Functions) Examination

- Consciousness: Patient is conscious and well oriented
- Higher motor functions: Intact
- Orientation to place, person and time: Intact
- Memory (recent and past): Intact
- Speech: Normal
- Hallucination and delusion: Absent
- Intelligence: Intact

Examination of Cranial Nerves

Neurological examination of all the cranial nerves is within normal limits except the facial nerve.

Facial Nerve Examination

- Absence of furrows on the left side
- Unable to raise the forehead on the left side
- Leakage of air through the left cheek while blowing
- Incomplete closure of the left eye (Bell's phenomenon positive)
- Muscle power and tone were normal in all the limbs
- Deep reflexes, such as knee, ankle, plantar, biceps, triceps, etc., were normal
- Coordination test
- Finger-nose test possible
- Dysdiadochokinesia possible
- Heel walking possible
- Heel shin test possible

Diagnostic Assessment

The patient was prediagnosed as Bell's palsy by a neurologist in the city. Based on the symptoms exhibited by the patient, condition was diagnosed as *Ardita* (Bell's Palsy).

Therapeutic Intervention

Treatment was planned after analyzing the involvement of *Dosha* (Morbid Humor). Initially, oral medication along with *Talam* (application of medicinal paste on the vertex) was given. Fourth day onwards *Bahir-Parimarjana* (external therapies) and *Panchakarma Chikitsa* (Penta bio-purification treatment) was started. *Panchakarma* (Penta bio-purification) therapies and oral medications are detailed in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.

Follow-up and Outcome

The patient underwent the above-mentioned treatment for 18 days. Patient came after 1 and 6 months for the first and second follow-up,

Table 3: The *Shamanoushadhi* (oral medications)

Sl. No.	Name of the treatment	Dose	Days
1.	<i>Dhana Dhanayanadi Kashaya</i>	15 mL in the morning and evening before food with 60 mL of water	1–14
2.	<i>Rasona Kalka</i>	6 gm in the morning and night with food	1–7
3.	<i>Ekangaveer Ras</i>	1 tablet in the morning and night after food	1–7
4.	<i>Dhanvantara 101 Capsule</i>	1 capsule in the morning and night	14–30
5.	<i>Dhanvantara Kashaya</i>	15 mL in the morning and evening before food with 60 mL of water	14–30

respectively. The patient was absolutely free from symptoms. She was strictly instructed not to bite hard food articles and kept covered while going out during cold weather. The patient came for the last follow-up after 1 year without any recurrence.

DISCUSSION

Initially, for *kapha-vata shaman* (mitigating the morbid humor) *Rasnadi choorna*¹³ with *Gandharva Hastadi Eranda Taila*¹⁴ *talam* (a medicinal paste applied on the vertex) was advised for 4 days to the patient. Internally, *Dhanadhanayadi Kashaya*¹⁵ along with *Rasona kalka*¹⁶ and *Ekanga Veera Ras*¹⁷ were prescribed for first one week. In the second week, *Dhanadhanayadi Kashaya* and *Ekanga Veera Ras* was continued. *Rasona Kalka* (paste of garlic) was discontinued after the first week. All the ingredients of *Dhanadhanayadi Kashaya* are *teekshna-ushna* in nature will mitigate the *kapha dosha*. It is specifically indicated for *Ardita*. *Ksheeradhooma*—a kind of *nadi sweda* (medicated steam) where in vaporized medicated milk is held on the face and neck region through a tube. *Ksheeradhooma* (vaporized milk) contains *Bala kashaya* (Decoction of *Sida Cordifolia*) and milk. It is a kind of *swedana karma* (sudation therapy) that does the *kapha vata shaman* (mitigates morbid humor). *Mukhabhyanga* (face massage) was done as a *poorva karma* (preoperative procedure) of *Ksheeradhooma*¹⁸ as well as *Kukkutanda Pinda Sweda*¹⁹ *Shirobasti* (retention of medicated oil on the head) with *Dhanvantara taila* was done for 7 days, which is a kind of *Moordhni Taila* (different modes of application of medicated oil on the head) specially indicated for *Ardita* (facial palsy or Bell's palsy). Even *Shirobasti* (retention of medicated oil on the head) and *Nasya* (errhine therapy/nasal medication) help to recover and to restore the normal functions of the facial nerve. Later, to strengthen the facial muscles, *Nasya* (errhine therapy/nasal medication) with *Dhanvantara 101 Avaritita taila* (processed for 101 times) and *Kukkutanda Pinda Sweda* (a kind of sudation technique done by using mainly hen's egg). Initially, *kapha avarana* (removes the hindrance) should be removed, followed by *vata hara chikitsa* [mitigates morbid humor to be followed in the management of *Ardita* (facial palsy or Bell's palsy)]. Initially, House–Brackmann's grade was V (with a score of 2/8). After the completion of *Ksheeradhoma* and *Shirobasti* grade came down to III (with a score of 5/8). At the end of *Kukkutanda Pinda Sweda* and *Nasya karma* grade came down to I (with a score of 8/8).

Limitations of the Study

This is a single case study, not carried out in a large sample.

RESULTS

After the completion of 18 days of treatment, the patient was completely relieved from the symptoms such as fever, deviation of the mouth, swelling below the ear, able to close the eye, and to raise the eyebrows properly. The House–Brackmann's grade was V (with a score of 2/8) before the treatment, and it came down to I (with a score of 8/8) after the treatment.

Patient Perspective

The patient was comfortable after being relieved of the symptoms completely. She felt happy to do her normal activity and also could go out without covering her face. The quality of life of the patient was improved. The patient was strictly cautioned not to be exposed to the cold breeze.

CONCLUSION

Ardita (facial palsy or Bell's palsy) is one of the 80 types of *Vatavyadhi* (neurological diseases). It can be easily managed depending on the severity of the symptom as well as *dosha* (morbid humor) involvement. In this case, initially *kapha hara chikitsa* (treatment which mitigates morbid *kapha* humor) followed by *kevala vata chikitsa* (treatment which mitigates morbid *vata* humor) was followed. Patient got complete relief from the symptom. *Talam* (application of medicinal paste on the vertex), *Ksheeradhooma* (vaporized milk), *Shirobasti* (retention of medicated oil on the head), *Kukkutanda Pinda Sweda* (a kind of sudation where a bolus of hen's egg is used), and *Nasya karma* (nasal medication/errhine therapy) have shown marked improvement in the symptoms of the patient in just 18 days of treatment.

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