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A Literary Review on Abhishyanda in Ayurveda with Special Reference to Conjunctivitis

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Abstract-- Abhishyanda is one of the most extensively described ocular disorders in Ayurveda and is considered the primary causative condition for several other eye diseases (Sarva Netra Roga Nidana). It is characterized by inflammation, excessive lacrimation, discharge, redness, pain, and discomfort in the eyes. The classical Ayurvedic texts, including the Sushruta Samhita and Charaka Samhita, provide a detailed account of its etiology (Nidana), pathogenesis (Samprapti), classification, and management.

In contemporary medicine, Conjunctivitis is a highly prevalent ocular condition involving inflammation of the conjunctival membrane, presenting with similar clinical manifestations such as redness, discharge, irritation, and watering of the eyes. It may arise due to infectious, allergic, or irritative causes and constitutes a significant proportion of ophthalmic outpatient cases globally.

The striking resemblance between Abhishyanda and conjunctivitis suggests a strong conceptual and clinical correlation between the two systems of medicine. This literary review aims to critically analyze classical Ayurvedic descriptions of Abhishyanda and compare them with modern concepts of conjunctivitis with respect to etiology, clinical features, classification, and therapeutic approaches. The study also explores the potential scope for integrative management strategies that combine the strengths of both systems, thereby contributing to improved patient outcomes and holistic ocular care.

Keywords-- Abhishyanda, Conjunctivitis, Netra Roga, Ayurveda, Ocular inflammation, Integrative medicine

I. INTRODUCTION

Vision is one of the most valued sensory functions, and the eye (Netra) holds a place of paramount importance in maintaining the quality of human life. Ayurveda emphasizes the preservation and promotion of eye health through preventive and curative measures. Classical Ayurvedic literature, particularly the Sushruta Samhita, provides a comprehensive description of ocular anatomy, physiology, and diseases under the heading of Netra Roga.

Among these disorders, Abhishyanda is considered one of the most fundamental and significant diseases. It is often described as the root cause of many other ocular conditions due to its ability to vitiate all the three Doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) and affect ocular tissues. The disease is characterized by excessive discharge, inflammation, redness, pain, and impaired ocular function. If left untreated, it may progress to more severe complications, highlighting its clinical importance in Ayurvedic ophthalmology.

From a modern medical standpoint, Conjunctivitis is one of the most common eye disorders encountered in clinical practice. It involves inflammation of the conjunctiva and may be caused by viral or bacterial infections, allergens, or chemical irritants. Conjunctivitis is highly contagious in its infectious forms and represents a major public health concern due to its widespread occurrence and ease of transmission.

Despite differences in conceptual frameworks, both Abhishyanda and conjunctivitis exhibit remarkable similarity in their clinical presentation, including redness (hyperemia), discharge, irritation, burning sensation, and watering of the eyes. This overlap provides a strong basis for comparative analysis and highlights the relevance of correlating traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with modern biomedical understanding.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in integrative medicine, where traditional systems like Ayurveda are studied alongside modern medicine to develop more holistic and patient-centered approaches. Understanding Abhishyanda in the light of conjunctivitis not only validates ancient Ayurvedic concepts but also opens new avenues for research, especially in the development of safe, cost-effective, and sustainable treatment modalities.

Therefore, this review aims to explore the classical concept of Abhishyanda in detail and establish its correlation with conjunctivitis, thereby contributing to the scientific integration of Ayurvedic and modern ophthalmological perspectives.

II. CONCEPT OF ABHISHYANDA IN AYURVEDA

(a) Definition and Meaning

The term *Abhishyanda* is derived from the Sanskrit roots:

- *Abhi* – towards
- *Syanda* – flowing or discharge

Thus, *Abhishyanda* refers to a pathological condition characterized by excessive ocular discharge and inflammation.

(b) Etiological Factors (Nidana)

The causative factors described in Ayurveda primarily involve lifestyle, environmental exposure, and dietary habits. These factors lead to vitiation of Doshas, which subsequently localize in the eye.

Etiological Factors of Abhishyanda

Category	Factors
Environmental	Dust, smoke, wind, pollution
Behavioral	Excessive crying, eye strain, lack of sleep
Dietary	Incompatible food (Viruddha Ahara), spicy and sour diet
Seasonal	Sudden climatic changes
Others	Suppression of natural urges

(b) Classification of Abhishyanda

Abhishyanda is classified into four types based on Dosha predominance. Each type presents with distinct clinical features.

Type	Dominant Dosha	Key Symptoms
Vataja	Vata	Dryness, pricking pain, foreign body sensation
Pittaja	Pitta	Burning sensation, redness, yellow discharge
Kaphaja	Kapha	Thick white discharge, heaviness, itching
Raktaja	Rakta	Severe redness, bleeding, intense inflammation

This classification reflects a detailed understanding of disease variation and individualized patient presentation.

III. CONJUNCTIVITIS: MODERN PERSPECTIVE

(a) Definition

Conjunctivitis refers to inflammation of the conjunctiva, the transparent mucous membrane covering the sclera and inner eyelids.

(b) Etiology and Types

Conjunctivitis can be classified based on causative factors

Type	Cause	Key Features
Viral	Adenovirus	Watery discharge, redness, contagious
Bacterial	Bacteria	Purulent discharge, sticky eyes
Allergic	Allergens (dust, pollen)	Itching, tearing, bilateral involvement
Chemical	Irritants	Burning, redness

(c) Correlation between Abhishyanda and Conjunctivitis

A comparative understanding reveals strong similarities between Ayurvedic and modern descriptions of ocular inflammation.

Abhishyanda Type	Possible Modern Correlation
Vataja	Dry eye / mild allergic conjunctivitis
Pittaja	Acute infective conjunctivitis
Kaphaja	Allergic or mucopurulent conjunctivitis
Raktaja	Severe inflammatory conjunctivitis

IV. COMMON CLINICAL FEATURES

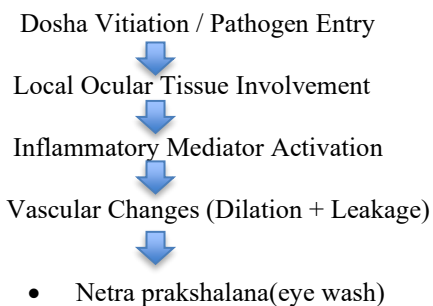
Both conditions share several overlapping symptoms:

- Redness (Raga)
- Discharge (Srava)
- Pain (Shoola)
- Swelling (Shopha)
- Burning sensation (Daha)

This overlap supports the conceptual equivalence between Abhishyanda and conjunctivitis.

V. SAMPRAPTI

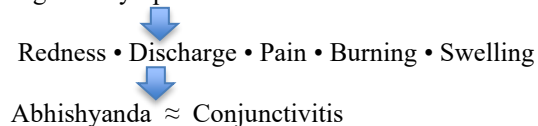
Nidana (Dust, Infection, Allergens)



Modern management

Type	Treatment
Viral	Supportive care, hygiene
Bacterial	Antibiotic eye drops
Allergic	Antihistamines, lubricants
Chemical	Immediate irrigation

Signs & Symptoms:



VI. MANAGEMENT/CHIKITSA

The management of Abhishyanda focuses on eliminating causative factors and restoring Dosha balance.

Therapeutic Procedures like;

- Seka (eye irrigation)
- Aschyotana (eye drops)
- Anjana (collyrium application)

Commonly Used Drugs

- Triphala
- Yashtimadhu
- Nimba
- Honey (Madhu)

These drugs exhibit anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and soothing properties.

VII. DISCUSSION

The concept of Abhishyanda occupies a central place in Ayurvedic ophthalmology and is considered the मूल (root) of many ocular disorders. Classical texts such as the Sushruta Samhita describe Abhishyanda in detail with respect to its Nidana (etiology), Samprapti (pathogenesis), Lakshana (clinical features), and Chikitsa (management). The description reflects a highly systematic and observational understanding of ocular inflammatory conditions, which remains clinically relevant even in the present era.

When analyzed in the light of modern medicine, Abhishyanda shows a striking resemblance to Conjunctivitis, one of the most prevalent ocular disorders worldwide. Both conditions share common etiological factors such as exposure to environmental irritants, infectious agents, and allergens. Furthermore, the clinical manifestations—redness (Raga), discharge (Srava), pain (Shoola), burning sensation (Daha), and swelling (Shopha)—closely parallel the signs and symptoms observed in conjunctivitis, such as conjunctival hyperemia, lacrimation, irritation, and mucopurulent discharge.

A significant strength of the Ayurvedic description lies in its Dosha-based classification of Abhishyanda into Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, and Raktaja types. This classification not only categorizes the disease based on symptomatology but also provides a framework for individualized treatment. For instance, Pittaja Abhishyanda, characterized by burning sensation and yellow discharge, closely resembles acute infective conjunctivitis, while Kaphaja Abhishyanda with thick discharge and itching shows similarity to allergic or mucopurulent conjunctivitis. Such correlations indicate that Ayurvedic physicians had a nuanced understanding of disease heterogeneity, which aligns with modern concepts of disease subtypes and personalized medicine.

From a pathophysiological perspective, the Ayurvedic concept of Dosha vitiation leading to Srotodushti (microchannel obstruction) and localized inflammation can be compared with modern mechanisms involving immune activation, release of inflammatory mediators, and vascular changes. Although the terminologies differ, the underlying principles of inflammation and tissue response show conceptual convergence.

In terms of management, Ayurveda emphasizes a holistic approach that includes Nidana Parivarjana (avoidance of causative factors), local therapies (such as Aschyotana, Seka, and Anjana), and systemic herbal medications. These interventions possess anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and immunomodulatory properties.

On the other hand, modern medicine provides rapid symptomatic relief through targeted therapies such as antibiotics, antihistamines, and lubricants. However, modern treatment is often limited to symptomatic management and may not address recurrence or individual susceptibility.

The growing interest in integrative medicine provides an opportunity to combine the strengths of both systems. Ayurvedic therapies can offer safe, cost-effective, and preventive strategies, while modern medicine ensures prompt control of acute symptoms and complications. An integrative approach may be particularly beneficial in recurrent, allergic, or chronic cases of conjunctivitis, where long-term management is required.

Despite these promising correlations, there is a need for more scientific validation through clinical trials, pharmacological studies, and evidence-based research. Standardization of Ayurvedic formulations and protocols is essential to ensure reproducibility and wider acceptance in the global medical community.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Abhishyanda is a comprehensive and well-described ocular condition in Ayurveda that closely correlates with Conjunctivitis in modern medicine. The similarities in etiology, clinical presentation, and disease progression strongly support this correlation and highlight the depth of understanding present in classical Ayurvedic literature.

The Dosha-based classification of Abhishyanda provides a unique and individualized approach to diagnosis and management, which resonates with the modern concept of personalized medicine. Ayurvedic therapeutic modalities not only address the symptoms but also focus on correcting the underlying imbalance, thereby offering a more holistic and preventive approach to ocular health.

Modern medical management, with its rapid and targeted interventions, plays a crucial role in controlling acute infections and preventing complications. However, its integration with Ayurvedic principles can enhance overall treatment outcomes, reduce recurrence, and improve patient satisfaction.

In conclusion, the correlation between Abhishyanda and conjunctivitis serves as a valuable model for bridging traditional and contemporary medical systems. Further research, including well-designed clinical studies and pharmacological evaluations, is necessary to validate Ayurvedic interventions and promote their integration into mainstream ophthalmic practice. Such efforts will contribute to the development of safe, effective, and holistic strategies for the management of ocular inflammatory disorders.



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