

**AGNIKARMA: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW****Dr. Bharati Biswas<sup>1\*</sup> and Dr. Namita Baishya<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>PG Scholar, Dept. of Shalya Tantra, Govt. Ayurvedic College, Guwahati-14.<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Dept. of Shalya Tantra, Govt. Ayurvedic College, Guwahati-14.Article Received on  
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**\*Corresponding Author****Dr. Bharati Biswas**PG Scholar, Dept. of Shalya  
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College, Guwahati-14.**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda is the holistic science which covers all aspect of life, not only the preventive as well therapeutic part. Among 8 branches of Ayurveda, shalya is considered as superior most. Similarly agnikarma is considered as superior among Bhesaja, Kshara & Sastra karma. Sushruta has given details description about agnikarma. Agnikarma is considered as one of the best parasurgical procedure, which has been widely used in the clinical practice now-a-days. Superiority of Agnikarma over treatment modalities are timely described by our ancients because of Apunarbhavatva (no recurrence property). It is mainly effective in vata and kaphaja disorders, where pain & stiffness is the cardinal symptom. Agnikarma is safe, non-invasive & drug free parasurgical procedure. It is also a cost effective procedure requiring no hospitalization etc. Because of its convenience and low cost has

gained wide acceptability.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda, Agnikarma, Susruta Samhita, Para surgical.***INTRODUCTION**

Shalyatantra is one of the important branch among 8 branches of Ayurveda. In the same way agnikarma is best among Bhesaja, kshara and sastra karma and is mainly effective in vataja and kaphaja vyadhi as the disease treated by agnikarma does not recur and it gives instant reliefs. Agnikarma is non-pharmacological treatment modality which is briefly described by acharya Sushruta. The pain is comparatively less as compared to other shastrakarma.

**AIM AND OBJECTIVE**

Different literature about Agnikarma in Ayurvedic text (Samhita) and Published articles about Agnikarma evaluation.

### History of Agnikarma in Vedas & Samhitas

- A. In Rig veda, application of agni has mentioned in context of obstetric and gynecological disorders to get rid of micro-organism in genital areas (10/162/1-4)
- B. In Atharva veda, worshiped agni as God. They mentioned as Rakshoha (Ath.5/21/1,3,5)
- C. In Yajur veda, agni has been used to treat sheta related disorders (23/10/1)
- D. In Sama veda, A separate adhyaya as Agnneya Khanda – elaborate description of agni is cited.
- E. In Charaka samhita, shastra pranidhana chikitsa for granthi, gridhrasi, apachi, bhagandara etc.
- F. In Sushruta samhita, Parasurgical procedure, upayantra for the management of arsha, bhagandara, granthi etc.
- G. In Vagbhata, mainly for pain management & surgical procedures.

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

The literature about Agnikarma in therapeutic use studied vividly in both Vedas and Samhitas of Ayurveda as well as recent published articles. The literary data about derivation and definition of agnikarma, different methods, indication and contraindications, mode of applications, benefits and complications etc. The different data recorded and analyzed according to the age of Ayurvedic texts and their commentaries for Comparative Study as well as chronological development. The different new modalities of Agnikarma practice and their benefit in modern era of surgical practice are also studied vividly.

### Derivation and Definition

The term Agnikarma is made up of 2 words – **Agni & Karma**

★ **Agni:** Derived from the root “agigatau agyati agnayam na prapyanti” i.e. it gives the rebirth, is utilized to cure and prevent the diseases.

★ **Karma:** ACTION

★ **Agni + Karma** i.e. Agninakritwa yatkarma, agne sambandh va yatkarma tad agnikarma (Dalhan on S. Sutra 12/02)

The procedure which is done with or through fire is fire therapy.

Agnikarma is an intentional therapeutic heat burn in proper way for a particular purpose with the help of certain things.

**Superiority of agnikarma**

क्षारादग्निर्गरीयान् क्रियासु व्याख्यातः, तद्गन्धानां रोगाणामपुनर्भावाद्

भेषजशस्त्रक्षारैरसाध्यानां तत्साध्यत्वाच्च ।।

|| Su.su.12/3 ||<sup>[1]</sup>

Agni (Fire) is better than alkali in action (of burning) i. e. diseases treated by burning will not recur again as because agni removes the root cause of disease & contract the vessel after dahan karma so prevent bleeding & those diseases which are incurable by the use of medicines, sharp instruments and alkalis will be cured by Agnikarma (Thermal cauterization). It is superior due to its simple technique & optimum result.

**Dahana Upakarana**

अथेमानि दहनोपकरणानि तद्यथा-पिप्पल्यजाशकृद्गोदन्तशरशलाकाजाम्बवौष्ठेतरलौहाः  
क्षौद्रगुडस्नेहाश्च ।

तत्र, पिप्पल्यजाशकृद्गोदन्तशरशलाकास्त्वग्गतानां जाम्बवौष्ठेतरलौहा मांसगतानां,

क्षौद्रगुडस्नेहाः सिरास्नायुसन्ध्यस्थिगतानाम् ।।








|| Su.su.12/4 ||<sup>[2]</sup>

Dahana Upakarana (Equipment required for burning)	Site of burning according to disease
Pippali, Ajasakrita (Goat's excreta), Godanti (Cowteeth), Shara (Arrow head), Shalaka (Metal)	Disease of skin (Twakdagdha)
Jambavostha (Surgical instrument), Itara lauha (Metal rods of copper or silver)	Disease of muscles (Mamsadagdha)
Kshaudra, Guda, Sneha (Honey, Jaggery, Oil)	Disease present in veins, ligaments, bones and joints (Sira, Snayu, Asthi, Sandhidagdha)

**Classification of agnikarma**

According to dravyas used			
S. No	Type	Dravyas used	Sites for agnikarma
1	Snigda agni karma	Madhu, grita, taila	Sira, snayu, sandhi and asthi.
2	Ruksha agni karma	Pippali, shara, shalaka, godanta	Twak and mamsa dhatu.

According to site	
Types	Diseases
Sthanika (Local);	Kadara, Arshas.
Sthananthariya (Distal to site of disease);	Plechodara, Gridrasi, Apachi etc.

According to akriti			
S. No	Name	Description	Shapes
1	Valaya	Circular Shape	
2	Bindu	Dot-Like Shape (Pointed)	
3	Vilekha	1.Tiryak (Oblique) 2.Riju (Straight) 3. Vakra (Zigzag)	
4	Pratisarana	Rubbing at indicated site by heated shalaka and there is no specific shape.	
5	Ardhachandrakara	Semicircular fashion.	
6	Swasthika		
7	Ashtapada		

### Dagdha lakshana (Feature of proper agnikarma)

1. Twak dagdha: Sabdha pradurbhava (Production of crackling sound), Durgandhata (bad odour), Twak sankoch (Constriction of skin).
2. Mamsa dagdha: Kapotavarna (Colour like that of pigeon i.e. ashy, dark grey), Alpa swabathu (Mild swelling), vedana (Pain), sushka (Dryness), sankochita vrana (Constriction of the wound i.e. ulcer).
3. Sirasnayu dagdha: Krishnaunnatavrana (Ulcer becoming black and elevated), sravasannirodha (Cessation of exudation).
4. Sandhiasthi dagdha: Ruksharuna (Appearance of dryness & slight red colour), karkashasthivrana (Roughness & firmness of the ulcer).

### Agnikarma kaal

Agnikarma can be performed during all seasons except grishma and sharada. Even in these two seasons, in the case of an emergency, it may be performed after taking appropriate precautions. In sharada, there is mention of pitta prakopa, as agni karma also aggravates pitta, it may lead to pitta prakopa if carried out in sharad ritu which is a contraindication.

### Indication

त्वङ्मांससिरास्नायुसन्ध्यस्थिस्थितेऽत्युग्ररुजि

वायवुच्छिन्नकठिनसुप्तमांसे

व्रणे

ग्रन्थ्यर्शोऽर्बुदभगन्दरापची

श्लीपदचर्मकीलतिलकालकान्त्रवृद्धिसन्धिसिराच्छेदनादिषु नाडीशोणितातिप्रवृत्तिषु चाग्निकर्म कुर्यात् ॥

॥ Su.Su.12/10 ॥<sup>[5]</sup>

Burning (Branding) should be done in conditions such as presence of very severe pain in the skin. muscles, veins, ligaments. Bony joints and bones. Caused by vāta (Aggravation). muscles which are grown upwards (New growths) hard and without sensation. ulcers/wounds. tumor, haemorrhoids. Malignant tumor, fistula-in-ano glands in neck, filariasis, warts on the skin, moles, hernia. Tearing of the joints, and veins, sinus ulcers and profuse haemorrhages.

### Contraindication

अथेमानग्निना परिहरेत्- पित्तप्रकृतिमन्तः शोणितं भिन्नकोष्ठमनुद्धतशल्यं दुर्बलं बालं वृद्धं भीरुमनेकव्रणपीडितमस्वेद्यांश्चेति ॥

॥ Su.Su.12/14 ॥<sup>[7]</sup>

Branding by fire (Thermal cautery) should be avoided, in persons of pitta predominant constitution, in whom blood has accumulated inside the abdomen, when there is rupture of the abdominal organs, foreign bodies have not been removed. The debilitated, children, very aged, the fearful, those suffering from multiple wounds and people who are unfit for sudation therapy (vide. Chap. 32 of chikitsa sthana).

### Material required for agniarma

- Triphala kwath / Panchvalkal kwath
- Shalaka / Ghrita / Taila etc material use for Agnikarma
- Heat source i.e. Stove
- Yastimadhu churna
- Ghee
- Swab holding forcep
- Gauze piece



## Agnikarma vidhi

## Purvakarma

- Before performing out the Pradhan karma, the procedures and preparations carried out is called Purvakarma.
- After having carefully analysis, selection of patient and disease should be done depending upon the strength, locations of Marma, disease and seasons.
- Proper consent and explanation about procedures to the patient should be done.
- Preparation of the patient i.e. the patient should be fed on a diet which is picchila before Agnikarma. The patient should be on empty stomach before the therapy, in case of Asmari, Mudhagarbha, Arsha, Bhagandara, Udara & Mukha roga.
- Surface should be cleaned with triphala kwath / panchvalkal kwath.
- Unnecessary exposed part should be drapped.

## Pradhan karma

- The patient kept in suitable position by keeping head in the east direction & held by expert assistants to avoid movement.
- After that specific tender point should be localised.
- With the help of panchadhatu Shalaka, after red hot should applied to the specific tender point & burn the area in the form of valaya, bindu, bilekha, pratisaran, ardha chandra, swastika etc. as per need.
- Once the pradhan karma is carried out, it is necessary to assess the samyak dagdha lakshana.

**Samyak dagdha lakshana**

- Anaawagadha (Wound which is not deep)
- Talaphala varna (Colour resembling fruit of tala tree)
- Susamsita (Without elevation or depression)

**Paschat karma**

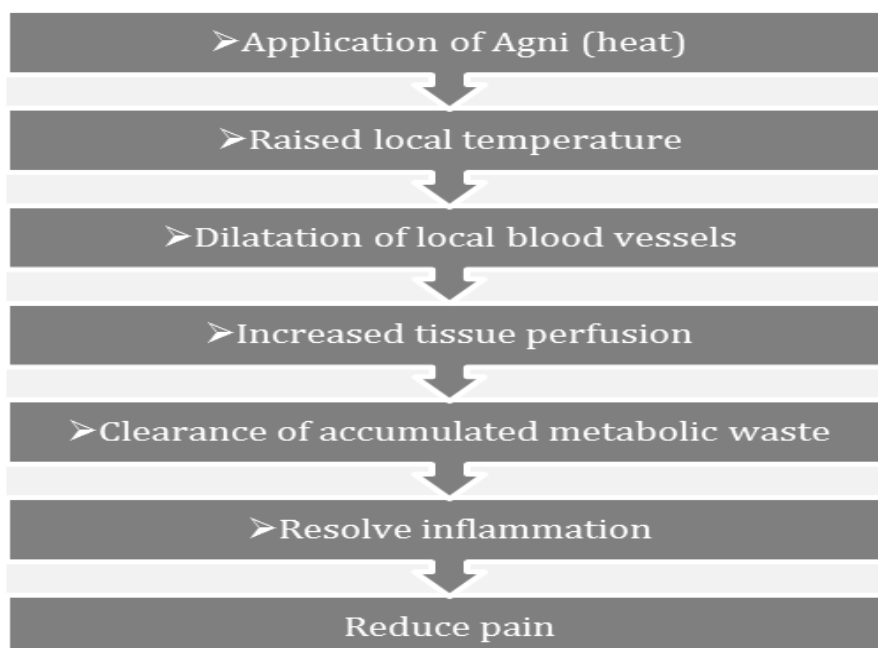
- After Agnikarma procedure, application of ghee & madhu to that area (to reduce burning sensation & promote healing)
- Then after dusting with yastimadhu churna (which is sita virya & ropan drug) should be done.

**Post operative advice**

1. To avoid water contact upto 48 hrs for infection (to prevent sepsis).
2. Repetation of the procedure if required like 1 to 3 to 5 to 8 at weekly interval depending on disease & problem.

**Probable mode of action; According to ayurveda**

- Action of agnikarma may be accessed by the properties of agni.
- It removes srotavarodha, avarana and increase in rasarakta samvahana to the affected site.
- It works deep in tissue because of its power of penetration to deep tissue by virtue of laghu, sukshma and theekshna guna.
- In other theory ushna gunagni improves dathwagni that pacifies the ama dosha and reduces pain - vata shamana.
- Dahana karma is having the property of sirasankochana by that quality even it helps for raktha sthambana (Haemostasis).
- Skin is one of the places of vayu, agnikarma is performed to release the sangha (Obstruction) of vayu.
- Pain is caused anywhere in the body is due to vata, agnikarma being ushna chikitsa pacifies vata, and thus pain is relieved immediately after agnikarma.

**Mode of action of agnikarma (In modern)****Cauterization --- Modern concept**

Cauterization refers to a medical treatment involving the use of heat or chemicals to burn or destroy tissues. The main forms of cauterization used today are –

- Electrocautery
- Chemicalcautery
- useful in stopping severe blood loss
- To close amputations
- Useful in preventing infections, including complications from septicemia

**Current practice of agnikarma**

- Nowadays the Agnikarma Shalaka got the modification as the source is electricity.
- This Shalaka has different shapes of probes for specific use.
- Nowadays there is a list of common ailments where agnikarma is very effective i.e
- Sciatica pain
- Mechanical back pain
- Peri- Arthritis Shoulder Joint
- Frozen shoulder
- Osteoarthritis knee joint in early stage
- Cervical pain

- Tennis elbow
- Planter corn
- Viral warts

### Common problems with therapy

1. Patient's consent
2. Scar formation
3. Recurrence
4. Needs skill to perform
5. Burn injury

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Susruta Samhita is the treasure house of surgical research and describes details about Agnikarma along with other parasurgical procedure. Other textbook followed the principles of susruta samhita along with their own modification to simplify the usability. Acharya Sushruta mentioned Agnikarma as one among Raktastambanopaya. Now in modern surgery also Agnikarma is utilized in the form of cauterization for haemostatic purposes. Different articles on Agnikarma reviewed and got scientific analysis for pain relief in musculoskeletal disorder.

### CONCLUSION

Agnikarma is mainly effective in vata and kaphaja disorders, where pain & stiffness is the cardinal symptom. Agnikarma is safe, non-invasive & drug free and cost-effective day-care para surgical procedure. There will be no recurrence of the disease which is managed by Agnikarma.

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