

A REVIEW ARTICLE ON AGNI KARMA AYURVEDIC AND MODERN METHODS

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ABSTRACT

The Rachana Sharir is a branch of Ayurveda in which human anatomy is explained according to the Ayurveda Samhita. The knowledge of human anatomy is very important for the treatment of diseases and other surgical procedures.

CONCEPT OF KARMA

This act is called Karma. Through which the action takes place is also called Karma. AGNIKARMA (Procedure of Branding by Fire/Thermal Cauterization) The two words Agni and Karma combined form a unique term or procedure, i.e., Agnikarma, which means “the action / Karma takes place by the upward spreading nature of Agni”. When Samyak Dagdha Vrana is produced by Agni with the help of various Dravyas, it is called Agnikarma.

Types

- Dalhana, the commentator of „Sushruta Samhita“, has given the following description regarding the Agnikarma. “Agni Krita Karma”-the Karma/action done/carried out by Agni. Here Agni is used directly, i.e.-direct manner of application of Agni 2. „Agni“ Sambandhi Karma”- the Karma or action related to Agni. The Agni-related things/media are used, i.e. indirect manner of application of „Agni“. So the identical character in both statements is the presence of Agni, whether it is used directly or indirectly through the media.

Effects- Hence, we can assess the effect of Agnikarma as follows.

1. Sthanika Karma-local action.
2. Saarvadaihika Karma- the action takes place all over the body.
3. Vishishta Karmas- a special kind of actions

Classification of Agnikarma

1. According to Dhatu: Twak Dagdha & Mamsa Dagdha, Agnikarma is not contraindicated for blood vessels, ligaments, joints, and bones.
2. According to Dravya: Snigdha is done by Madhu and Ghrita, and it is indicated for Sira, Snayu, Asthi, and Sandhi Vikaras.

Ruksa -Louha, Pippali, etc. -indicated for Twak Dagdha and Mamsa Dagdha.

According to Area

Local (Sthanika) - Sandhivikara, Granthi, etc
Distant part - Antraviddhi, Apachi.

According to the disease

Agnikarma is to be done after surgical excision e.g., Kadara. Nadivrana, Bhagandara. Agnikarma is to be done in Krimidanta after the filling of Guda.

According to Dahana Vishesha

Valaya, Bindu, Vilekha, Pratisarana, Swastika, Ardhachandrakara, and Ashtapada

1. Items useful for Twak Dagdha are.
 - a. Pippali(Piper longum)
 - b. Ajashakrut (feces of a goat)
 - c. Godanta (Moon stone)
 - d. Shara (arrow-like device)
 - e. Shalaka (rod of metal)
 - f. Suryakanta and Varti (mentioned by Vagbhatta)

Items useful for Mamsa Dagdha are

Jambaustra (device resembling Jambu) and other metallic instruments, Madhu (honey), Guda (jaggery), and Sneha (oil/ghee) (Vagbhata).

Items useful for Sira, Snayu, Asthi, and Sandhi are

a. Madhu(honey), Guda (jaggery), and Sneha (oil/ghee)

They are classified as follows according to various Acharyas

| Dahana Upakarana | Sushruta ^[45] | Charaka ^[46] | A.S ^[47] | A.H ^[48] |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Pippali A.H [48] - - - | + | - | + | - |
| Aja Shakrit | + | - | + | - |
| Godanta | + | - | + | + |
| Share | + | + | + | + |
| Shalaka | + | - | + | + |
| Jambaustra | + | - | + | + |
| Dhatu | + | - | - | - |
| Madhu | + | + | + | + |
| Madhuchhishta | + | + | + | + |
| Guda | + | - | + | + |
| Vasa | + | - | + | + |
| Ghrita | + | + | + | + |
| Tailam | + | + | + | + |
| Yastimadhu | + | - | - | - |
| Suryakanta | | -- | + | - |

Dahana Shalaka

^[49]The Loha Shalaka becomes cool soon after making it red hot, and once heated only once, Samyak Dagdha Vrana can be made. Ideally, once heated, a Shalaka should be able to produce 20-30 Samyak dagdha Vrana. So Loha Shalaka was found useless. When Tamra Shalaka was used, Atidagdha Vrana develops. This might be due to the quick transfer of heat due to Tamra (copper). So it is also not ideal. While using Rajata Shalaka, the transfer of heat was found very quickly & Vrana was made very fast. So it is also not ideal. Pancha Dhatu Shalaka was found as ideal since 20-30 Samyak Dagdha Vrana could be made satisfactorily.

Dahana Vishesha

Dahana Vishesha implies the type of shape produced in the skin after Agnikarma. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned four types of Dahana Visheshas.

- 1) Valaya – Figure of Circle
- 2) Bindu – Figure of dot shape
- 3) Vilekha – Figure of a parallel line
- 4) Pratisarana – Figure after rubbing

Acharya Vagbhata has mentioned three extra varieties of Dahana Visheshas.

- 1) Ardhachandrakara- Semilunar shape
- 2) Swastika - four-tailed mark
- 3) Ashtapada - eight-tailed mark

Clinical features of Agni Dagdha

- Plusta Dagdha (Scorched burn): - This is the discoloration of skin and contraction on the part (losing its normal color). Vagbhata has named it Tuchha Dagdha

b. Jambaustra mentioned by Vagbhata

Dahana Upakaranas – Dahana Upakaranas are the instruments used to produce therapeutic burns (Samyaka Dagdha) during Agnikarma.

and given one additional symptom, e.g., more burning sensation without vesicle.

- Durdagdha (Blistered burn)-This is characterized by the formation of a blister, severe pricking pain, burning sensation, and redness, which takes a long time to subside.

- Samyak Dagdha (Superficial burn) -These are the Samanya Lakshana (common symptoms) produced in any type of Dhatu. This is characterized by

- Anavagadha Vranata (Wound which is not deep)

- Talaphala Varnata (color of the palm fruit)

- Susamsthita Vrana (Without elevation or depression)

Vagbhata has mentioned the production of sound and watery secretion after proper stoppage of bleeding. The color will look like Pakwa Talaphala or Kapota Varna.

BURNS- REVIEW OF MODERN LITERATURE

A burn is a wound in which there is coagulative necrosis of the tissue. According to the depth of the necrosis, burns are classified into 3 degrees.

For

First-degree burns the simply hyperemia of the skin with slight edema of the epidermis. Superficial layers of the epidermis are destroyed, which are soon replaced by the basal layers, so that no scarring will be there.

Second-degree involves the entire thickness of the epidermis. Blebs or vesicles are formed between the epidermis and dermis.

Third-degree destruction of the epidermis and dermis with irreversible destruction of the dermal appendages.

Another classification to describe the severity of the burn.

Partial thickness burn- here, superficial layers of the skin, i.e. whole of the epidermis and superficial part of the dermis, become destroyed so that spontaneous regeneration of the epithelium is expected. Here sensation of the skin remains.

Full-thickness burn- here whole thickness of the skin is destroyed. Spontaneous regeneration is impossible with the development of scar tissue and contractures. The sensation is lost here since sensory nerves are destroyed.

ELECTROSURGERY or DIATHERMY

In modern medicine, there is no use of therapeutical heat, i.e., Samyak Dagdha Chikitsa, whereas it is used for coagulation and tissue destruction.

Cauterization: -Cauterization is a medical term describing the burning of the body to remove or close a part of it. The main forms of cauterization used today are electro-cautery and chemical cauterity. Cautery can also mean the branding of a human, either recreational or forced. Hot cautery was applied to tissues or arteries to stop them from bleeding. Cauterization was used to stop heavy bleeding, especially during amputations. For that, a piece of metal was heated over fire and applied to the wound. This would cause tissues and blood to heat rapidly to extreme temperatures and, in turn, cause coagulation of the blood, thus controlling the bleeding, at the cost of extensive tissue damage.

Cautery is described in the Hippocratic Corpus. The cautery was employed for almost every possible purpose in ancient times: as a „counter-irritant”, as a hemostatic, as a bloodless knife, as a means of destroying tumors, etc. Later, special medical instruments called cauterizers were used to cauterize arteries. These were first described by Abu al-Qasim al-Zahrawi (Abulcasis) in his Kitab al-Tasrif. He specialized in curing the disease by cauterization and performed about 50 operations. Abu al-Qasim al-Zahrawi also introduced the technique of ligature of the arteries as an alternative to cauterization. In chapter 51, he describes a specially designed cautery for the dependent drainage of pus. He describes in chapter 56, “on cauterization in hemorrhage arising from a cut artery”. This method was later improved and used more effectively by Ambroise Paré.

Diathermy

The basic principle is to deliver high-frequency current to the human body using an active electrode, and this, after passing through the tissue to be diathermized, returns via a return electrode. The intense heat produced by the passage of current destroys it in different ways depending on the type of current used. The cutting current is undammed and produces a cutting effect secondary to intense heat generation within the tissue. It is also hemostatic, and no bleeding can occur.

Coagulating current is highly damped and coagulates by tissue dehydration, and its effect is mainly hemostatic. Blended current is a combination of two types of waves, introducing both cutting and coagulating effects. Most new surgical units deliver low-voltage cutting or blended current from a solid-state generating unit through an isolated bipolar system, which is considered the safest.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Agnikarma will do instant relief of chronic pain, tissue cutting, coagulation, blending, and fulguration or wound healing. The Agnikarma deals with the action of thermal energy in the human body. It is a potent and minimally invasive parasurgical procedure that 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. New vistas of research should be opened up in this topic for achieving a crystal clear validation of its applications in Ayurveda.

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