AN UNIQUE CONCEPT OF AYURVEDA - SHODHANANGA SNEHAPANA

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ABSTRACT
Snehapan is an unique concept of internal administration of either medicated or non-medicated lipid substances with an aim of definite therapeutic benefits. Sneha known for its nutritional value, also has a specific therapeutic application especially in Panchakarma Chikitsa Vidhana of Ayurveda. The treatment modality of Panchakarma, is basically designed to purify the human body by detoxification of various systems. Snehana is adopted externally in the form of Abhyanga, Unmardana, Pariseka, Bhaya Basti's etc & internally in three forms based of their effect viz., Shodhana, Shamana & Brihmana. In this present study an effort is made to critically analyse the role of Snehapan as a Purvakarma to Shodhana and its mechanism in augmentation of Shodhana karma without disturbing the body functions.

KEYWORDS: Shodhana, Snehapan, Panchakarma.

INTRODUCTION
In Panchakarma, Snehana is considered as an important preparatory procedure before Shodhana therapies like Vamana and Virechana. According to Acharya Charaka, Snehana is one among the Shadvidhopa Kramas.¹⁰¹ The treatment regimen mainly consists of major procedures named as Pradhana Karmas. They are preceded by some specific preparatory procedures named as Purva Karmas and followed by certain recovery procedures commonly named as Paschat Karmas.

The total outcome of Shodhana procedure chiefly depends upon the proper mobilization of Doshas from the channels, which is achieved with the help of Snehana and Swedana. Out of
these two, *Snehana* is vital as it decides the whole outcome of the procedure of *Shodhana*. It is the first and the initiating procedure of *Panchakarma*. Though it is not included among the main 5 procedures of *Panchakarma*, even then without this procedure, the other therapies cannot be performed effectively. *Shodhananga Snehapana* – It is a pre-operative procedure for *Shodhana Chikitsa* where *Sneha Dravya* is administered to attainment the state of *Upasthita Dosha Avastha* to ease the elimination of vitiated *Doshas*. Here, *Upasthita Dosha* refers to presence of *Dosha* in the *Koshta* for expulsion. The proper mobilization of *Doshas* from *Shakha* to *Koshta* is achieved mainly by the action of the two preparatory procedures of *Snehana* and *Swedana*.

**Sneha:** The word *Sneha* is derived from ‘*Snih Dhatu*’ which has two meanings

‘*Snih-preetau*’: Means to render affection.

‘*Snih-snehane*’: Means to render lubrication.

The term *Sneha* implies to a material or substance that brings softness, unctuousness or oiliness to the body tissues. Acharya Charaka defines *Snehana* as the procedure which leads to *Snigdhata, Vishyandana, Mardavata* and *Kledana* in the body.[2]

**Properties of sneha dravya**

All *Sneha Dravya’s* have *Prithvi* and *Jala Mahabhuta*. The properties of *Sneha Dravya’s* are like *Sukshma, Sara, Snigdha, Drava, Picchila, Guru, Shita, Manda* and *Mridu*. [3]

**Table no. 1: Showing Guna, Bhoutika Sanghatana & Karmukata of Sneha Drayvas.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guna</th>
<th>Dominant Mahabhuta</th>
<th>Karmukata</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prithvi</td>
<td>Apya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picchila</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukshma</td>
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<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snigdha</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Drava</td>
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<td>Sheeta</td>
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<td>Manda</td>
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<td>Mridu</td>
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</table>
By the above table it can be concluded that Sneha Dravyas are predominantly Apya Mahabhuta Pradhana.

**Accha sneha:** Oral administration fat substances alone in the form of ghee, oil etc is called as Accha Sneha[4] In this form of Snehana, fat substances are not given in combination with other substances e.g. foods. Dalhana opines that, Kevala Sneha is the synonym of Accha Sneha, which means administration of processed or unprocessed Sneha alone, without mixing with other liquids.[5] This method of Snehana is ideal for patients who are capable of digesting the fat substances easily. Depending upon the purpose of Snehapana, it is categorised into two as Shodhana Snehapana and Shamana Snehapana.

**Shodhana sneha:** When Snehapana is carried out as a preliminary procedure of Shodhana therapies like Vamana and Virechana it is known as Shodhana Snehapana or Shodhananga Snehapana or Shodhanartha Snehapana.[6] As a part of Shodhana therapy, Snehapana is carried out to facilitate the mobilization of the Dosha from the site of its manifestation to the site of elimination i.e.from Shaka to Koshta. In this process, Utklesha state of the Dosha is achieved by Snehapana. It is given early in the morning on empty stomach. Shodhana procedure depends upon the proper mobilization of Doshas from the channels, which is achieved with the help of Snehana and Swedana. The importance of Sneha is quoted in Samhita’s as, administration of Panchakarma without administering proper Sneha may destroy the body as a dry wood breaks, if bent without smearing with oil.[7] It may act as Pradhana Karma when administered to pacify Dosha or mitigate the disease. Snehapana is a procedure which decides the whole outcome of Shodhana therapy. It is the process of administering Sneha to achieve the desired effect in a precise duration prior to Vamana and Virechana Karma, with due consideration of the dose, time, duration etc. The ultimate aim of the Shodhananga Snehapana is to prepare the whole body for purification by bringing the Doshas situated in periphery to Koshta, which are then easily expelled out just as Klishta Mala of any cloth is easily washed by water, once loosen from its site, in the similar way, Malas are easily expelled out by Shodhana if we take them to Utklishta Avastha by Purvakarma i.e. Snehana and Swedana.[8]

**DISCUSSION**

While explaining Snehana Karma, Acharya Charaka states as[9]

- **Snehoanilamhanti:** Sneha is having exactly opposite characters to Vatadosha and it aids to induces proper Gati to Vata. Vata Nigraha is one of the criteria mentioned by Charaka
to bring Dosha back to Koshta and this Snehapana helps to bring the Shakagata Dosha to Koshta.

- **Mridukaratideham**: Sneha by virtue of its Snigdha & Mridu qualities brings softness in Dosha Sanghata, Srotas and Deha which helps in bringing Doshas from Koshta to Shaka.

- **Malanamvinihantisangam**: Malasanga occurs due to Rukshata, Sneha decreases this Rukshata by its Snigdha and Vishyanda properties. It is a well-known fact that the Doshas are present in and travel throughout the body having their own Gati viz. Urdhava, Adha and Triyak etc. However, in Vyadhit Avastha they travel from Koshta to Shaka causins Sthana Samshraya in Srotases having Khavaigunya due to which Vyadhi or Roga is formed. Shodhana Chikitsa aims at expulsion of these vitiated Doshas from the body through Urdhvamarga (by inducing Vamana) or through Adhomarga (by inducing Virechana). Doshas are brought back to Koshta by Vriddhi (by excessive increase of Doshas), Vishyandana (by liquefaction of Doshas), Paka (by digestion of Doshas), Srotomukha Vishodhana (by cleaning and opening of channels) and by Vayu Nigrahat (by controlling of Vayu) which can be successfully achieved by Snehana and Swedana Karmas.

Acharya Charaka gives simile that, as from a smooth container, contents easily separate without any effort, similarly Kaphadi Doshas get easily expelled out from Samyak Sneha Bavita Sahreera (well oleated body). Sneha, by virtue of its Sukshma Guna brings the Doshas present in various different channels to Koshta where in Kledana Karma acts as a solvent of the morbid Doshas. Here the fat-soluble impurities in the body get eliminated as Shodhana Dravya brings the Doshas to Koshta for elimination. Sinha Kaushal et al. concluded in their study that entire Procedure of Shodhana depends upon the proper mobilization of Doshas from Shaka to Koshta which is achieved with the help of Snehana and Swedana. Sneha Dravya by virtue of its specific characters mobilize the vitiated Doshas from Shaka to Koshta without trouble, and thus are easily expelled out from the body tissues without causing any harm. After ingestion Sneha by virtue of its properties, gets absorbed from the gut, rapidly enters the micro channels (Sukshma Srotases) of the body and reaches the remotest target area. After reaching there, it binds with the vitiated Doshas (toxic elements / free radicals) leads to Vriddhi which can also be understood by the fact that Sneha is hydrophilic, hence after appropriate oral ingestion of Sneha the cells of body become saturated with fats. Then the fat material is transported out of the cell to extra-cellular fluid by the process of osmosis. The levels of fatty acid increases in the blood resulting in the high plasma volume as there is a quantitative
increase due to the aqueous properties of Sneha and liquefied metabolic waste brought from the tissues (Mala). The equilibrium of the normal plasma level is maintained and so the extra amount of liquid reaches to the Koshta (Gastro-intestinal Tract) to be expelled out of the body (Anupravanabhava).\[14]\n
Vishyadana is Vilayana or liquefaction of Doshas, which is achieved by Snigdha, Mridu and Drava Guna of Sneha. By liquefying the Doshas and Dhatus it helps in bringing them to Koshta from Shaka for their easy expulsion during the process of Shodhana.

Paka denotes that the Doshas which were initially in Sama Avastha, have attained Nirama Avastha leading to Abhaddhata (Dislodgement of Doshas from Shaka) and are moving towards Koshta.\[15]\n
Srotomukha Vishodhana Karma is achieved by Sukshma Guna of Sneha Dravyas. It helps to remove the Margavrodha.

Vayur Nigrahana means pacification of aggravated Vata which initially pushed the morbid Doshas out of Koshta, which again facilitates the natural return of the Doshas to Koshta.

When Snehapana is followed by Swedana (Sudation Therapy) it further facilitates to bring back the Sneha bound Doshas to the gut, from where they can be easily removed out of the body by purifactory procedures like Vamana & Virechana Karmas.

It is further stressed that this ingestion of large quantity of Sneha prior to Shodhana Karma doesn't cause any harm to the body in any way as whatever Sneha is ingested, is extracted out of the body and it will not cause hyperlipidimia, the fact which is favoured & supported by several research studies. It is also remarkable & notable that Sneha bound Doshas not only travel to gut but also are discharged out of the body through micro sweat channels. The guidelines mentioned in the classics should be taken into proper consideration for proper Snehapana, otherwise complications may occur which may put the life into danger. Vasant Patil et al. in their study concluded that oral ingestion of lipids does not cause rise in the level of lipids rather it facilitates in bringing the increased level of lipids to normal; even if the lipid levels increase during oral ingestion of lipids during Snehapana it is transient and comes to normal after purification (Samyaka Shodhana).\[16]\n
When *Vamaka & Virechaka Dravyas* are administered, these increased amounts of body fluids are evacuated, by which the vitiated *Doshas* (Humours) and *Malas* (Metabolic waste) are also expelled out resulting in the radical cure of the disease.

Dr. Aparna Bagul concluded in their study that the rise in lipids is transient and comes to normal after *Samyaka Shodhana. Shodhanartha Snehana* is safe & has high therapeutic benefits, if proper *Vamana* or *Virechana* and *Samsarjana Krama* are performed in later course of time, and it is noticed that at the end of the whole *Shodhana* therapy there is remarkable improvement in the serum lipid levels of patients even after administration of lipids in increasing order.[17]

**CONCLUSION**

After critical analysis & review of the available ancient literature and various clinical studies, it can be concluded that *Shodhananga Snehapana* (Therapy of Internal Oleation) definitely helps in detoxification of the body by facilitating all the prerequisites of *Doshagati*. It is also confirmed that this ingestion of Sneha for a short duration prior to *Shodhana Karma* does not harm the body in any way viz fear of hyperlipidimia.

**REFERENCES**


