A review of *Nadi Parikshan* in various *Ayurvedic Samhita* with its clinical methods

Pooja Babaso Kamble,
PG Scholar
Rognidan Evum Vikruti Vigyan Dept.,
Yashawant Ayurvedic Medical Collage Kodoli, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India

*Corresponding author: 1312pooja@gmail.com*

**ABSTRACT**

*Nadi Pariksha* is the most effective diagnostic tool known in the medical field. It is cost effective, accurate, safe, and gives quick results. We can conduct *Nadi Pariksha* on healthy individuals as well as all patients irrespective of stage of the disease also, and even pregnant woman, children, elderly can undergo without any harm or side effects. However, this technique is not being widely practised at present, because of lack of training, practise and knowledge about it in the present day among Ayurveda vaidyas. An iconic factor for identification of a physician, irrespective of the time, Region, *Nadi Pariksha* can be highlighted as a common factor or even System of Medicine or Civilization of the known world. Thus, we can perceive that *Nadi Pariksha* or the pulse examination remains as an effective diagnostic tool since ages. *Nadi Pariksha* was not been discussed among the Brihatrayees of Ayurveda. *Acharya Sharangdhara* was the first to document in the doctrines of Ayurveda. Thus *Acharya Sharangdhara* is considered as ‘The Founder of Nadi Pariksha’in Ayurveda. *Nadi Pariksha* was titled under the Pancha-Nidana by *Acharya Sharangdhara* and Ashta Sthana Pariksha by *Acharya Yogaratnakara*. It was the Foremost among all the other diagnostic tools mentioned by him. Later *Acharyas like Acharya Bhava Mishra,* *Acharya Yogaratnakara,* *Acharya Basavaraja,* *Acharya Kanada Maharishi,* and *Acharya Ravana* have contributed in giving more descriptions and importance. In the recent days Dr. Vasant lad and Dr. Sarvadeva Upadhaya’s research work interest and scope of Nadi Pariksha.

**KEYWORDS**- Nadi Parikshan, Pulse examination, Ayurved Samhita

**INTRODUCTION:**

Kills the patients in no time and does not earn Glory. As the strings attached to a ‘Veena’ plays all the Ragas, so does the pulse, found in the hand discloses all the ailments i.e. clear diagnosis can be made through careful
examination of the Nadi.

First duty of a physician is to examine the patient; the degree of vitiation of the Tri-Dosha should be examined through Nadi. The physician should clearly observe the condition of the patients pulse in the beginning and the end of the ailment i.e. for Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

Aims – to study Nadi Parikshan from various ayurvedic Samhita and its clinical methods

Material- Yogaratnakara states at his first chapter (Yg.1/40). “The physician, who does not know the features of Nadi, Mutra and Jiwha etc.

Review of Literature:

Method-

Pariksha Vidhi

Acharya Ravana explained about the procedure of Nadi Pariksha as-

1. The physician who wish to exam the Nadi, should posses
   • Complete Knowledge of Nadi.
   • Good Experience.
   • Should be free from Natural Urges.
   • Have a Comfortable Seat.

2. Ideal Time for Pariksha
   • Early Hours of the morning.

3. Misleading Time
   • Just After Food.
   • After Exercise.
   • Just After Bath.
   • Just After Intoxicants.
   • Just After Sexual act.
   • Just After Sleep.
   • During Hunger.
   • During Anger.
   • During Thirst.
   • During Grief or worry.

4. The person who wish to be examined the Nadi, should follow
   • Must be made to sit comfortably – Sukhasana.
   • He should be relieved from all Natural Urges.
   • He must have Faith in the Physician.
   • He must have faith in Nadi Pariksha.
   • He should not be in Hurry.

Site for Palpating Pulse

Acharya Basavrajiam explained about the site of NadiPariksha in individuals as: The radial pulse is usually examined as a routine. However, if necessary the physician may examine the pulse at the following sites:

1) Wrist (radial artery)
2) Elbow (brachial artery)
3) Arm (brachial artery)
4) Axilla (axillary artery)
5) Ankle (posterior tibial artery)
6) Dorsum of foot (dorsalis pedis)
7) Neck (carotid arterys)
8) In front if ear (superficial temporal arteries), i.e. right ear-pusha left ear-yashaswini temples branch of superficial temporal.
9) Above the eye (supra orbital) hastijivha
10) Near the nose (facial artery branch) aambusha
11) Tongue (lingual)
12) Lips (labial branch of facial artery)
13) Penis (Branch of Int. pudendal artery)
14) Perineum (Branch of Int. pudendal artery)
15) Apex beat.

The pulse is felt in the right hand in males and the left hand in females.
The radial and posterior tibial artery are palpated over a length of three fingers, carotid artery over toe fingers and orbital artery over a length of half a finger only.

**DISCUSSION**-

**Three Basic Gatis of Nadi**

_Acharya Yogratnakara_ explained about three basic _gatis_ of _Nadi_ as-

The word _gati_ means movement. We have to discussed the three basic pulses. In order to begin to understand the variety and complexity in pulse reading, we will look at some variations of these pulses or _gatis_. This introduction will begin to expand our sensitivity and later we will go into the detection of specific disease conditions in more detail.

In addition to the three doshic _gatis_, there are other pulses which help to identify specific diseases. In _jalauka gati_ (leech pulse), the pulse touches the fingers of the clinician and after another in rhythm like the movement of a leech. _Pitta_ enters _rakta dhatu_ which then carries _pitta_ deeper into _asthi dhatu_, the joints, leading to gout and arthritis.

Under _Manduka_, the _pitta_ pulse, the _Acharyas_ observed _lavaka, tittraka_ and _kaka_. _Lavaka_ is a common quail. A _lavaka_ pulse indicates the possibility of _prostatitis_ in a man or _cervicitis_ in a woman. _Tittiraka_ is a _partridge_. With a _tittiraka_ pulse, the _partridge hops_ and then stops. This pulse shows a sharp spike under the middle finger indicating _gastric ulcer_. _Kaka_ means _crow_ and this pulse as a higher spike than _tittraka_ and denoted as excess _pitta_ disorder in the _Small intestine_ (enteritis). This kind of observation is called _darshana_ of the pulse, which leads to _antar darshana_, inner vision or insight. Practicing this kind of observation, one opens new doors of perception through the tips of the fingers.

The peacock pulse is called _mayura gati_. The peacock _gati_ is full and bounding but the distal phase is spreading like the fan of a peacock. _Peacock gati_ is common in _arterial hypertension_. This pulse may occur in _kapha-pitta_ people.

Another interesting dual pulse under the _Vata_ or _pitta_ finger is the _camel pulse_, which has a hump. Lift the finger and a little notch will be felt, which then drops down. This is called _ushtra gati_ (camel pulse). A camel pulse indicates _aortic stenosis_ with thickening or narrowing of the _aortic valve_.

Under _kapha_, the ring finger, which moves like a swan, one can observe an _elephant pulse_ moves deeply and slowly.

The elephant pulse feels like the head of an elephant with a little notch. Feel the and _fro_. _elephant moving_ under the ring finger, letting intuition and awareness work. _It is slow_, deep and heavy, with a notch before it collapses. This pulse is called _gaja gati_ and it shows extremely high _kapha_ blocked in the _lymphatic tissue_. This pulse may indicate _eliphantitis_ or _lymphosarcoma_ and can be felt under the ring finger.

Under the _kapha_ finger one might also find a _padma gati_, a _lotus pulse_. Just as the _lotus moves_ and floats in the water, the pulse under the finger moves to That _lotus gati_ is a very sacred pulse, indicating that the person is enlightened. The thousand petal _lotus_ is open. This pulse is present during
deep meditation and indicates enlightenment and a blissful state.

Feeling the pulse is an art. Awareness should be passive. One should let that awareness act upon the mind. Use the tips of the fingers to feel the nature or gati of the pulse. Sarpa gati (the cobra pulse) is a normal Vata pulse. Manduka gati (the Frog pulse) is a normal pitta pulse, Hamsa gati (swan pulse) is a normal kapha pulse; these are the three basic pulses that one should bear in mind.

Ayurveda is a subjective as well as objective science. A computerized machine to study the Nadi has been devised. To use a machine as a diagnostic tool is all right to quantify perception but to qualify perception requires the sensitivity of human fingers. Certain subtleties about whether the pulse is not, heavy, light, or Vata is pushing pitta or pitta is blocking Vata are difficult to represent graphically. To have a machine will satisfy some people, but we should program our highly developed human computer, which is our brain, improve the sensitivity of these beautiful electrodes in the fingertips. When one starts feeling a manduka gati, hamsa gati or jalauka gati, a memory is stored in the finger as well as in the brain. Through the receptors in the fingertips one can perceive these characteristics of different pulses. Once one knows how to perceive, one will begin to gain insight and mastery over the pulse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vata Nadi</th>
<th>Pitta Nadi</th>
<th>Kapha Nadi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Fast, Feeble, Cold, light, thin, disappears on pressure</td>
<td>Prominent, strong, High amplitude, hot and forceful, lifts up the palpating fingers</td>
<td>Deep, slow, Broad, wavy, thick, cool or warm, regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Best felt under the index finger</td>
<td>Best felt under the middle finger</td>
<td>Best felt under the ring finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gati</strong></td>
<td>Moves like a cobra</td>
<td>Moves like a frog</td>
<td>Moves like a swimming swan</td>
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Doshanusrini Nadi

**Vata +Pitta:** The pulse is a tortuous, tremulous, hard with a good uplift. Its movements resembles at times that of a serpent and at other times that of a frog.
**Kapha + Vata:** The pulse is bulky, tortuous, tremulous, slow and cold. Its movement resembles that of a swan and at other time that of a frog or a serpent.

**Pitta + Kapha:** The pulse is thin, cold and steady. Its movements resembles at times that of a peacock and at other times that of a frog or a swan. The pulse which is sometimes fast and sometimes slow and the pulse which is well felt at its normal place and gets dislodged often indicates combination of doshas.

**Sharangdhara and his contribution**

A new start appears to have been made with commencement of the 13th century where a new type of medical literature, a new school of medicine and new trends in medical diagnosis and therapeutics made their appearance.

**Sharangdhara Samhita,** a popular medical work of this period is the first text which described ‘Nadi Pariksha’ a method of medical diagnosis in preference to the classical Pancha-Nidana the five essentials of diagnosis. *Nadi Pariksha* is not mentioned in Caraka Samhita or Susruta Samhita or Vagabhata’s Astanga Hridayam or Sangraham. It was a great advance over the Pancha-Nidana of the ancient classics. The correlation of the *Nadi-Pariksha* with the tridosa theory is indeed a very great achievement.

1. **Nadi Pariksha** - Pulse Examination a new tool in the diagnosis at that time.
2. Important drugs like mercury and opium.

**Sharangdhara – The Founder of Nadi Pariksha**

As described earlier, Sharangdhara was the first person to introduce Nadi Pariksha concept in Ayurveda, since it was introductory, it contained only eight shlokas. In these eight verses, Sharangdhara explained the entire Nadi Vignana in a ‘Nut Shell’ manner. Therefore, a critical study of the each Shloka is desirable to build up ‘Nadi-Marma Vignanato’ greater heights.

The first Stanza Very clearly deals with the anatomical position of the (Radial) Artery, and its clinical importance as the pulse ‘Jeeva Saksini’. This Jeeva Saksini Dhamani lies at the root of the Thumb (Angusthamoola). Pulsation in the artery reflects the evidence of life and the learned physician through the Sparshana Pariksha; i.e. feeling the pulse of this Jeeva Saksini, is able to come to a clinical assessment of the subject concerned, whether he is ill or well.

Other seven verses deal with types of pulse which can be broadly grouped under 3 categories.

1. The pulse in physiological state of the body – The Prakrutha Nadi.
2. The pulse in certain (Mental condition) Psychological condition – The Manasika Nadi.
3. The pulse in pathological states of the body- The Vikrutha Nadi.

Acharya Sharangdhara, described the characteristics of Nadi in the different condition of the life process, beginning with the pathological state of Nadi, followed by psychological status, and finally and physiological condition of Nadi in normal status. However in keeping with Charaka’s concepts of Prakruti first then Vikrutti next (in Grahaniti chapter), the Prakruti Nadi, as described by Sharangdhara is described here under, so that a clear cut picture of good and bad, Nadi can be visualised by the readers.
During the ‘Diptagni’ and Kshudha’ i.e. when a person is having good digestive fire and normal appetite, his pulse is Lagavi; i.e. light Chapala (tremulous) and Vegavati – fast pulse. After meals, when one’s hunger is satisfied i.e. during Trupta Awastha, Nadi becomes Sthira or stable (while during the period of hunger it is Chapala i.e. Unstable). In Sukhita Awastha; i.e. in healthy state the pulse is Sthira (steady) and Balawati (strong). One can feel these characteristic values in Nadi only on prolonged practice of pulse science with dedication and devotion.

During the various situations on Manasika Udrekata the Nadi represents the following characteristics.

a) In case of Kama (lust) and Krodha (anger), the Nadi is rapid i.e. Vegavahi.

b) During the state of Chinta (anxiety) Bhaya (fear) the pulse is feeble ‘Ksheena’.

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Conflict of Interest: Non  
Source of funding: Nil

Cite this article:  
"A review of Nadi Parikshan in various Ayurvedic Samhita with its clinical methods."  
Pooja Babaso Kamble,  