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## Nadi Pariksha: An Ancient Ayurvedic Method of Diagnosis

**Kalpna B. Kachare\*, Santosh G. Girbide, Snehal A. Bankar**

Department of Rognidan, R.A. Podar Ayurved Medical College, Worli, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

### Abstract

In Ayurveda we have studied two hypotheses namely, Pinda Brhmada Nyaya and Anshansha Kalpana. As per the Pinda Brahmanda Nyaya, whatever elements we see in the nature, we find same elements in the smallest part of the human body as well and vice versa. According to Anshanshakalpana, all the elements found in any organism, are found in the seed of that organism in the same proportion but in minute quantities. The presence of pulse at the Angushthamula is evidence of life. “Hastagatenadisarvanroganprabhashyate.” Nadi Pariksha is done to analyse and estimate the quantity of Tridosha in the body. Tridosha, i.e. Vata, Pitta and Kapha are considered as the fundamental. Concept of Nadi Pariksha found in various ancient Ayurved Samhitas like, Bhavprakash, Nadi Pariksha by Ravansamhita, Nadivigyan by Kanad. Theacharya Sharangdhara flourished it in his work as a means of diagnosis and prognosis. The concept of Nadi Pariksha is described in third chapter first part. Yogratnakara also describes Nadi Pariksha as diagnosis, in first chapter under heading Rog Pariksha. The examinations of Nadi Pariksha (Pulse examination) are evidence of many diseases as per Yogratnakara. These parameters are indicative of diagnosis of diseases. They were popular diagnostic tools in the past but nowadays they are not specifically used, so there is need to re-establish their results so that they can be used in future.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Nadi Pariksha, pulse examination

\*Author for Correspondence E-mail: Kachare.kalpna@gmail.com

### INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda we have studied two hypotheses namely, Pinda Brhmada Nyaya and Anshansha Kalpana. As per the Pinda Brahmanda Nyaya, whatever elements we see in the nature, we find same elements in the smallest part of the human body as well and vice versa. According to Anshanshakalpana, all the elements found in any organism, are found in the seed of that organism in the same proportion but in minute quantities. The presence of pulse at the Angushthamula is evidence of life.

#### **Hastagatenadisarvanroganprabhashyate**

Nadi Pariksha is done to analyse and estimate the quantity of Tridosha in the body. Tridosha, i.e. Vata, Pitta and Kapha are considered as the fundamental elements of health. A balance between these three is considered as Prakriti or healthy status and any imbalance in these three is considered as Vikriti or ill health. As per ancient Ayurvedic text, Nadi can be examined at various places but commonly it is

examined at the wrist of the person. Conventionally it is examined at right wrist of the males and left wrist of the females. Ideally it should be examined in the early morning and on empty stomach. Dosha usually stay at their own place, i.e. Ashrayasthana and come in the body hollows to do their function. Some of the Dosha are utilized during this process. After the process is over, the remaining Dosha goes back to their original place.

Nadi Pariksha is an Ayurvedic tool of diagnosis practiced from long back. Nadi Pariksha is the science of observing the pulse from a perspective of diagnosis of the human body, mind and the sub-conscious. It is commonly known as pulse diagnosis. The pulse communicates more than what we can feel. Energy flowing through the various channels (Nadis) carries information about health of all that connects to them as organ channels (Srotas), tissues (Dhatus), organs and their health and regeneration into the blood. Body metabolism and even information about

our conscious, sub-conscious mind, attitudes and also information about our *Samskaras* (experiences) and *Vasanas* (pattern) that we lived through in the past are available as energies in blood for *Nadi Pariksha*.

*Nadi* is also known as *sphura*, *sira*, *veena*, *sphurani*, *hansi*, *dhamani*, *jivsakshi*, *jivitadnya* are *sanskrita* synonyms of *nadi*, as well as pulse in English, these synonyms show functional activity of *Nadi*, i.e. *Spura* (nerve), *Dhamani* (artery) *Sira* (vein) *Rasayani* (lymphatic vessels) *snayu* (ligament). It indicates *nadi* is a channel existing within the body in the form of blood vessels.

The term *Nadi Pariksha* denotes examination of pulse (*Nadi*). According to *Ayurveda*, *Nadi Pariksha* is base of *Tridoshvijyana*. *Nadi Pariksha* also helps to find out vitiated *doshas* in patients. Etiology of diseases are formed due to vitiated *doshas*, this vitiation is formed in blood. This impure blood is purified by *hrudya* (heart). *Hrudya* (heart) is also center of control for mind and body [1].

As per Acharya Charka (ch.I 3/1-5) the absence of *spandanas* (pulsing) in *Nadi* indicates *parasu* (death). There are eight *sthans* for examination of *nadi*, explained in *vasvrajyamsamhita* among them commonly used *nadi* is *karangushtamulanadi* (radial artery). The process of *Nadi Pariksha* involves placing of index, middle and ring finger on *karangushtamula* (forearm), i.e. one finger distance from *angushtamula*. Pressure of pulse on finger indicates the *doshaprabhya*; index: *vatvahanadi*, Middle: *pittavahanadi*, Ring: *kaphavahanadi*.

### DIAGNOSIS IN AYURVEDA [2-4]

There are three main methods mentioned in *Ayurveda* for diagnosing *Dosha* imbalance and disease process in a person. They are:

1. *Darshana Pariksha*: By observing the patients' physical signs and symptoms, for example, color of skin, hair, eyes, behavior, body condition etc.
2. *Prashna Pariksha*: By asking questions regarding the imbalance of each *Doshas*.
3. *Sparshna Pariksha*: By touching the patient. The pulse diagnosis, palpitation, percussion and auscultation are included in this method.

*Nadi Pariksha* is very important tool for the diagnosis. The physician feels the radial artery pulsation on the wrist of the patient and through his experience he can get a clear picture of whole body. This is a very spatial type of noninvasive diagnostic technique where by the use of three fingertips only and pulse of the patient a diagnosis can be achieved within no time. This can provide the information about the exact location and nature of the disease [5].

### WHAT IS NADI?

*Nadi* is a channel existing within the body in the form of blood vessels. The term *Nadi Pariksha* denotes examination of pulse (*Nadi*). According to *Ayurveda*, *Nadi Pariksha* is base of *Tridoshvijyana*. *Nadi Pariksha* also helps to find out vitiated *doshas* in patients. Etiology of diseases are formed due to vitiated *doshas*; pulsation varies in every person from healthy to *aturpariksha* (diseased person).

### RELATION BETWEEN DOSHA'S AND NADI [6]

Dosha	Nature of Pulse/Movement	Examples
Vata	Vakra Gati	Jalouka, sarpa
Pitta	Chanchal	Manduka, kak
Kapha	Manda	Hansa, paravat
Pitta-Vata	Vakra, Chanchal	Sarpa, manduka
Vata-kapha	Vakra, manda	Sarpa, Hansa
Pitta-kapha	Chanchal, manda	Manduka, Mayur
Tridosha	Vakra, Tivra, Manda	Lava, Tittira

### RELATION BETWEEN PRAKRITI AND NADI

Represents the *Prakriti* of the person. As *Nadi* is simulated with the river; thus, as at the base of river there are no rustling movements as otherwise seen on the surface. In the human body, the most constant non-changing thing is the *Prakriti*, so it is understood at the base. One must look for the location and strength of the pulsation and the fingertips representing the respective *Prakriti*.

### NADI PARIKSHA [7]

This is the methodology of accessing the knowledge about happening in the physiology

only by the touching the *Nadi*. The touch works as the bridge between the patient and the examiner, i.e. *Vaidya*, by touch the knowledge is transferred from the patient to the *Vaidya*, who after proper decoding can understand exact nature and extend of the change in patient with its causes thus achieving diagnosis.

The method of *Nadi Pariksha* being a very potent diagnostic tool needs to be used very precisely to achieve the correct diagnosis. The selection of place following appropriate pressure at various levels of touch; collecting the variables in the examination and arranging them, are the basics of *Nadi Pariksha*.

The findings then are exposed to analysis for understanding the happenings to achieve diagnosis. Location is: base of the thumb on the radial artery, right hand in male and left hand in female. Once the location is decided then place all the three fingers gently on the pulsating area just below the wrist. The *Nadi* is examined at specific time, which helps us in achieving the diagnosis; these are as follows:

1. During *Nadi Pariksha*, as per *acharyas* in the female *vamnadi* (left) should be examined and in males *dakshin hasta nadi* (Right) should be examined, the reason behind is that in females are described as *vamangapradhan*.
2. *Nadi Pariksha* being done early morning after *mala-mutravisarjana*, to *Parikshaswabhavikgati* of the *nadi*. This condition varies in result of observations.
3. *Nadi Pariksha* being done on patient, when patient is in *sukhasan* (relax in seating position or sleeping position).
4. *Nadi Pariksha* is not performed just after eating or bathing, because it varies in diagnosis of person, in those mentioned conditions may be pulse is high.
5. *Nadi Pariksha* being not performed on patients who is hungry, thirsty, coming from burning sun rays, after exercise; these conditions show *vyakulanadi* (weak) *bala*.

### **NADI BALA IN MODERN MEDICINE**

*Nadi Pariksha* (pulse examination) should be done by rate, rhythm, volume, character; all these are explained in *ayurveda* as *bala of nadi*

or power of the pulsation. *Gati of Nadi* is directly proportional to *doshaprabalyata* in body [8].

1. *Gurunadi*: Where volume of blood is full or *doshas* are powerful.
2. *Laghunadi*: Where volume is disturbed due to any etiology of diseases or *doshas* are weak as per *acharyas*, *laghunadi* found in *Jwara*, *dhamnipratichay* (high blood pressure), *vrikkaroga* (renal diseases), *vishvikara* (toxicity), *krodha* (anger), *yakrutroga* (liver disease).

### **NADI GATI**

It is appropriate pressure at various levels of touch to three fingers, i.e. each finger felt different pressure due to *doshaprabalyata*, as *acharya* explains it in various *upamas* for identifying *gati of doshas* or *prabalya of doshas*:

*Sarpagati-Vata Dosha*: *Vataprabaldosha* having characteristic nature of *chanchalta*, or *vakragatinadi*, so it represents by *sarpgati* (serpentine movement) or *jalokagati* (leach movement).

*Mandukgati-pitta Dosha*: *Pitta prabaldosha* having characteristic nature of *Udreka* and *chapel* or jumping nature, so it represents by *Mandukagati* (frog) or *kakgati* (crow), i.e. frog like jumping movement of pulse felt to finger.

*Hansagati-Kapha Dosha*: *Kapha prabaldosha* having characteristic nature of *sthira*, i.e. *Hansagati*, or *paravatgati*, i.e. *Hansa* (regular) walking like movement of pulse felt to finger.

### **CONCLUSION**

*Nadi Pariksha* has been said as one of the *Ashta Sthana Pariksha*. This system of examination cannot be practiced easily because of non-availability of detail description about *Nadi Pariksha* in *Ayurvedic* literature and lack of practice in the field of science. *Nadi Pariksha* is an easy tool to arrive at the faster diagnosis like pulse examination in other systems of medicine. Fortunately some of the ancient *Ayurvedic* literature is still available to us. So, to enrich the knowledge, small effort is made to put light over pulse examination. It is well known fact that the knowledge of pulse science originated some thousand year ago in various medical disciplines of the world. The first indication about this science in original form is found in

the works of *Sharangdhara* in 14th century. Concept of *Nadi Pariksha* is found in various ancient *Ayurved Samhitas* like-*Bhavprakash*, *Nadi Pariksha* by *Ravansamhita*, *Nadivigyan* by *Kanad*. *Theacharya Sharangdhara* flourished it in his work as a means of diagnosis and prognosis. The concept of *Nadi Pariksha* is described in third chapter first part. *Yogratnakara* also describes *Nadi Pariksha* as diagnosis, in first chapter under heading *Rog Pariksha*.

So, in modern era of information and technology, we the scholars of *Ayurveda* have to use knowledge of *Nadi* which depends on the subjective knowledge and experience of the physician to objective parameters by the tool of modern science, so that the knowledge of *Nadi* reaches its height.

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### Cite this Article

Kachare Kalpana B, Girbide Santosh G. *Nadi Pariksha: An Ancient Ayurvedic Method of Diagnosis*. *Journal of AYUSH: Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy*. 2016; 5(3): 48–51p.