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## An Ayurvedic Perspective on Neurological Balance with Special Reference to Vata Dosha Pimparkar P.<sup>1</sup>, Parekh G.<sup>2</sup>

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### ABSTRACT:

The meaning of the word Ayurveda is "Knowledge of Life." Our body is rooted in Dosha, Dhātu, and Mala. The doshas function by means of dhatus and malas. The dhatus and malas are the structural components and the Doshas are the energy forms. Each concept in Ayurveda is based on the Panchmahabhutas; the Dosha represents the physical form of Panchmahabhutas in our body. Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, classifies physiological functions into three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Among these, Vata Dosha is primarily responsible for movement, communication, and nervous system regulation. This article explores the intricate relationship between Vata Dosha and neurological balance, correlating Ayurvedic principles with modern neurophysiology. The nervous system, particularly the autonomic and central nervous systems, exhibits characteristics akin to Vata, such as rapid transmission of impulses, sensory perception, and motor control. Imbalances in Vata Dosha are often linked to neurological disorders like anxiety, insomnia, and neurodegenerative conditions. Ayurveda emphasizes the use of dietary modifications, lifestyle practices, herbal formulations, and therapies such as Abhyanga, Shirodhara, and Nasya to restore Vata equilibrium and promote nervous system health. This article aims to provide a holistic perspective on neurological wellness by integrating Ayurvedic wisdom with contemporary scientific insights.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, Vata, Dosa, Pitta, and Kapha. Panchmahabhutas Nervous system, CNS Abhyanga, Shirodhara, and Nasya

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**INTRODUCTION:**

The three-fold management system known as Tridosha theory, which consists of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha Dosha, is the foundation for all Ayurvedic principles pertaining to physiology, pathology, diagnosis, prognosis, medicine, and treatments. Every Dosha is represented by many physiological and physical characteristics. Of the three, vata is without a doubt the most crucial and vital dosha for survival. The word Vata is formed by combining the essential concepts Gati (movement) and Gandhana (senses).

1. The vata dosha is represented by Daruna (with severe implications), Bahu-Ighra, and Anavasthita, similar to how nerve impulses rapidly transfer information from one part of the body to another (always changing).

2 Vata is the sign that governs many kinetic and physiological characteristics, such as respiration, circulation, voluntary action, etc. It is also the sign that governs psychological characteristics, such as enthusiasm, concentration, etc.

3 Vata is the principal energy responsible for maintaining homeostasis, or normal sensory and motor processes necessary for survival. Notably, there is a direct correlation between significant neurological problems and deficient Vata Dosha

4 The "homeostatic" or "Tantra Yantra Dhara" functions of the Vata Dosha preserve normalcy. The ANS maintains survival and homeostasis in an unconscious (or "automatic") manner. The reproductive, digestive, excretory, and circulatory systems are all under control by the ANS. The Ayurvedic concept of Vata Dosha is deeply intertwined with the functions of the Tantrika Tantra (nervous system). Vata is responsible for all physiological movements, including neural transmission, sensory perception, cognition, and motor coordination. The Majjavaha Srotas (nervous system pathways) and Manovaha Srotas (mental channels) are

directly influenced by Vata. When in equilibrium, Vata maintains Sharira Kriya (bodily functions) and Manas Prakriti (mental stability). However, its vitiation leads to Vata Vyadhi (neurological disorders) affecting both physical and mental health.

**Aim and Objective**

**Aim:** To explore the Ayurvedic perspective on neurological balance with special reference to Vata Dosha, highlighting its physiological role, pathological manifestations, and holistic management.

**Objectives:**

1. To understand the correlation between Vata Dosha and the nervous system (Tantrika Tantra) based on Ayurvedic principles.
2. To analyze the role of VATA in regulating neurological functions.
3. To explore Ayurvedic treatment modalities for Vata-related neurological disorders.

**Material and Method**

**Material:**

Ayurvedic Classical Texts – Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya

Modern Research – Studies on Vata Dosha and the nervous system

Therapeutic Modalities – Ahara, Vihara, Aushadhi, Panchakarma, Yoga, Pranayama

**Methodology:**

Literature Review of Ayurvedic and modern neurological concepts

Data Collection from classical texts and modern research

Therapeutic Approach involving Ayurvedic treatments for Vata disorders

**PHYSIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS AND QUALITY OF VATA**

Though Vata is all pervading and responsible for all activities in our body, basing on the names, site and functions. The sharir Vata is divided into five categories.

1 PRANA VATA: the word Parana is related derived from the Sanskrit Root "AN" with a prefix "PRA" means to Breathe, to live. Therefore Parana Vata is responsible for all



vital functions like Respiration, Heart rate and other vegetative functions which are essential for human existence. According to Charka and Vagbhatta the Parana Vata is located in the Head and it is stated to traverses in the region of oral cavity, nose, neck and chest for the proper control and discharges its function. The function like Buddhi Dhahran, Mano Buddhi, Tatwa ganana, Dhahran, grahan, Indrias Buddhi (sensory knowledge), smriti (memory), anubhava (knowledge through direct perception, inference, analogy, verbal testimony). The anatomical relation with nervous system is Hippocampus, Cerebral cortex, Wernick's area, Physical cortex, anterior thalamic group. In physical function site of working memory helps in complex intellectual activities like judgment, decision making. Helpful in retention and recollection of recent and past experiences. Chital Dhahran function holds the function of Manas (indriabhigraha-initiates and withdraws indrias (ganana- intellectual, karma-motor) from perceiving their objectives and sends information to Atma. The anatomical relation with nervous system is Heschl's gyrus, post central gyrus, insular cortex, amygdale, cerebellum, hypothalamus dorso medial associating with prefrontal gyrus, primary motor area, pre motor area, basal ganglion. Physiological function like Intellectual, Emotional, Motor activities. The other function like Hridaya dharana, Swasa, Anna pravesana, Sneezing, Spitting, Belching. The anatomical relation with nervous system neuron lie in dorsal motor nucleus of the Vagus nerve in reticular formation of medulla, Caudal hypothalamus, Vasomotor centre in medulla, Respiratory centers located in the reticular formation of Brain stem, Nuclei of Trigeminal, Facial, Gloss pharyngeal, Vagus, other parts of brain, Sneezing centre of CNS stimulated by impulses through Trigeminal nerve from the nasal mucosa, nucleus of

facial nerve located in caudal portion of Pons, Medulla (a poly synaptic visceral reflex).

2 UDANA VATA: Acharya Vagbhatta considered that the Prana Vata is essential for the life and Udana Vata is for the strength of a person. If they are disturbed there is danger both life and strength. The Vata is situated in Uras (chest) and circulates between Nostrils, neck and nabhi. The function of this Vata is Production of speech, work, mental stamina, zeal, colour and smriti. The function again can be divided into: Psychic and physiological, Urja and smriti are psychic and speech, prayatana, Bala, Varna is physiological. Anatomical relation with nervous system the motor fibers of the cranial nerves- facial, gloss pharyngeal, Vagus and accessory, hypoglossal as a whole can be compared to cervical plexus as it is formed by these along with nerves arising from vertebrae C1-C4.

3 VYANA VATA: Vata is concerned with motor and sensory function of body. The life of an individual is dependent upon these two functions. The movements may be visible or invisible. Both Prana and Udana are concerned with some of visible and invisible movement in the body. The locomotion is a visible movement and it is one of the most important functions of living body. All movements are effected through the contraction and relaxation of the muscles. Vyana Vata controls the voluntary movement of the body. This Vata is situated in the Hridaya and circulates in the whole body through the medium of Rasa Dhatu. The function of Vyana Vata are Rasa samvahana (circulation of blood), Gamana (walking), Apakshepana (downwards movements of limb), Utkshepana (elevation), Nimesha and Unmesha (movements of eye lids). Vyana Vata is described as Mahajwa (highly powerful). Therefore it keeps the Rasa Dhatu in circulation (yugapath) i.e. continuously throughout the life. Anatomical relation with

nervous system CNS, motor nerve supply to the cardiac muscle, Thoraco lumbar sympathetic division and vasomotor centre of ANS and parasympathetic, Hypothalamus, sympathetic division and vasomotor centre of ANS.

4 SAMANA VATA: some of the important function of a living being to ingest food , digest and assimilate to maintain the life and also the mass of the body. This Vata is situated near the Jatharagni and moves about all through the Kostha (Alimentary canal). The function of Samana Vata are Annagraham (reception of food that is swallowed), Agni sandhukshana (stimulation of stomach and intestines to secrete digestive juices), Annapachana (digestion indirectly through digestive juices), Sara kitta vibhajana (sorting of digested, undigested, indigestible and excretory parts of ingested food materials), Facilitates absorption of digested food and excretion of waste products, control over Sweda Vaha, Dosa Vaha and Udakavaha Srotas. Anatomical relation with nervous system Vagal, Gloss pharyngeal supply of the GIT (gastrointestinal tract), ENT (enteric nervous system), Sympathetic, Para sympathetic supply of glands of digestive system, myo enteric plexus, parasympathetic innervations of colon, Auerbach's plexus of Autonomic nervous system.

5 APANA VATA: The Vata which has a special tendency to move downwards is called Apana Vata. This Vata is situated in the pelvic and sacral regions. It circulates through Shroni (pelvic region), Vasti (bladder), Medra (penis and vagina in case of females) and Uru(thighs). The function of Apana Vata is Shukra Pravrutti (ejaculation of semen), Artava Pravrutti (menstruation and ovulation), Pureesha Pravrutti (evacuation of bowels), Muttra Pravrutti (micturition) and Garbha nishkramana (parturition-labor). Anatomical relation with nervous system sensory fibers of the pelvic nerves, motor

branches of the pudendal nerve, pontine, spinal regions which can be considered as indriya Dhahran of (Parana), parasympathetic supply, sympathetic supply in L1-L2 level, nerve supply to the muscles of uterus and abdomen, hypothalamus, plexus of autonomic nervous system.

### **Ayurvedic Management of Neurological Disorders**

#### **1. Nidana Parivarjan (Eliminating the Cause)**

The first step in Ayurvedic management is identifying and avoiding the root causes (Nidana).

Factors aggravating Vata dosha include:

Excessive fasting and irregular eating habits, Overuse of dry, light, and cold foods Chronic stress, anxiety, and overthinking, Excessive travel and lack of proper rest Cold exposure and excessive physical exertion, Avoiding these triggers helps in stabilizing Vata and preventing neurological dysfunctions.

#### **2. Shodhana Chikitsa (Detoxification & Purification Therapy)**

Detoxification therapies play a significant role in balancing Vata and clearing Avarana (blockages) in nerve channels.

a) Panchakarma for Neurological Disorders  
Panchakarma therapies help in Vata pacification and nerve rejuvenation.

b) Snehana (Oleation Therapy): Use of medicated oils like Maha Narayana Taila, Bala Taila, Ksheerbala Taila for external and internal lubrication.

c) Swedana (Sudation Therapy): Steam therapy using Dashmoola Kwath or Bala Mooladi decoctions to reduce stiffness and increase blood circulation.

d) Basti (Medicated Enema Therapy):

Anuvasana Basti (Oil-based enema): Nourishes nerve tissues. (e.g., Ksheerbala Taila, Sahacharadi Taila)

Niruha Basti (Decoction enema): Eliminates toxins and balances Vata (e.g., Dashmool Kwath Basti, Erandmooladi Basti).

e) Nasya (Nasal Therapy): Nasal administration of medicated oils (e.g., Anu Taila, Shadbindu Taila) supports brain function and nerve rejuvenation.

f) Shirodhara (Oil Streaming Therapy): A continuous stream of warm oil on the forehead helps relieve stress, anxiety, and neurodegenerative conditions.

### **3. Shamana Chikitsa (Pacification Therapy)**

After detoxification, internal medicines are given to balance Vata and nourish nerve tissues.

#### **a) Medications & Herbs**

Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*): Enhances memory, reduces anxiety, and strengthens the nervous system.

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*): Acts as a nerve tonic and stress reliever.

Shankhpushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*): Supports cognitive functions and mental clarity.

Jatamansi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*): Calms the mind and prevents neurodegeneration.

Vacha (*Acorus calamus*): Useful in speech disorders and improving neural communication. Ksheerbala Taila & Mahamasha Taila: Used for Abhyanga (oil massage) and Basti therapy for nerve nourishment.

#### **b) Classical Formulations**

Vata Chintamani Rasa – Used in neurological disorders like paralysis and epilepsy.

Brahmi Ghrita – Improves cognitive function.

Saraswatarishta – Beneficial in neuropsychiatric disorders.

Dashmoola Kwath – Reduces inflammation and nerve-related pain.

### **4. Rasayana Therapy (Rejuvenation & Nerve Strengthening)**

Rasayana therapy helps in restoring neurological strength and regenerating damaged nerve tissues.

Medhya Rasayana (Cognitive Enhancers): Brahmi, Shankhpushpi, Ashwagandha,

Swarna Bhasma is used in degenerative neurological disorders.

Vata-Pacifying Rasayana: Chyawanprash, Ashwagandha Lehyam

### **5. Ahara (Dietary Management)**

A Vata-pacifying diet includes warm, nourishing, and unctuous foods.

Recommended Foods: Milk, ghee, sesame oil, nuts (almonds, walnuts) for nerve nourishment. Mung dal, rice, wheat, and root vegetables for stability. Warm herbal teas (ginger, cinnamon, ashwagandha) for calming Vata. Foods to Avoid: Dry, cold, processed foods. Excessive caffeine, alcohol, and smoking. Excessive bitter, pungent, and astringent foods.

### **6. Vihara (Lifestyle Modifications)**

Regular Oil Massage (Abhyanga): Applying warm oil helps in calming Vata

### **Yoga & Pranayama:**

Bhramari Pranayama – Calms the nervous system. Nadi Shodhana Pranayama – Balances Vata and improves mental clarity.

Asanas: Vrikshasana, Shavasana, and Balasana enhance neurological stability.

Adequate Sleep: Proper rest is essential to avoid Vata aggravation.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The Ayurvedic concept of Vata Dosha shows a strong correlation with the functions of the modern nervous system. Each subtype of Vata—Prana, Udana, Vyana, Samana, and Apana—reflects specific neurological and physiological functions such as respiration, sensory perception, motor control, digestion, and elimination. These functions closely resemble the roles of the central, autonomic, and enteric nervous systems described in contemporary science. Imbalance of Vata is linked with neurological and psychological disorders including anxiety, insomnia, neuropathies, and degenerative conditions. Ayurvedic texts emphasize restoring Vata balance through Nidana Parivarjan, Panchakarma therapies such as Basti, Nasya,

and Shirodhara, and the use of Medhya Rasayana like Brahmi and Ashwagandha. Diet, lifestyle modification, yoga, and pranayama further support Vata stability and neurological harmony. Overall, the discussion highlights that integrating Ayurvedic principles with modern neurophysiology provides a holistic approach to understanding and managing neurological disorders, demonstrating the relevance of Vata Dosha in maintaining nervous system health.

### CONCLUSION:

The following statement indicates the relative levels in the CNS of the functional regions an aspect of the five sub divisions of the Sharir Vata certain overlapping may be noticed.

1 PRANA VATA: Reticular formation from the brain stem to medulla oblongata with connections to the brain and higher centers.

2 UDANA VATA: reticular formation from the lower part of Pons to the spinal cord up to the cervical segments 3, 4, 5 and upper thoracic segments 2 to 6. The motor nuclei of the facial, glossopharyngeal, Vagus, spinal, accessory, hypoglossal nerves are also included.

3 VYANA VATA: the anterior lateral horn cells of the spinal cord T1 TO L2 or L3 segments.

4 SAMANA VATA: myo enteric and sub mucous plexus of the GIT track.

5 APANA VATA: Lower lumbar and sacral segments of the spinal cord.

As a whole all the five sub divisions of vata are facilitated by coordination of Parana and Vyana Vata with each other. Hence these can be correlated to basic functions of nervous System The Ayurvedic concept of Vata Dosha aligns closely with the modern understanding of the nervous system. Vata pacification through Panchakarma, Medhya Rasayana, and lifestyle modifications offers a holistic approach to neurological health. The integration of Ayurvedic treatments with

Yoga and Pranayama provides a comprehensive strategy for managing Vata-related neurological disorders.

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