AGNIKARMA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF JOINT PAIN – AS COMPLIMENTARY THERAPY

Chandra Ramesh1*, Jaiswal RK2, Pandey KK3, Pande DN4

1J. R. III, Department of Sangyaharan, IMS BHU, India
2Assistant Professor, Department of Sangyaharan, IMS BHU, India
3Professor, Department of Sangyaharan, IMS BHU, India
4Professor, Department of Sangyaharan, IMS BHU, India

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*Corresponding Author: Chandra Ramesh
J. R. III, Department of Sangyaharan, IMS BHU, India Mobile: 9452789346

ABSTRACT

At present the human society is leading with mechanical life, frequent changing of lifestyle, environmental factors, climate, etc. The critical busy schedule, restless, anxiety, stress & strain, running after comfortable life, comparing to higher group curses different psychosomatic disorders. The major somatic disorders involves, the constant work schedule in improper sitting posture, continuous & over exertion, prolonged travelling by different vehicles, less sports activities, exercises, etc. which in fact cause undue pressure on spinal cord, knee joints, shoulder joints, wrist joint, etc. and produce low backache, joint pain, while estimating the joint pain and low backache the incidence rate of this disease goes higher than 60%. Now-a-days, the disorders like Gridh rasi (sciatica), SandhigataVata (lumbar spondylosis, cervical spondylosis), Katishoola (ankylosing spondylitis, lumbago), SandhiVata (osteoarthritis), SnayugataVata (Tennis elbow), MansagataVata (myofascial pain), Jirna Vatika Vedana (chronic fatigue pain), KandaragatVata (tendonitis) are found in routine clinical practice. These all disease have pain and person is in much painful condition.

Although a lot of pain modalities are at present scenario like - Acupuncture, Acupressure, Jalaukaav charan, Agni karma, Rakthmokshan, Aroma therapy, Magnet therapy, Yoga therapy, Mud therapy, Spa, Hydrotherapy, Physiotherapy along with Modern and Ayurvedic drugs for pain management. Agni karma has one of the best goal in the field of joint pain management.

Keywords: Gridhrasi, SandhigataVata, Katishoola, SnayugataVata, MansagataVata, MansagataVata, Magnet therapy, Aroma therapy, Agni karma therapy.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurvedic medical science, various modalities of treatment are explained for the management of pain, Agnikarmachikitsa is said to be superior. Various painful conditions like joint pain, headache, abdominal cramps/discomfort & few convulsive disorders like epilepsy, schizophrenia & psychosomatic disorders can be treated with this intentional heat burn therapy. In Chakradatta & Yogratnakara, we find direct reference of Agnikarma indicated for pain management.

Now a days the process of Agnikarma done by using gold, silver, Panchadhatu, Iron shalaka, pippali etc. The procedure of Agnikarma does not have side effect, it is cost effective, can be managed with patients as ambulatory & can be done in OPD itself.

Agni Karma:
Aganinakritva yat karma,agnehe sambhandhi va yat karma tadagnikarma

Dalhan cometry on sushrut Samhita Sutrasthan-12/1

Agni karma is the work performed by application of Agni.

Synonyms of Agni karma
i) Agni chikitsa
ii) Agni karma
iii) Agni kasya
iv) Dagdhakarm
v) Dahan karam
vi) Dagdha chikitsa
vii) Dambhakriya
viii) Pachanakriya

Historical Review of Agnikarma:
History is a part of description of any object. In this way an attempt has been made to trace references regarding agni karma available till now beginning right from vedic period. For the total coverage of historical aspect, it has been divided into two sections viz.,
(i) Vedic period,
(ii) Samhita period
(i) Vedic Period

In Rig veda Specific treatment by Agni and its material was advised for the vaginal and uterine disease (10/162/1-4).

Yajurveda again emphasized the use of Agni in case of sheeta and sheeta induced disease. (23/10/01).

Samaveda bears elaborated description about Agni which is clear by enumeration of a separate chapter as ‘Agnaneyakanda’. In this veda Agni is given special names as Parmeswar, Aatma, Vaishwanar etc. It is considered as the life existing in the creatures of the universe and which bears elaborated description about Agni which is again emphasized the use of Agni in case of sheeta and sheeta induced disease. (23/10/01).

Athravaveda has identified Agni as God and treatment for diseases from the verses it becomes clear that Agni was used to protect the body from the invading microorganisms. (5/23/1,3,5).

(ii) Samhita Period

CharakSamhita
- Ch. Su 11/55 i.e. ShastraPranidhana.
- In VidhishonitaAdhayaya (Ch. Su. 24/46).
- In VividhasapitiyaAdhayaya (28/26).
- In Dwivranjyaadhuyachikitsa as a treatment of Vrana (Ch. Chi. 25/101-103).
- In Kaphajagulma (Ch. Chi 5/55, 61, 62,163,86).
- In Svayyathuchikitsa in the reference of Granthirog and BoganderChikitsa (Ch. Chi. 12/82,97).
- In UdaraChikitsa in the reference of Pleeードdorarog and Yakritodarachikitsa (Ch. Chi. 13/86).
- In Arshachikitsa (Ch. Chi. 14/33).
- In reference of Granthivisarpachikitsa (Ch. Chi. 21/132).
- In the context of vishegachikitsa (Ch. Chi. 23/45).
- In dayathuchikitsa in reference of Gridharasirogchikitsa (Ch. Chi. 28/100).
- In context of Trimarmiyachikitsa in the reference of Ardhasvadharogchikitsa. (Ch. Si. 9/78)

SushrutaSamhita

Maharshi Sushruta told Agnikarma as a parasurgical procedure and it is superior to all parasurgical procedures. Many references are available in Sushrutasamhita regarding agni karma.

- In Su. Sutrasthan in yantravidhiadhyaya as an upayantra (Su.Su. 7/14).
- A detailed agni karma vidhiAdhyaaya described in (Su.Su. 12/9-10).
- As a shalyaniraharana(Su. Su. 27/14).
- Reference of Sira, Snyau, Sandhi, Asthi, Samprapti. (Su. Chi. 4/8).
- In Arsha roga chikitsa (Su. Chi. 6/3).
- In Ashmarichikitsa(Su. Chi. 7/35).
- In Bhagandarachikitsa as a vrana(Su. Chi. 8/14,21,24,29).
- In SushrutaChikitsasthana in the context of kustachikitsa(Su. Chi. 9/9-11,20).
- In GranthiApachayaArbudaChikitsa(Su. Chi. 18/14,17,24,39,43,44).
- In VrudhiapadhanshaChikitsa(Su. Chi. 19/21-23,50-51,53-54)
- In Kshudraroga(Su. Chi. 20/10,32).
- In Mukha roga chikitsa (Su. Chi. 22/9,23,27-29,40)
- In Kalpasthan is reference of (5/5;7/33,50).

Vagbhatta samhita

In Ashtangasamgraha(Su.40) deals with Agni karma vidhi and many other references of other diseases regarding Agni karma.

In A.H. Su. 30 deals with Agni karma vidhi and there are many other reference of other diseases regarding Agni karma.

HaritaSamhita

In Haritasamhita Agni karma indicated as a important types of treatment out of eight types of treatment (H.S. 1/2/7-8).

Dahanupakarana( Material used for Agnikarma):

Dahanupakarana are various accessories like drugs, articles and substance used to produce therapeutic burns (samyakadadgda) during Agni karma chikitsa. They are classified as follows .
- Vanaspatija- Pippalee, (PipperLongum) ,Yash’ imadhu (GlycerrhizaGlabra Linn.) , Haridraa (Curcuma longa), Gu’d,a(jaggery) SnehaTaila, Sarjarasa (herbal origin).
- Praa’i ja - Ajas’ hakrita, Godanta, Madhoochchhihsita (animal-origin)
- Metallic and others - Panchadhautu (Silver, Copper, Iron, Tin and Zine) S’araShalaaka, Jambavausht’ha, Sooryakaanta, Scoochi, Stone For
- TvagkataVaataVikaara- Pippalee, Ajas’hakrita, Godanta, S’haraShalaaka
- Maamagsata Vikaara- Jambavausht’ha, Panchadhaatu S’alaakaKshaudra
- Siraa, Sneayu, Sandhi, Marma- Madhu (Kshaudra), Gu’d’a (Jaggery), Sneha.

Methods of Agni Karma

Though there is no clear cut description about the classification of Agni karma in Ayurvedic literature, still with the consideration of its type of applications, to have a clear concept following classifications have been done.

I) According to Dravyas used

a) SnigdhAgnikarma - performed by means of madhu, grith, taimal used for Agni karma to treat diseases situated in Sira, Snyau, Sandhi, Asthi.

b) Ruksha Agni karma - performed by means of pippali, shara, shalaaka, godanta used for Agni karma to treat diseases situated in Twak and Mamsadhatu.

II) According to Site

a) Sthaniya (local)-As in vicharchika, kadara, arsha.

b) Sthanantariya (Distal to site of disease)-As in visuchika, apachi, gridhrasi etc.

III) According to Akriti -

i Valaya ( ) - Circular shape.

ii Bindu ( .) - Dot like shape. According to Acharya Dal-hanashalaaka should be of pointed tip.

iii Vilekha - Making of different shapes by heated shalaaka. Vilekha type of agni karma is further subdivided by Acharya Dalhana into three types according to the direction of line.

1. Tiryak (Oblique)  ()
2. Riju (Straight)  -------
3. Vakra (Zigzag )  ()
iv. **Pratisarana** - Rubbing at indicated site by heated shalaka and there is no specific shape.

v. **Ardhachandra** - Crescent shape.

vi. **Swastika** - Specific shape of Swastika Yantra.

vii. **Ashtapada** - Specific shape containing eigh limbs in different directions.

**IV) According to Dhatus** -
1. **Tvakdagdha**
2. **Mamsadagdha**
3. **Sirsnayudagdha**
4. **Sandhiasthidagdha**

**V) According to four types of Itarthdagdha as**
1. **Plusht**, 2. **Durdagdh**, 3. **Samyakdagdh** & 4. **Atidadgh** {On the basis of effect on dehdhatu}. Samyakdagdh is better in among these four. Samyakdagdjh is performed when Shalaka is at red hot.

**Mode of action of Agnikarma:**
The use of Agni karma may provide relief of pain and painful muscle spasm by acceleration of metabolic processes where by the concentration of pain including toxic metabolites is reduced. This is primarily by an increased local circulation. Agni karma also relief of stiffness by decrease in synovial fluid viscosity. These are some hypothetic theory for mode of action of agnikarma.

**Theory 1**
Agni Karma

- **Ushna guna** (Hot properties)
- Qualities against Vata & Kapha Dosha
- Pacifies Vata & Reduces Kapha
- Reduces Pain

**Theory 2**
According to Ayurveda, every Dhatu (tissue) has its own Dhatvagni which is responsible for the nourishment, increase, and decrease of Dhatu. When this Dhatvagni becomes low (**manda**), diseases begin to manifest. Thus in this condition, Agni Karma works by giving external heat, thereby increasing the Dhatvagni which helps to digest the aggravated dosha and hence cures the disease.

- Agni Karma
  - Ushna guna (Hot properties)
  - Increase in Dhatvagni
  - Manda Dhatvagni gets rectified
  - Enhance nourishment & formation of newer tissues.
  - Also perform **Ama Pachana** & removal of accumulated toxins.

**Theory 3 (Gate Control Theory of Pain)**
Heat □ Stimulation of Lateral Spinothalamic Tract (SST) stimulation of descending pain inhibitory fibres (DPI) □ Release of endogenous opioid peptide which bind with opioid receptors at substantia gelatinsosa rolandi □ Inhibition of release of P-substance (Pre-synaptic inhibition) □ Blockade of transmission of pain sensation.

**Theory 4** (ref. www.painfoundation.org)
Pain receptors of skin and motor end plate get stimulated at 45 °C. Pathway for pain and thermal signals run parallel and end up at same area, but only stronger one can be felt. Therefore complete exclusion of pain impulse by heat occurs.

**Theory 5**
It was suggested that various endogenous opioids such as β endorphin, enkephalin, and dynorphin are involved in Agni karma induced analgesia (AIA). This working hypothesis about the role endogenous opioids in Agni karma action has been widely accepted in near future.

**Agni Karma Kal**
According to Acharya Sushruta Agni karma can be done in all seasons, except sharad (autumn) there is a Prakopa of Pitta and Agni karma also aggravates Pitta and it may lead to Pitta prakopa, leading to emergence of various disorders due to vitiated Pitta, and Grishma (summer) as it is the hot season. But again Acharya advises to use Agni karma in emergence conditions in these ritus also provided appropriate counter measures are adopted, part with moist cloth use of cold foods and applying cooling pastes over the part.

**Classical Indications of Agnikarma:**
The approach of Agni karma has been mentioned in the context of diseases like Arsha, Arbuda, Bhagandar, Sira, Snayu, Asthi, Sandhigata Vata Vikaras and Gridhrasi Apachi, Granthi. Antravridhi, Shlipada, Nadvirana, Upadamsa, Gulum, Bhagandara, Sotha, Sheetadanta, (vatajakaphajha), Kadar, Prasupti, Shonita atisrava, Sira sandhi chheda etc.

Ref. (Sushruta. Acharya Narayana Ram, Editor. Susruta Samhita Moolamaatra; Sootrasthana)

**Application Methods of agnikarma In Joint pain:**
Agni-karma is performed in three stages- (i) Poorva Karma, (ii) Pradhan Karma, and (iii) Paschata Karma.

1. **Poorva Karma**
   - Sterilization of local part with TriphalaKwath.

2. **Pradhan Karma**
   - Most tender spot was selected and ‘Bindu’ type of therapeutic ‘Agni karma was done with the help of red hot panchdhatu, swarnalauhshalaka etc.

3. **Paschata Karma**
   - Therapeutic wound was dressed with Ghritkumari pulp, immediately along with application of Yastimadhu huruchana.

**Agni Karma Shreshthata**
Acharya Sushruta and Acharya Vagbhatta have both given superior place to Agnikarma as compared to Ksharaka rma among Dahanakriyas used for treatment of various diseases due to its following qualities as given below :

1. **Apunarbhavaat (no relapse)**- chances of recurrence are not present.
2. **Sterilization property**- Agni karma is having effect of Nirijiwanukaran (sterilization).
3. **Haemostatic action**- Due to Agnikarma bleeding checked. It causes coagulation and closure of bleeding vessels.
4. **Curative property**- Agnikarma eradicates disease from its root.
5. **Effect on doshas**- It shows shamaka effects on both Vata and Kaphadoshas.
CONCLUSION

Agnikarma therapy –para surgical modality is a good therapy for acute and chronic joint pain management. Minimal scar with maximum vednahar properties was found. Scar diminish with in 7 day of application. Thus seeing that musculoskeletal disorders is quite a significant global burden, particularly for general working population and create heavy socio-economic burden over the families. From the study it is clear that Agnikarma can be practiced as an effective, safe and drug less therapy. It is an ambulatory treatment modality and can be performed as an office procedure in routine practice.

REFERENCES


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