

ROLE OF AGNIKARMA TREATMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ARDHAVABHEDAKA (MIGRAINE)

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medicinal system, identifies various forms of *Shiro Rogas* (head disorders) as outlined by the *Acharyas*. Among these, *Ardhavabhedaka* is a condition that closely mirrors the symptoms of migraines. In contrast to contemporary treatments that chiefly depend on analgesics often linked to negative impacts on other organs Ayurveda presents a comprehensive approach. This article examines the Ayurvedic treatment of migraines through the perspective of *Ardhavabhedaka*, with a specific emphasis on the technique of *Agnikarma*.

The *Agnikarma* therapy has been suggested as a viable alternative for migraine sufferers who do not experience relief from standard medications. This method is particularly notable for its non-pharmacological approach. It is viewed as not only effective but also cost-efficient, making it a viable option for patients seeking quick relief from migraine discomfort. Additional observations have shown that *Agnikarma* may be beneficial in addressing not just migraines but also a range of chronic conditions.

KEYWORDS: *Shirorog, Ardhavabhedaka, Agnikarma.*

• INTRODUCTION

Acharya Sushruta categorized *Shiroroga* (head diseases) into 11 distinct types. *Ardhevabhedaka* is described by nearly all *Aacharyas* as being *Vataja* or *vatakaphaj*, but *Aacharya* Sushruta recognized it as a *Tridoshaja Vyadhi* (caused by the disruption of all three *doshas*). Our *Acharyas* have extensively detailed *Dinacharya* (daily regimen) and *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen). However, modern shifts in lifestyle, diet, and environment have substantially affected human health and altered the equilibrium of the *Tridoshas*. Today's eating habits—such as consuming fermented and baked goods, chocolates, and dairy paired with irregular sleep routines like staying up late and sleeping during the day, are seen as predisposing factors for *Ardhavabhedaka*. Additionally, psychological stress and mental strain play significant roles in its initiation.

Ardhavabhedaka is frequently linked to Migraine. Migraine is a complex neurological disorder generally characterized by moderate to severe pulsating or throbbing headaches. These occurrences are often accompanied by symptoms such as nausea, sensitivity to light (photophobia), and sensitivity to sound (phonophobia). Women are three times more likely to experience migraines than men, and they typically affect one side of the head, although they can sometimes impact both sides. Worldwide, migraine is recognized as the second leading cause of disability and greatly affects productivity and work efficiency. In clinical settings, it usually manifests without aura, accounting for roughly 75% of cases, although some individuals may experience migraine with aura. Common triggers include stress, hormonal changes, missed meals, changes in weather, disrupted sleep patterns, and exposure to strong smells.

The procedure known as *Agnikarma* is categorized as *Karma* performed using *Agni*, where "AGNI" is used for purposeful burning for therapeutic effects. It is indicated for various *Vata-Kapha* disorders. It is believed to provide *Roganam Apunarbhava*, meaning that the disease treated with *Agnikarma* does not recur. It eliminates diseases from their source. In pain management the *Agnikarma* procedure can be performed effectively and safely.

- **Causative Factors (*Nidana*) of *Shiroroga***

धूमात्पतुषाराम्बु-क्रिडातिस्वप्नजागरैः।

उत्स्वेदाधिक्यपुरवात-बाष्पनिग्रहरोदनैः ॥१॥

उन्मादाधिक्यपूर्ववातात् त्यक्ताम्बुमद्यपानतः।

कृमिभिर्वेगधारणैः – उपधानमृजाभ्यङ्ग-

द्वेषाधः प्रततेक्षणैः ॥२॥ माधव निदान (23/1-2)

Environmental and Physical Factors

- Exposure to smoke (*Dhooma*)
- Extended exposure to sunlight (*Atapa*)
- Contact with cold dew or mist (*Tushara*)
- Engaging in water activities (*Ambu Krida*)
- Oversleeping (*Ati Swapna*)
- Staying awake during the night (*Ratri Jagaran*)

Mental and Emotional Factors

- Repressing natural needs (particularly tears)
- Experiencing emotional trauma or distress (*Manovyatha*)
- Crying excessively or holding back tears

Dietary and Lifestyle Factors

- Consuming too much water (*Atiambu Pana*)
- Eating incompatible, heavy, or impure foods (*Asatmya Ahara, Dushta Anna*)
- Drinking alcohol (*Madya Pana*)
- Repressing natural bodily urges (*Vegadharana*)
- Neglecting bathing and oil massages (*Snana-Abhyanga Dvesha*)

Postural and Sensory Factors

- Frequent gazing downward
- Straining the eyes (constant staring)
- Talking excessively

- **Rupa (Signs And Symptoms) Of Ardhavabhedaka**

Common symptoms (*Lakshanas*) of *Ardhavabhedaka* include

- Sharp pain (*Toda*)
- Dizziness (*Bhrama*)
- Pain in localized areas such as half the neck (*Manya*), eyebrows (*Bhru*), temples (*Shankha*), ears (*Karna*), eyes (*Akshi*), and the forehead (*Lalata*)
- Tightness in the shoulders (*Skandagraha*)
- Nasal discharge (*Ghrana Srava*)
- Sensitivity to light (*Prakashasahishnuta*)
- Sensitivity to sound (*Shabdahishnuta*)

If left untreated, the condition can lead to severe complications, including rapid vision and hearing loss (*Achirad Vinash*). Migraine is typically described as intermittent, throbbing, pulsating, and unilateral headaches. Additional symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, constipation, light sensitivity, sound sensitivity, and visual disturbances. The pain generally affects one side of the head, including areas such as the temple, above the eye, forehead, behind the eye, and the back of the head.

- **Management According to Ayurvedic Principles**

In Ayurveda, the approach to managing *Ardhavabhedaka* is divided into several categories.

A. Nidana Parivarjana (Avoidance of Causative Factors)

Nidana Parivarjana is regarded as the foremost and most efficient method for preventing and treating *Ardhavabhedaka*. This entails steering clear of the known triggers of the condition.

B. Aushadh Chikitsa (Medications and Therapies)

- **Medications:** *Rasa Aushadhi*, *Kwatha*, *Ghrita*, *Shirolepa*, *Shiro-Abhyanga*
- **Therapies:** *Panchakarma* + *Shamana Chikitsa*
- **Panchakarma:** *Nasya*, *Basti*, *Upnaha*, *Shiro-Basti*, *Dahana Karma* (*Agnikarma*)
- **Prevention:** Modifying diet, managing lifestyle, and using supplements

- ***Agnikarma Chikitsa***

Rationale and Benefits

Agnikarma, a traditional Ayurvedic treatment, has demonstrated effectiveness in alleviating

migraines by applying targeted thermal therapy to specific pressure points on the body.

***Rapid Pain Relief*:** *Agnikarma* therapy offers swift relief from migraine pain and its symptoms by focusing on particular areas of the head and neck.

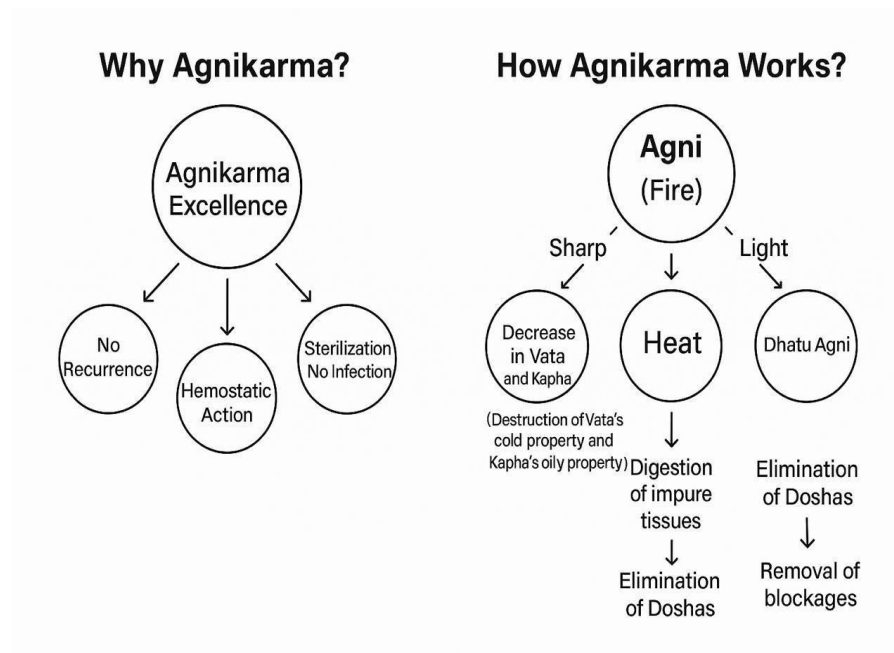
According to Ayurvedic principles, pain (*Ruja*) primarily arises from an imbalance in the *Vata Dosha*. In various painful conditions, the *Kapha Dosha* also contributes, exacerbating the symptoms.

***Lowered Frequency and Severity*:** Consistent *Agnikarma* treatments may help reduce the frequency and severity of migraine episodes.

***Minimal Side Effects*:** Being a non-invasive procedure, *Agnikarma* presents fewer risks of adverse effects in comparison to pharmaceutical treatments.

Agnikarma is particularly effective in these situations due to its distinct properties—heat (*Ushna*), sharpness (*Tikshna*), subtlety (*Sukshma*), and lightness (*Laghu*). These characteristics assist in balancing the *Vata* and *Kapha* Doshas, alleviating pain and stiffness in the affected areas.

Mode Of Action



Upkarana (Classical Instruments) for Doing AgniKarma:- The instruments for *AgniKarma* listed by *Sushrut* include: 1) *Pippali* (Piper longum), 2) *Aja shkrut* (dried goat excreta),

Madhuccista, 3) *Godanta* (cow's teeth), 4) *Shara*, 5) *Shalaka*, 6) *Jambavastha*, 7) *Swarna*, *Rajat*, *Tamra*, *loha*, and 8) *Snigdha* substances such as *Madu*, *Gud*, *Ghrut*, and *tail*, 9) *Ardhendu Vaktra Shalaka*, and 10) *Kalas*.

• Common techniques of *Agnikarma* for Migraine

***Pippali Technique*:** Involves using a heated long pepper to focus on specific areas, often effective for persistent headaches.

***Shalaka Technique*:** Employs a heated metal rod to concentrate on particular points.

The practice of *Agnikarma* is extensively recorded in traditional Ayurvedic literature and was performed by ancient medical practitioners. Although contemporary medicine has improved the methods and instruments, the essential concepts of *Agnikarma* have remained the same. It is a straightforward, cost-effective procedure that usually does not necessitate hospitalization. When conducted by a qualified professional, it provides outstanding outcomes, particularly in alleviating various forms of pain.

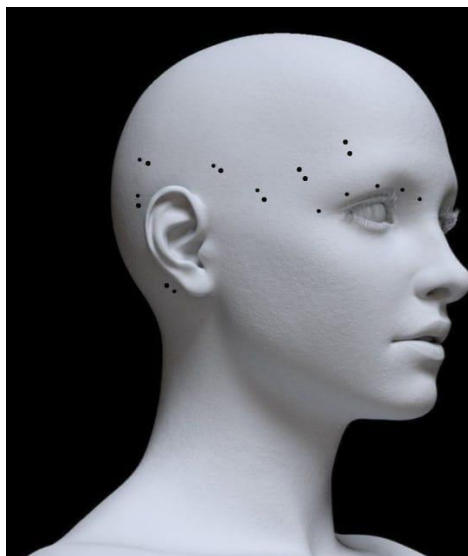
Safety and Protocol

- *Agnikarma* should not be performed on an empty stomach. It is advisable to consume *Pichchila anna* before undergoing *Agnikarma*.
- One must be mindful of vital body areas, the season, and the condition of *Vyadhi Tosha*.
- Caution should be exercised when heating the *Shalaka* and positioning it afterward at the designated site.
- Ensure the patient is in a comfortable position, exposing the area of concern.
- Put on surgical gloves.
- Identify the most tender spot.
- Continue *Agnikarma* until the symptoms of *Samyak Dagdhata* (Proper *Agnikarma*) are reached.

Postoperative care: Apply *Madhu-ghrit* to the *Samyak Dagdhata* to alleviate immediate burning sensation.

• Main Sites of *Agnikarma* in *Ardhambhedaka* (Migraine)

शिरोरोग अधिमंथयो भू ललाट शंख प्रदेशेषु दहे तासु.. सूत्र 12/8



● CONCLUSION

Agnikarm Treatment shows promise as an effective solution for migraines, with case studies demonstrating notable immediate relief and minimal discomfort. As additional research unfolds, the embrace and possible incorporation of this therapy into conventional migraine treatment methods could open new avenues for innovative, patient-focused strategies in migraine management.

<Adverse events/side effects>

No adverse events were reported. The patient experienced a mild burning sensation at the site of *Agnikarm* Treatment, and a small dark discoloration due to the burn was observed in the treated area. There was no pain or wound present in the *Agnikarma* site.

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