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Clinical Interpretation of Samyak, Heena, and Atiyoga in Vamana-Virecana: Analysis Based on the Kalpanacatushka of Carakasamhita and Its Commentaries

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Abstract

Introduction:

Vamana (emesis) and *Virecana* (purgation) are integral purification therapies in Ayurveda, designed to detoxify the body by expelling accumulated *dosha*. These therapies are widely used to restore balance and treat various health conditions, but their effectiveness depends on precise administration.

Methods:

This review article analyzes the clinical signs of proper, inadequate, and excessive administration of *Vamana* and *Virecana*, based on the classical texts of *Carakasamhita* and its commentaries. By assessing the therapeutic outcomes of these therapies through key symptoms, we provide a framework for evaluating the efficacy and safety of these treatments.

Results:

The signs of *Samyak* (proper), *Heena* (inadequate), and *Atiyoga* (excessive) administration were explored, highlighting the various indicators of successful detoxification as well as potential complications arising from improper therapy. These symptoms include the restoration of vital functions, improved appetite and digestion, and the expulsion of dosha in a controlled manner. Inadequate or excessive administration can lead to symptoms such as abdominal distension, excessive salivation, and fatigue.

Discussion & Conclusion:


Effective *Vamana* and *Virecana* therapies require careful monitoring of the patient's response to ensure that the therapy is neither overdone nor insufficient. Clinical assessment through these signs allows practitioners to adjust treatment protocols, maximizing benefits and minimizing adverse effects.

By understanding and evaluating the signs of proper, inadequate, and excessive purification therapy, Ayurveda practitioners can ensure optimal therapeutic outcomes, promoting a balanced and healthy body.

Keywords: *Vamana*, *Virecana*, Ayurveda purification, *Samyak* signs, *Heena* signs, *Atiyoga* complications

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Introduction

Purification therapies, *Vamana* (emesis) and *Virecana* (purgation), are central to Ayurveda healing practices. These therapeutic measures are designed to expel toxins from the body and restore balance among the *dosha*. In *Vamana*, the elimination occurs through the upper part of the body, typically via vomiting, while in *Virecana*, the expulsion happens through the lower part of the body, through purgation. Both therapies, when used correctly, are referred to as *evacuatives* due to their shared purpose of purging excrement from the body, thus improving overall health [1].

According to the classical texts, the pharmacodynamics of *Vamana* involve the use of potent *ushna* (hot), *tikshna* (sharp), *sukshma* (subtle), *vyavayi* (penetrating), and *vikashi* (spreading) drugs. These drugs possess the ability to travel through the body's circulatory system, reaching the heart and circulating vessels. They target impurities present in both the superficial and deeper tissues, liquefy them, and expel them through the natural ducts. This purging action is largely influenced by the fire (*agni*) and wind (*vāyu*) elements within the drugs, causing upward movement in the body. Conversely, when the drug's composition is more aligned with water (*jala*) and earth (*prithvi*), it primarily exerts a downward effect, aiding in purgation. When both actions occur, the drug effectively clears toxins from both ends of the body, balancing

the therapeutic outcome [2].

This dual-action of *Vamana* and *Virecana* emphasizes their complementary roles in Ayurveda detoxification, each targeting different pathways for toxin elimination. The proper use of these therapies requires an understanding of the body's constitution, the nature of the impurities, and the specific therapeutic objectives of the treatment.

Clinical Interpretation

Purification therapies such as *Vamana* (emesis) and *Virecana* (purgation) are cornerstone treatments in Ayurveda's Panchakarma, designed to cleanse the body of accumulated *dosha*. These therapies, when administered correctly, restore balance and health. However, when improperly performed, they can lead to a variety of complications. The classical texts of Ayurveda provide key signs and symptoms to help clinicians assess the effectiveness of these procedures.

Signs of Proper Purgation Therapy (*Samyak*) [3]

In the classical texts, successful purification is marked by several signs. These include *daurbalya* (weakness) and *laghuta* (lightness), which suggest the expulsion of toxins. A reduction in disease load and a restoration of vitality are commonly noted. The patient's *ruchi* (taste perception) improves, and *hrdvarṇashuddhi* (restoration of heart function) is seen. The complexion (*varṇa*) becomes clearer, and *kṣut-trṣṇā*

(proper appetite and thirst) are restored. Timely passage of natural urges and a feeling of clarity in intellect, senses, and mind further confirm the success of the purification therapy. Additionally, the correct movement of *vāta* and improved digestive functions signify that the therapy is proceeding as intended.

Signs of Inadequate Purgation Therapy (Heena) [4]

If the therapy is not performed adequately, the following symptoms may arise, indicating that the purification process is incomplete. These include *ṣṭhīvāna* (abdominal distension), *hṛdayāsuddhi* (impaired heart function), and *utklesha* (abnormal precipitation) of *śleṣhma* (mucus) and *pitta* (bile). The patient may experience *ārucī* (anorexia), *klamā* (fatigue), and *malāghava* (lack of lightness). Laxity in the calf muscles and thighs, accompanied by *tāṃtiya* (drowsiness) and *rīnitis* (nasal congestion), are also common. The disturbance in the function of *vāta* may also occur, leading to additional health problems.

Signs of Excessive Purgation Therapy (Atiyoga) [5]

Excessive *Vamana* or *Virecana* leads to more serious complications, as seen in the following signs. Over-elimination of *feces*, *pitta*, *kapha*, and *vāta* in succession may lead to excessive weakness. The expulsion of *śoṇita* (blood), *meda* (fat), or *māṃsa* (flesh) without the other *dosha* suggests over-purging. Further, excessive thirst (*tr̥ṣṇā*) and an

aggravated *vāta* lead to fainting or dizziness.

The overuse of *Vamana* often results in diseases related to *vāta*, primarily affecting the upper body and causing impediments in speech. Such conditions are signs of excessive purification, highlighting the necessity for a skilled practitioner in managing the dosage and timing of the therapy.

Signs of Proper Emesis Procedure [6]

The clinical signs of a successful *Vamana* therapy can be assessed through the appropriate progression of emesis. The patient should expel the correct quantity of *dosha*—*kapha*, *pitta*, and *vāta*—in the proper sequence. A gradual, well-timed onset of emesis, along with the patient's comfort during the procedure, indicates that the therapy is being administered properly. The expelled *vomitus* should contain the correct proportions of *dosha* and no excessive frothing or blood, which would indicate complications. This type of emesis is essential for the successful cleansing of the body.

Signs of Inadequate Emesis Procedure [7]

Inadequate *Vamana* (or *ayoga*) manifests in several ways. The absence of emesis, or a situation where only the drug is expelled without the other *dosha*, suggests improper therapy. A delayed or obstructed emetic process, where the patient does not experience the full purging effect, is another indication of *ayoga*. The improper dosage of the medicine, leading to insufficient or incomplete expulsion of the *dosha*, further

signals the need for correction in the therapy.

Signs of Excessive Emesis Procedure [8]

Over-administration of *Vamana* may result in excessive purging, leading to complications such as *utklesha* (distension) of the abdomen, severe pain, excessive salivation, and even hematemesis (vomiting of blood).

Table 1 Summarizing the Clinical Assessment Features of *Vamana*

Samyak Lakshana (Proper Vamana)	Heena Lakshana (Inadequate Vamana)	Atiyoga Lakshana (Excessive Vamana)
Proper emesis timely comfortable expulsion of dosha including <i>kapha . pitta</i> and <i>vāta</i>	Absence of emesis	Excessive expulsion of dosha frothy or blood-stained vomit
Leads to restored vitality and health	Drug-only expulsion	Abdominal distension extreme thirst dizziness fatigue
Restoration of appetite and digestion improvement in overall health	Delayed or obstructed process	Excessive salivation abdominal distension and fatigue

Table 2 Summarizing the Clinical Assessment Features of *Virecana*

Samyak Lakshana (Proper Virecana)	Heena Lakshana (Inadequate Virecana)	Atiyoga Lakshana (Excessive Virecana)
Timely expulsion of dosha (<i>feces, pitta kapha vāta</i>)	Abdominal distension	Excessive elimination of dosha including blood or flesh-like substances
Improved health appetite and digestion	Impaired heart function anorexia	Excessive thirst fainting
Balanced sequence of dosha leading to restored vitality	Nasal congestion impaired <i>vāta</i>	Fainting and disturbances in <i>vāta</i>

Complications of Over-Administration or Inadequate Administration [9]

Both *Vamana* and *Virecana* therapies are highly potent and need to be carefully administered. When these therapies are either over-administered or inadequately performed, they can result in several complications. These complications, as outlined in classical Ayurveda texts, include:

- Distension of the abdomen (*Ādhmāna*)
- Searing or cutting pain (*Parikartikā*)

- Excessive salivation (*Parisarāva*)
- Palpitation (*Hṛdayopasarāna*)
- Rigidity (*Aṅagrāha*)
- Stiffness (*Jīvādāna*)
- Displacement of the viscera (*Vibhramśa*)
- Hematemesis (*Stambha*)
- *Upadrava*
- Fatigue (*Klamā*)

These symptoms arise when the delicate balance of the therapy is disturbed, either due to improper dosage or an incorrect approach to the treatment process. It is therefore critical to closely monitor the patient and adjust the therapy accordingly to prevent these adverse effects.

Discussion

In the classical texts, the signs of successful purification therapy (*Samyak*), inadequate therapy (*Heena*), and excessive therapy (*Atiyoga*) serve as guiding principles for clinicians in Ayurveda. Each stage of therapy requires careful monitoring and evaluation to ensure the optimal benefits while minimizing risks and complications. Below are key questions designed to assess the effectiveness and safety of *Vamana* and *Virecana* therapies.

1. Signs of Proper Purgation Therapy (*Samyak*)

Successful purification therapy is marked by several indicators, suggesting that the toxins have been effectively expelled and the body has returned to a balanced state. The

following questions can help assess if the therapy is proceeding correctly:

1. Has the patient experienced a reduction in disease symptoms and an increase in vitality?
2. Is the patient feeling lighter (*laghuta*) with reduced fatigue or weakness (*daurbalya*)?
3. Has the patient's taste perception (*ruchi*) improved, indicating the restoration of digestive functions?
4. Has there been a noticeable improvement in the patient's heart function (*hṛdvarṇashuddhi*) and overall complexion (*varṇa*)?
5. Are the patient's appetite and thirst (*kṣut-tṛṣṇā*) properly restored?
6. Is the patient experiencing timely passage of natural urges, such as bowel movements, urine, and other natural physiological needs?
7. Has the patient reported a sense of clarity in intellect, senses, and mind, suggesting effective detoxification?
8. Is the correct movement of *vāta* being observed in the patient's body, including proper digestion and metabolic activities?

These questions ensure that the purification therapy has achieved its intended outcome and that the body is on the path to balance and rejuvenation.

2. Signs of Inadequate Purgation Therapy (*Heena*)

Inadequate administration of the purification therapy can lead to incomplete detoxification and the persistence of toxins in the body. To assess the possibility of an inadequate procedure, consider the following questions:

1. Is the patient experiencing abdominal distension (*ṣṭhīvāna*), suggesting improper expulsion of *dosha*?
2. Is there an discomfort in chest region (*hrdayāsuddhi*)?
3. Has the patient experienced abnormal precipitation (*utklesha*) of *śleṣhma* or *pitta*?
4. Is the patient reporting loss of appetite (*āruci*) or feeling fatigued (*klamā*) even after the therapy?
5. Has the patient experienced a lack of lightness (*lāghava*)?
6. Is there laxity in the calf muscles and thighs, suggesting weakness or improper expulsion of toxins from the lower part of the body?
7. Has the patient reported excessive drowsiness (*tāṃtiya*) or nasal congestion (*rīnitis*)?
8. Are there signs of disturbance in the functioning of *vāta*, leading to additional health issues such as bloating, irregular digestion, or mental fatigue?

These symptoms indicate that the purification therapy may have been inadequately performed, which could lead to

incomplete detoxification and lingering toxins in the body.

3. Signs of Excessive Purgation Therapy (*Atiyoga*)

Excessive purification therapy can result in severe complications, as the body may be overburdened by the expulsion of too many *dosha*. To assess the risk of over-purging, the following questions should be asked:

1. Has the patient experienced excessive weakness due to the over-elimination of *dosha*?
2. Has there been an abnormal expulsion of *śoṇita* (blood), *meda* (fat), or *māṃsa* (flesh) without the other *dosha*?
3. Is the patient suffering from excessive thirst (*trṣṇā*), which may indicate dehydration or an imbalance caused by excessive purging?
4. Has the patient experienced dizziness or fainting due to an aggravated *vāta*?
5. Is there an imbalance in the body caused by excessive *vāta*, manifesting as disorders in movement, mental clarity, or speech?

Excessive purification therapy leads to imbalances in the body and may result in further health complications. These questions help clinicians assess if the therapy has been overdone and if the patient is at risk of severe complications.

4. Signs of Proper Emesis Procedure

For *Vamana* therapy, the emesis procedure is key to ensuring that toxins are expelled in

the correct sequence and manner. The following questions help in evaluating whether the procedure has been successful:

1. Did the patient expel the correct quantity of *dosha* (*kapha*, *pitta*, *vāta*) in the proper sequence?
2. Was the onset of emesis gradual and well-timed, indicating that the body is responding properly to the therapy?
3. Did the patient experience comfort during the procedure, with no excessive pain or discomfort?
4. Was the expelled vomit in the correct proportions of *dosha* with no excessive frothing or blood, indicating successful expulsion of toxins?

These signs indicate that the emesis procedure has been properly conducted, with the expulsion of the right toxins at the right time.

5. Signs of Inadequate Emesis Procedure

When *Vamana* therapy is inadequately administered, it may not fully expel the toxins, or the process may be disrupted. To assess the adequacy of the emesis procedure, consider these questions:

1. Was there a complete absence of emesis, or did the patient only expel the drug without other *dosha*?
2. Was the emetic process delayed or obstructed, preventing the full purging of toxins?

Inadequate emesis indicates that the therapy was not fully effective, and

adjustments need to be made to ensure complete detoxification.

6. Signs of Excessive Emesis Procedure

Over-administration of *Vamana* can lead to excessive purging, causing severe complications. To assess whether the therapy has been overdone, ask the following questions:

1. Did the patient experience excessive abdominal distension (*utklesha*) or severe pain due to over-purging?
2. Was there excessive salivation or hematemesis (vomiting of blood), indicating an extreme reaction to the therapy?
3. Did the patient suffer from excessive weakness or fatigue due to the over-elimination of toxins?

These signs indicate that the therapy has been over-administered, leading to potential health risks.

By regularly evaluating these signs through thoughtful questions, clinicians can ensure that *Vamana* and *Virecana* therapies are administered effectively, balancing the need for purification with the prevention of harmful side effects. These assessments allow practitioners to tailor the treatment to each patient's specific needs, ensuring optimal health benefits from Ayurveda purification therapies.

Conclusion

The efficacy of *Vamana* and *Virecana* therapies in Ayurveda depends on a delicate

balance between proper administration and monitoring throughout the therapeutic process. Successful purification, marked by the restoration of vitality, clarity, and balanced physiological functions, indicates the effective expulsion of toxins from the body [10]. However, both inadequate and excessive purification therapies can lead to a range of complications, from digestive disturbances to severe systemic imbalances. The key to optimizing the therapeutic benefits lies in accurately assessing signs of proper, inadequate, and excessive therapy, allowing for timely adjustments. By closely observing the clinical signs outlined in classical Ayurveda texts, practitioners can ensure that *Vamana* and *Virecana* therapies are tailored to individual patient needs, ultimately promoting health, wellness, and a return to balance in the body's natural processes.

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