

Review Article



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“AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF TIMIRA (REFRACTIVE ERRORS) – A REVIEW”**Dr. Jalpa Gandhi¹****AFFILIATIONS:**

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Timira, one of the prime Netra Roga (ocular diseases) described in Ayurveda, is considered the early stage of ocular disorders progressing towards blindness if untreated. It broadly correlates with refractive errors in modern ophthalmology, such as myopia, hypermetropia, and presbyopia. With the rising incidence of refractive errors globally, particularly among children and young adults, exploring traditional Ayurvedic management strategies has become clinically relevant. **Methods:** A comprehensive literature search was carried out across Ayurvedic classical texts (Sushruta Samhita, Charaka Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya), contemporary commentaries, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science databases. Clinical trials, observational studies, and review articles published in English between 2000–2024 were included. Both Ayurvedic interventions (Snehana, Swedana, Nasya, Netra Tarpana, Chakshushya Rasayana) and modern ophthalmological approaches were reviewed. **Results:** Timira is described as a progressive disease involving doshic vitiation, particularly of Vata and Pitta, leading to impairment of Drishti. Classical management emphasizes Shodhana (biopurification), Shamana (palliative therapies), and Rasayana (rejuvenative therapies). Netra Tarpana with Ghrita-based formulations, Anjana (collyrium), and Nasya are highlighted for strengthening ocular tissues. Recent clinical studies have reported improvement in visual acuity, reduction in asthenopic symptoms, and stabilization of disease progression with Ayurvedic therapies. Comparative modern evidence suggests parallel mechanisms through ocular lubrication, antioxidant activity, and neuroprotective effects. **Discussion:** Ayurveda offers a holistic model of Timira management integrating lifestyle, diet, ocular therapies, and Rasayana formulations. While modern ophthalmology provides corrective interventions like spectacles, contact lenses, and refractive surgery, Ayurveda emphasizes preventive and restorative approaches. More rigorous, multicentric clinical trials are needed to establish standardized protocols and integration into mainstream ophthalmic care.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Netra Roga, Rasayana, Refractive errors, Timira

INTRODUCTION

Visual health has been a central theme in Ayurveda, where the eyes are described as the most delicate organ (*Pratyaksha pramana*)^[1]. Among ocular diseases, *Timira* holds a special place as it represents progressive visual disturbances that can ultimately lead to blindness if untreated. The classical Ayurvedic texts describe *Timira* under *Drishti Gata Roga*, where the pathology primarily affects the visual axis^[2-3].

In modern ophthalmology, refractive errors such as myopia, hypermetropia, astigmatism, and presbyopia are the most common causes of visual impairment^[4]. According to the World Health Organization, uncorrected refractive errors are the leading cause of visual disability worldwide, affecting both developed and developing nations. Increasing screen time, near-work activities, and lifestyle changes are contributing to a rising global burden^[5-7].

This review aims to critically evaluate the concept of *Timira* in Ayurvedic classics, its correlation with refractive errors, and the efficacy of Ayurvedic management strategies^[8]. The objectives are to (1) analyze traditional descriptions of *Timira*, (2) review evidence-based Ayurvedic therapies, and (3) compare them with modern ophthalmological perspectives to identify integrative solutions for refractive error management^[9-10].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A systematic review methodology was followed:

- **Databases searched:** PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, AYUSH Research Portal, and Google Scholar^[11].
- **Keywords used:** “*Timira*,” “Ayurveda AND refractive errors,” “*Netra Roga*,” “Ayurvedic ophthalmology,” “*Rasayana* AND vision.”^[12]”
- **Classical sources:** *Sushruta Samhita*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and later texts such as *Yogaraj Nigraha* and *Chakradatta*^[13].
- **Inclusion criteria:** Articles published between 2000–2024; clinical trials, observational studies, review articles, and pharmacological research on Ayurvedic ocular therapies; English language publications^[14].
- **Exclusion criteria:** Studies unrelated to ocular diseases, animal-only studies without

translational relevance, and non-peer-reviewed sources^[15].

- **Type of studies reviewed:** 12 clinical trials, 18 observational/experimental studies, 10 review articles, and references from Ayurvedic classics^[15].

Data were extracted thematically under concepts, therapeutic interventions, formulations, and clinical evidence.

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

1. Concept of *Timira* in Ayurveda

Ayurvedic literature classifies *Timira* under *Drishti Gata Roga*, conditions affecting the visual axis. In *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Timira* is described as a progressive disease, beginning with blurring of vision and eventually leading to *Linganasha* (complete blindness) if untreated. The pathology arises from the vitiation of *Vata* and *Pitta doshas* affecting the *Alochaka Pitta* (ocular functional entity responsible for vision).

The classical description divides *Timira* into stages based on the depth of doshic involvement:

- **First stage:** Blurred or indistinct vision.
- **Second stage:** Distorted or double vision.
- **Third stage:** Severe impairment in clarity of objects.
- **Fourth stage:** Complete vision loss.

Modern ophthalmology recognizes refractive errors (myopia, hypermetropia, presbyopia, astigmatism) as the closest clinical parallel to early and intermediate stages of *Timira*.

2. Pathogenesis and Clinical Features

- **Doshas involved:** Primarily *Vata* (responsible for movement and sensory function) and *Pitta* (responsible for ocular metabolism).
- **Dushyas (tissues):** Predominantly *Rasa dhatu*, *Rakta dhatu*, and *Drishti mandala*.
- **Samprapti (pathogenesis):** Vitiating doshas obstruct the normal function of *Alochaka Pitta* leading to progressive dimness of vision.

Clinical features described:

- Blurred or cloudy vision.
- Inability to perceive distant or near objects clearly.
- Eye strain, headache, and photophobia.
- Progressive worsening with age and lifestyle errors.

3. Ayurvedic Principles of Management

The therapeutic approach to Timira is guided by three principles:

1. **Shodhana (Biopurification):** Panchakarma procedures such as *Virechana* and *Nasya* for dosha elimination.
2. **Shamana (Pacification):** Local and systemic therapies using *Chakshushya* (eye-strengthening) drugs.
3. **Rasayana (Rejuvenation):** Use of formulations to nourish ocular tissues and prevent progression.

4. Key Therapeutic Interventions

a. Netra Tarpana (Ocular oleation therapy)

A specialized therapy where medicated ghrita is retained over the eyes in a circular boundary of flour paste.

- **Common formulations:** *Triphala Ghrita*, *Jeevantiyadi Ghrita*, *Mahatriphaladi Ghrita*.
- **Benefits:** Enhances ocular nutrition, relieves dryness, reduces eye strain, and improves clarity of vision.
- **Clinical evidence:** Trials show improved visual acuity and reduction in refractive error-related symptoms among children.

b. Anjana (Collyrium applications)

Herbal pastes or powders applied to the inner eyelid margin.

- **Types:** *Lekhana* (scraping), *Ropana* (healing), and *Prasadana* (soothing).
- **Drugs used:** *Sauviranjana*, *Rasanjana*, *Haritaki*.
- **Role:** Reduces inflammation, clears ocular channels, and sharpens vision.

c. Nasya (Nasal instillation therapy)

Instillation of medicated oils or powders into the nasal passages to nourish ocular structures.

- **Formulations:** *Anu Taila*, *Shadbindu Taila*.
- **Mechanism:** Nasal route is connected with *Shira (head)*; promotes ocular strength and reduces doshic aggravation.
- **Evidence:** Reported to reduce ocular fatigue and asthenopia.

d. Chakshushya Rasayana (Ocular rejuvenatives)

Certain herbs and formulations are specifically mentioned for vision health.

- **Drugs:** *Triphala*, *Amalaki*, *Yashtimadhu*, *Shatavari*, *Jeevanti*.

- **Formulations:** *Chyawanprasha*, *Amalaki Rasayana*, *Saptamrita Lauha*.
- **Modern validation:** Antioxidant-rich herbs reduce oxidative stress on ocular tissues and protect against degenerative changes.

e. Ahara and Vihara (Diet and lifestyle)

- **Dietary recommendations:** Consumption of ghee, milk, green leafy vegetables, fruits (especially *Amalaki*), and avoidance of spicy, oily, and excessive salty food.
- **Lifestyle:** Avoidance of excessive screen time, late-night work, and excessive exposure to bright light.

5. Modern Parallels and Integrative Perspectives

- **Refractive corrections:** Spectacles, contact lenses, and surgical interventions such as LASIK are the mainstay in modern ophthalmology. These provide symptomatic correction but do not address disease progression.
- **Ayurveda's preventive role:** Focuses on maintaining ocular health through *Rasayana* and therapies like *Netra Tarpana*, which may complement modern care by improving ocular surface health, reducing oxidative stress, and delaying progression.
- **Scientific validation:**
 - *Triphala* has shown antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties comparable to modern ophthalmic lubricants.
 - *Amalaki* is rich in Vitamin C, improving collagen and ocular tissue integrity.
 - Honey-based *Anjana* has antimicrobial activity comparable to povidone-iodine.

6. Clinical Research Evidence

Several clinical and experimental studies validate Ayurvedic approaches:

- A study on *Triphala Ghrita Tarpana* reported improved visual acuity in schoolchildren with mild refractive errors.
- *Anu Taila Nasya* demonstrated reduction in eye strain among IT professionals.
- *Saptamrita Lauha* significantly improved subjective symptoms like blurring and watering of eyes in presbyopia patients.

- Experimental studies on *Amalaki Rasayana* have shown neuroprotective and antioxidant effects on ocular tissues.
- Clinical trials on Triphala decoction eye wash revealed improved ocular surface health and reduced eye fatigue.

7. Summary of Clinical Outcomes

- Improvement in subjective symptoms (blurring, strain, photophobia).
- Reduction in ocular fatigue among screen users.
- Enhancement of accommodative capacity in presbyopia.
- Slowing of progression of refractive errors in pediatric populations.
- Overall better ocular comfort and health with integrative use.

DISCUSSION

The Ayurvedic description of *Timira* resonates with the pathophysiology of refractive errors in modern ophthalmology. While Ayurveda attributes the pathology to *Vata-Pitta* vitiation affecting *Alochaka Pitta*, modern science identifies anatomical changes in corneal curvature, axial length, or lens elasticity. This difference in interpretation highlights Ayurveda's functional approach compared to modern structural pathology^[16].

A key strength of Ayurveda lies in its preventive and holistic approach. Netra Tarpana, Nasya, Anjana, and Rasayana therapies not only aim to relieve symptoms but also to rejuvenate and strengthen ocular tissues. Modern evidence suggests that many of the herbs used are rich in antioxidants, bioflavonoids, and neuroprotective compounds, which may slow oxidative damage—a factor implicated in ocular degeneration and presbyopia^[17].

Comparatively, modern ophthalmology offers precise corrective interventions—spectacles, contact lenses, and refractive surgeries. While these are effective, they primarily correct vision rather than enhance ocular health. Ayurveda fills this gap by offering therapies that may delay progression, improve accommodative function, and enhance patient quality of life^[18].

However, challenges remain. Most Ayurvedic therapies are validated through small-scale studies with methodological limitations. Standardization of formulations, dosage, and treatment duration is

lacking, and there is limited multicentric trial data. Another gap lies in the lack of mechanistic studies correlating Ayurvedic principles like *Alochaka Pitta* with biochemical or neurophysiological markers^[19].

The future lies in integrative ophthalmology. Combining modern corrective measures with Ayurvedic ocular therapies may yield synergistic benefits. For instance, school-based eye health programs can include Netra Tarpana or Triphala-based Rasayana supplementation to reduce refractive error progression. Similarly, IT professionals prone to digital eye strain can benefit from Ayurvedic interventions alongside artificial tears^[20].

In summary, while modern ophthalmology excels in correction, Ayurveda provides preventive, restorative, and rejuvenative strategies. More robust evidence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and policy-level integration are required to position Ayurvedic management of *Timira* as a complementary approach in refractive error care.

CONCLUSION

Timira, described in Ayurveda as a progressive ocular disease, closely parallels refractive errors in modern ophthalmology. Classical texts emphasize its doshic origin and propose a holistic management strategy involving Shodhana, Shamana, and Rasayana therapies. Among these, Netra Tarpana, Anjana, Nasya, and Rasayana formulations like Triphala and Amalaki have shown significant promise in maintaining ocular health and alleviating symptoms of refractive errors.

Modern research increasingly validates these approaches, with studies highlighting the antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and neuroprotective properties of Ayurvedic formulations. Clinical evidence supports their role in improving visual clarity, reducing eye strain, and slowing the progression of refractive errors, particularly in children and presbyopic adults. While modern ophthalmology remains indispensable for corrective measures such as spectacles, lenses, and surgical options, Ayurveda offers unique preventive and restorative dimensions that can complement existing modalities. However, challenges such as lack of standardization, limited multicentric trials, and insufficient mechanistic studies need to be addressed to strengthen the scientific foundation of Ayurvedic ophthalmology.

Thus, an integrative approach combining modern and

Ayurvedic practices holds immense potential in refractive error management. With further research and clinical validation, Ayurvedic therapies could play a significant role in reducing the global burden of visual impairment due to refractive errors.

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