CRITICAL REVIEW OF ASHRUVAHA SROTAS IN CO-RELATION WITH LACRIMAL FUNCTIONAL UNIT

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Anatomical description of Ashruvaha Srotas (Lacrimal Functional Unit)
Though separate anatomy of Lacrimal Functional Unit is not given in Ayurvedic classics except while Describing the Panchabhatuika concept of eye. But scattered references is found in relation to understand the anatomy and physiology of Lacrimal apparatus. In Ashruvaha Srotas samhita acharya has mentioned that Aakash – one of the five elements responsible for creation of Ashru marga i.e. Lacrimal passage. And also while describing the sraava rogas, the detail pathological features indicates that our Acharyas were well aware about the luminous structure of the Lacrimal Apparatus (Drainage part) residing beneath and medially to inner canthus of eyes. Acharya shushruna has mentioned two Ashruvahini Dhamanis which is responsible for production and nourishment of Ashru. Acharya Vagbhata has given strict attention to surgeons that not to damage the Ashruvahini while performing the Arma Chhedana karma. Thus, we can say that our Acharyas had deep knowledge of Lacrimal Apparatus without having any imagination technology.

Role of Tridosha in Lacrimal Functional Unit
Role of Vata
Vayu when unvitiate, holds up the systems and organs of the body. Employing sense organs in their activity, carries all sense objects, causes structural formation of all bodily dhatus, promotes union in body.

The normal vayu moving about in the body performs these functions by making the gross and subtle channels. Thus, it is easier to understand that vayu plays an important role in embryological development of Lacrimal Function Unit.

Role of Pitta
While describing the physical qualities of Pitta in our classics, it is mentioned as one of the strong natured hot fluid of the body contains fatty substances and spreads eventually in and over ocular surface.

Thus, it provides smooth optical surface on cornea which is necessary for very sharp perception of light rays and objects.

It is also responsible for the local metabolism in the ocular surface, absorbs the medicines applied locally and contributes to the ocular surface defense mechanism.

Role of Kapha
Kapha due to its properties imparts cohesion of Dhatus in eyeball as well as stabilizes the eyeball in the orbital cavity and protects the ocular surface by providing proper lubrication. (Udakakarmana – Kledana, Tarpana and Poorana).

Tarpaka Kapha which is located in Shira provides the nourishment to eyes. Shleshaka Kapha helps in adherence of tear film over the globe of ocular surface. Acharya sushruta has mentioned Kapha as Mala of Rasa dhatu, while Sharangadharacharya stated that excretion of watery fluid from adjacent areas of eyes is said to be Mala-excreta of Rasa dhatu, thus it provides moistures to the ocular surface and protects the eye against the dryness.

Ayurvedic concept of control of Lacrimal Functional Unit
Krishna Mandala, being the seat of Vata Dosha probably monitor the minute change in the ocular surface. Any change in the equilibrium of ocular surface due to exogenous or endogenous factors, will stimulate the Prana vayu to act reflexly and transmit impulses to the Shira (seat of Prana Vayu and Tarpaka Kapha). This stimulation will initiate the Tarpaka Kapha to carry out its function i.e. Kledana, Tarpana and Poorana.

Tarpaka Kapha will perform its function by the help of its Ashrayi Dhatu (Sneha Dhatu) to act on the ocular surface.

Pitta Dosha which has the specific seat at Netra and having the unique feature of Panchana will assimilate the Dhatus secreted by the Tarpaka Kapha and form a stable tear film and maintain the normal Prabha (luster).
and Mardava (softness)\(^1\) of the ocular surface. Vyana Vayu which circulates all over the body will help the normal lid movements and Dhatu Tarpana.\(^2\)

This reflex arc will help to maintain the ocular surface integrity and immunity which facilitate the proper optical function of the eye. Prana and Vyana Vayu along with Pachaka Pitta and Tarpaka Kapha are the Doshas involved in this reflex arc for the proper operation of Lacrimal functional unit.

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