

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SHANKH-PRAKSHALAN IN PURISH-VEGA AS ADHARNIYA VEGA

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ABSTRACT:

Purish Vega, the urge to defecate, is considered an *Adharniya Vega* (non-suppressible urge) in *Ayurveda*. Suppressing this urge, known as *Purish Vega Dharana*, can lead to various health complications. *Ayurvedic* texts and modern medicine describe these effects, including abdominal pain, bloating, constipation, rectal pain, and disorders related to the small intestine. The management of these complications involves addressing the underlying cause and promoting regular bowel movements. *Shankh-Prakshalan*, an easy and effective gastrointestinal cleansing technique, is recommended for managing the adverse effects of *Purish-Vega Dharana*. The study was conducted in 30 clinically diagnosed patients of *purish* as *adharniyavega* with an objective of alleviating symptoms arising from *purishvegadharan* viz- *pakvashya-shoola*, *shiro-shoola*, *vata-varchoapravartanam*, *adhmanam*, *pindiko-udveshtan* & its management was done by *shankh-prakshalan*. It was observed that suppressing the urge to defecate can impact both physical and mental well-being. Defecation is a crucial part of our daily routine, essential for eliminating waste from the body and preventing potential illnesses. It was observed that *Shankh prakshalan* has demonstrated noteworthy outcomes in alleviating symptoms arising from *purishvegadharan*.

KEYWORDS: *Purish, Adharniya Vega, Shankh Prakshalan,*

Ayurveda, Swasthayarakshan, Vyadhimukti, Asanas, Dhauti Karma, Hatha yoga.

INTRODUCTION:

Ayurveda's purpose lies in '*Swasthayarakshan*' (maintaining health) and '*vyadhimukti*' (freedom from illness). *Ayurveda* incorporates insights from various philosophical systems like *Nyaya, Sankhya, Yoga, Vedanta*, and more (Ch. Su.30/26).¹ While originally grounded in philosophy and spiritual development, contemporary experts recognize *Yoga's* value as a preventive measure and treatment approach for various ailments.² The normal functioning of the natural urges is controlled by *Vata Dosha*. The *vegadharan* causes an imbalance in the activity of *Vata Dosha*.³ Following *Ashtang Hridaya*, *Vata* is primarily managed through practices such as "*Snigdha*," "*ushna Basti*," and "*sukhsheelta*." Here, "*sukhsheelta*" pertains to engaging in activities that promote comfort and ease (A.H.Su. 13/2).⁴ *Purish Vega Dharan* is the suppression of the defecation reflex.³ Defecation is part of our daily routine and it is necessary to excrete the waste products out of the body to avoid various illnesses. Inhibition of the urge to evacuate the bowel triggers stomach pain, head pain, stiffness in calves, and abdominal bloating.⁵ The study has shown that people use laxatives or purgatives to relieve these symptoms, which have to habituate a tendency to the digestive system.⁶ *Hatha Yoga* has mentioned *Shatkarmaas* a cleansing technique and *Dhauti* is the cleansing technique for the gastrointestinal tract. *Varisara Antardhauti / Shankh Prakshalan* is a practice included under *Dhauti Karma*.⁷ *Shankh Prakshalan* (A *Yogic Kriya*): This technique is simple & efficient for purging the whole gut, which means extracting the toxins found within the gut.⁶

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

This economical procedure can be performed at home by patients and is highly effective in removing auto intoxicants from the alimentary canal. Previous studies have shown that *Shankha Prakshalana* significantly benefits patients with irritable bowel syndrome and anxiety neurosis. This technique involves drinking saline water and performing specific *yoga* postures to cleanse the entire gastrointestinal tract, promoting overall digestive health and well-being. By incorporating *Shankh-Prakshalana* into their routine, patients can effectively manage the complications arising from the suppression of the urge to defecate, ensuring a healthier and more balanced digestive system.

Purishvegadharan according to brihatarya

<i>Brihatraya</i>	<i>Laxanas of purishvega dharna</i>	<i>Chikitsa</i>
<i>Charak Samhita</i> ⁸	<i>Pakvashayashoola, Shiroshoola, Vata-varchoapravartanam, Adhmanam, Pindiko-udveshtan</i>	<i>Sweda, avgaha, abhyanga, varti (suppositories), basti karma (herbal enema), pramathi anna-pana (carminative eatables and drinks).</i>
<i>Sushruta Samhita</i> ⁹	<i>Atopa, shoola, guda-medra-bastipeeda, mala-avrodha, urdhavvata, mukhenpurishvega.</i>	<i>Phala-vartiprayog</i>
<i>Vagbhata</i> ¹⁰	<i>Pindiko-udveshtana, pratishyaya, shiro-ruja, urdhava-vaayu, parikartika, hridysayo-aprodha, mukhen mala pravritti, vatarodhajanyaroga.</i>	<i>Phala-varti, abhyanga, avgahan, swedan&basti karma.</i>

Review of Shankh-prakshalan:

“Shankh” means “conch” because it resembles the stomach and intestines, & “Prakshalan” means “cleansing”. Drinking water gradually – slowly upto the throat, then engage the abdominal muscles with the help of some *asanas* to allow that water to pass through the whole canal and excrete it out through the anus. This process will help to cleanse the whole gut and body as well & the person will get a shining body. According to this *samhitas*, this procedure should be kept secret. “Shankh-prakshalan is helpful in *Udara vikara*”. 5 asanas included in *shankhprakashalanare* :

- Tadasana
- Tiryaka-tadasana
- Kati-chakrasana
- Tiryaka-bhujanasana
- Udrakarshan asana⁷

P.S Swami et. al. stated that A recent randomized controlled study done on 60 healthy individuals, demonstrated the beneficial effects of laghushankhprakashalana in bowel health.¹¹ Dr. Gunjan Garg et. al. stated that Shankh prakshalana and various Asana are reliable to control the Madhumeha.¹² S.N Singh et. al. stated that – shankhprakashalan is an easy and effective technique for cleansing the gastro-intestinal canal & can also be given to patients of anxiety neurosis with satisfactory results.¹³ Dr. Priya Pathak stated that this yogic kriya is modified to suit the fast-paced life and persons with weak constitution.⁷

AIM:

- To explore the role of *shankh-prakshalan* in *purish-vega* as *adharniyavega*.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the health issue caused by the suppression of *purishvegadharan* and to analyze its effects on physical and mental well-being.
- To access the effect of *Shankh Prakshalan* on the management of *Adharniya Vega Purish*.
- To study the importance of timely defecation and its benefits on health.

METHODOLOGY:

Procedure: *Shankh-Prakshalan*.

Type of Study: Single Arm Open Clinical Trial. It was a single-group study of 30 patients; doing *Purish Vega Dharan* (voluntarily suppress the urge to defecate) for at least 1 month were chosen for the study. *ShankhPrakshalan* has been practiced for 30 days.

Standard Operative Procedure:

Shankh Prakshalan was performed for 30 days. **Time of Practice:** Early in the morning. 6 AM to 8 AM. **Duration:** 10 to 30 minutes. **Requirements:** Yoga Mat, Water(1.5-Ltrs), Salt: 5gms (*Saindhava*).

<i>Purvakarma</i>	<i>Pradhan karma</i>	<i>Paschat karma</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5-liter lukewarm water with a 5gms of salt (<i>Saindhava</i>) added to it, which is mildly salty. • The patient was on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drank two glasses (200ml each) of lukewarm saline water. (swiftly). • Performed the sequence of five <i>asanas</i> actively eight times each round in subsequent order included in <i>Tadasana, Tiryaka-Tadaasana, Kati-Chakraasana, Tiryaka-Bhujanga</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of the practice, the patient will be advised to take rest for 45 minutes, and then eat khichdi in (semi-liquid) form.

<p>an empty stomach, before the procedure.</p>	<p><i>Asana, Udarakarshan Asana</i> (This was one complete round).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They didn't take a break within the rounds. • Drank two glasses of lukewarm saline water & redo the 5 asanas 8 times. <p>If in between the rounds the patient feels the urge to evacuate the bowel, then only he/she was advised to use the lavatory check to see if there was bowel movement and if there was no such bowel movement, then they didn't strain and resumed the practice.</p>	
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PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION:

Subjects were randomly selected from the OPD/IPD of Bharati Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University) College of Ayurved and Hospital. A special case paper Performa was prepared for the study. Written informed consent was obtained from patients in accordance with ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) guidelines before the clinical trials began. Findings were recorded both before and after the clinical trials. *Shankh Prakshalan* training was provided for 7 days. Each patient practiced *Shankh Prakshalan* for a total of 30 days, for approximately 10-30 minutes each day. Follow-up has been done periodically for a total duration of 45 Days.

STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS:

<u>INCLUSION CRITERIA:</u>	<u>EXCLUSION CRITERIA:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those people who suppress the urge to defecate voluntarily for a long period (at least 1 month) – Dyschezia & presenting with symptoms induced due to <i>Purish Vega Dharan</i>. • Age between 25 to 60 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients taking laxatives. • Major diseases Cardiac disorders, Respiratory disorders, Renal Failure. Psychiatric and Seizure Patients. • IBS, Faecal Impaction, Intestinal obstruction, Hernia, Hypertension, Chronic & peptic ulcer, Gastrointestinal Disease, Tuberculosis, Hypothyroidism, Functional Constipation (Infrequent or hard bowel movement), Uremia, Diabetes, Colorectal cancer, Hypercalcemia, Diverticular disease, Fissure- Fistula- Haemorrhoids. • Pregnant & lactating mothers and menstruating women. • Weak & debilitated person.

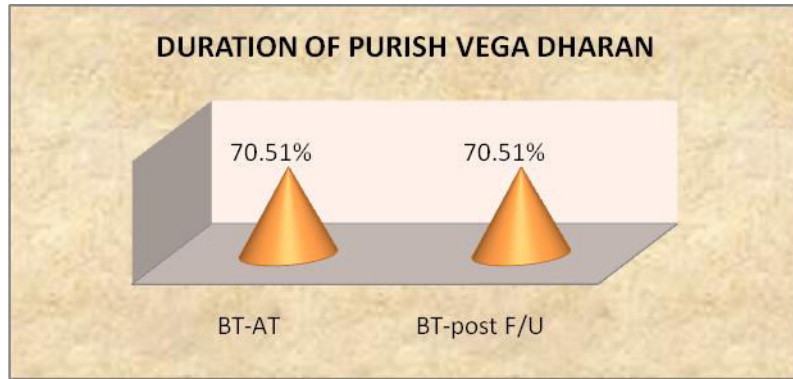
CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT: The results of the treatment have been assessed based on relief in Signs and symptoms of the following criteria.¹⁰

<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Grade 0</u>	<u>Grade 1</u>	<u>Grade 2</u>	<u>Grade 3</u>	<u>Grade 4</u>
<u>PURISH VEGA DHARAN⁹</u>	No suppressi	5-30 minutes suppression	30-60 minutes	Suppression of	Suppression of <i>purishvega</i>

	on of <i>purishvega</i> , usually defecation just after sensation.	of <i>purishvega</i> after sensation with mild discomfort	suppression of <i>purishvega</i> after sensation with moderate discomfort.	<i>purishvega</i> after sensation with moderate discomfort	after sensation with uncomfortable pain.
<u>PAKVASHAYA SHOOLA (Pain in iliac fossa)</u>	No pain in the iliac fossa / any other cause	Pain in the iliac fossa occasionally in the morning	Pain in the iliac fossa everyday, anytime.	Pinching pain in the iliac fossa everyday, anytime.	Whole-day pain in the iliac fossa with a feeling of heaviness
<u>SHIROSHOOLA (Headache)</u>	No Headache/ any other cause of headache.	Occasionally pulsating headache.	Headache everyday, anytime.	Continuous headache along with less energy to do anything.	Continuous headache with heaviness in the head.
<u>VATA VARCHO APRAVARTNAM (Obstruction of flatus & feces).</u>	No obstruction of flatus & feces.	Urge to evacuate, but not evacuated properly.	Urge to evacuate with pinching pain.	No urge to evacuate & continuous pulsating pain.	No urge to evacuate & continuous belching (smelly)
<u>ADHMANAM (Flatulence)</u>	No flatulence / odour-free farting.	Flatulence with smelly odor.	Flatulence but unable to pass completely.	Painful flatulence and unable to pass completely.	Painful flatulence and unable to pass it.
<u>PINDIKO UDVESHTANA (Cramps In Calves)</u>	No stiffness in calves.	Occasional stiffness in the calves.	The feeling of stiffness everyday, anytime.	Continuous stiffness with less energy to do anything.	Continuous stiffness & unable to walk properly.

OBSERVATION & RESULTS :

Effect Of Shankh Prakshalan on Duration of Purish Vega Dharanin Adharniya Vega Purish.

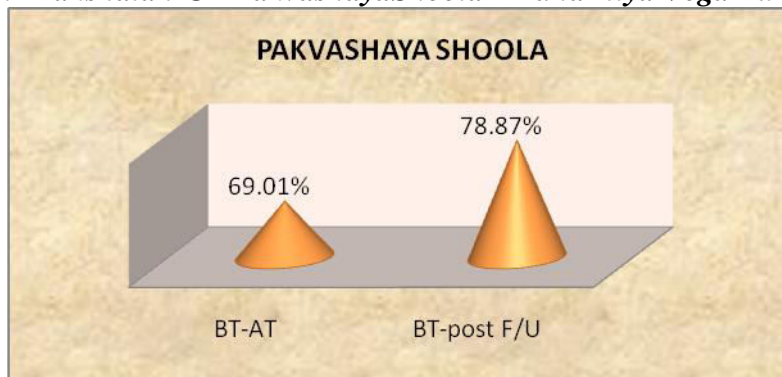


Parameter		Mean		x	% of improvement	Negative rank	Positive rank	Tie	z	P VALUE
		BT	AT							
DURATION OF PURISH VEGA DHARAN	BT-AT	2.6	0.767	1.83	70.51%	26	0	4	-4.53	0
	BT-post F/U	2.6	0.767	1.83	70.51%	25	0	5	-4.44	0

The mean grade of DURATION OF *PURISH VEGA DHARAN* BT was 2.6 which was decreased to 0.767 after treatment. The mean increment in score was 70.51% which is significant as observed by “The Wilcoxon Test “(as p value<0.05) thus it can be said that there is a significant increment DURATION OF *PURISH VEGA DHARAN* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*

Also here 70.51% improvement was found at post-follow-up on the DURATION OF *PURISHVEGA DHARAN* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.
i.e. *SHANKH PRAKSHALAN* was effective on DURATION OF *PURISH VEGA DHARAN* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

Effect Of Shankh Prakshalan On PakvashayaShoolaInAdharniya Vega Purish.

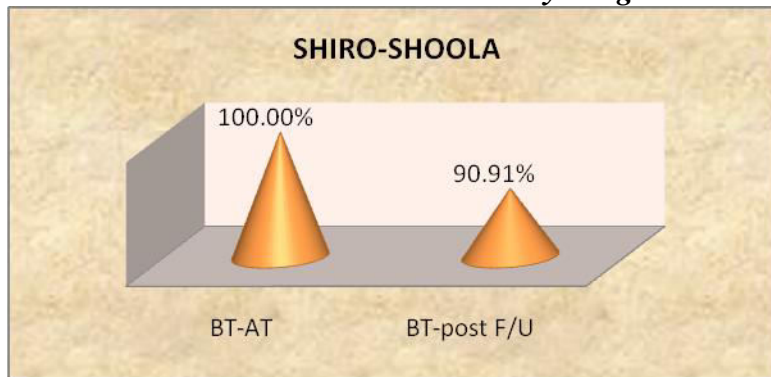


Parameter		Mean		x	% of improvement	Negative rank	Positive rank	Tie	z	P VALUE
		BT	AT							
PAKVASHAYA SHOOLA	BT-AT	2.367	0.733	1.63	69.01%	23	1	6	-4.2	0
	BT-post F/U	2.367	0.5	1.87	78.87%	24	0	6	-4.33	0

The mean grade of *PAKVASHAYA SHOOLA* BT was 2.367 which was decreased to 0.733 after treatment. The mean increment in score was 69.01% which is significant as observed by “The Wilcoxon Test “(as p value<0.05) thus it can be said that there is a significant increment in *PAKVASHAYA SHOOLA* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

Also here 78.87% improvement was found at post-follow-up on *PAKVASHAYA SHOOLA* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.
 i.e. *SHANKH PRAKSHALAN* was effective on *PAKVASHAYA SHOOLA* in *adharniya Vega Purish*.

Effect Of Shankh Prakshalan On Shiro-ShoolaInAdharniya Vega Purish



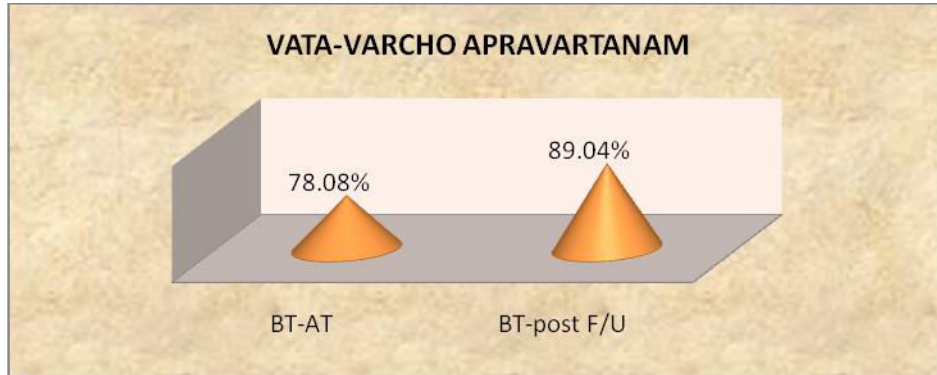
parameter		Mean		x	% of improvement	Negative rank	Positive rank	Tie	z	P VALUE
		BT	AT							
SHIRO-SHOOLA	BT-AT	0.367	0	0.37	100.00%	11	0	19	-3.32	0.001
	BT-post F/U	0.367	0.033	0.33	90.91%	11	1	18	-2.89	0.004

The mean grade of *SHIRO-SHOOLA* BT was 0.367 which was decreased to 0 after treatment. The mean increment in score was 100% which is significant as observed by the “Wilcoxon Test “(as p value<0.05) thus it can be said that there is a significant increment in *SHIRO-SHOOLA* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

Also here 90.91% improvement was found at post-follow-up on *SHIRO-SHOOLA* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

i.e. **SHANKH PRAKSHALAN** was effective on *SHIRO-SHOOLA* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

Effect Of Shankh Prakshalan On Vata-VarchoApravartanamInAdharniya Vega Purish.



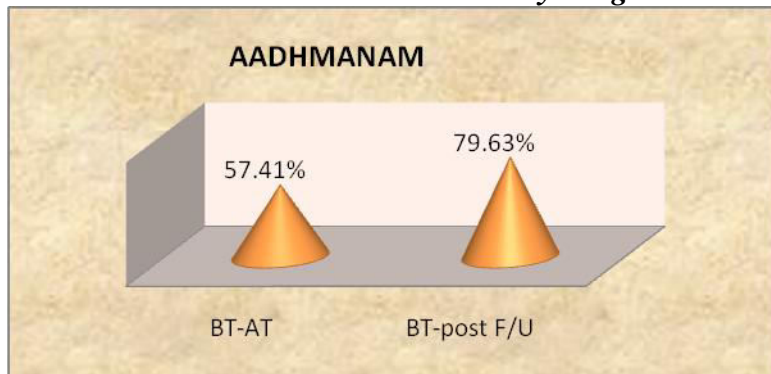
Parameter		Mean		x	% of improvement	Negative rank	Positive rank	Tie	z	P VALUE
		BT	AT							
VATA-VARCHO APRAVARTANAM	BT-AT	2.433	0.533	1.90	78.08%	27	0	3	-4.6	0
	BT-post F/U	2.433	0.267	2.17	89.04%	27	1	2	-4.59	0

The mean grade of *VATA-VARCHO APRAVARTANAM* BT was 2.433 which was decreased to 0.533 after treatment. The mean increment in score was 78.08% which is significant as observed by “The Wilcoxon Test “(as p value<0.05) thus it can be said that there is a significant increment in *VATA-VARCHO APRAVARTANAM* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

Also here 89.04% improvement was found at post-follow-up on *VATA-VARCHO APRAVARTANAM* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

i.e. **SHANKH PRAKSHALAN** was effective on *VATA-VARCHO APRAVARTANAM* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

Effect Of Shankh Prakshalan On AadhmanamInAdharniya Vega Purish.



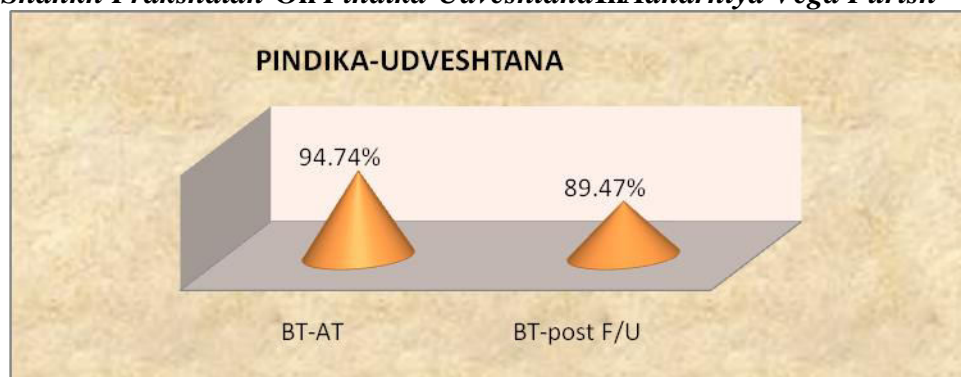
parameter		Mean		x	% of improvement	Negative rank	Positive rank	Tie	z	P VALUE
		BT	AT							
AADHMANAM	BT-AT	1.8	0.76	1.03	57.41%	20	1	9	-3.89	0
	BT-post F/U	1.8	0.36	1.43	79.63%	26	1	-3	-4.45	0

The mean grade of *AADHMANAM* BT was 1.8 which was decreased to 0.76 after treatment. The mean increment in score was 57.41% which is significant as observed by the “Wilcoxon Test” (as p value<0.05) thus it can be said that there is a significant increment in *AADHMANAM* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

Also here 79.63% improvement was found at post-follow-up on *AADHMANAM* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

i.e. **SHANKH PRAKSHALAN** was effective on *AADHMANAM* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

Effect Of Shankh Prakshalan On Pindika-Udveshtana In Adharniya Vega Purish

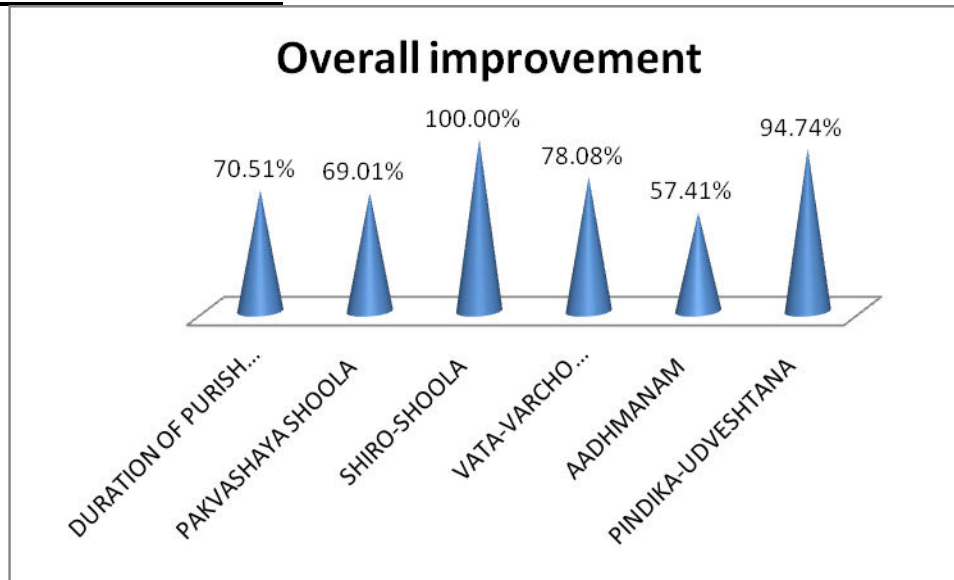


parameter		Mean		x	% of improvement	Negative rank	Positive rank	Tie	z	P VALUE
		BT	AT							
PINDIKA-UDVESHTANA	BT-AT	0.633	0.033	0.60	94.74%	17	0	13	-3.85	0
	BT-post F/U	0.633	0.067	0.57	89.47%	16	0	14	-3.9	0

The mean grade of *PINDIKA-UDVESHTANA* BT was 0.633 which was decreased to 0.33 after treatment. The mean increment in score was 94.74% which is significant as observed by “The Wilcoxon Test” (as p value<0.05) thus it can be said that there is a significant increment on *Pindika-Udveshtana* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

Also here 89.47% improvement was found at post-follow-up on *Pindika-Udveshtana* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

i.e. **SHANKH PRAKSHALAN** was effective on *Pindika-Udveshtana* in *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

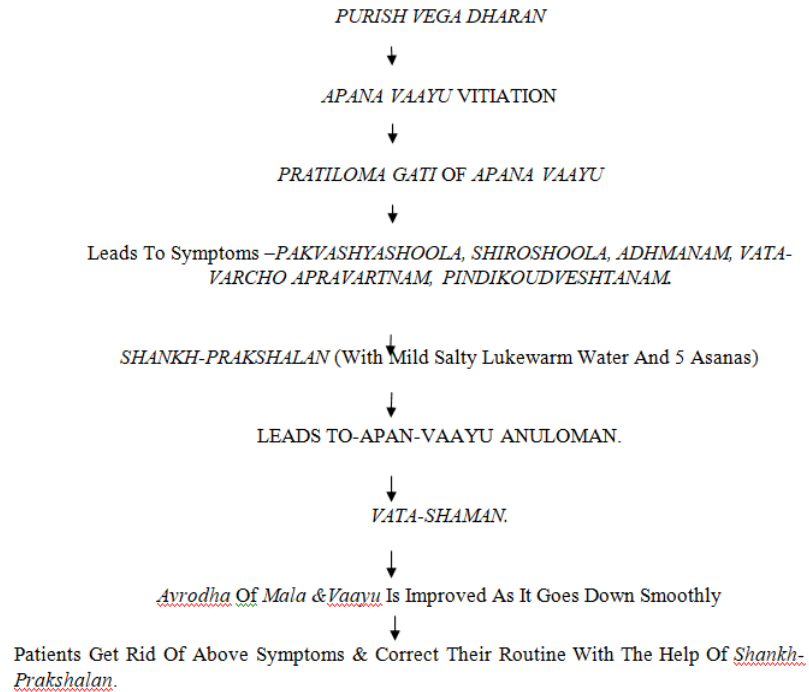
OVERALL IMPROVEMENT

From the above diagram, we found that *Shankh Prakshalan* has a significant effect on the Management of *Adharniya Vega Purish*.

RESULTS :

After carefully and thoroughly analyzing the results of the study the following conclusions are drawn :

- *Shankh prakshalan* has demonstrated noteworthy outcomes in alleviating symptoms arising from *purishvegadharan* viz-*pakvashya-shoola*, *shiro-shoola*, *vata-varchoapravartanam*, *adhmanam*, *pindiko-udveshtan*.
- The observed effects are likely attributed to the regulation of *apaanvaayu* through *shankhprakshalan*, contributing to the pacification of *vata dosha*.
- The feces which becomes dry and has difficulty passing naturally, becomes more streamlined with water intake during the *shankhprakshalan* practice. It then moves effortlessly, emptying the rectum and intestines through this *yogic* technique.
- Thus the *avrodha of Mala* (obstruction of feces) and *Pratilomagati* (reverse movement) of *apanavaayu* are enhanced.
- Symptoms arise from the increased *vata dosha* in the *purish-vahastrotas* pacify with the practice of *shankhprakshalan*.
- Abdominal massaging *asanas* *tadasana-tiryaktadasana-bhujangasana-tiryakbhujangasana-udrakarshanasana* had demonstrated a reduction in symptoms caused by *purishvegadharan* as substantiated by statistical analysis.
- Consistent practice of *shankh-prakshalan* over an extended period is essential to reap the benefits & these benefits endure for an extended duration.
- Based on this research study, it can be concluded that particular abdominal massaging *asanas* within *shankhprakshalan* play an efficacious therapeutic role in alleviating symptoms associated with *purishvegadharan*.

FLOW CHART NO. 1**PROBABLE MODE OF ACTION**

Individuals aged 30-40 experience higher rates of *purishvegadharan* due to busy work schedules and the perception that defecation should only occur in the morning, causing them to neglect natural urges throughout the day. This highlights the complex relationship between lifestyle, work commitments, and bodily function perceptions in this age group. The occurrence of *purishvegadharan* is higher in males (53%) due to extended working hours, late mornings, and time constraints for defecation, with work-related stress further contributing to this increase. Females, with a recorded incidence of 47%, often neglect their health while prioritizing family care, revealing how work demands, time constraints, and health priorities affect *purishvegadharan* prevalence in both genders. Students show a higher prevalence at 40%, likely due to academic activities, outdoor engagements, assignment stress, and limited awareness of timely defecation, with other affected groups including housewives (23%), shopkeepers (10%), IT workers (10%), teachers (7%), nurses (7%), and doctors (3%). Among patients, 23% had Vata-Pitta prakriti, 13% had Vata-Kapha, 7% had Kapha-Vata, 13% had Pitta-Vata, 13% had Pitta-Kapha, 14% had Kapha-Pitta, and 17% had Kapha-Pitta-Vata, indicating that those with Vata-Pitta are more prone to worry and anxiety, which can lead to digestive issues and affect excretion when Vata is imbalanced, especially with Pitta. Out of 30 patients with *purishvegadharan*, 44% were identified with Madhyam Agni, 43% with Visham Agni, and 13% with Sama Agni, likely influenced by the impact of vitiated Vata dosha, which disrupts the Agni (digestive fire). Among these patients, 50% were found to have Madhyam Koshtha, 47% exhibited KrurKoshtha, and 3% showed Mridu Koshtha, with the presence of KrurKoshtha, combined with *purishvegadharan*, potentially exacerbating the condition. Additionally, 60% of patients with *purishvegadharan* consume a mixed diet of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian

foods, potentially intensifying the condition and increasing susceptibility to constipation, while the remaining 40% adhere to a vegetarian diet.

PAKVASHAYA-SHOOLA

69.01% of Patients showed relief in *pakvashayashoola*, as *purishvega* is initiated by *apana-vaayu* when *apana* gets *pratilomagati*, *mala* is reverted to the intestine where the liquid part of *mala* gets dried and difficulty in the defecation is being felt, it gives rise to *pakvashya-shoola*, *Shankh-prakshalan* helps to achieve the *anulomanofapana-vaayu* which further results in the relief in *pakvashya-shoola*.

SHIRO-SHOOLA

100% of patients showed relief in *shiro-shoola*, *shiro-shoola* is found in a few patients but after treatment, it shows 100% improvement. Due to suppression of the urge to defecate, people used to get *Vatajashiro-shoola* & by doing *shankh-prakshalan* When *Apana-Vata* attains its *anulomagati*, there is a relief in *shiro-shoola*

VATA-VARCHO APRAVARTANAM

78.08% of patients showed relief in *vata-varchoapravartanam*, which is the *sangha* of *mala* & *apana-Vaayu* in the intestines. *Vata* has properties like *gati* (*chanchal-swabhava*), when its *gati* is voluntarily suppressed it gets *vikritta* and results in *mala* & *apana-Vaayu sangha*. *Shankh-prakshalan* corrects the *gati* of *vikrittavaayu* and the *sangha* of *mala* & *Vayu* is also removed by doing so.

ADHMANAM

57.41% of the patients showed relief in *adhmanam*, as *purishvegais* initiated by *apana-Vaayu* when *apana-vaayu* gets *pratilomagati*, *mala* is reverted to the intestine where the liquid part of *mala* gets dried & starts producing gases by doing *shankh-prakshalan* *anulomanof Apana vaayu* is achieved and hence results in the *shaman* of *adhmanam*.

PINDIKO-UDVESHTAN

94.74% of the patients showed relief in *pindikoudveshtan*, which is a *VatajaNanatamajavyaadhi*, when *Apana-Vaayu* pacifies the body, this symptom simultaneously gets relieved.

CONCLUSION:

Suppressing *purishvegac* can result in imbalances within the *doshas* and lead to various illnesses and it does have an impact on both physical and mental well-being. *Shankh Prakshalan* has a significant effect on the Management of *Adharniya Vega Purish*. In this study, we have discovered that suppressing the urge to defecate can have implications on both physical & mental well-being. Given that defecation is a crucial element of our daily routine, it is vital for eliminating waste from the body and preventing potential illnesses.

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