

**A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON  
AGNIKARMA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
DIFFERENT AYURVEDA SAMHITAS**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda, science of life is the natural healing system of medicine to maintain health of a healthy person and curing the ill person. It gives more importance to preventive treatment than curative treatment and complete curing of disease with minimal chance of reoccurrence.

As per Ayurveda, human body is all based on four basics that is Dosh, Dhātu, Mala, Agni, also known as 'The Mool Siddhant' or 'The basic fundamentals of ancient Ayurvedic treatment'. Shalyatantra is branch of Ayurveda and the uniqueness of Shalya Tantra is due to the availability of dual treatment procedures i.e. shastra karma (surgical procedures) and Anushastra karma (Para surgical procedures). Further shastra karma is of eight types and Anushastra karma includes Ksharakarma, Agnikarma and Raktamokshana. Amongst Anushastra karma, Agnikarma is unique because of its simple technique and

optimum result. By this technique various diseases are treated successfully without recurrence.

Agnikarma is one of the procedure described by Acharya Sushruta. While elaborating the benefits of this procedure he mentions that the procedure is easy to perform, it cures many

incurable diseases, relieves pain instantly and there will be no recurrence of the disease. Agnikarma is indicated in many diseases including severe pain in asthi and sandhi Pradesh.

Nowadays, para-surgical procedures like Shastrakarma, Ksharakarma, Raktamokshana are well known in society, because of many research work have been carried out regarding its efficacy and well known truthful data available, but Agnikarma chikitsa have no popularity in society and many chikitsa are far away from scientific approach towards Agnikarma, because there is no pinpoint description about Agnikarma chikitsa and very few works have been carried out regarding Agnikarma chikitsa.

### Conceptual Review

- **Agnikarma:** The term Agnikarma consists of two words Agni and karma.
- **Agni:** The word Agni is in Male gender, and takes its origin from “Yadva ati urdhavam gachati iti. Agni Gato.” means one which takes its course of action in upward direction, also means that which is mobile. Agni Gathou', Yad Va Angathi Oordwam Gacchathi Ithi' - that which goes in the upward direction. Agni is one among the Panchamahabhootas.
- **Nirukti:** “Agnina kritva yat karma.” The procedure which is performed with the help of Agni for treating the disease is called as Agnikarma. “Agneh sambandhava yat karma, tadagnikarma.” The procedure which is related to Agni is called as Agnikarma. Ayurveda suggested thermal therapy techniques for treating certain diseases known as Agnikarma Vidhi.
- **Paryayas:** Suchi, Vahni, shikhi, pachana, pingala, saptajihva, dahana, vaishvaanara, paavaka, anala., vayusakha, jwalana, dhananjaya, jatveda, shushma, aashrayashu, saptarchi, damuna, chitramanu, shuchihi, vrushakapi, kapila, aranee, vishvapta, udarchi, bhaskara, vasu, and sarvadevamukha.
- **Agnikarma Shreshthata:** Dahakarma includes both Ksharakarma and Agnikarma. Cauterization (agnikarma) treatment has been described to be superior to the caustic alkali (kshara karma), as the disease treated by it do not relapse and moreover those incurable by medicines (bhesaja), operations (shastra) and caustics (kshara) yield to it.
- Unlike kshara karma, agnikarma is entirely an external procedure. In Agnikarma direct use of Agni is done, so more specific way of treatment than Ksharakarma. Ksharakarma is otherwise known as 'potential cautery or virtual cautery.' Agnikarma is known as 'actual cautery.'
- When all methods of stopping the haemorrhage fails, then burning with fire is best.

- The surgical excision should be done with the sharp instrument, which is heated by Agni with benefit of asepsis. By these virtues Agnikarma is having greatness than other procedures. During the period of Susruthacharya, Agnikarma got importance in the field of treatment as a curative measure of many diseases and became one among the para surgical measures in Salyathantra.
- **Agnikarma kala:** Agnikarma can be done in all seasons except sharad (autumn) and grishma (summer). In Sharad Pitta Prakopa naturally occurs and Agnikarma also aggravates Pitta, due to this Agnikarma is contraindicated. In emergency even in these seasons it can be done, after adopting counter methods. Acharya Dalhana mentions covering the body or around the site of branding with moist cloth, use of cold foods and applying pastes which are cooling as counter methods to mitigate the effect of burning.

## DISCUSSION

- **Classification of Agnikarma**

### Agnikarma is Classified as Follows

#### 1. According to Dravya

- a) **Snigdha Agnikarma:** Madhu, Ghrita, Taila etc. are used for Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, Asthi dahana.
- b) **Ruksha Agnikarma:** Pippali, Shalaka, Godanta are used for Twak and Mamsadahana.

#### 2. According to Site

- a) **Sthanika (local):** Kadara, Arsha, Vicharchika.
- b) **Sthanantariya (systemic):** Apachi, Gridhrasi.

#### 3. According to Disease

- a) In the disease like Arsha, Kadara etc. it should be done after surgical excision (Chedana).
- b) In the disease like fistula, sinus etc; done after surgical incision (Bhedana).
- c) In the disease like Krimidanta, it should be done after filling by the Guda.

#### 4. According to Akriti

- Valaya
- Bindu
- Vilekha
- Pratisarana
- Ardhchandra

- Swastika
- Ashtapada

## 5. According to Dhatu

Acharya Sushruta gives the meaning Twak dagdha, Mamsa dagdha, Sira-snayudagdha and Asthi dagdha.

### Agnikarma Shalaka

1st group is useful in Agnikarma Chikitsa of Twak Dhatu (skin).

1. Pippali 2.Shara 3.Aja shakruta 4.Shalaka 5.Godanta

2nd group is useful in Agnikarma Chikitsa of Mamsa Dhatu.

1. Jambavoshtha

3rd group is useful in Agnikarma Chikitsa of Sira, Snayu,

1. Madhu 2.Guda 3.Sneha

- 1) **Pippali**: It is a well know herbal drug, used in dry form. Fruit is medicianly used. Pippali is helpful in dahankarma of skin, for mashaka, tilkalaka, charmkila.
- 2) **Aja shakrit**: This is the fecal matter of goat, used in dry condition. it is used for tawak dagdh.
- 3) **Godant**: “Teeth of cow” is also used in twakdahan.
- 4) **Shara**: Red hot tip of iron made arrow was used in agnikarma of skin.
- 5) **Suryakanta**: It is mentioned for tawak dagdh. It is a transparent stone. Sun rays after passing from it converge at on point, which lead to dahan karma.
- 6) **Madhu**: This animal product is produce by honeybees. it is indicated in the agnikarma of sira, snayu, sandhi and asthi.
- 7) **Madhuschisha (bee wax)**: This animal product is indicated in the agnikarma of sira, snayu, sandhi and asthi.
- 8) **Guda**: This herbal product used for agnikarma of sira, snayu, sandhi and asthi.
- 9) **Sneha**: There are four type of sneha, such as taila, ghrita, vasa and majja. It is indicated in the agnikarma of sira, snayu, sandhi and asthi.
- 10) **Jambovashtha**: This one type of shalaka yantra. It is used in agnikarma of mamsa dhatu
- 11) **Shalaka**: In this shalaka of various datu are used to give therapeutic burn.

**Contraindications for Agnikarma**

Agnikarma should be avoided in

- 1) Pitta Prakriti
- 2) Bhinna Kostha
- 3) Daurbala
- 4) Vriddha
- 5) Antaha Shonita
- 6) Anuddhrita Shalya
- 7) Bala
- 8) Bhiru
- 9) Aneka Vrana
- 10) Patients who are contraindicated for Swedana.

According to Acharya Charaka Agnikarma should not be done in the Vrana of Snayu, Marma, Netra, Kushtha and Vrana with Visha and Shalya.

In Astanga Hrudaya it is mentioned that those who are contraindicated for Ksharakarma are also contraindicated for Agnikarma. Ie pittaja disease, raktaja disease, jvar, atisar, hrut, roga, shiro, roga, pandu, aruchi, timir, garbhini, rajaswala, ajirna, shishu, vrudha, dhamni, sandhi, marma, sira, snayu, sevani, gala, nabhi, vrushna, medra, Perforation of alimentary canal, internal bleeding, un-extracted foreign bodies from wounds, suffering from several wounds, in summer.

**Sites for Agnikarma Chikitsa****1) Shiroroga and Adhimantha**

- Bhru pradesha
- Lalata pradesha
- TShankha pradesha

**2) Vartma-gata-roga**

- Vartma romakupa

**3) Tvacha, Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, Asthi (Atiruja)**

At the place of Vedana (pain)

**4) Utaseda-yukta kathinya supta – mamsa**

At the place of disease

**5) Vrana, Granthi, Arsha, Arbuda, Bhagandara, Apachi, Shleepada, Charma-kila, Tilakalaka, Antravridhi, Sandhi-chhedana, Sirachhedana, Nadi-gata, ati-rakta-pravritti**

- At the place of the disease
- At the special place as noted in texts

**AGNIKARMA VIDHI****POORVAKARMA**

Means preoperative procedures, this include preparation of the patient as well as preparation of Agnikarmagara.

- **Preparation of Patient**
- After carefully considering the symptoms of the disease, the vital spots and strength of the patient, disease and seasons, patients are selected for agnikarma.
- The patient who was eligible for Agnikarma, instructed to perform all auspicious ceremonies.
- Ask the patient to take food which is Picchilam (slimy) veerya ie sita and mrudu. It alleviates pitta. But in diseases such as mudhagarbha, ashmari, bhagandara, udara, arsha and mukharoga, empty stomach is advised, as after taking food there may be hindrance due to upward and downward natural urges and sometimes there may be lack of space.

**Preparation of Agnikarmagara**

keep ready at hand all the equipment needed A small open hearth is to be constructed, fixed with bellows similar to that of an ironsmith; into the hearth, wood of Khadira or Badara are put in and set fire & obtain nirdhuma agni.

**Pradhanakarma**

- A. The patient lie down making his/her head towards the east.
- B. Then ask the assistants to catch hold the patient's arms, legs and head so that he cannot move.
- C. The part kept ready where Agnikarma has to be done.
- D. Place the red hot shalaka at the most tender area of heel.

- E. Agnikarma done as much as deep as required for the disease and till the symptoms of proper cauterization manifest.
- F. The patient being kept assured by encouraging words all the time.

### **Samyak Dagdha Lakshanas**

Acharya explains Lakshanas of Samyagdagdha in Twak, Mamsa, Sirasnayu Sandhi and Asthi.

- **Twagdagdha:** Sabdapradurbhava (sound), Durgandhatha (smell of burning skin) and sankocha (skin becomes contracted) are the Samyak Lakshanas.
- **Mamsa Dagdha:** Kapotha Varnatha (burnt area attains colour of dove), Alpaswayadhu (oedema) and (Alpavedana less pain), Sushka and Sankuchitha Vranatha (scar will be dry and contracted.) are Samyak Lakshanas.
- **Sirasnayu Dagdha:** Krishnonnatha Vranatha (Ulcer will be black and elevated) and Sravasannirodha (no discharge) are Samyak Lakshanas.
- **Sandyasthi Dagdha:** Rookshatha (dryness), Arunatha (red colour), Karkasa and Sthiravranatha (hard and rough ulcer) are Samyagdagdha Lakshanas. In Astangahrudaya Acharya explains only generalised Samyagdagdha Lakshana ie after stoppage of Raktha, there will be Lasikasrava, Sabda and colour like Pakwathala and Kapotha, will heal easily and there will not be much pain.

### **Pashchatkarma**

After agnikarma was done, at the area where agnikarma was done kumari gel was applied immediately.

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