

Concept of Microsurgery In Ayurveda : A Review Article

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Abstract

The integration of microsurgery and Ayurvedic principles represents a promising frontier in enhancing surgical practices and patient care. This review explores the convergence of ancient Ayurvedic surgical techniques, as outlined by Acharya Sushruta, with modern microsurgical advancements. Key microsurgical procedures, including reattachment of excised ears, management of tracheal injuries, treatment of severed extremities, and approaches for ocular injuries, are examined. The article highlights how Ayurvedic methods complement contemporary practices by focusing on precision, healing, and aesthetic outcomes. Additionally, the review delves into cosmetic aspects of plastic and reconstructive surgery in Ayurveda, discussing techniques for addressing irregularities in post-operative healing. Specific interventions such as *Utsadan* (elevation of depressed areas), *Avasadan* (reduction of overgrowth), *Mridukarma* (softening of hardened tissue), *Darunkarma* (hardening of soft tissue), *Krishnakarma* (darkening of lighter skin), *Pandukarma* (lightening of darker skin), and *Romasanjanana* (promotion of hair growth) Romapaharan (Removal of unwanted hair) Patradana (Application of specific leaves for therapeutic or cosmetic purposes) are detailed. By drawing parallels between historical practices and contemporary innovations, this article illuminates the potential for interdisciplinary synergy, paving the way for improved surgical outcomes and holistic patient care in the evolving landscape of surgery.

Key Words - Microsurgery, Acharya Sushrut, Utsadan, Avasadan, Mridukarma, Darunkarma, Krishnakarma, Pandukarma, Romasanjanana, Patradana, Romapaharan

Introduction :

Microsurgery, a field of modern surgical practice, focuses on the meticulous manipulation of minute structures such as blood vessels, nerves, and tissues using specialised instruments and microscopes. Despite its relatively recent development in Western medicine, the underlying principles of precision, minimal invasiveness, and targeted intervention can be traced back to ancient medical traditions, including Ayurveda. Ayurveda, a 5,000-year-old holistic system of healing from India, is renowned not only for its medicinal herbs and lifestyle

practices but also for its advanced understanding of surgery, as documented in the classical text Sushruta Samhita. Acharya Sushruta, regarded as the “Father of Surgery,” laid the foundation for microsurgery in ancient medical science through his pioneering surgical techniques described in the Sushruta Samhita His comprehensive approaches to wound care, reconstructive surgery, and post-operative management emphasise both functionality and aesthetics. Sushruta’s descriptions of intricate procedures—such as the reattachment of severed body parts, treatment of tracheal injuries, and microsurgical care of delicate structures like the eye—demonstrate a profound understanding of precision in surgery. These early practices align closely with modern microsurgery principles, where

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the careful restoration of form and function is critical to recovery and rehabilitation.

Additionally, Sushruta's emphasis on cosmetic aspects in healing, including his methods for addressing tissue overgrowth, depressed scars, and skin discolouration, reveals the ancient wisdom of plastic and reconstructive surgery. His use of herbal pastes, medicated oils, and specific therapeutic practices like *patradana* (the application of medicinal leaves) shows the Ayurvedic focus on promoting healing through natural remedies, ensuring both effective recovery and improved cosmetic outcomes.

This article explores the concept of microsurgery as envisioned by Acharya Sushruta, focusing on his techniques for reattaching severed parts, managing injuries, and enhancing aesthetic results through precise surgical interventions and Ayurvedic formulations. A deeper examination of Sushruta's methodologies offers invaluable insights into the intersection of traditional Ayurvedic wisdom and modern surgical practices, highlighting the enduring relevance of these ancient techniques in contemporary medicine.

Concept of Microsurgery by Acharya Sushruta : Microsurgery In Reattaching An Excised Ear^[1]

In cases where an ear is severed, the ear should be carefully repositioned and sutured with precision to ensure proper alignment. After suturing, the area must be securely bandaged to maintain stability during healing. Additionally, medicated oil should be applied to the ear cavity to promote healing and prevent infection.

Microsurgery In Tracheal Injury^[2]

In cases where the trachea is injured, particularly at the *krikatika* (the posterior junction of the neck and head), and air escapes through the wound, immediate and precise surgical intervention is essential. The edges of the wound should be carefully approximated and sutured to ensure there are no gaps. The sutured area must then be securely bandaged to prevent further air leakage. Post-operatively, the wound should be irrigated with *ghrita* (clarified butter) prepared from goat's milk, known for its healing properties. The patient is advised to lie on their back during feeding to prevent head movement, which could disrupt the

healing process. Additionally, the patient should perform necessary physical activities such as urination and defecation while remaining in this position to minimise stress on the neck and promote recovery.

Microsurgery in Extremities^[3, 4]

In cases of lacerated or severed extremities, such as arms or legs, the surgeon must first ensure proper alignment of the bones and joints, following established surgical guidelines. The wound should be promptly sutured and dressed using either a *vellitaka* (spiral) bandage or a *Gophana bandh* (sling bandage), depending on the location and severity of the injury. Additionally, a medicated oil with *vata-nashak* properties should be applied to reduce pain and inflammation, and to promote healing.

In instances where an extremity, such as a hand or leg, has been completely severed, the area should be treated with thermal cauterisation by applying heated oil to control bleeding and seal the wound. The severed part should then be dressed with a *koshbandh* (sheath bandage), and appropriate measures must be taken to facilitate proper healing and recovery, including the application of medicated oils and post-operative care to restore functionality.

Microsurgery in Excised Eye^[5]

In cases of complete eye excision, the prognosis is generally unfavourable, and surgical intervention is not recommended, as the condition is deemed incurable. However, if the eyeball is displaced but still connected and dangling from the socket, immediate care can be taken to reposition it. The surgeon must be cautious not to disturb the delicate *siras* (nerve and vascular structures) attached to the eyeball. Using a lotus leaf or similar soft material, the surgeon should gently press the eyeball back into its original position.

Following repositioning, *Tarpana Kriya* (an ocular therapeutic procedure) should be performed using a medicated *ghrita* (clarified butter) prepared from the following ingredients:

- Goat's milk *ghrita*
- *Yashtimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*)
- *Neel Kamal* (*Blue Lotus*)
- *Jeevak* (*Malaxis acuminata*)
- *Rushabhak* (*Microstylis muscifera*)

These ingredients are processed together to create a medicated paste and infused with *ghrita* made from goat's milk. This medicated *ghrita* should be used for ocular injuries to promote healing and restore eye health. The formulation is specifically indicated for managing various types of eye trauma, helping reduce inflammation and support the healing of delicate ocular tissues.

Cosmetic Aspects in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in Ayurveda^[6]

In the Sushruta Sutrasthana, Acharya Sushruta provides detailed insights into the cosmetic aspects of plastic and reconstructive surgery. He emphasises the importance of not only restoring function but also achieving aesthetic harmony after surgical procedures. Post-operative care and cosmetic refinement are crucial in cases where the healing process leads to irregularities in the appearance of the treated area. Sushruta outlines specific measures to address various cosmetic issues that may arise following healing, including:

- If the healed part is elevated above the skin surface, depressed, or shows abnormal overgrowth
- If the healed tissue is too hard or too soft, or if the skin tone of the healed area is significantly lighter than the surrounding skin
- If the area lacks hair or requires hair removal for aesthetic reasons

To address these concerns, Sushruta prescribes the following measures:

- Utsadan (Elevation of a depressed area)
- Avsadan (Reduction of excess tissue or overgrowth)
- Mridukarma (Softening of hardened tissue)
- Darunkarma (Hardening of overly soft tissue)
- Krishnakarma (Darkening of lighter skin areas)
- Pandukarma (Lightening of overly dark skin areas)
- Romasanjanana (Promotion of hair growth in areas where it is absent)
- Romapaharan (Removal of unwanted hair)
- Patradana (Application of specific leaves for therapeutic or cosmetic purposes)

These procedures demonstrate the advanced understanding of cosmetic refinement in ancient Ayurveda, where the focus extends beyond

functional recovery to include the restoration of natural appearance and aesthetic balance, a concept that aligns with modern plastic and reconstructive surgery. Sushruta's detailed approaches continue to inspire integrative practices that combine traditional Ayurvedic wisdom with modern surgical techniques for improved cosmetic outcomes.

Utsadan (Elevation of a Depressed Area) ^[7]

Utsadan refers to the elevation of a depressed healed ulcer, particularly when such depression occurs due to inadequate or defective healing. This procedure is essential for restoring the contour of the affected area to match the surrounding skin, thereby improving its aesthetic appearance.

To facilitate the elevation process, a medicated paste can be prepared using *Apamarg* (*Achyranthes aspera*) and *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), combined with *ghrit* (clarified butter) processed with these herbs. This paste should be applied to the ulcer to enhance healing and support the elevation of the depressed tissue.

Additionally, the strategic inclusion of meat from carnivorous animals in the patient's diet, administered appropriately, is believed to promote tissue regeneration and assist in elevating the depressed area. This integrative approach highlights the Ayurvedic perspective on restoring not only the functionality but also the cosmetic appearance of healing tissues.

Avasadan (Reduction of Excess Tissue or Overgrowth) ^[8]

Avasadan refers to the destruction of excessive tissue or overgrowth associated with a healing ulcer. This technique aims to reduce any soft, marginal overgrowth so that it aligns more closely with the surrounding skin, thereby improving the overall appearance of the affected area.

To effectively address this issue, a medicinal paste can be prepared using *Kasis* (copper sulphate), which should be finely powdered and mixed with honey to form a cohesive paste. This paste is then applied to the elevated margins of the ulcer. The therapeutic properties of the ingredients work synergistically to eliminate the soft marginal overgrowth, allowing for a more aesthetically pleasing and level surface. This approach not only enhances the cosmetic outcome but also contributes

to the overall healing process by ensuring the ulcer site blends seamlessly with the surrounding tissue.

Mridukarma (Softening of hardened tissue) ^[9]

Mridukarma refers to the process of softening hardened tissue, which is crucial in the management of post-surgical or healing areas that have become excessively firm or fibrous. This condition can arise due to various factors, including inadequate healing or the formation of scar tissue, which can lead to functional impairment and aesthetic concerns.

To achieve the desired softening effect, specific medicinal formulations are employed. These may include herbal pastes or oils that possess emollient properties, which help to restore suppleness to the affected area. Commonly used ingredients in these formulations may include *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Apamarg* (*Achyranthes aspera*), and various types of *ghrit* (clarified butter), each known for their beneficial effects on skin and tissue health. The application of these medicinal preparations can promote blood circulation, enhance nutrient delivery, and facilitate the breakdown of excess fibrous tissue. By employing Mridukarma, practitioners aim to restore both the functional mobility and cosmetic appearance of the affected area, thereby improving the overall quality of life for the patient. This technique underscores the holistic approach of Ayurveda, focusing on both physical healing and aesthetic restoration.

Darunkarma (Hardening of overly soft tissue) ^[10]

If the ulcer is soft then the following remedial measures should be followed to harden the part. The bark of *Dhava*, *priyangu*, *Ashok*, *Rohini*, *Triphala*, *Dhataki*, *Lodra* and *sarjara* should be taken and make it powder. This powder should be applied with *Ghrit* or the powdered drug should be dusted in affected part.

Krishnakarma (Darkening of lighter skin areas) ^[11]

If the healed part becomes white cicatrix as a result of bad or defective granulation then the surgeon performs *krishnakarma*. For this some quantity of *Bhallataka* seed should be taken and soaked in cow urine. Then seeds should be taken out and dried in sunlight. This procedure should be continued for 7 days then all seeds should be put in pitcher full of milk upto seven days then seeds should be cut in

two parts and kept in iron pitcher. Another pitcher should be buried in ground with a thin and perforated lid placed over its mouth and pitcher containing seeds should be placed over it with the mouth downwards then the mouth of both the pitcher should be firmly joined with clay. Then fire should be lit by burning the cow dung above the pitcher. Oil dribbling down from the *Bhallatak* seeds should be collected by underground pitcher. The hoof of animal like horse or cow should be burnt and fine powder should be made and this powder should be mixed with the previous *Bhallataka* oil and applied in the white cicatrix it will blacken the part.

Pandukarna (Lightening of overly dark skin areas) ^[12]

Owing to the defective and faulty healing of operated part if the skin becomes black in color then the natural color of the skin can be achieved by *pandukarma*.

For this purpose Fruit of *Rohini* (*katutumbi*) should be dipped into Goat milk for seven night then the fruit should be made into paste by this milk and medicated paste should be applied on the affected part.

Another medicated compounds are like Root of *Vetasa*, Root of *Sala*, *Yastimadhu*, Sulphate Of Iron, Powder of newly made earthen pot this all should be pasted together with honey and applied on affected areas Etc.

Romasanjanana (Promotion Of Hair Growth In Areas Where It Is Absent) ^[13]

Romasanjanana is an Ayurvedic practice focused on stimulating hair growth in areas that are bald or have sparse hair, particularly relevant in cases of alopecia or hair loss resulting from surgical procedures or injuries. The technique employs a range of herbal formulations and medicated oils known for their nourishing and rejuvenating properties to stimulate hair follicles and promote regrowth.

1. Ashes of Elephant Tooth: The ivory from an elephant's tooth is burned to create ashes, which are then powdered. This powder is mixed with pure *Rasanjana* (black antimony) and goat's milk to form a paste. According to Sushruta, the application of this paste can induce hair growth, even in areas such as the palms of the hands.

2. Burnt Ashes of Animal Byproducts: A mixture of burnt ashes from the bones, nails, hair, skin, hooves, and horns of any quadruped can be combined with oil. This formulation is believed to facilitate hair growth in the treated area.

3. Medicinal Paste with Iron Sulphate: A paste made from sulphate of iron, *Karanja* leaves, and expressed juice of *Kapiththa* is applied to the affected areas. This preparation has been noted to encourage hair growth effectively. These traditional Ayurvedic formulations reflect a holistic approach to hair restoration, addressing both functional and aesthetic concerns while highlighting the rich heritage of natural healing practices in Ayurveda **Romapaharan (Removal of unwanted hair)** ^[14]

The presence of hair in ulcerated areas can hinder proper healing. In such cases, it is advisable to either shave the hair using a razor or remove it with forceps. Various traditional formulations can assist in depilating unwanted hair effectively.

Burnt Ashes of Conch Shell - A mixture comprising two parts of *Harital* (Yellow Orpiment) and one part of burnt conch shell ashes can be prepared. This combination should be blended with *sukta* (an acid gruel) to form a paste, which can then be applied to the affected area to facilitate hair removal.

Bhallatak Oil - A mixture of *Bhallatak* oil and *snuhi ksheer* (the milk of the Euphorbia plant) can also be used externally on the affected area to effectively remove hair.

Pastes from Plant-Based Ingredients - A paste made from the burnt ashes of plantain leaves, *Syonaka*, rock salt, *Harital*, and Sami seeds can be mixed with water and applied to the affected region to remove hair.

Domestic Lizard Oil - Additionally, an oil derived from burning domestic lizard, combined with plantain, *Harital*, and Ingudi seeds, can be processed into a paste using oil and water. This preparation should be heated in sunlight before application. This external treatment is effective in eradicating hair from the desired areas.

These traditional Ayurvedic methods highlight the holistic approach to healing and recovery, emphasising both functional restoration and aesthetic refinement.

Patradana (Application of Specific Leaves for Therapeutic or Cosmetic Purposes):^[15]

Patradana, a traditional Ayurvedic technique, involves the external application of medicinal leaves to promote healing and improve cosmetic outcomes after surgery or injury. Leaves from plants like *Dhava*, *Priyangu*, and Ashoka are used for their anti-inflammatory, wound-healing, and rejuvenating properties. These leaves are processed into pastes or applied directly to the affected area, aiding in tissue regeneration, scar management, and skin tone correction. *Patradana* aligns with modern wound care practices that use plant-based extracts for natural, non-invasive recovery. Further research into this technique could offer valuable insights for enhancing post-surgical healing and cosmetic refinement.

Discussion

The convergence of ancient Ayurvedic surgical principles and modern microsurgery provides a rich tapestry for exploring how historical practices can inform contemporary surgical techniques. The meticulous descriptions found in the Sushruta Samhita reflect an advanced understanding of anatomy, wound healing, and patient care that resonates with today's microsurgical approaches. This discussion focuses on the implications of integrating these two paradigms for improved surgical outcomes, particularly in the areas of precision, aesthetics, and holistic patient management.

Historical Context and Evolution of Surgical Techniques^[16, 17]

Acharya Sushruta's methodologies were groundbreaking for their time, emphasising careful dissection, precise suturing, and an understanding of postoperative care. The principles of microsurgery—such as minimising tissue damage, maintaining blood supply, and achieving optimal functional and aesthetic results—echo the teachings in the Sushruta Samhita. For example, the concept of achieving aesthetic harmony after surgical interventions aligns with modern reconstructive and plastic surgery, where restoring both function and appearance is paramount.

The detailed descriptions of surgical techniques such as rhinoplasty and ocular procedures demonstrate an impressive grasp of the complexities involved in managing intricate bodily structures. This historical context underscores the

notion that principles of precision and meticulousness are not exclusive to modern practices but have deep roots in ancient traditions.

Integration of Techniques and Philosophies

The application of Ayurvedic practices, such as the use of herbal formulations for postoperative care, offers a complementary approach to enhancing recovery and reducing complications. For instance, the use of medicated oils to promote healing and prevent infection is a practice that resonates with modern wound care strategies, which often incorporate botanical extracts and natural products. Moreover, the emphasis on holistic care in Ayurveda—considering not only the physical but also the emotional and psychological well-being of the patient—provides a framework for enhancing patient outcomes in contemporary surgical practices. The concept of patient centred, which is gaining traction in modern medicine, aligns well with the Ayurvedic philosophy that advocates for a comprehensive approach to health.

Potential for Research and Clinical Application

The integration of Ayurvedic principles into modern microsurgical practice offers several avenues for research and clinical application. Investigating the efficacy of traditional herbal remedies and formulations, as outlined in the Sushruta Samhita, in conjunction with modern surgical techniques could yield valuable insights into enhancing healing processes and patient satisfaction.

Moreover, exploring the use of Ayurvedic diagnostic methods and personalised treatment plans could lead to improved patient outcomes. The focus on individualised care, as practiced in Ayurveda, can inform modern approaches to tailoring surgical interventions based on patient-specific needs and conditions.

Cosmetic Considerations and Aesthetic Outcomes

The importance of aesthetic outcomes in surgery, particularly in reconstructive procedures, has been well established. The methods described by Sushruta for addressing irregularities in skin tone, texture, and hair growth highlight the ancient understanding of cosmetic enhancement, which remains a critical aspect of modern plastic surgery.

Integrating Ayurvedic cosmetic techniques with contemporary practices could provide additional options for patients seeking not only functional restoration but also improved aesthetic results. This interdisciplinary approach emphasises the need for continued dialogue between ancient wisdom and modern scientific advancements, potentially leading to innovative practices in reconstructive surgery.

Conclusion

The exploration of the intersection between Ayurvedic surgical techniques and modern microsurgery reveals a wealth of knowledge that can enhance current practices. By honouring the foundational principles established by Acharya Sushruta, contemporary surgeons can adopt a more holistic and patient-centred approach to care. This integration fosters an environment ripe for innovation, where traditional wisdom and modern technology coalesce to improve surgical outcomes and patient satisfaction.

Future research should focus on empirical studies to validate the efficacy of Ayurvedic practices in modern surgical contexts, paving the way for a more integrated approach to surgical care that respects both historical traditions and contemporary medical advancements. The potential for interdisciplinary synergy in surgery is vast, offering exciting possibilities for the evolution of surgical practice in the years to come.

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