

CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF ABHYANGA IN (OLD AGE PERSONS) GERIATRICS

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ABSTRACT

Abhyanga (oil massage) is a very effective and popular therapy in Ayurveda for old age persons. One who practices *Abhyanga* daily. His ageing process has delayed. Because *Abhyanga* (Local application of oil) has anti ageing properties. In old age persons suffer from Vata diseases. Oils (Which is used in *Abhyanga*) has Anti vata properties. So for healthy life every old person should practice *Abhyanga* therapy. It is very easy to do. *Abhyanga* is a blessing of Ayurveda for old person. Benefits of *Abhyanga* has described by Charak, Sushruta, and Vagbhata. *Abhyanga* has advised to every one (Specially old persons) in daily routine for healthy life.

KEYWORDS:- “*Abhyanga*”, “*Abhyanga* is a blessing of Ayurveda for old age”, “*Anti Vata -Abhyanga*”

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda *Abhyanga* (Oil massage) is a very popular therapy. This therapy has been practicing in India from thousands years. This therapy can be applied by self and also by help of others (Massager) according to condition. *Abhyanga* therapy is applicable in many diseases. According to condition and diseases different types of oils may be used. *Ayurveda*

suggests massage with sesame oil to calm and balance the body. Stroking against the grain of body hairs facilitates penetration of oil into the hair follicles. This technique is indicated because *Vata* people have dry skin and closed follicles.^[1]

Different types of herbal drugs may be added in oils to make it more potent. For example we can add *Rasna*, *Dashmool*, *Bala* etc. in sesame oil. Types of oils for *Vata* suppression are- *Narayana tail*, *Mahanarayana tail*, *karpasthyadi tail*, *kautuchukkadi tail*, *Maasa tail*, *Mahamashsa tail*, *Dhanvantartail*, *Bala tail*, *Ashwagandha tail*, etc. These medicated oils are very useful for *Vata* disorders.

Physiological changes in old age- A gradual loss of energy, initiative, creative imagination, a narrowing of interests, an increase in ego centricity and personality changes are often part of the normal process of ageing. With advancing age, there is a progressive loss of physical and mental resources. Learning become more difficult and other noticeable changes such as loss of teeth and impairment of hearing and sight, add to the persons feeling of anxiety. On account of progressing age the muscles become flabby, the joints become loose, the blood becomes decomposed. The fat gets extremely liquified, the marrow does not cling the bone, the semen is not secreted in sufficient quantity and the vial essence become depleted.^[2]

As the result of this, one gets exhausted, languid and a victim to sleepiness, torpor and sluggishness. He gets dispirited and starts breathing hard. As he advances the tissues become more rigid, bones become brittle. The ligaments become stiffer so that contortion of the body and limbs become impossible to function. Fat is deposited beneath the skin in middle age and absorbed again in old age leaving the skin wrinkled. The deposition of fat also occurs in internal organs e.g. the heart, weakening their activity. The skin becomes thin and is less lubricated and its vessels do not react properly to heat and cold, so that is felt more acutely. The chief change in blood vessels. The walls of which become first thicker, then more brittle so the hemorrhage (bleeding into the brain with apoplexy) more readily occurs. The changes in the arteries is hastened by alcoholic excesses and some disease too. The thickening of the arteries is in the brain and consequently narrowing of their caliber, causing a poorer blood supply to the brain is one of the chief reasons of mental feebleness in old age.^[3]

In old age person suffers from many *Vata* diseases due to degeneration process increase in old age.

Properties of *Vata* are Dry (*ruksha*), light (*laghu*), cold (*sheeta*) rough (*khara*), subtle (*sukshma*) mobile(*chal*), clear (*vishada*), dispersing.^[4]

Properties of oils (which are using in *Abhyanga*) are just opposite of *vata* properties.^[5]

So according to Ayurvedic *samanya Vishesh Siddhant* oil suppresses *vata* properties and maintains a homeostatic state (*samyavastha*).^[6]

In *Abhyanga* we use properties of oil, heat, and physical energy also.

This therapy increases the absorption of oil in skin. In the surface of skin *bhrajakpitta* presents. *Bhrajakpitta* is a type of *pitta* bioenergy. *Bhrajakpitta* absorbs oil and digest it for creating energy to support our body.^[7] In briefly we can say that *Abhyanga* is a local process. Which provides energy our body through external application of oil.

Procedure - *Abhyanga* therapy in old age person who suffers from *vata* diseases he needs a oil (medicated or non medicated), a stainless steel pot and a *chulha* (for heat).

If a person takes *Abhyanga* by self he needs knowledge of *Abhyanga* process. Proper knowledge about the process is necessary for maximum benefits.

According to the place of body part where we apply *Abhyanga* it may be divided into two types - 1. *Sarvanga Abhyanga* (Full body massage)

Ekang Abhyanga (Massage of local affected body part).

Process of abhyanga

In classical whole body *Abhyanga* (*sarvanga Abhyanga*) has described seven postures.

These seven postures are- (1) Sitting with legs (2) Supine position or lying (3) Left lateral Prone right lateral

Again supine

Again sitting with leg extended for

After *Abhyanga* person should clean himself by mild hot water or rubbing by towel.

Benefits

In ayurveda *Abhyanga* therapy is a very old therapy. *Abhyanga* has described in all Samhita as a daily routine (*dincharya*). It is applying as a preoperative procedures in *Panchkarma* and main procedure in *Vata saman* (specially in old age).

Benefits of *abhyanga* according to *astanga hridaya*

One who practices *Abhyanga* in daily life he will be benefited by – Delay aging, delay exertion, delay degenerative changes, vision clear, fit body, long life, sound sleep, tolerance increase, body harm tolerance increase, balances kapha and bio energy, lustre of skin increase.^[8]

Abhyanga (massage) aids the normal movement throughout your alimentary canal assisting with many dysfunctions through its stress releasing effects.

It increases the excretion (via the kidneys) of fluids and waste products of protein metabolism, inorganic phosphorus and salt in normal individuals. It can facilitate elimination through the large intestines by mechanically stimulating peristalsis and improving tone. It can reduce cramping or spasm in the digestive tract. It supports healthy digestion through its stress releasing effects.^[9]

Abdominal massage (udar *Abhyanga*) is a tonic for the vital organs situated in the abdomen - the kidneys, liver, reproductive organs, urinary tract and small intestines. It will help relieve chronic constipation.^[10]

It increases the blood supply and nutrition to your muscles. It helps your muscles recover more quickly from exertion and fatigue. It reduces and breaks down adhesions (knots) and fibrosis. It relaxes your muscles effectively reducing spasms tension, and cramping. It stretches your connective tissue. It helps to re-establish your proper muscular tone. It reduces your muscles and soft tissue pain. It supports increased work capacity and encourages your metabolism. It helps to prevent muscular atrophy (wasting from injury and paralysis).^[11]

Benefits of *abhyanga* in skeletal system

It improves the circulation and nutrition of the joints and helps increase your range of joint movement. It reduces joint strain and compression through releasing tight muscles and tendons. It increases the ease and efficiency of your movements.

It helps to increase the retention of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sulphur in the bones and this aids in fractures healing.^[11]

It has been said in the favour of the Tail *Abhyanga* that as the axis of a wheel lubricated with oil becomes jerk resistant similarly, skin by the application of oil become strong, smooth free

from disturbances of Vata and tolerant of exertions and exercise.^[13]

If used daily it will help a powerful tonic for the whole body. Man suffers from increase of vata in his later life which is responsible for the ageing. Tail Abhyanga is the supreme destroyer of vata hence; the application of Tail Abhyanga can be a very effective to keep old age at a bay.^[14]

DISCUSSION

Abhyanga is a very ancient and scientific therapy which has described in *Ayurveda* classics. Skin is the part of nerve endings. Skin is a good source of excretion of sweat glands. Skin can absorbs medicated oil through capillaries due to diffusion process. It promotes good blood circulation. If any type of obstruction is present in circulation in outer surface of body, it may dissolve due to the pressure of *Abhyanga*.

Vayu is predominant in tactile sense organ which again is located in skin, *Abhyanga* Is the most beneficial for skin, hence one should use it regularly. The body of one who uses *Abhyanga* regularly does not become affected much even if subjected to accidental injuries or strenuous work. By using *Abhyanga* daily, a person is endowed with pleasant touch, charming, and least affected by old age.

By massaging of oil (*Abhyanga*) in feet, coarseness, stiffness, roughness, fatigue and numbness of feet are alleviated in no time. Further delicacy, strength and firmness in feet, clarity of vision are attained and *Vata* is pacified, by massage of oil in feet (*Padabhyanga*) there is no occurrence of Sciatica, cracking of sole and, constriction of veins and ligament.

CONCLUSION

Thus we can say that *Abhyanga* is a very popular and effective therapy in our daily lifestyle .it rejuvenates our body.

Because it decreases the aging process and it suppresses the increase *Vata* bioenergy. For old person *Abhyanga* is a blessing of ayurveda.

Every one should apply *Abhyanga* for healthy life.

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