



## Critical Review on Agnikarma and its Importance in Shalyatantra

Vd. Trupti Bhaiyaram Titarmare

Associate Professor, Shalyatantra Department, Government Ayurved College Nagpur

**ABSTRACT:** Ayurveda is a science for life and represents its unique concepts and principles. Ayurveda has 8 branches of treatment. Shalya (surgery) is one of them. Acharya Sushruta who is the father of surgery described several treatment procedures to treat disease as well as para-surgical procedures. Agnikarma is a unique para-surgical procedure that has a tremendous ability to treat several diseases. In Agnikarma, therapeutic heat burns are done on desired sites with the help of specific heating tools. The disease never reoccurs after treatment with Agnikarma. In modern science, it can be correlated with therapeutic burn or cauterization. Agnikarma is a boon in Ayurvedic Surgical practice and hence one must be aware of all the conditions where Agnikarma can give a successful result. This article is an attempt to enlighten various aspects of Agnikarma and its use in the present context.

**KEYWORDS:** Agnikarma, Para-surgical procedure, Therapeutic burn, Dagdha, Surgery.

### INTRODUCTION

Shalya Tantra is one of the important branches of Ayurveda based on six major methods of treatment such as Bhesaja karma, Kshara karma, Agni karma, Sastra karma, Yantra karma, Raktamokshana. Agnikarma is superior among them and useful for local vata & kaphaja vyadhi. While treating patients using Agnikarma, usually there are patients with pain in joints. A person having pain is always restless. Which is routine observation in practice. The patient always demands quick methods to relieve pain. Thus, comes the idea of Agnikarma in Ayurveda. Because there is not quick expected result of Ayurvedic medicine including Shoolprashamana. Shushruta has mentioned various procedures to treat the disease like Ashtavidha shastrakarma, kshara karma, Raktamokshana along with medicine. Agnikarma procedure is a unique line of treatment among them. Agnikarma is the procedure where Agni is applied directly or indirectly with the help of different materials to treat the disease. In Agnikarma what is more important is to be a samyak Dagdha Vrana should be at the end of the procedure. In modern science, Agnikarma can be correlated with therapeutic heat burns with intention done by cautery. According to Dalhana Commentary on Sushruta Samhita, the treatment protocol done using fire or which is related to fire is called Agnikarma<sup>[1]</sup>

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

#### IMPORTANCE OF AGNIKARMA:

Acharya Sushruta stated Agnikarma to be better than Kshara karma. It cures the disease which are not managed with Bhesaja karma, Shastra karma and kshara karma<sup>[2]</sup>. The disease treated with proper Agnikarma has no chance of recurrence.

## **MATERIALS USED FOR AGNIKARMA**

### **Dahanopakarana (Instruments Used for Cauterization):**

According to Acharya Sushruta, Dahanopakarana are classified into three groups based on the tissue involved:

#### **1. Twak Dhatu (Skin)**

Pippali

Godanta

Ajashakrut

Shalaka

#### **2. Mamsa Dhatu (Muscle)**

Jambavastha

Other metals

#### **3. Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, Asthi Dhatu (Vessels, Ligaments, Joints and Bones):**

Madhu,

Madhuchista guda,

Sneha (Oils or Fats) [3]

### **Dahana Vishesha ( Patterns of Cauterization):**

Acharya Sushruta described several patterns for the application of Agnikarma:

- Valaya (Circle)
- Bindoo (Dot)
- Vilekh (Parallel line)
- Pratisarana (Rubbing)

Additionally , Ashtannga Samgraha introduced three more patterns:

- Ardhachandra (Half Moon)
- Swastika
- Ashtapada (Eight Intersecting Lines)

### **Indications of Agnikarma:**

#### **Agnikarma is indicated for various conditions, including:**

Abhishyanda, Arbuda, Alaji, Ardhabhedaka, Shiroroga, Pakshmakopa, Puyalasa, Medoj oshtharoga, Krimidanta, Adhidanta, Dantanadi, Adhidanta, Shitadanta, Jalarbuda, Nadivrana, Upadvansa, Visarpa, Vilambika, Unmada, yakrut and plihodar, Visarpa, arsha, Bhagandar, Kadar, Mashaka, Tilkalaka<sup>[4]</sup>

## **CONTRAINDICATION OF AGNIKARMA**

Bhinnakoshth, Daurbalya, Bala, Multiple vrana, Chardi sthula, Ajirna, Trishna, Garbhini prameha, Timira, Kshata, Gudabhramamsha, Udararoga, Kroddha, Agnikarma should not be done in the vrana of marma, snayu, netra<sup>[5]</sup>

## **CLASSIFICATION OF AGNIKARMA**

#### **1. According to dahanvishesha<sup>[6]</sup>**

- Bindu- dot like. Use in shola , vessel block

- Valaya- Oval shaped . Use in antravridhi, kurchashul.
- Pratisarana- Bhagandar, Nadivrana, Valmik
- Vilekha-Apachi

Acharya vagbhata has mentioned 3 extra dahanvishesha as follows-

- Ardhachandra (crescent shaped),
- swastika (like swastika yantra) and
- ashtapada (containing 8 limbs in specific directions <sup>[7]</sup>)

## 2. According to site

mansa, sira, twaka, snayu

## 3. According to dravya

- a. **Snigdha agnikarma:** Ghrita, taila, madhu etc. are used for sira, sandhi, snayu, asthi
- b. **Ruksha agnikarma:** Pippali, godanta are used for mamsa and twak dagdha.

## 4. According to site:

- a. Sthanika: kadara, vicharchika, arsha
- b. Sarvadehika: Gridhrasi, Apachi.

## 5. According to Dravya:

- a. Snigdha Agnikarma: Ghrita , Taila, Madhu etc. are used for snayu, sandhi, sira, asthi types of agnikarma.
- b. Ruksha Agnikarma: Pippali, Godanta, Shalaka are used for twak and mamsa Dagdha.

## 6. According to Dhatu:

Sushruta gives the meaning Twak dagdha, mamsa dagdha, asthidagdha, sira-snayu dagdha.

## Dagdha Bheda (Types of Burns):

According to Acharya Sushruta, burns resulting from Agnikarma are categorized into four types:

- Plushta Dagdha: Characterized by discolouration and excessive singeing
- Durdagdha: Involves blisters, excessive pain, burning sensation, redness, inflammation, and prolonged healing.
- Samyaka Dagdha: A therapeutic burn with common symptoms across all tissues, including:
  - Ana- Awagadha Vranata: Wound not deep
  - Talphala Varnata: Colour resembling the fruit of the Tala tree (blue-black)
  - Susamshita Vrana: Wound without elevation or depression
  - Shabdapradurbhava: Production of Sound
  - Durgandhata: Bad odor
  - Twak Sankocha: Contraction of the Skin
- Ati-Dagdha: Excessive burn leading to severe tissue damage.

## FEATURES OF PROPER AGNIKARMA:

1. Twaka dagdha- Crackling sound, bad odor, and contraction of the skin.

2. Mamsa dagdha- kapotvarnata ashy color, dark grey, mild swelling, mild pain, dry contracted wound etc.
3. Snayu- Black colouration, the elevation of the site, cessation of discharge etc.<sup>[8]</sup>

### **IMPORTANCE OF AGNIKARMA<sup>[9]</sup>**

Agnikarma is highly esteemed in Ayurveda for its effectiveness in treating various ailments. Diseases addressed through Agnikarma are believed to have a low recurrence rate, making it a reliable therapeutic option. The procedure offers several benefits:

**Sterilizing Effect:** Agnikarma eliminates infection by sterilizing the treated area.

**Haemostasis:** It aids in controlling bleeding by promoting coagulation and constricting blood vessels.

**Root Cause Treatment:** Agnikarma addresses the Underlying causes of diseases, providing a comprehensive healing approach.

### **MODE OF ACTION**

Agnikarma is particularly effective in balancing vitiated Vata and Kapha doshas due to the Ushna (hot), Sukshma(Subtle), Teekshna (Sharp), and Ashukari (quick-acting) qualities of Agni (fire). According to Ayurvedic principles, a weakened digestive fire (Mandagni) leads to various diseases, and each tissue (Dhatu) has its own Agni. When this Agni diminishes, it results in disease manifestation. Agnikarma enhances the Dhatavagni, thereby pacifying the aggravated doshas and facilitating healing.

### **DISCUSSION**

Agnikarma is a significant Para surgical procedure in Ayurveda, utilizing controlled heat to treat various conditions. Its therapeutic properties, such as Ushna Veerya (hot potency) and Tikshna Ushna Guna (penetrating quality), make it particularly effective for vata- kapha disorders, which are often challenging to treat due to the opposing nature of these doshas. However, the intense heat used in Agnikarma can aggravate pitta and Rakta, necessitating caution in its application. Agnikarma works by virtue of its guna but in some places it works by mechanical degeneration of tissue. Acharya Sushruta indicated Agnikarma in Arbuda, bhagandar, Nadivrana and dushtavrana. Here Agnikarma works by its power of destroying the Unhealthy granulation tissue by heat.<sup>[10]</sup> In contemporary Science also Agnikarma has been enumerated in different forms such as monopolar, bipolar electrocautery. Acharya Sushruta mentioned Agnikarma as one among Raktasthambanopaya, now in modern surgery also Agnikarma is utilized in the form of cauterization for haemostatic purpose. Acharyas mentioned different materials to perform Agnikarma in different structures for the temperature regulatory purpose.

### **CONCLUSION**

Agnikarma is a therapeutic burn procedure that has wide application in various diseases. It can be used in chronic as well as emergency treatment. This therapy is result oriented to Vataja and Kaphaja disorders, due to its ushna, sukshma, asukari guna it pacifies the vata kapha dosa and removes Srotavarodha. Patient is effectively relieved from pain and other associated symptoms. It is good measure for haemostasis. There will be no recurrence of the disease which are managed by Agnikarma<sup>[11]</sup>. According to Acharya Sushruta when bhashaja chikitsa, kshar chikitsa and Shashtra chikitsa are unable to cure the disease then Agnikarma can be used to treat the disease successfully. It is practiced as cauterization or diathermy in modern. Agnikarma has a wide number of applications in various diseases with a number of theories which is needed to be explored.

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