

**MANAGEMENT OF SCIATICA WITH AGNIKARMA AND
JALAUKAVACHARAN IN AYURVEDA: A CASE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

Sciatica, characterized by pain radiating along the sciatic nerve, often leads to significant discomfort and reduced quality of life. In Ayurveda, this condition is correlated with Gridhrasi, a Vata-dominant disorder. The present case study explores the efficacy of two Ayurvedic parasurgical procedures—Agnikarma (therapeutic cautery) and Jalaukavacharan (leech therapy)—in the management of chronic sciatica. Remarkable improvement was observed in pain intensity and mobility, suggesting that this combination therapy offers a safe and effective alternative for the management of sciatica.

KEYWORDS: Sciatica, Gridhrasi, Agnikarma, Jalaukavacharan, Ayurveda, Leech Therapy, Pain Management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sciatica is a neuropathic condition involving compression or irritation of the sciatic nerve, resulting in radiating pain from the lower back to the legs. Conventional management includes NSAIDs, physiotherapy, and surgical interventions, which may have limitations in long-term efficacy and safety.

In Ayurveda, sciatica is described as Gridhrasi, a condition predominantly caused by aggravated Vata dosha, sometimes associated with Kapha. Classical texts suggest various Shamana and Shodhana therapies, among which Agnikarma and Jalaukavacharan are highlighted for their analgesic and anti-inflammatory effects.

This case study evaluates the combined efficacy of these two procedures in the holistic management of sciatica.

2. CASE REPORT

Patient Profile

Age/Sex: 45-year-old male

Chief Complaints: Pain in the lower back radiating to the right leg for 6 months, aggravated by walking and prolonged sitting.

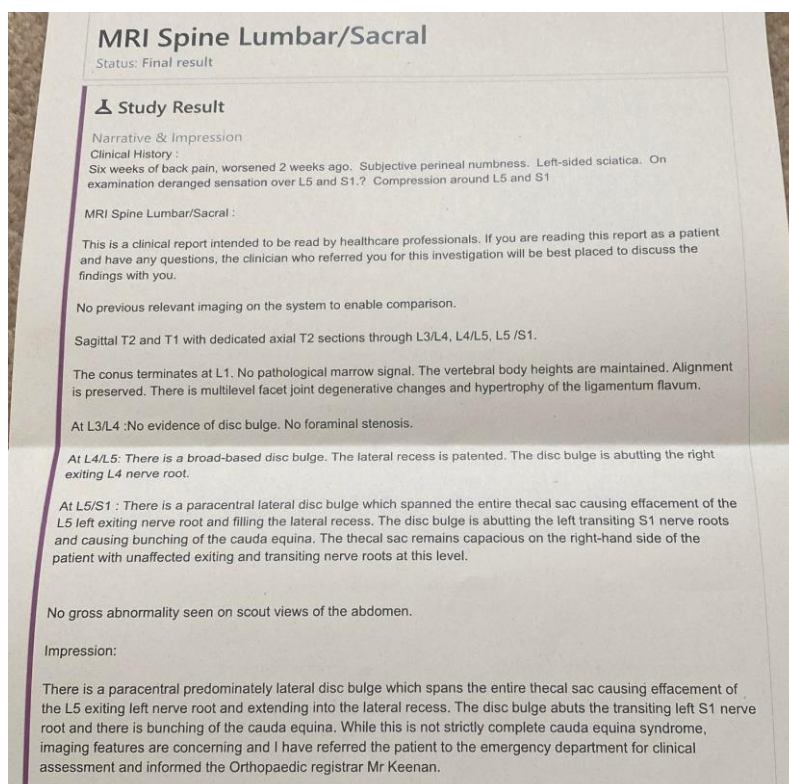
N/H/O: DM/HTN/TB/BA/ or any other major illness

S/H: Nil

D/H: Nil

A/H: Nil

MRI Findings: Disc bulge at L4-L5 level compressing the sciatic nerve



Ayurvedic Assessment

Prakriti: Vata-Pitta

Vikriti: Vata-Kaphaj Gridhrasi

Agni: Mandagni

Nadi: Vata-dominant

Bowel habits: Constipation

Micturition: 5-6times/day

Sleep: Disturbed due to pain

General examination

Conscious oriented

PR: 78/min

BP: 130/80 mm Hg

RR: 18/min

Blood Investigation

All routine investigations were normal

Ayurvedic Diagnosis: Vata-Kaphaja Gridhrasi

Treatment Protocol

a. Jalaukavacharan was performed once a week for 3 weeks.

Leech application at the affected kati-pradesha (lumbosacral region).

Each session lasted for approximately 30–45 minutes until the leeches detached spontaneously.

Local application of turmeric paste post-detachment to prevent infection.



b. Agnikarma was initiated in the 4th week.

Done using Panchadhatu shalaka heated to a red-hot state.

Multiple controlled cauterizations were done on the lumbosacral area and along the sciatic nerve path.

Frequency: Weekly for 3 sessions.



3. OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

Parameters and findings post 6 weeks treatment

Parameters	Before Treatment	After Treatment
Pain (VAS Scale)	8/10	2/10
Tingling	Present	Absent
Numbness	Present	Absent
Range of Movements	Restricted	Normal
Straight Leg Raise (SLR)	40°	70°

No adverse reactions were reported. Patient expressed significant relief in symptoms and improvement in daily activities.

4. DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic Perspective: Gridhrasi manifests due to vitiation of Vata (and sometimes Kapha) affecting the Kandara and Snayu structures. Jalaukavacharan and Agnikarma are recommended in classical Ayurvedic texts such as Sushruta Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya for Vata-Kaphaja disorders.

Modes of Action

1. Agnikarma (Therapeutic Cautery)

- Vatahara: Heat counters the cold and dry nature of Vata, restoring balance.
- Vedanasthapana (pain-relieving): By denaturing proteins in pain-transmitting nerve endings, it reduces pain perception.
- Srotoshodhana: Improves local circulation and reduces nerve compression by relaxing surrounding musculature.
- Thermocoagulation stimulates tissue regeneration and promotes healing in musculoskeletal disorders.

2. Jalaukavacharan (Leech Therapy)

- Raktamokshana: Detoxifies blood and reduces local inflammation.
- Leech saliva contains bioactive substances like hirudin, eglins, and bdellins which exhibit anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and anticoagulant properties.
- Reduces local congestion, edema, and improves tissue oxygenation. It pacifies Pitta and Kapha along with Vata, offering a multi-dosha approach.

5. CONCLUSION

This case study demonstrates that the combined application of Jalaukavacharan and Agnikarma provides significant relief in chronic sciatica. The dual mechanism—anti-inflammatory and neuromodulatory—offers a comprehensive, safe, and cost-effective Ayurvedic solution. Further clinical trials with larger sample sizes are recommended to validate these findings.

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