

Review Article: A Critical Review on the Nasya Karma

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Abstract: *Nasya Karma, an essential procedure of Panchakarma in Ayurveda, plays a vital role in preserving health and treating disorders of the head and neck. The nose, regarded as the gateway to the head, serves as a direct route to the central nervous system through the olfactory mucosa. This forms the scientific basis for administering medicines nasally to influence the brain and sense organs. Nasya aims to eliminate vitiated Doshas from the head region (Shirah) and related structures, thereby curing UrdhwajatrugataRoga. Various formulations such as Taila, Swarasa, Kwatha, and Churna are used depending on disease type and patient condition. These medicaments reach the SringatakaMarma and act on the channels of the eyes, ears, and oropharynx, restoring the balance of Tridosha. Both preventive and curative, Nasya is simple yet requires precise technique for safe administration. This review compiles classical Ayurvedic concepts and modern research to evaluate Nasya Karma's mechanism, therapeutic relevance, and practical scope. The study highlights the need for scientific validation and standardization to establish Nasya Karma as an effective integrative approach in modern clinical practice.*

Keywords: Ayurveda, Nasya Karma, Panchakarma, Sringataka Marma

I. INTRODUCTION

Nasya Karma is an important therapeutic procedure in Ayurveda, classified under Panchakarma, in which medicated oils, decoctions, powders, or juices are administered through the nose. The term Nasya is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Nasa,' meaning nose, signifying the route of drug administration. According to Acharya Charaka and Sushruta, the nose serves as the gateway to the head (Nasa hi ShirasoDwaram), and medicines administered through it help eliminate vitiated Doshas from the head region, thus curing UrdhwajatrugataRogas. This therapy acts on the supraclavicular region, influencing the brain, sensory organs, and upper respiratory tract. The drugs used in Nasya quickly absorb through the highly vascular nasal mucosa, avoiding first-pass metabolism and enhancing bioavailability. Beyond its curative role, Nasya also holds preventive and promotive importance by enhancing Prana flow, clearing the sinuses, and nourishing the sensory organs. Regular practice helps prevent premature greying of hair, improves vision, and promotes mental clarity. In today's lifestyle, marked by stress, pollution, irregular diet, and sedentary habits, Nasya offers an effective, natural, and minimally invasive therapeutic approach for managing head and neck disorders. This paper aims to critically review the classical and scientific perspectives on Nasya Karma.

NASYA KARMA CLASSIFICATION

SR. NO	ACHARYA	TYPES	CLASSIFICATION	NAME
1	CHARAKA	3 Types ¹	Mode of Action	Rechana Tarpana Shamana
		5 Types ²	Method of Administration	Navana Avapidana Dhmapana



				Dhuma Pratimarsha
		7 Types ³	According to the part of the drug used	Phala Patra Mula Pushpa Niryasa Twaka
2	SUSHRUTA	5 Types ⁴	-	Shirovirechana Pradhamana Avapida Nasya Pratimarsha
3	VAGBHATTA	3 Types ⁵	-	Virechana Brahmana Shamana
4	KASHYAPA	2 Types ⁶	-	Shodhana Poorana
5	SARANDHARA	2 Types ⁷	-	Rechana Snehana

The classification of Nasya Karma according to Acharya Charaka can be understood in the following ways.

RechanaNasya-

RechanaNasya is a purificatory nasal therapy focused on expelling vitiated Doshas from the head and neck region (Urdhvajatrugata Pradesh). It employs medicated powders or oils prepared with Shirovirechana herbs such as Apamarga, Pippali, and Maricha, which may be administered with strong oils, decoctions, or juices, or dissolved in substances like honey, alcohol, or saline solutions. This therapy is indicated for Kaphaja disorders of the head such as stiffness, numbness, and heaviness, as well as conditions like sinusitis, nasal congestion, headache, throat ailments, tumors, and various Kapha-related diseases affecting the upper body.

TarpanaNasya

The procedures of TarpanaNasya(described by Charaka), SnehanaNasya (described by Sushruta and Sharangdhara), and BrahmanaNasya (described by Vagbhata) are considered synonymous, all utilizing Sneha (medicated oils or ghee) prepared with Vatapittahara and Madhura drugs for nourishing and strengthening head-related organs, with indications for various head, dental, and hair conditions, and are applied according to specific disease requirements.

S

hamanaNasya

ShamanaNasya is a palliative nasal therapy described by Charaka and Vagbhata, used to alleviate doshas located in the head region (Urdhajatrugatasthana), often associated with Snehana and Marsha-Pratimarsha types, in which only Sneha (oil or ghee) prepared with essential palliative drugs for the specific disease is administered for mitigation without aggressive cleansing.

According to Method of Administration:

NavanaNasya

NavanaNasya is a key Ayurvedic nasal therapy involving the administration of medicated oil or ghee drops into the nostrils, primarily used in the Snehana and Shodhana forms of Nasya; this procedure nourishes and treats various head and neck conditions by delivering therapeutic oils directly to the nasal passages as detailed by Charaka and others.



AvapidaNasya

The term Avapida implies to extract the juice of leaves or paste (kalka). Herb is put in white and clean fabric and is crushed to get the necessary Table 2: Various Parts of Dravyas. BioResScientia Publishers quantity of juice, put directly in the nostril of the individual. It may also be given by dipping the pichu into the Shruta or Shrutashita, Sheeta, Swarasa of the desired drug. It is fundamentally of two kinds. (i) StambhanaNasya (ii) ShodhanaNasya.

DhmapanaNasya/Pradhamana

It is a specific type of **ShodhanaNasya** in which medicated *Churna* is administered through the nasal route using a *NadiYantra*. The powder is placed at one end of the tube, and air is blown through the opposite end to ensure that the medicine enters the nostrils effectively.

DhumaNasya

It is defined as the inhalation of medicated fumes through the nose and their expulsion through the mouth. Acharya Sushruta does not categorize this procedure as a form of Nasya. Instead, smoking through the oral route is termed **Dhumapana**, which is considered separate from Nasya and may be harmful to eyesight. Dhumapana is classified into three types: **Prayogika**, **Sneihika**, and **Vairechanika**.

PratimarshaNasya

Refers to the administration of a small, specific dose of medicated *Sneha* into the nostrils. This type of Nasya can be safely used daily, in any season, both morning and evening, without causing adverse effects. The procedure is performed by dipping a finger into the chosen *Sneha* and gently applying it inside the nostrils.

On the basis of various parts of dravyas for Nasya⁸

Parts	Dravyas
Phala	<i>Pippali, Vidanga, Apamarga, Shringu, Sarshapa, Shirisha, Mareecha, Bilwa, Vatarka</i>
Moola	<i>Karaveera, Bimbi, Aparajita, Vacha, Karanja, Arka, Jyotismati, Kushta, Barngi, Shweta, Nagadanti</i>
Kanda	<i>Lashuna, Athivisha, Nagara, Haridra</i>
Patra	<i>Taleesapatra, Tamala, Patra, Surusa, Tarkari, Sarshapa, Haridra, Nagar, LashunaMoolaka</i>
Twaka	<i>Ingudi, Meshasrunji, Shigru, Tejaswani, Ela, Bruhati, Kantakai</i>
Pushpa	<i>Matulunga, Shigru, Peel, Jati, Jyotismati, Gavaskshi, Haritaki, Vruschikali, Lavanga</i>
Sara	<i>Shala, Thala, Madhooka, Tamala, Dravi</i>
Nirayasa	<i>Hingu, Laksha, Agaru, Suradaru, Sallaki, Jingani, Asana, Rasanjana</i>
Beeja	<i>Lodhra, Madana, Peel, Saptaparna, Nimba</i>

Time of Administration of Nasya Karma⁹

Ritu(Season)	Time of Administration of Nasya Karma
<i>Grishma</i>	Before Noon (Morning)
<i>Sheeta</i>	Noon
<i>Varsha</i>	Day- the sky should be clear of rain-bearing clouds
<i>Sharad + Vasanta</i>	Morning
<i>Shishira + Hemanta</i>	Noon
<i>Grishma + Varsha</i>	Evening



Time Schedule in Doshaja Vikara¹⁰

DoshajaVikara	Timing
KaphajaVikara	Morning
PittajaVikara	Noon
VatajaVikara	Evening

Duration of Nasya Karma¹¹

SR. No.	Acharaya	Days
1	Sushruta	1,2,7,21
2	Bhoja	9
3	Vagbhata	3,5,7,8 or till the Samyakalakshana of Nasya

Dose of Nasya karma¹²

SR. NO.	Type of Nasya	HrusvaMatra	MadhyamaMatra	UttamaMatra
1	Snehana	8	16	32
2	Shodhana	4	6	8
3	Marsha	6	8	10
4	Avapidana	4	6	8
5	Pratimarsha	2	2	2

Procedure of Nasya Karma⁽¹³⁻¹⁷⁾

Purva Karma

Before Nasya Karma, all essential equipment and materials should be arranged in a clean, dust-free room with proper lighting, known as NasyaBhavana. It should contain a Nasya table, NasyaDravya, NasyaYantra, Dhoomayantra for PradhamanaNasya, and necessary items like towels, bowls, and spittoons. The patient must understand the procedure, give consent, and empty natural urges before lying on the table. Preparation includes Snehana and Swedana. Shiroabhyanga with medicated oils is done for 10–15 minutes, followed by mild Swedana to liquefy Doshas, avoiding direct heat on the head but applying it on the face, neck, and related areas.

Pradhan Karma

During Nasya Karma, the patient should lie in a supine position on the Nasya table with the head placed in Pralambita (slightly hanging down) at about a 45° angle, ensuring it is neither excessively flexed nor extended. If the head is not properly lowered, the medicine may not reach its desired location, and excessive lowering can cause the drug to reach the brain and get trapped. After covering the patient's eyes with a clean cotton cloth, the physician should gently lift the nasal tip with the left thumb and administer lukewarm medicine into both nostrils using the right hand in proper quantity. The medicine should be neither too hot, too cold, nor in excess. During the procedure, the patient should remain calm, avoiding speech, laughter, sneezing, or head movement.

Paschat Karma

After administering the Nasya drug, the patient should remain in a Uttanaposition for about one minute, or while counting up to one hundred, during which the feet, shoulders, palms, and ears are gently massaged. The head, cheeks, and neck should then undergo mild sudation. Any excess medicine reaching the throat should be spat out, not swallowed. Medicated Gandusha and Dhuma are advised afterward to expel residual KaphaDosha from the Kantha and SringatakaMarma. The patient should rest in a windless room, consume LaghuAhara with SukhoshnaJala, and avoid dust, smoke, sunlight, alcohol, excessive exertion, anger, day sleep, and cold water for bathing or drinking.



Mode of Action

In Ayurveda, the Nasa is considered the gateway to the Shira. The drug administered through the nostrils reaches the Srungataka via the NasaSrotas. From there, it spreads to the Murdha and Shiramukhas of the Netra, Karna, and Kantha, helping to eliminate morbid Dosha from the supraclavicular region like removing Munja grass from its stem. According to Acharya Sushruta, excessive ShodhanaNasya may even cause the flow of cerebrospinal fluid through the nose, indicating the close relation between the nose and the brain. The concept “Nasa hi ShirsoDvaram” reflects this vital connectivity, possibly through blood vessels, lymphatics, or nerve pathways. Experimental evidence supports that irritation in any body part increases local blood circulation as a natural defense mechanism. Similarly, during Nasya, the stimulation of Dosha in the head enhances cerebral blood flow, promoting expulsion of accumulated morbid Dosha as nasal discharge, tears, and salivation.

Benefits of Nasya Karma:

Prasannata of all Indriyas.

Khanata and Prasannata of Twaka, Skanda, Greeva, Asya, and Vaksha IndriyaVimalata.

UrdhwajatrugataVyadhiShamana.

AsyaSugandham.

SnigdhaNiswana.

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