

**DIFFERENT MODALITIES OF PAIN MANAGEMENT IN  
AYURVEDA: A REVIEW ARTICLE**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** Pain is a protective body mechanism, which alerts the person about the harmful condition or experience that occurs in the body. About 10% world's population is suffering from any type of chronic pain. Nowadays pain has become a public health issue and pain management is always a concern for physicians. Ayurveda not only treat physical pain but also prevents from mental, spiritual, materialistic and social sufferings. **Aims and Objectives:** To know the different treatment modules in Ayurveda for pain management. **Materials and Methods:** Literature review was done from different Ayurvedic classical texts, scientific journals and materials related to pain management concepts, and other significant topics have been collected related with it. **Discussion:** Ayurveda mentions that pain is mainly due to Vata vitiation and associated types of pain are due to Pitta and Kapha Avarana. To balance this vitiated Doshas purification

treatments like Panchkarma & Shaman Chikitsa is prescribed. Also the instant pain management techniques like Agnikarma, Viddhakarma and Marma Chikitsa is most feasible way of treatment and can be done in OPD basis. **Conclusion:** In this way, different treatment modalities like Panchakarma, Shaman Chikitsa, Agnikarma, Viddhakarma, Marma Chikitsa, Satvavajaya Chikitsa, and Yoga therapy is surely a comprehensive package for pain management which gives miraculous results.

**KEYWORDS:** Pain, Panchkarma, Shaman Chikitsa, Agnikarma, Viddhakarma, Marma Chikitsa.

## INTRODUCTION

WHO defines pain as “an unpleasant sensory or emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage”. Pain is the physical suffering or discomfort caused by illness or injury. No matter how minor the pain is, it nevertheless impairs your daily activities and puts you in a condition of discomfort. A painkiller that we take frequently weakens our resistance to pain. Pain can manifest in many different ways, such as a throbbing toothache, eye ache, or colic pain that comes in spasms as in renal calculi, gnawing abdominal discomfort, muscular pain from a sprain, sports injury, joint pain from swelling, and many more. Opioids and NSAIDs (Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs) are the recommended options for treating pain. However, all of these also have a plethora of extremely dangerous long-term side effects and negative drug interactions. In this way, Ayurveda approaches pain management holistically, taking into account the total integrity of its diverse pathophysiology. According to Ayurveda, vitiated Vata Dosha is the main cause of pain. In Ayurveda, many names like as Ruk, Toda, Shoola, Vedana, Dukha, etc., have been used to indicate different types of pain. Many disease conditions have nomenclature reflecting dominance of pain e.g. Annadrava Shula, Ardhavbhedaka, Hrit-Shoola etc.<sup>[1]</sup> in Ayurveda, Purification treatments like Panchkarma & Shaman Chikitsa is prescribed for pain management. Also the instant pain management techniques like Agnikarma, Viddhakarma and Marma Chikitsa is most feasible way of treatment and can be done in OPD basis.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To know the different treatment modules in Ayurveda for pain management.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature review was done from different Ayurvedic classical texts, scientific journals and materials related to pain management concepts, and other significant topics have been collected related with it.

## Therapeutic procedures for Pain Management in Ayurveda

According to Ayurveda pain is mainly triggered by accumulation of toxins in body. These toxins can create an imbalance in the state of Doshas which causes Avarana of Vata with Pitta and Kapha these type of Avarana can produce different types of pain in the body.

Panchkarma is effective form of therapy for cleansing the body of toxins and clearing Avaranas of Doshas (blockages) in the body's circulatory system. This helps the Vata dosha to conduct its functions properly and reduces pain associated with.

Panchakarma includes five Ayurvedic techniques.

1. **Vamana (Emesis):** This treatment is specifically done for Kapha Dosha. The oral drug is administered and it induces emesis and eliminates the vitiated and morbid Kapha and Pitta Doshas from the stomach.
2. **Virechana (Purgation):** specifically done for Pitta Dosha. Here the orally administered drug induces purgation and purifies the alimentary canal.
3. **Anuvasana Basti:** Medicated oil is administered in the required dose through the anal canal to large intestines, it pacifies Vata Dosha and eliminates all toxins from body.
4. **Niruha Basti:** Medicated Kwatha (decoction) is a major ingredient which expels the vitiated Doshas and cleans the intestines which is prime site of Vata Dosha. Basti removes toxins and waste products from the body through the colon it also cleanses the digestive channels and improves circulation of Vata Dosha in the body. With better circulation, joint pain is effectively reduced. It nourishes the body and gives it the strength to rebuild tissues while boosting the immune system.
5. **Nasya:** Nasal administration of Medicines in the form of liquids (decoction, oil) or powder (Choorna) expel the vitiated Doshas from nasal cavity and then pacifies the Doshas of head.
6. **Abhyanga or Full Body Massage:** This technique helps in the removal of toxins from deep tissues within the body. It balances the Vata and provide nourishment to the body. Abhyanga increases venous and lymphatic flow with increase in Arterial blood flow to the muscle and skin. Hence it increases removal of waste products of metabolism. It increases nutritive exchange between blood and cells. It induce sedation and hence causes sleep and decreases Pain. It also facilitate contraction in hypotonic muscle and modulate autonomic response which increases Electro- derma responses.<sup>[2]</sup>

a) **Potli or Poultice Massage:** A poultice is made by medicated herbs and with help of Potli massaging the body with the warmed medicated oils is done. This Potli is then used to massage the entire body. This technique relaxes the muscles of the body and soothes the aggravated Vata Dosha and reduces pain in Vata-Kapha Avarana conditions like sciatica, arthritis, neuromuscular deformities.

**b) Pizhichil Massage:** This involves subjecting the body to streams of medicated lukewarm oil while simultaneously softly massaging the body. This type of massage helps to relieve tension and stress and is a very effective remedy against joint pains. It is highly recommended in the case of rheumatic diseases.

## 7. Sarvang Swedana

Sweda is produced in body by Pakakarma (fastens the metabolism) of Medodhatu by Medadhatwagni and Bhutagni and causes Srotomukhashodhana which result in transportation of toxins and displacement of exudates hence relieve pain, relaxes muscular spasm. Swedana, causes arterial dilatation and enhance circulation. So, acts as Stambhaghna, Gourabaghna, Sitaghna and also Prabha Varnakara. Due to Swedana, Doshas accumulated in Snehana got transported to the Koshtha and from there they get eliminated.<sup>[3]</sup>

## 8. Agnikarma

Agnikarma (Thermal microcautery) has been mentioned in the classical Ayurvedic texts of Sushruta Samhita, for the treatment of the disorders of Asthi (bone), Sandhi (joint) and Snayu (ligament). The Agnikarma treatment can be beneficial in acute and chronic painful conditions. From the Ayurvedic perspective, pain is the result of an imbalance of Vata dosha in the body. Agnikarma treatment eliminates the causative factor of pain by acting directly on the Vata-Kapha imbalance. In the procedure, a special pointed metallic instrument is used which is called as Shalaka. The Shalaka is heated and then applied to the affected parts of the body to transfer the heat. The Ayurvedic practitioner performs this therapeutic heat conduction according to area of pain, and severity of the disorder.

Acharya Sushruta have narrated that Agnikarma is superior to Kshara and Shashtra Karma.<sup>[4]</sup> Agnikarma can be done for disorder of Snayu (ligament and tendon), Asthi (bone), Sandhi (joint) etc. In injuries of ligament there is painful condition and causes restricted movement of joints which require treatment for long period. Agnikarma is effective in other musculoskeletal disorders such as Sciatica Frozen shoulder, Osteoarthritis, lumbar Spondylosis, Cervical Spondylosis, Carpal tunnel syndrome, Trigger thumb etc.<sup>[5]</sup> In this paper we describe the different modalities of pain management in Ayurveda.

### Mode of action

- In Agni karma, the heat is transferred to the area of pain through different instruments, which then increases the circulation of blood to the affected site.

- The rate of metabolic activity rises as the local temperature rises. As a result, every cell activity increases, including synthesis, release of chemical mediators, dilatation of capillaries, and motility. By doing this, the inflammation is removed, which relieves the person of their symptoms. Additionally, it improves blood flow to the injured area.
- Stimulates the nerves and tissues
- Improves tissue metabolism
- Reduces the chances of developing an infection
- Temporary stimulation of local inflammatory response
- Promotes muscle relaxation and reduces joint stiffness.<sup>[6]</sup>

## 9. Viddhakarma

Raktamokshan i.e Viddhakarma is puncturing of specific site and bloodletting, it is point specific treatment and specific points for different diseases are mentioned by Acharya Sushruta.

### Mode of action of Viddhakarma

Special hollow Viddha needles are used for Viddha, and it must be sterile, after the puncturing of vein or specific site, the immune system response to it by releasing endorphin that helps to reduce pain. Viddha treatment shows significant results in pain relieving of musculoskeletal disorders. It is helpful to reduce the intensity of pain.

Agni-karma and Viddhakarma can be practiced in following disorders.

1. Old non healing Sinuse.
2. Tennis Elbow (Disease of tendons and ligaments), Hernia Inguinal, Umbilical- reducible, Frozen Shoulder.
3. Tremor and Palsy.
4. Calcaneal spur, Plaster fasciitis, Ankle Sprain, Heal Pain.
5. Tingling sensation of foot, constant tingling sensation, brachial neuritis, radio ulnar neuritis.
6. Ankle Sprain.
7. Fibromyalgia, Disease / Spastic disease of tendon and ligament, Osteoarthritis Elevated mole, Cramps, Sciatica.
8. PID Prolapse intervertebral disc, Trigeminal Neuralgia, Torticollis or Neck rigidity, Lock Jaw.
9. Cervical spondylitis/spondylosis.

## 10. Marma Therapy

Marma is defined as anatomical site where muscles, veins, ligaments, bones and joints meet together.<sup>[7]</sup> Marmas are vital points that, when afflicted, will cause severe pain and debility. The 107 Marmas mentioned in Ayurveda have been detailed as a separate chapter in both Ashtanga Hrudaya and Susruta Samhita.

### Indications of Marma Chikitsa<sup>[8]</sup>

1. Musculoskeletal disorder.
2. Genitourinary tract diseases
3. Metabolic disorders
4. Respiratory tract diseases
5. Cardiovascular diseases
6. Neurological diseases
7. Alimentary tract diseases.
8. Eye and Ear related disorders
9. Cerebral palsy, down syndrome, mental retardation, autism, speech disorders etc.

### Methods of Application of Marma Therapy<sup>[9]</sup>

For reduction of pain a Marma point must be pressed or stimulated, stimulation of Marma should be optimal with contact time for 0.8 seconds (one cardiac cycle) and it should be repeated for 12-20 times (normal respiration rate per minute) in one sitting while others say 6 time stimulation in one sitting is sufficient.

The following are the general rules to be followed while administering Marma treatment.

1. Finger nails should be cut in both the hands and Marma points in the body should not be touched by the finger nails.
2. Don't talk to others while rendering Marma treatment and make the patient to sit or lie down during procedure.
3. It is sufficient to cure the diseases by rendering Marma treatment twice a week. But depending on the need of the patient and the intensity of the ailment, it can also be administered daily.
4. For indoor patients, the treatment can be administered once in six hours daily (4 times daily).

5. After rendering Marma treatment to each patient, it is necessary to touch the wall or any wooden objects before treating the next patient. This is to avoid the transfer of the body heat from one patient to another.
6. There are not many dietary restrictions for this treatment but it is better to avoid the consumption of curd and greens at night.
7. The amount of pressure used should be determined by the patients' age and physical condition.
8. Don't administer this treatment to patients who come with complaints of snake bite, scorpion bite and poisoning cases.
9. Make sure that patient is neither fasting nor full stomach.
10. Preferable times is morning hours after rising from the bed and attended morning toilet.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Role of Marma Therapy<sup>[10]</sup>

1. Removes blocks in energy channels (Srotas).
2. Pacifies Doshas bringing it to normal path (especially Vyanvayu which controls autonomic nervous system).
- 3 Creates physical, mental and emotional flexibility.

### Vedanasthapana Concept in Ayurveda

There are various types of analgesics available in pharmaceutical market. Peoples are suffering from adverse effects of long-term use of them. Ayurveda explains origin of pain as vitiated Vata Dosha and Pitta. For pacifying these painful conditions, Charaka suggests Vedanasthapaka Mahakashaya which contains 10 drugs that are possessing common properties of Vedanta Sthapana (pain relief). These are the medicinal plants which are easily available in market and safe to consume by as they are herbal formulations.

### Vedanasthapana Mahakashaya contains<sup>[11]</sup>

Drug	Botanical name	Effect on Dosha	Chemical compositions
<b>Shal</b>	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	Pacify Pitta (by Kashaya Rasa)	Tannin & Ursonic acid
<b>Katphal</b>	<i>Myrica esculenta</i>	Pacify Vata (by Ushna Veerya)	Myricanol
<b>Kadamba</b>	<i>Anthocephalus indicus</i>	Pacify Tridosha	Cincotannic acid
<b>Padmaka</b>	<i>Prunus cerasoides</i>	Pacify Pitta (by Kashaya Rasa)	Ursolic acid, stigmasterol
<b>Tejovati</b>	<i>Zanthoxylum armatum</i>	Pacify Vata (by Ushna Veerya)	Flavonoid, 3,5-diacetyltambulin (antibacterial activity)
<b>Mocharasa</b>	Resin of <i>Salmalia malbarica</i>	pacify Pitta (by Kashaya Rasa)	
<b>Shiris</b>	<i>Albizzia lebbeck</i>	Pacify Tridosha	In bark- Tannins,

			Melacacidin in seeds- Ascorbic acid
<b>Vanjula</b>	Salix caprea	Pacify Pitta by Tikta and Kashaya Rasa	Salicin
<b>Elavaluka</b>	Prunus cerasus		
<b>Ashoka</b>	Saraca ashoka	Pacify Pitta (by Sheeta Veerya)	In bark- tannin, catechol

### Therapeutic uses<sup>[12,13]</sup>

- **Shala** - Decoction of its bark is effectively prescribed especially in Sarvang Shula conditions (Body ache).
- **Kataphala**- used as externally as well as internally as decoction of dried bark, and dried bark powder to spray on wound for wound healing.
- **Kadamba**- Bark kwath is used for pain relief.
- **Padamaka**- Ursolic acid, stigmasterol is Chemicals present in its bark, has effect on nervous system for neurodegenerative and psychiatric disease conditions.
- **Tejovati**- Tejovati is appetizer, digestive, Kanthya, Arshoghna useful in dental caries, earache, haemorrhoidal pain etc conditions.
- **Mocharas**-. Shalimali bark is advised to be used to wounds that are causing burns and inflammation, but not to haemorrhage.
- **Shiris**- it is used in the inflammatory conditions.
- **Vanjula**- Its external use is described for Vedanasthapan and Dahaprashaman
- **Ashoka**-In all pain prone diseases its use is described.
- **Elvaluka**- Basically it is a controversial drug. In Bhavprakash it is considered as Kankolsadrishyam Kushthagandhi. Some people consider it as a Satva of aloe Vera which is called as Mussabbar in market. But according to Bhavprakash Elvaluka is dwarf cherry and its Swaras is very much helpful in subsiding pain specifically cardiac pain.

Various formulations can be made from these medicines according to Dosha and Dushya in disease.

**Pain Management through the Yogic Perspective:** As the name suggests yoga is the union of body, mind and soul. With regular practice of disease specific yoga postures, Pranayama and meditations physical as well as mental sufferings and pain can be lowered. Yogi practices cleanses body by enhancing circulation of elemental energies that alleviate chronic pain by enhancing body mechanics, posture and releasing endorphins- the body's natural painkillers.<sup>[14]</sup>

Integrative approach of Panchakarma, Medicines, Yoga, physiotherapy and emotional healing to help improve flexibility, tolerance and well-being to patient. The meditative practices enhance pain modulation by stimulating brain regions responsible for pain processing, leading to decreased pain intensity and perception. Pranayama (breathing practise) and Dhyana (meditative practises) like Yoga Nidra and Panchkosha Dhyana activate the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing stress-induced pain and promoting a calm state which result in reduction in stress, pain relief, and improvement in mental balance.

### Psychogenic Pain & Emotional Wellbeing

Psychogenic pain is the pain that is primarily caused and triggered by emotional factors, such as stress, anxiety, or depression, rather than a physical injury. Psychogenic pain are intricately linked to emotional wellbeing. Emotional state of individual is depending upon the Satva, Raja and Tama Gunas of Mana. (Mind)

### Basic qualities of Trigunas<sup>[15, 16, 17]</sup>

1	<b>Satva</b>	Without impurity, free of disease and Doshas, egoless, purity and good deeds.
2	<b>Raja</b>	Desirefull, greedy, unsatisfied, active, bound with Doshas.
3	<b>Tama</b>	Delusion, laziness, sleepy, Despondency, angry.

### Relation between Triguna and Tridosha<sup>[18,19]</sup>

S.N.	Trigunas	Dosha
1	Satva	Pitta
2	Raja	Vata
3	Tama	Kapha

### DISCUSSION

As there is no any single, definite and sufficient, potential treatment modality is available in any of health streams, also one for all phenomenon not be followed for each individual, hence in Ayurveda, different modalities are mentioned according to Vyadhi (Disease condition) and Rugna Avastha (patient's condition). Snehana and Svedana pacifies Vata, the main cause of pain, by sensitizing the tactile stimulation with help of oil and removing of toxins from the body by enhancing peripheral circulation. Panchakarma incorporates the five modes of purification (Detoxification), which in Panchakarma literally means five methods of body purification. These methods are employed in the healthy individual to prevent diseases. These are also prerequisites of the Rasayana therapy (Rejuvenation) to enhance bodies defence mechanism against diseases. Viddhakarma is a revolutionary Ayurveda technique used in getting result faster in each patient. It is simple and safe method of Raktamokshana (Blood

Letting). it is very cost effective and drugless therapy and can be performed irrespective place and time. Agnikarma is a Cosmetology, Dermatology, Pain management technique, explained in Sushrut samhita. As Sushruta said Ushna Guna of Agni pacifies Sheeta Guna of Vata and pain is instantly reduced. This technique of Agnikarma has been designed to relieve various skin, muscular and joint disorders. Agnikarma is effective in conditions of acute pain and chronic pain. Marma chikitsa is also one of the fast acting, cost effective pain management techniques. In Ayurvedic Acharya Sushruta described about Marma points and their anatomical locations in body where a concentration of life energy exists. By pressing vital points, the blockage of energy is removed and pacifies aggravated Doshas, which leads to flow of vital (Prana) energy and reduces pain and associated symptoms. Yoga is also boon to mankind. With help of yoga chronic pain and long last sufferings of patient suffering from diseases like cancers, diabetes, post-operative pain, chronic neurodegenerative pain can be minimised. Regarding meditation, it greatly work in release of endorphins and reduces cortisol hence feeling of happiness and calmness occurs, it also calms rajas and bodily and mental urges which are called as root cause of the diseases. From an Ayurvedic perspective, meditation is a great way to calm Vata, calm Pitta, and gain clarity. Therefore, it is necessary to practice regularly.

## CONCLUSION

Vata is the principal cause of discomfort, and Snehana and Svedhana pacify Vata. Basti functions by eliminating vitiated Vata from the body at the Mool Sthana (primary site) of Vata, hence reducing the pain of disease. For pain management Panhakra should be applied first followed by Shaman chikitsa (Drug Therapy) along With parasurgical processes like Agnikarma, Marma Chikitsa and Viddhakra. All above measures give miraculous results in no time. These pain management techniques are best alternatives for conventional treatments and Public health personnel's should be trained for it.

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