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A Short Review on "Nadi Pariksha in Ayurveda"

Jadhav DK[1]* and Agrawal K[2]

[1]Department of Swastawritta, Associate Professor, Shri Dhanwantari Ayurvedic medical college, and Research Centre, India

[2]Department of Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant, Professor and HOD, Shri Dhanwantari Ayurved Medical College, and Research Centre, India

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***Corresponding author:** Dnyaneshwar Kantaram Jadhav, Associate Professor, Department of Swastawritta, Shri Dhanwantari Ayurvedic medical college, and Research Centre, Mathura, India, Tel: 8451834859; Email: dj85015@gmail.com

Abstract

Nadi Pariksha (pulse examination) is one of the most important diagnostic tools in Ayurveda. It is a non-invasive method used to assess the balance of the three doshas. Nadi Parisha done by examining the pulsations at the radial artery at the wrist. This pariksha is described in Ayurvedic Samhita to understand the physiological and pathological state of the body. Nadi Pariksha helps in identifying both manifest and latent disease conditions. It's used for preventive as well as diagnostic approach. It Is considered unique concept of Ayurveda, as it not only provides physical insights but also reveals the mental and emotional state of the patient. Thus, Nadi Pariksha serves as a holistic diagnostic tool. This tool used for proper treatment and lifestyle recommendations for maintaining balance and promoting well-being.

Keywords: Nadi Pariksha; Ayurveda

Introduction

Nadi Pariksha is a classical diagnostic method in Ayurveda, utilized since ancient times to assess the health and disease states [1]. The term Nadi translate to pulse or channel and Pariksha denotes examination [2].

By carefully observing the pulse at the wrist, an Ayurvedic physician evaluates the functioning and equilibrium of three fundamental; observing factor or doshas: - Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.

This method provides insights into the prakriti (individual constitution), vikriti (current imbalance), and even the prognosis of diseases [3,4]. Unlike modern diagnostic tools, Nadi Pariksha is unique because it can also reflect the mental, emotional, and spiritual condition of a person along with physical health [2].

Thus, Nadi Pariksha is regarded as a holistic and reliable diagnostic tool in Ayurveda, guiding the physician in planning appropriate diet, lifestyle, and treatment for restoring balance and well-being.

Nadi Pariksha in Ayurveda

Definition of Nadi Pariksha

- Nadi Pariksha = Pulse examination.
- Nadi pariksha refers to the clinical examination of the radial pulses to assess functional health and diagnose pathological conditions within the body [1-4].

Uses of Nadi Pariksha

- To Detection of Prakriti (natural constitution) [2].
- To identifies Vikriti (dosha imbalance) [3].
- To Helps in diagnosis and prognosis of diseases [4].
- To Evaluates physical, mental, and emotional state [2].

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- To Guides treatment, diet, and lifestyle planning [5].

Benefits of Nadi Pariksha

- Its non-invasive and simple technique.
- Its Provides a holistic view of health.
- It Can detect early imbalances before disease manifests.
- It's Useful in preventive as well as curative medicine [5].

Limitations of Nadi Pariksha

- It's highly subjective – accuracy depends on physician's skill [2].
- It's requires years of training and experience.
- It's not easily standardized like modern diagnostic tests [5].
- It may not detect structural or hidden diseases in early stages without support of other methods.

Comparison of Nadi Types in Ayurveda

Dosha Type	Pulse Nature (Gati / Movement)	Characteristics	Clinical Indication
Vata Nadi	Sarpa-gati (like a serpent's movement)	Irregular, thin, fast, variable, sometimes weak	Indicates Vata dominance → restlessness, anxiety, pain, dryness, neurological issues
Pitta Nadi	Manduka-gati (like a frog's leap)	Jumping, sharp, warm, moderate speed, forceful	Indicates Pitta dominance → heat, inflammation, fever, hyperacidity, anger
Kapha Nadi	Hamsa-gati (like a swan's graceful movement)	Steady, slow, deep, strong, stable	Indicates Kapha dominance → heaviness, obesity, lethargy, cold, congestion

Table 1: Comparison of Nadi Types and their Clinical Significance.

Nadi Pariksha in Veda

- In the Vedas, the term Nadi refers to channels carrying Prana, Vata, and Rasa in the body [1].
- The Atharva Veda and Upanishads describe about 72,000 Nadis, with Ida, Pingala, and Sushumna as main ones [1,6].
- Nadis are seen as both physical pathways (like vessels) and subtle energy channels.
- Health depends on the free flow of Prana through these Nadis.
- Though detailed pulse examination is not in the Vedas, the concept later evolved into Nadi Pariksha in Sharangadhara Samhita [4,6].

Procedure of Nadi Pariksha (Pulse Examination) [2,4]

Preparation of the Patient

- The patient must be evaluated preferably in the morning, on an empty stomach, in a relaxed state of mind.
- Avoid food, alcohol, physical exertion, or stress before examination.
- Patient should sit relaxed, with the hand comfortably resting [3].

Position of the Physician

- The physician sits directly facing the patient [2].
- Examination is usually done on the right hand in males and the left hand in females (radial artery at the wrist) [4,6].

Use of Fingers

- The physician uses Index, middle, and ring fingers to feel the pulse [2].
- Index finger → Vata
- Middle finger → Pitta
- Ring finger → Kapha

Technique of Examination

- Fingers are placed gently on the radial artery, just below the thumb root [2].
- Observe the rate, rhythm, volume, force, temperature, and movement of the pulse [3,4].
- Pulse movement is compared to animals:

Name of Dosha	Its gati
Vata	Sarpa-gati
Pitta	manduka-gati
Kapha	Hamsa-gati

Table 2: Showing Name of Dosha and Its Gati.

Interpretation

- Identify Dominant dosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) or their combination.
- Detect Prakriti (natural constitution and Vikriti (imbalance).
- Helps in diagnosis, prognosis, and planning treatment.

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Nadi Pariksha with Modern Machines

Concept

- Traditionally, Nadi Pariksha is done by touch (palpation).
- Today, digital pulse diagnosis machines are developed to make it more objective, standardized, and measurable
- These machines record pulse waveforms and analyse them using sensors and software.

How it Works

- A sensor (similar to ECG /plethysmograph) is placed on the 'Radial artery' at the wrist.
- It detects pulse signals and sends them to a computer or digital display.
- Software analyses amplitude, frequency, rhythm, and waveform patterns.
- The system then correlates findings with Vata, Pitta, Kapha dominance and possible imbalances.

Examples of Modern Devices

- Digital Nadi Tarangini - developed in India for Ayurvedic pulse diagnosis.
- Ayur Nadi machines - portable digital devices.
- Pulse oximeter /plethysmography -based models – modified for Ayurvedic use.

Advantages

- Provides standardized, repeatable results
- Reduces dependence on physician's subjectivity.
- Can store data for Research and patient monitoring.
- Bridges Ayurveda with modern biomedical science

Limitations

- Still evolving; not as sensitive as an experienced Vaidya's touch.
- Interpretation depends on algorithms, which may vary.
- Needs more clinical validation to be universally accepted.

Importance of Nadi Pariksha in Ayurveda

- **Fundamental Diagnostic Tool**: Nadi Pariksha is one of the main methods of "Ashtavidha Pariksha" (eight-fold examination) and is highly valued for diagnosing health and disease.
- **Assessment of Doshas**: It helps in understanding the balance and imbalance of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, which form the basis of Ayurvedic diagnosis.
- **Understanding Prakriti & Vikriti**: Through the pulse, a physician can identify a person's Prakriti (constitution) and Vikriti (current imbalance), guiding personalized treatment.
- **Early Detection**: Nadi Pariksha can reveal subtle changes and imbalances before diseases fully manifest, making it important in preventive healthcare.
- **Holistic Insight**: Unlike modern diagnostics, it provides information not only about the physical body but also about the mental and emotional state of the patient.
- **Guidance for Chikitsa (Treatment)**: Treatment Findings from Nadi Pariksha help in planning diet, lifestyle, Panchakarma, and medicines according to dosha imbalance.
- **Non-invasive and Simple:** It requires no instruments and gives quick insight, making it a convenient and cost-effective diagnostic method.

Discussion

Nadi Pariksha (pulse examination) remains a primary clinical assessment methodology in traditional Ayurvedic practise [1-6]. Performed primary at the radial artery, tactile assessment using three fingers allows for real time classification of pathological states according to vata pitta kapha [2]. The pulse is observed for rate, rhythm, force, and gati (movement), which resemble animals: vata – serpent, pitta – frog, Kapha– swan.

Through this, the physician can determine the patient's Prakriti (constitution, Vikriti (imbalance), and even prognosis.

Recent effort to digitize Nadi pariksha using pressure transducers and machine learning models seek to resolve the historical limitation of practitioner subjectively [5].

Nadi Pariksha is a non-invasive and holistic diagnostic tool that helps in early detection of imbalances and guides proper diet, lifestyle, and treatment. Though it requires skill and experience, it remains a cornerstone of Ayurvedic clinical practice.

Conclusion

Nadi Pariksha represents an efficient, non-invasive, and comprehensive diagnostic method in Ayurveda. By evaluating systemic doshic states, individual constitution, and early functional deviations, it plays a vital role in preventive and therapeutic medicine. Modern engineering integrations further hold the potential to standardise and validate this ancient diagnostic practice for modern clinical integration.

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