

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

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**ABSTRACT**

“Owch its Paining” this is the most popular complaint everybody is facing. There were a lot of methods for pain management. It may be occur at any stage of life, with varying intensity and may be able to occur at any location, at any person without any age barrier. Many people have a false belief that Ayurveda is no good in times of acute pain, Ayurvedic medicines should only be consumed in chronic illnesses and it always gives very slow results but the thing is they are unaware of the wonder management. Here are the various ways to kill pain. Internal treatment includes the administration of herbal medicines internally. It may be in the form of tablet, capsule, and herbal compound powder. External treatment includes swedan, abhyanga,

basti, agnikarma, raktamokshan, lepa etc. The concept of pain management is a big domain, so the treatment protocol varies accordingly. Some may get relieved with internal medications but some with external therapies. Some type of pain may persist for a long time but some other may relieved fastly. In this paper we describe the different modalities of pain management in ayurveda.

**KEYWORDS:** Pain, swedan, abhyanga, basti, agnikarma, raktamokshan, etc.

## 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 can be described as any physical suffering or discomfort caused by illness or injury. No matter however mild the pain is anywhere in the body it lands you in a state of discomfort and affects your day to day activities. Pain can present in various ways as throbbing pain in toothache, eye ache or a colic pain which comes in spasm as in renal calculi, gnawing pain in abdominal discomfort, muscular pain as in sprain, sports injury, joint pain due to swelling and many more; and our answer to this is a pain killer which on frequent usage also kills our resistance power.

NSAIDs (Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs), Opioids are preferred choice in pain management. But all these also have so many considerable serious long term complications and adverse drug effect in body. In this respect the orientation of Ayurveda to the management of pain is holistic with the consideration of overall integrity of its various Patho-Physiologies. According to Ayurveda, Pain is predominantly due to vitiated vata dosha. Depending upon the type of pain, many terms like Ruk, Toda, Shoola, Vedana, Dukha etc. have been used in Ayurveda to denote pain. Many disease conditions have nomenclature reflecting dominance of pain e.g. Annadrava shula, Ardhavbhedaka, Hrit-Shoola etc.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Pain in Ayurveda

According to the philosophy of Ayurveda, the five elements in the body merge in pairs to form the three basic functional principles or *DOSHAs* (also called humors).

These humors are called *VATA DOSHA*, *PITTA DOSHA* and *KAPHA DOSHA*. The internal functions of the body, including those of the mind, are controlled by these humors. When these humors are balanced, a person remains healthy. When these humors are out of balance, they lead to ill health.

## *VATA DOSHA* – responsible for pain

Pain is a protective body mechanism, which alerts the person about the harmful condition or experience that occurs in the body. Pain can be somatogenic or psychological. The somatogenic pain occurs due to physiological causes or external injuries. The psychological

pain does not have any physical cause, but it occurs due to the some disturbance in the mind.

In Ayurveda, all types of pain are considered under VATA Aggravation.<sup>[2]</sup> According to Ayurvedic theory, pain can only occur due to the VATA involvement and it cannot occur if VATA is not involved in it. VATA dosha is responsible for every movement and action in the body. The hindrance in VATA flow leads to the pain. VATA is energy belongs to the Vacuum and Air elements. It is present in the hollow organs, nerves, blood vessels, all other body channels. It allows the other PITTA and KAPHA humors to function in the body. PITTA and KAPHA cannot work without the help of VATA humor. Therefore, VATA should flow easily in the body without any obstruction. The obstruction in VATA flow causes pain.

*“If pain appears in any disease, it indicates the involvement of VATA humor.”*

*“All ayurvedic treatments and therapies treat the VATA humor if a patient experiences pain anywhere in the body.”*

## **Management of pain**

### **(A) Internal treatment**

It includes the administration of herbal medicines like ayurvedic drugs like guggulu preparation, Shallaki, Dashmularishta, Brahmi and Ashwagandha, Vedna sthapana, shoola prashamna, angamarda prashamna formulations etc.<sup>[3]</sup> internally. It may be in the form of tablet, capsule, and herbal compound powder.

### **(B) External treatment**

The external therapy includes;

1. **Nadi swedan**<sup>[4]</sup> – The instant pain reliever procedure, in which medicated water vapour is applied over the painful region and the patient, got immediate relief. This may be given locally and generally.
2. **Patra pinda swedan**<sup>[5]</sup> – a bolus is prepared out of pain relieving leaves and oil, this is applied with oil over the body generally or locally depend on the condition of the patient. The oil used for the preparation of the bolus can be varying according to each patient.

3. **Kashaya dhara**<sup>[6]</sup> – This treatment is a kind of sedation therapy using herbal decoction. This is a process by which the body is made to perspire by means of pouring warm decoction from special herbs with a special vessel from a certain height in rhythmic manner and is rubbed into the body. This method removes ‘ama’ or toxins from the tissues and promotes fat metabolism, removes tension from muscles and also alleviates pain and stiffness of the joints and muscles, Fibromyalgia etc.
4. **Abhyangam**<sup>[7]</sup> – application of medicated oil throughout the body or locally with specially designed steps for massaging.
5. **Basti**<sup>[8]</sup> – Medicated enema, the procedure of giving medicated decoction or oil into the anal region for reducing the pain. Kati Basti, Janu Basti, Griva Basti, is organ related procedures performed at respective site to manage pain and at the same time strengthen them.
6. **Agnikarma**<sup>[9]</sup> – A small rod of Gold with a blunt end, specially designed for this purpose is placed for heating and then on the affected area. It works effectively and gives immediate relief. Agnikarma is basically performed in two ways.
  - (a) Direct heat an
  - (b) Indirect heat,

We follow the second method in practices. A small rod of Gold with a blunt end, specially designed for this purpose is placed on the affected area and the heat is transferred through the other end by a candle, till the patient can bear the heat. It works effectively and gives immediate relief.

Usually done in conditions like joint pain, pain due to cervical or lumbar spondylosis, spasmodic pain due to calculi, sciatica the procedure is done along the path of the nerve, frozen shoulder. The other way (direct heat) is useful in pain at heels which is done by Mruttika shalaka (earthen rod), Jaundice where root of turmeric is used for the purpose.

7. **Rakthamokshana**<sup>[10]</sup> :- raktamokshana(means let out the blood from body)is blood cleansing and purification therapy. In patients where blood pressure constantly remains high without any definite symptoms bloodletting plays an efficient role. Raktamokshana is performed in various ways the common methods used in practice are : –

a) Jalaukavcharan (Leech therapy) – The characteristic feature of leech is it only sucks the impure blood from the body. In conditions like painful cracked heels or soles and palms due to excessive dryness, headache due to vitiated pitta, some skin diseases, swelling in various tissues or joints, pain due to contused wound where blood capillaries get ruptured and the blood gets accumulated under the skin resulting in pain. Leeches are usually used where the cause of pain lies in blood tissue. The moment the impure blood is sucked out the pain disappears.

b) Viddha karma: This is a miniature of bloodletting, a very small puncture is done with the help of an needle. The knowledge of vital points and symptom related points is essential. This procedure serves many purposes but usually in headache, eye ache, tonsillitis, nasal blockage, renal colic, pain related to nerve defects, joint pain radiated pain, and much more.

8. Lepa<sup>[11]</sup>: - Lepa literally means application of paste of herbs on the affected area and leave it to dry. Usually applied in cases of swelling, injury, sprain, etc.

9. Marma therapy<sup>[12]</sup>: Marma Therapy has a special role to play in pain management. Instant pain relief is the motive of *marma* therapy. Stimulation of *marma* can produce analgesia by secreting a number of prostaglandin inhibitors, endorphins, enterferon and other opoid-like substances which are hundred times more potent than opium.

S.NO.	TYPES OF PAIN	MARMA
1.	Shoulder pain	<i>Kshipra marma</i> and <i>Kurpara marma</i> .
2.	Pain in abdomen	<i>Kurpara</i> and <i>Urvi marma</i> .
3.	Chest Pain	<i>kurpara</i> , <i>Urvi</i> and <i>Ani</i> .
4.	Cervical (neck) pain	<i>Kshipra</i> , <i>Kurpara</i> , <i>Ani marma</i>
5.	Leg and knee pain	<i>Kshipra</i> , <i>Gulpha</i>
6.	Sciatic pain	<i>Kshipra</i> , <i>Gulpha</i>

### Spirituality's Role in Pain Management

The Vedic understanding underlying Ayurveda says that pain affects the body, arising from a person's karma, but it doesn't touch the soul or higher self. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna tells the warrior Arjuna that "weapons do not cut it, fire does not burn it. the self is indestructible and timeless." An understanding that all pain is temporary and separate from one's true nature gives the spiritually-inclined the mental strength to put it in proper context and to cope without falling into depression or self-blame.

## CONCLUSION

All these treatment are pacifying the aggravated vata over the body. In Ayurveda pain is considered as the aggravation of vata dosha, this may be vata alone or accompanied with other doshas. Ayurveda presents conscious, self-aware, pain-reducing techniques that are effective and non-addictive. Vedna sthapana, shoola prashamna, angamarda prashamna formulations and ayurvedic therapies like abhyanga, swedana, basti, agnikarma, raktamokshana, marma therapy has a special role in pain management. Religion and spiritual background play a deep role in pain management as well.

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