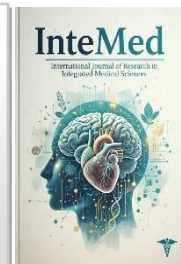




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Review Article

Role of *Pratimarsha Nasya* in Recurrent Upper Respiratory Infections: A Critical Integrative Review

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ABSTRACT

Recurrent upper respiratory infections (URIs) constitute a significant clinical burden, particularly in pediatric populations, leading to repeated morbidity, antibiotic use, and healthcare utilization. Conventional management primarily focuses on symptomatic relief, prevention, and addressing underlying risk factors; however, recurrence remains a persistent challenge. In Ayurveda, *Pratimarsha Nasya*, a form of daily nasal administration of medicated oils or ghee in small doses, is described as a preventive and therapeutic modality for disorders involving the head and neck region. This review critically evaluates the role of *Pratimarsha Nasya* in the prevention and management of recurrent URIs, correlating classical Ayurvedic principles with modern concepts of mucosal immunity and respiratory defense mechanisms. A structured literature review

was conducted using classical texts (*Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*) and modern databases including PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science. Evidence suggests that *Pratimarsha Nasya* may enhance local immunity, improve mucociliary clearance, and maintain nasal mucosal integrity. Medicated oils such as *Anu Taila* and *Shadbindu Taila* are traditionally indicated. Modern studies on nasal oil application indicate potential benefits in reducing pathogen adherence and inflammation, although robust clinical trials are limited. While Ayurvedic descriptions emphasize daily preventive use without significant adverse effects, contemporary evidence remains insufficient for definitive conclusions. Integrative approaches combining *Pratimarsha Nasya* with standard preventive strategies may offer a promising avenue for reducing URI recurrence, warranting further scientific validation.

Keywords: *Pratimarsha Nasya*, recurrent upper respiratory infections, Ayurveda, mucosal immunity, nasal therapy, *Anu Taila*, integrative medicine

1. Introduction

Recurrent upper respiratory infections (URIs) are among the most common clinical conditions, particularly in children, defined as multiple episodes of infections such as rhinitis, pharyngitis, and sinusitis within a year [1]. These infections significantly impact quality of life and contribute to excessive antibiotic use.

In Ayurveda, diseases of the head and neck region are collectively described under *Urdhvajatrugata Roga*. *Nasya Karma*, particularly *Pratimarsha Nasya*, is advocated as a daily regimen (*Dinacharya*) for maintaining health and preventing disease [2].

Pratimarsha Nasya involves administration of small quantities of medicated oil or ghee into the nostrils and is considered safe for daily use across all age groups [3].

The increasing interest in preventive healthcare and integrative medicine necessitates a critical evaluation of such traditional practices in light of modern scientific understanding.

Aim and Objectives:

- To analyze the concept of *Pratimarsha Nasya*
- To review recurrent URIs in modern medicine
- To evaluate the role of *Pratimarsha Nasya* in prevention and management
- To identify correlations with modern physiological mechanisms

2. Materials and Methods

Databases searched: PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar

Keywords used: “*Pratimarsha Nasya*”, “*Nasya* therapy”, “recurrent URI”, “nasal immunity”, “Ayurveda respiratory infections”

3. Conceptual Background

Nasya Karma is one of the five procedures of *Panchakarma*, described in detail in *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*. It is considered the primary treatment for diseases above the clavicle [3].

Pratimarsha Nasya is a subtype involving low-dose administration (usually 1–2 drops), suitable for daily use without strict restrictions [4].

Recurrent URIs, though not directly named, can be correlated with conditions like:

- *Pratishyaya* (rhinitis)
- *Kasa* (cough)
- *Shwasa* (respiratory disorders)

These are attributed to *Kapha* and *Vata* imbalance affecting the respiratory tract [5].

4. Review of Literature

4.1 Pathophysiology of Recurrent URIs

Modern Perspective

Recurrent URIs are caused by:

- Viral infections (rhinovirus, RSV)
- Immature immune system (especially in children)
- Environmental factors (pollution, allergens)
- Impaired mucociliary clearance [6]

Key mechanisms:

- Reduced local immunity (IgA deficiency)
- Chronic inflammation
- Microbial colonization

Ayurvedic Perspective

- *Kapha Dosha* → mucus accumulation
- *Vata Dosha* → recurrent episodes
- Weak *Agni* → poor immunity (*Vyadhikshamatva*)

Disease occurs due to imbalance in *Pranavaha Srotas* [7].

4.2 Concept and Mechanism of *Pratimarsha Nasya*

Pratimarsha Nasya involves:

- Administration of 1–2 drops of medicated oil/ghee in each nostril daily

Ayurvedic Actions:

- Lubricates nasal passages
- Clears *Dosha* accumulation
- Strengthens sensory organs
- Enhances immunity [3]

Modern Interpretation

Possible mechanisms include:

- Improved mucociliary clearance
- Barrier formation against pathogens
- Anti-inflammatory effects
- Modulation of nasal microbiome

Nasal mucosa is highly vascular, allowing rapid absorption and systemic effects [8].

4.3 Drugs Used in *Pratimarsha Nasya*

1. *Anu Taila*

- Polyherbal oil
- Indicated in rhinitis, sinusitis
- Anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial

2. *Shadbindu Taila*

- Stronger formulation
- Used in chronic sinusitis

3. *Goghrita (Cow ghee)*

- Mild, nourishing
- Suitable for children and daily use

4.4 Procedure and Dosage

- Dose: 1–2 drops in each nostril
- Frequency: Once or twice daily
- Time: Morning and evening
- Position: Supine with head slightly extended

Unlike classical *Nasya*, no strict preparatory procedures are required.

4.5 Clinical Effects

Reported benefits include:

- Reduction in frequency of URIs
- Relief from nasal dryness and congestion
- Improved breathing
- Reduced dependence on medications

However, most evidence is observational or based on small studies.

4.6 Comparison with Modern Preventive Strategies

Strategy	Modern Medicine	Ayurveda (<i>Pratimarsha Nasya</i>)
Mechanism	Immunity boosting, hygiene	<i>Dosha</i> balance, mucosal protection
Evidence	Strong	Limited
Safety	High	High (if properly used)
Cost	Moderate	Low

4.7 Critical Analysis

While *Pratimarsha Nasya* aligns with modern concepts of nasal hygiene and mucosal protection, limitations include:

- Lack of randomized controlled trials
- Variability in formulations

- Absence of standardized protocols

Modern medicine emphasizes vaccines, hygiene, and nutrition, whereas Ayurveda provides a daily preventive approach.

5. Research Gaps and Limitations

- Insufficient clinical trials evaluating efficacy
- Lack of standardization in dosage and duration
- Limited mechanistic studies
- Absence of pediatric-specific research

6. Future Perspectives

- Clinical trials comparing *Pratimarsha Nasya* with saline nasal sprays
- Studies on mucosal immunity (IgA levels)
- Microbiome-based research
- Integration into school health programs

7. Conclusion

Pratimarsha Nasya represents a simple, safe, and potentially effective preventive strategy for recurrent upper respiratory infections. Its mechanism may involve enhancement of mucosal defence and maintenance of nasal health. While traditional knowledge supports its widespread use, scientific validation through rigorous research is essential. Integrating such practices with modern preventive strategies may improve outcomes in recurrent URIs.

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