

International Research Journal of Ayurveda & Yoga

An International Peer Reviewed Journal for Ayurveda & Yoga



Effect of Agnikarma Therapy on Musculoskeletal Pain – A Review Article

Mukesh Gupta,¹ Mahesh Dixit,² Hari Mohan Meena,³ Namu Narayan Meena⁴

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 10

1. P.G. Scholar, PG Department of Shalya Tantra; M.M.M. Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur
2. Principal & H.O.D; PG Department of Shalya Tantra; M.M.M. Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur
3. Professor, PG Department of Shalya Tantra; M.M.M. Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur
4. Associate Prof., PG Department of Shalya Tantra; M.M.M. Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur

Corresponding Author :- Mukesh Gupta, P.G. Scholar, PG Department of Shalya Tantra; M.M.M. Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur, Email, Id- drmukesh8989@gmail.com

Article received on 29th August 2021

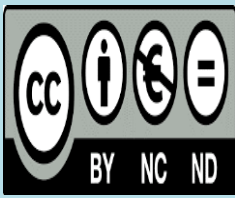
Article Accepted 22nd Oct 2021

Article published 31st Oct 2021

ABSTRACT: -

In *Ayurveda*, the word “pain” can be correlated with *Ruja*, which is caused due to vitiation of *Vata*. Use of heat therapy for various ailments was found in Ancient *Ayurveda* treatises. There are different treatment modalities in *Ayurveda*, which are described by *Acharyas*, *Agnikarma* (heat therapy) is one among them. *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned use of *Agnikarma* in various disorders such as *Granthi* (tumor), *Arsha* (hemorrhoids), *Bhagandar* (fistula), *Arbuda* (tumor), *Shlipad* (filariasis), *Antra Vrana* (internal injury), and *Nadi Vrana* (sinuses) in detail. There are different materials that are used, such as *Pippali* (Piper longum), *Aja Shakrut* (goat excreta), *Godanta* (gypsum), *Shara* (arrow), *Shalakha* (metal rod), *Kshaudra* (honey), *Guda* (jaggery), and *Sneha* (oil/fat), for giving *Agnikarma* to various parts of the body such as skin, muscles, blood vessels, and ligaments. As *Agnikarma* is a para-surgical procedure, *Acharya Charak* has not described it in separate chapter but has described it as one of the treatment measures in different *Vatavyadhis* (neuro muscle skeletal disorders) such as *Gridhrasi* (sciatica). If the drugs such as non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, which are generally used for relieving pain factor in musculoskeletal disorders, are used for longer duration they can cause potential side effects on the body; hence, there is an emerging need to search for a safe option for the same. In this article, an attempt has been made to search the researchers conducted on *Agnikarma* related to musculoskeletal disorders to establish its role in musculoskeletal pain.

Keywords: *Agnikarma*, Pain, Para surgical, *Ruja*



This work is licensed under a creative attribution -Non-commercial-No derivatives 4.0 International License commons

How to cite this article: Gupta M, Dixit M Hari, Meena M, Meena N N, Effect of *Agnikarma* Therapy on Musculoskeletal Pain – A Review Article” IRJAY. [Online] 2021;4(10):95-99.

Available from: <http://irjay.com> ; DOI:-<https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2021.41011>

INTRODUCTION

Pain is the fundamental feature of most of the musculoskeletal disorders. It is defined as “an unpleasant sensory and emotional involvement, which is generally associated with actual or potential tissue damage.”^[1] It can affect the quality of life; hence, its preventive measure is of prime importance in health care. In *Sushrut Samhita*, the word pain is mentioned as *Ruja*.^[2] There are different treatment modalities in *Ayurveda*, which are described by *Acharyas*, *Agnikarma* (cauterization) is one among them. As it is a para surgical procedure, *Acharya Charak* has not described *Agnikarma* in separate chapter but has described it as one of the treatment measures in different *Vatavyadhi* is such as *Gridhrasi* (gout).^[3] *Agnikarma* is the application of heat directly or indirectly to the affected part by using different materials. According to *Sushruta*, if *Agnikarma* is used in such diseases, there will be less chances of their recurrence and it will be successful in curing the diseases, which are incurable by drugs and surgery. ^[4] The present review is aimed at analyzing the role of *Agnikarma* in pain of various musculoskeletal disorders.

Classification of *Agnikarma*

According to *dravya* used:

- 1) *Snigdha Agnikarma*: performed by *madhu*, *gritha* and *taila* . It is used in treatment of diseases situated in *sira*, *snayu*, *sandhi* and *asthi*.
- 2) *Ruksha Agnikarma*: performed by *Pipali*,

kshara, *shalaka* and *godanta* . It is used in treatment of diseases situated in *twaka* and *mansa dhatu*.

According to the site:

- 1) Local: It is used in *Kadar* and *Arsha*
- 2) Systemic: It is used in *Visuchika* and *Gridhrasi*

According to Shape (*Akruti*):

- 1) *Valay*: Circular shape
- 2) *Bindu*: Dot like shape
- 3) *Vilekha*: Different shapes according to direction of lines
- 4) *Pratisaran*: No specific shape
- 5) *Ardhachandra*: Crescent shape
- 6) *Swastika*: shape of *swastika yantra*
- 7) *Ashtapada*: specific shape containing eight limbs in different directions ^[5]

Materials used for *Agnikarma*

- 1-Metallic and other materials:
- 2-*Panchadhatu shalaka* made of *Tamra*, *loha*, *Yasada*, *Rajata* and *Vanga*
- 3-Plant origin : *Pipali*, *Yashtimadhu*, *Haridra*, *Sneha* and *Taila*
- 4-Animal origin: *Ajasakrit*, *Godanta*. ^[6]

INDICATIONS:

- 1-*Agnikarma* is indicated in *vata* and *kapha* related diseases.
- 2- It is used in treatment of diseases like *arsha*, *bhagandar*, *arbuda*, *apache*, *shlipada*, *charmakila*, *gulma*, *nadivrana* and *shiroroga* , *gridhrasi*, after excision of cysts, mass, warts, tumour and fistula. ^[7]

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

- 1-Agnikarma is contraindicated in *pitta* related diseases
- 2- Children
- 3- Old age person
- 4-Pregnant women
- 5- Anemia
- 6- Perforated abdomen
- 7- Bleeding disorders ^[8]

METHOD OF AGNIKARMA:**Purva karma:**

It includes proper assessment and preparation of patient and instruments required for procedure. Informed consent of the patient should be taken prior to procedure. Routine investigations should be performed.

Pradhan karma:

Confirmation of the site for *Agnikarma* (cauterization) is done by choosing site where there is more pain and tenderness.

Proper cleaning of the area.

Deep *dagda* at tendered region and superficial *dagda* on effecting site. *Agnikarma* is performed at the site until *samyaka dagda lakshana* appears proper space should be maintained between two *samyak dagda vranas*.

Paschata karma:

Griha and *madhu* should be applied on *samyaka dagda vrana* for instant relief from pain and proper healing of the *vrana*.

Proper diet should be advice to the patient. *Pathya apathya* should be advised to the patient. Complete healing of the *vrana* should be observed.

Assessment of Agnikarma

- i. *Twaka dagda*: Production of crackling sound, bad odour and contraction of skin.
- ii. *Mansa dagda*: Peigon like colour, mild swelling, mild pain, and dry contracted

wound.

- iii. *Sira snayu dagda*: Black colourations, elevation of site and no discharge.
- iv. *Sandhi asthi dagda*: Dryness, dark red colouration, roughness and stability of the part.

DISCUSSION

According to *Ayurveda*, any musculoskeletal pain, that is, *Ruja* is caused due to vitiation of *Vata Dosha*. In various conditions, such as chronic plantar fasciitis, sciatica, osteoarthritis, calcaneal spur, cervical spondylosis, and frozen shoulder, there is a predominant involvement of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*. In the procedure of *Agnikarma*, *Agni* is given at the site of pain, which acts by its *Ushna* (hot), *Tikshna* (penetrating), *Sukshma* (minute), *Laghu* (small), *Vyavayi* (quick acting), and *Vikasi* (quickly spreading) *Guna*. These *Guna* acts against *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*, thereby relieving pain and inflammation at that site. ^[9]

According to *Ayurveda*, every *Dhatu* (tissue) has its own *Dhatvaagni* (digestive fire of tissues) for its *Poshan* (nourishment), if there is any *Dhatvaagni Vishamata* (deviation in digestive fire) it may lead to *Vikar* of that particular *Dhatu*. *Mamsaasthigata Pida* (musculoskeletal pain) might be due to *Mamsa* (muscle), *Meda* (fat), and *Asthidhatu* (bone) *Agnimandya*. In the process of *Agnikarma*, local heat therapy causes *Dhamaniprasaran* that increases the *Raktapravahan* of that *Sthana*, which is helpful in correcting *Dhatvaagnimandya*.

According to modern science, the heat therapy, which is given at the local or affected area increases the blood circulation with metabolism by causing vasodilatation, increase in the elasticity of connective tissue, and exudation of fluid with increase in white blood cells and

antibodies. ^[10] Local tissue metabolism rate is increased by warming, which helps in healing. As there is an increase in local metabolism, the waste products that are generated get excreted, which normalize the blood circulation, resulting in decreased intensity of pain. ^[11] Heat may stimulate lateral spinothalamic tract, which causes stimulation of descending pain inhibitory fibers, which again causes release of endogenous opioid peptide that binds with the opioid receptors to substantia gelatinosa Rolandi, leading to inhibition of release of P-substance with blockade of transmission of pain sensation. The gate control theory of pain asserts that non-painful input closes the "gates" to painful input, which prevents pain sensation from traveling to the central nervous system. The thin (pain) and thick (touch, pressure, vibration) nerve fibers carry information from the site of injury to two destinations in the dorsal horn of the spinal cord: transmission cells (carry the pain signal up to the brain), and inhibitory interneuron (impede transmission cell activity) (www.spine-health.com/conditions/motion). Greater the large fiber activity relative to thin fiber activity at the inhibitory cell, so less pain is felt i.e. stimulation by non-noxious input is able to suppress pain. Superficial nerve ending theory: Free nerve endings can detect temperature, mechanical stimuli (touch, pressure, stretch) or pain. Thermal nociceptors are activated by noxious heat or cold at various temperatures. There are specific nociceptor transducers that are responsible for response to the thermal stimulus. The first to be discovered was TRP V1, and it has a threshold that coincides with the heat pain temperature of 42 °C

CONCLUSION

Agnikarma therapy is a result-oriented treatment for localized *Vataja* and *Kaphaja* diseases. It is a low-cost hospital outpatient treatment option. *Agnikarma* therapy is mostly helpful in management of local pathological diseases. During procedure of *Agnikarma* one should not exert excessive pressure unless it will produce *Atidagdha vrana*. Scar of *Dagdha Vrana* produced by *Agnikarma* disappeared within 3 weeks. Number of sitting of *Agnikarma* (cauterization) depends upon chronicity and severity of the disease. The *Agnikarma* deals with the action of thermal energy in the human body. It is a potent and minimally invasive parasurgical procedure which has wide application in chronic conditions as well as in emergency management. Its applications are widely practiced in modern surgical practice-viz. cauterization, laser, radiation etc. It has a wide number of applications which may be substantiated with numerous theories. Thus from this article it can be concluded that *Agnikarma* procedure proves to be one of the easiest way to reduce the musculoskeletal pain.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Author expresses his sincere gratitude to Prof. Mahesh Dixit (Principal, M.M.M. Government Ayurved College Udaipur).

Financial Support: Nil.

Conflict of Interest: Nil

REFERENCES

1. Golwalla AF, Golwalla SA. *Medicine for Students*. 21st ed. Mumbai: Asia Publishing House; 1970. p. 1032.
2. Green GA. Understanding NSAIDs: From aspirin to COX-2. *Clin Cornerstone* 2001; 3:50-60.
3. Acharya JT, editor. *Sushruta Samhita* of

Sushruta, Chikitsa Sthana, Ch.4, Ver. 8. Reprint ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharti Prakashan; 2009. p. 420.

4. Acharya JT, editor. Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta, Sutra Sthana, Ch. 12, Ver. 10. Reprint ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharti Prakashan; 2009. P. 52.

5. Acharya JT, editor. Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta, Sutra Sthana, Ch. 5, Ver. 3. Reprint ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharti Prakashan; 2009. P. 18.

6. Shastri AD, editor. Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta (Part I), Sutra Sthana, Ch. 19, Ver. 9-24. 12th ed. Varanasi: Cahukhambha Sanskrit Bhavan; 2001. p. 79-81.

7. Acharya JT, editor. Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta, Sutra Sthana, Ch. 12, Ver. 6. Reprint

ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharti Prakashan; 2009. p. 51.

8. Bakhshi B, Gupta SK, Rajagopala M, Bhuyan C. A comparative study of Agni karma with Lauha, Tamra and Panchadhatu Shalakas in Gridhrasi (Sciatica). Ayu 2010;31:240-4. [PUBMED]

9. Felson DT. Epidemiology of hip and knee osteoarthritis. Epidemiol Rev 1988;10:1-28.

10. Acharya JT, editor. Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, Sutra Sthana, Ch. 10, Ver. 17. Reprint ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Prakashan; 2009. p. 67.

11. Mahajan A, Tandon V, Verma S, Sharma S. Osteoarthritis and menopause. J Indian Rheumatol Assoc 2005; 13:21-5.

