

ANATOMICO-PHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECT OF AGNIKARMA W.S.R. TO PAIN MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Pain an unfavorable sensation which brings discontinuity to a person's work and routine life. According to *Ayurveda* pain is described as an ailment caused due to vitiation of *Vata Dosha*. *Agnikarma* also acts on diseases which have predominance of *Vata Kapha Dosha*. Hence, as per *Ayurvedic Chikitsa Siddhanta* *Agnikarma* can be prescribed in patients for pain management. Recent studies are showing a growing trend towards various traditional pain management methods with a decline in NSAIDs use. This thermal invasive Para-surgical procedure is simple and safe and can alleviate neuromuscular and arthralgic pain.

It is also cost effective, drugless therapy which is done skillfully and technically. As per *Ayurveda*, there is no reoccurrence of disease treated by *Agnikarma*, i.e., *Apunarbhava of Roga*. Is it an exaggeration of things said about *Agnikarma* or does it have any scientific evidences backing it, is yet to be proved. It is said that if free nerve endings (receptor for pain) are burned by any means, can regenerate after 9-12 months. This study aims at providing a critical study about this concept of pain free period due to *Agnikarma* or ought to give a brief account on the various other Anatomico- Physiological concepts lying behind the pain management capacity of *Agnikarma*.

KEYWORDS: NSAIDs, *Agnikarma*, Neuromuscular, Arthralgia.

INTRODUCTION

Agni karma means application of *Agni* directly or indirectly with the help of different materials at specific sites. It comes under *Shalya Chikitsa*. *Shalya Chikitsa* also known as *Dhanwantriya Sampradaya*. *Ayurveda* evolved in to eight branches, *Shalya Tantra* is among one branch of *Asthang Ayurveda*. The novelty of *Shalyatantra* is in its *Ashukaritwa*, by mean of both invasive and less invasive methods of intervention. *Sushruta* has mentioned different

methods for management of disease such as use of *Yantra*, *Shastra*, *Kshara Karma*, *Agni Karma*, *Raktamoshana* etc.

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According to *Aacharya Sushruta*, there is no remission of disease treated by *Agnikarma*. *Agnikarma* has been mentioned in context of disease like *sira*, *Snayu*, *Arbuda*, *Arsha*, *Vata Kapha* disease.

The modern conservative therapy and all other modalities though have some relief but leaves with major structural defect. Hence they have their own limitations & not completely free from adverse effect.

In *Agnikarma* therapy tissue is dagdha with the help of various special material. It can be correlated with modern therapeutic cauterization. In *Agnikarma* due to excess heat (>45 °C), there is burning of both the epidermal and dermal layer of skin / *Twak*.

Ancient Ayurvedic Literature

In *Vedic* period, *Agnikarma* is mentioned in all four *Vedas*. In context of *Rig Veda*; *Agnikarma* is indicated for the remedy of different gynaecological & Obstetrical disease.

In *Yajur veda*, it has been explained as the Medicine to treat the *Hima* or the cold entity.

In *Atharva Veda*, *Agni* has been identified as God & Treatment for disease for the verses. it becomes clear that *Agni* was used to protect the body from the invading micro organism.

In our *Samhitas dukha*, *vedna*, *ruk*, *avasada*, *pida* etc. words are used for pain. According to *Sushruta* the main causative factors of pain is *vata*. The seat of pain is *sharir*(body) and *mana* (psyche)^{5/10}.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To evaluate the anatomico- physiological aspect of *Agnikarma* w.s.r. to pain management.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Classification;

➤ According to *site*

1. *Sthanika* (local)

2. *Sthanantariya* (distal to site of disease)

➤ According to *Dravyas*

1. *Snighad Agnikarma*
2. *Ruksha Agnikarma*

➤ According to *Dhatu*

1. *Tvak/* superficial disease – *pippali, ajasakruta, godanta, shar, shalaka*
2. *Mamsa/* muscles - *jamvostha, panchdhatu shalaka*
3. *Sira- snayu- sandhi* – *asthi - marma*(blood vessels & ligament) – *kshaudra, guda, sneha*

➤ According to aakirti instruments used

1. *Valaya / circular-* for tumors
2. *Bindu* – for blood vessels
3. *Vilekha* – when length of lesion is greater
4. *Partisarana* (scratching)
5. *Ardha chandrakar*
6. *Swastik*
7. *Asthapada*

Dahanopakarma

1. *Upakarma* of plant origin- *pippali, yasthimadu, Haridra, Guda, Sneha,*
2. *Upakarma* of Animal origin- *Ajashakrita, Godanta, Madhoochhishta*
3. Metallic & other *upakarma- Panchdhatu Shalaka*

Acharyas have mentioned the optimum signs of successful *Agnikarma* i.e. *Samyak dagdha lakshanas* as *Durgandhata* which is due to the burning of cutaneous tissue and subcutaneous fat or superficial fascia; *Shabda pradurbhava* i.e burning sound due to the thermal contact; *Twak sankocha* due to the thermal contact the elasticity of the skin is lost and subcutaneous vascular contraction. *Pakwa Taala Phal varna* which indicate that *Agnikarma* is successful.

- *Agni karma* can be performed in any *ritu* except *Shard ritu* and *Greeshma ritu*.
- *Picchila Ahara* or *Sneha yukta Ahara* is advised before doing *Agni karma* but in some of the disease it is advised in empty stomach like *Ashmari, Arsha* etc.

Clinical effects of *Agnikarma*

1. Relief pain due to release of spindle gamma afferent fibers.

2. Vasodilatation
3. Increase local tissue metabolism
4. Increase blood flow
5. Stimulation of neural receptors in the skin.
6. Increased elasticity of ligaments and capsular fibers
7. Increased motion of joints
8. Effects on temperature, pulse, B.P.

Indications of Agnikarma

- *Kaphaja* disorder
- For sharp pain in diseases of skin, muscles, ligaments, bone, joints etc.
- Hard and numb ulcers in muscles.
- Profuse bleeding
- *Granthi, Apachi, Arbuda* and *Shlipada*
- *Nadi varna, Arsha, Bhagandar*
- Joint and vein/ artery disorders
- Soporific effects (make feel sleepy)

Contra- indications of Agnikarma

- Acute trauma
- Venous obstruction
- Acute inflammation
- Malignancy

Role of Agnikarma in pain management

- Pain can be described as physical suffering of discomfort cause by illness or injury. Now a days people are spending huge amount of money for treatment of pain. Still the result are not satisfactory. By taking modern treatment relief is temporary and side effects are more.
- *Agni karma* is one of the best para- surgical procedure for diseases like *Gridhrashi* and any painful condition arouse by *Vata Dosha* vitiation, once *vata dosha* is treated efficiently the pain subsides automatically. It is also a cost effective procedure and no specific setup is required.

Mechanism of Action

- *Agni karma* provides better result (76% relief) in relieving pain as compared to *Guggulu*.
- *Agni karma* with the qualities like *ushna*, *sukshma*, & *ashukari guna* are helpful to subside *vata dosha*. It is seen to work on *chimchimayana hashta* (Tingling sensation) which is considered to be produced by *srotvarodha* of *vata vaha nadi* and the relief was observed due to *sukshma* as well as *ushna guna* of *Agnikarma*.
- *Agnikarma* cures the *Vataja* & *Kaphaj* disorder as *ushna guna* of *agni* is opposite to that of *Vata* & *kapha doshas*. According to principle of *Ayurveda*; Pain in the body is due to *vata* which has *sheeta guna*, so *agni* is having '*ushna*' *guna* counter acts with the *sheeta guna* of *vata* and thus reduces pain sensation by having direct effect on *vata*.
- *Agni karma* is a minimally, invasive procedure that destroy the free nerve endings (thermo & chemoreceptor's) carrying pain signals to the brain. It can provide lasting relief for people with chronic pain (for 9-12 month which is the time required for regeneration of the receptors).

Concept of pain and its management by *Agnikarma*- Pain is a psychical response of an imperative protective reflex. It is produced by stimuli exceeding the intensity threshold for sensory nerve ending. *Agnikarma* works on receptors (substantia Galetinosa) and inhibit Substance-P.

The local thermo therapy may increase tissue metabolism which may leads to excretion of the unwanted metabolites & toxins. It stimulate lateral spino-thalamic tract which leads stimulation of descending pain inhibitory fibers. The nervous impulses are produced by the stimulation of peripheral receptors; which reaches through dorsal root ganglion (specially C-Fiber) to substantia galetinosa. On reaching Mid- Brain through preaqueductal gray matter it secrete Enkaphalin (ENK) and also GABA pantine. It acts on Raphe Magnus Nucleus (Medulla) and secrete GABA & ENK & reaches Post. Horn of Spinal cord through interneurons and reduce secretion of Glutamin.

Anatomical position at *Agnikarma* Procedure in different disease

Sandhigat vata /O.A – It is one of *Vata Vyadhi* characterized by the symptoms such as *sandi shoola* and *sandhishopha*. *Agnikarama* is one which gives instant relief from pain by balancing local *Vata* & *Kapha Dosha* without any untoward effects.

- *Agnikarama* is done at maimum tender site affected at the knee joint.

Cervical spondylitis – Over the back of the neck starting from C5 –C7 spines & at the site of maximum tenderness. Made by making 3 *vilekha dahana vishesa* (multiple dots in 3 straight line) by hot *panch dhatu shalaka* one by one.

In Shirorogas - between 2 eyebrows and frontal and temporal area.

Hernia vka=ō`f+) – The hernia which affect left side of large intestine (descending colon) should be cauterized by half-moon shaped probe (*shalaka*) at mid point of skin in between root of toe and index finger at right side and at the superficial inguinal ring.

In diseases of eye lids- At roots of eye lashes.

Sciatica / Gridhrashi – after *agnikarma*, due to increased local metabolism the waste products, which are produced gets excreted, which normalize the blood circulation thus resulting in reduction in intensity of pain.

Lumbo-sacral region and other maximum tender points along the course of sciatica nerve. *Agni karma* is to be performed with red hot *pancha loha shalaka* in *bindu akruti*.

CONCLUSION

Studies have shown significant role of *Agni karma* in relief of pain and stiffness resulting from neurological & rheumatological disorders. Modern medicine is now introducing various forms of cauterization methods according to the requirement of disease. *Ayurvedic* principle allows not only for thermal therapeutic cauterization but also chemical cauterization. So, all the forms of cauterization should be renewed & practically used for proving relief to the ailing humanity.

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