

## SITE ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE FOR AGNIKARMA: A METHOD FOR EFFECTIVE PAIN MANAGEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

Sushruta acharya gives utmost importance to Shalya tantra Vigyan and has mentioned about the Shashti-upakramas i.e. 60 different type of method for healing, which includes wound healing, pain reducing, preventing infection, surgical methods, different route of medicine administration etc. Pain is a complex, subjective experience that can significantly impact patients quality of life. It is a protective mechanism that alerts us to potential harm or injury, but when it becomes persistent or severe, it can lead to a range of physical and psychological difficulties. The causes and the types of the pain may be different but Ayurveda understands pain originating through vitiated vayu. In Agnikarma, agni is used to eradicate the vitiated vayu and reduce the pain. Hereby learning the technique of evaluating the sthana of vayu which initiates the pain through the procedure of vimlapana, it becomes easy for the doctor to perform the procedure and get fruitful result in cases of pain without palliative medicines. Agnikarma is described in various references for different actions like sandhana, skandana, dahana, pachana.

**KEYWORD:-** Pain management, vayu, site / location of Agnikarma, method of Agnikarma.

### INTRODUCTION

Shalya tantra deals with removing of sharirik and mansik shalya from the body.<sup>[1]</sup> Pain is such an entity which each individual had suffered multiple time in life. There are many different types of pain similar to nociceptive pain, neurogenic pain, acute pain, chronic pain etc.<sup>[2]</sup> Acharya Sushruta has widely mentioned about different procedures to remove shalya under shashtiupakrama.<sup>[3]</sup> Pain can be considered as sharirik and manasika shalya because it hampers the daily routine of the person, changes the lifestyle and decubitus. Among these upakramas there is also reference of Agnikarma which is considered superior among yantra, shastra and kshara.<sup>[4]</sup> Agnikarma is widely used procedure for pacifying pain in cases of gridhrasi, avabahuka, sandhishoola, vatakantaka etc. The Acharyas has mentioned upakarna, kala, prakara, vishaya, akriti, samyak dagdha, atidagdha,

hindagdha lakshana and chikitsa for atidagdha<sup>[5]</sup> but the method to seek for the site of performing agnikarma and the agnikarma dahana akriti uses are still unexplored. Hereby to uplift the skill to assess the site for agnikarma and uses of Dahana akriti an article is enumerated with a conclusion to be more precise in selecting Agnikarma site then to use it multiple times on patient to do unwanted dahana. The technique of assessing the site of Agnikarma gives a unique confidence by locating the site of pain without asking patient thereby preventing multiple agnikarma on different spots. Agnikarma a well known shastra karma is superior among all karma and it is mentioned as vyadhi apunarbhawatva<sup>[6]</sup> and this has widely gained attention for pain relieving in different vatavyadhis like gridrasi, janusandhigata vata, vata kantaka, apabahuka, ardhavabhedaka and many more.

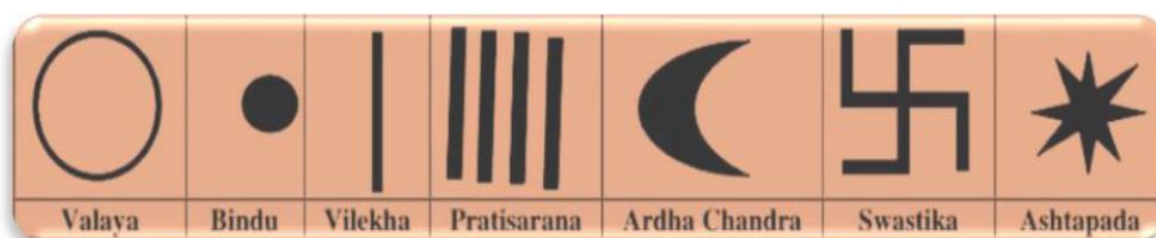


Figure 1: Dahana akriti.

## Literature survey

Table 1

	Twak <sup>[8]</sup>	Mamsa <sup>[8]</sup>	Sira, Snayu, Asthi, Sandhi <sup>[8]</sup>	Dahana akriti
Sushruta	Pippali, <sup>[7]</sup> Ajashakrut, Godanti, Shara, shalaka	Jambuoshtha, <sup>[7]</sup> dhatu	Madhu, <sup>[7]</sup> Guda, Sneha,	Valaya, <sup>[10]</sup> Bindu, Vilekha, pratisarana
Vagbhatta	Varti, <sup>[11]</sup> Suryakanta mani, Shara, Godanti	Madhu, <sup>[11]</sup> Sneha, Jambuostha yantra, Gudaadi	Madhu, <sup>[11]</sup> Sneha, Jambuostha yantra, Guda, (Pichuvarti, Suryakant, madhuchista)	Ardha Chandra, <sup>[12]</sup> Swastika, asthapada
Vyadhi-	Mashka, <sup>[9,11]</sup> Angaglani, Murdharti, Adhimantha, Charmakila, tila	Arsha, <sup>[9,11]</sup> Bhagandara, Granthi, Nadi vrana, Dushta vrana	Slishta vartma, <sup>[11]</sup> Raktastrava, Asmyak siravyadhana	

**Dahana akriti<sup>[10]</sup>**

1. Valaya- A circular ring type mark hollow in the middle. This agnikarma is traditional practices in children after birth in parts of Andra Pradesh, Maharashtra etc.
2. Bindu- It is a dot type mark at the tip of shalaka generally practiced by most of the Vaidyas. Used for pain relieving over joints, muscles, tissues etc.
3. Vilekha- It is linear in shape. A pointed shalaka is used and at the time of agnikarma a straight line is done over the affected part of the body.
4. Pratisarana- A shalaka or anu upakarna is heated and is rubbed over the affected part on the body. For

example on the area of kandu, haridra kanda is heated and rubbed over that area.

**Effect of agnikarma<sup>[13]</sup>**

1. Increases metabolism
2. Increases blood circulation
3. Decreases pain
4. Exciting/stimulating nerves
5. Relaxation to muscles
6. Decreases infection
7. Decreases joint stiffness and inflammation.



Figure 2: Rajat shalaka. Figure 3: Panchalauha shalaka.

**Aim**

To understand the precise site to perform Agnikarma in cases of pain management.

**Objectives**

1. Identify the precise point to perform agnikarma in case of pain management by understanding the below mentioned procedure.

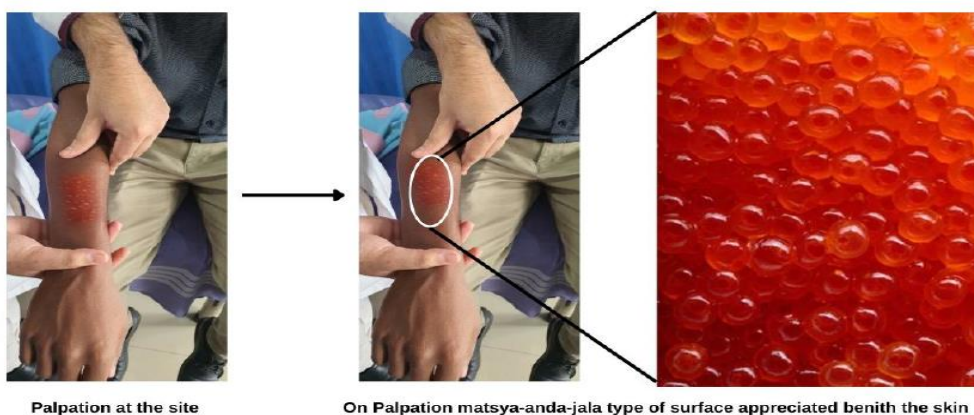
**Method**

- Pradhana karma
- Sambhara sangraha:
- Shalaka (As dahana upakarna)
- Burner
- Ghrita
- Plota
- Taila (For vimlapana)
- Assessing site of Agnikarma
- Decubitus of patient as a position for performing procedure

- Upasthata
- Deciding the upakarna to be used
- Pichila anna to be given to patient

**Assessing site of agnikarma**

- Ask the site of pain to patient grossly.
- Take taila and apply it on the site to create lubrication.
- Now, sliding the index figure and thumb as in vimlapana over the site of pain in Anuloma gati. (Figure 4)
- Here the Vaidya appreciate the “Matsya anda jala”<sup>[14]</sup> (Figure 4) like formation beneath skin.
- On palpating this particular site the patient feels pain and thus confirm the site by confirming the patient for tenderness.
- Mark the site.



**Figure 4**

- **Pradhana karma**
- Take informed consent from patient.
- The patient should be allowed to be in a comfortable position, exposing the site of the pain.
- Lit the butane gas burner and heat shalaka to red hot completely.
- Palpate the Matsya anda jala akriti through the above mentioned assessment technique.
- Do the desired agnikarma akriti over the Matsya anda jala.
- (The use of different akriti's are also not mentioned and so it depends on the Vaidya's school of learning or by Yukti<sup>[15]</sup>)
- Ensure Shalaka to be red hot. Hold the red hot Shalaka strongly in one hand and perform Agnikarma.
- **Paschata karma**
- After completion of the procedure, an ointment of Madhu and Sarpi was applied over the site of Agnikarma as mentioned by sushrutacharya as the treatment of samyak dagdha.
- Acharya Dalhana has explained that this particular ointment is meant for the prasadana of vitiated Rakta

and pitta after the procedure. It also relieve pain i.e., Vednopshamniya.<sup>[21]</sup>

- Vata vardhak ahara-vihar (diet and activities which aggravate vata dosha) was also restricted during the treatment and follow-up period.

**Mode of action of agnikarma**

Agnikarma is considered as better therapy to pacify Vataj and Kaphaj doshas, due to ushan, sukshma, teekshan and ashukaari guna of Agni, it pacifies vitiated Vataj and Kaphaj doshas. According to Ayurveda, Mandhagni leads to various diseases and every dhatu (tissue) has its own Agni and when it becomes low, it leads to manifestation of diseases. Agnikarma helps to causes increase in Dhatavagni, which pacifies the aggravated doshas and hence cure the condition.<sup>[16]</sup>

**Agnikarma importance**

Agnikarma is superior to Kshara karma as disease burnt with Agni will never re- occur. Disease which cannot be cured with medicines, Kshara and Surgery, can be cured with Agni. The Surgical excision should be done with the sharp instrument which is heated by Agni with

benefit of a sepsis, otherwise there will be sepsis by unheated instrument.<sup>[18]</sup>

There will be Vaso constriction due to direct heat and it will check the haemorrhage.<sup>[19]</sup> By this virtue Agnikarma is superior to every other procedure.

### Contraindication

1. Pitta Prakruti
2. Antah shonita (Internal bleeding)
3. Bhinna koshta (Ruptured viscera)
4. Nuddhrita shalya (in presence of foreign body)
5. Durbala (Emaciated), Bala (Children), Vriddha (Old aged), Bheeru (Coward), Aneka vranapeedita (With multiple wounds).<sup>[20]</sup>

### Findings

Agnikarma is a widely used shastra karma. In classics the acharyas have mentioned agnikarma for vatavyadhi, shoola, toda, avabahuka but the exact site is never mentioned for such diseases and the commentator also ends up by advising to do agnikarma on such tender points. By doing agnikarma on tender points vaguely there might be chances of atidagdha, hinda dagdha or durdagdha which doesn't solve the purpose of performing agnikarma. So with the above procedure by palpating mastya anda jala type of entity at the area of pain and doing agnikarma peculiarly on that site to avoid the durdagdha's and give relief to the patient.

### DISCUSSION

Agni Karma, a traditional Ayurvedic technique, is particularly effective in pacifying Kaphanubandha Vata Dosha due to its inherent qualities. Agni, the element of fire, possesses Ushna, Tikshna, Sukshma and Aashukari properties, which counter act the Vataja and Kaphaja characteristics.

During Agni Karma, a red-hot Shalaka is applied to specific points on the skin, generating therapeutic heat. This heat penetrates the Twak Dhatu, creating a controlled burn. The Ushna, Tikshna, Sukshma, and Ashukari qualities of the Shalaka help to remove Srotavarodha, balance the vitiated Vata and Kapha Doshas, and restore equilibrium.

Increased blood circulation to the affected area is a key benefit of Agni Karma. This enhanced circulation helps to flush away pain-producing substances, leading to symptom relief. Additionally, the therapeutic heat stimulates Dhatwagni, promoting the digestion of Ama Dosha and improving nutrient absorption from the Purva Dhatu. This ultimately strengthens Asthi and Majja Dhatu, contributing to overall well-being.

Agni Karma's therapeutic heat also penetrates deeper tissues like Mamsa Dhatu, neutralizing the Sheeta Guna of Vata and Kapha Doshas. This helps to balance these doshas and alleviate symptoms.

The concept of using heat to treat pain is reflected in modern-day cauterization, but its application is limited in scope. Ayurveda, on the other hand, has extensively discussed the use of Agni Karma for various conditions and in different ways.

### CONCLUSION

It becomes an important step for us to know the precise site of agnikarma as till now the conventional method of 'pressing the painful area and asking the patient to confirm the site' was used. So in need to uplift the skill and being more accurate in treatment of Agnikarma an observation was made by palpating the painful area on patient and by concluding with the bubbly structure named as "matya anda jala" as it feels similar to that of the eggs of fish when palpated, it gives the accurate sthana of vata sangha and when agnikarma is done over it the lakshanas like shabada pradurbhava and kapotavarna is appreciated provided that the vimlapana is done properly till the oil is absorbed on the skin and then agnikarma is done.

### Recommendations

The procedure of Agnikarma includes things like the upakarnas, dahana akriti, yantra etc which has to be selected based in different vyadhis and here most of the Vaidya uses shalaka and bindu agnikarma, this is because other yantra and agnikarma akriti are still unexplored. The reason why they are mentioned in Samhita is still unknown and that is why research should be done to know mode of action of these things and the need in different vyadhis. Agnikarma is considered apunarbhavatva but only if executed in proper manner. If the detailed research is done on which agnikarma upakarna to be used in which disease and performing which agnikarma akriti then the results would be more fruitful.

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