

## A REVIEW ARTICLE ON AGNIKARMA W.S.R MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDER

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## 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), *Shalakra* (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 parasurgical 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 researches conducted on *Agnikarma* related to musculoskeletal disorders to establish its role in musculoskeletal pain.

**KEYWORDS:** *Agnikarma*, pain, par surgical, *Ruja*.

## INTRODUCTION

Pain is the fundamental feature of most of the musculoskeletal disorders. Pain is the factor for which patient generally methods a doctor. Pain is defined as “an unpleasant sensory and emotional involvement, which is generally associated with actual or potential tissue damage.”<sup>[1]</sup> 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*.<sup>[2]</sup> There are different treatment modalities in Ayurveda, which are described by *Acharyas*, *Agnikarma* is one among them. As it is a par surgical procedure, *Acharya Charak* has not described *Agnikarma* in separate chapter but has described it as one of the treatment measures in different *Vatavyadh is* suchas *Gridhrasi*.<sup>[3]</sup>

*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.<sup>[4]</sup>

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, shalakra 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 Akrti
    - 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.<sup>[5]</sup>

#### Materials used for Agnikarma

- Metallic and other materials: Panchadhatu shalaka made of Tamra, loha, Yasada, Rajata and Vanga.
- Plant origin: Pipali, Yashtimadhu, Haridra, Sneha and Taila
- Animal origin: Ajasakrit, Godanta.<sup>[7]</sup>

#### Indications

- Agnikarma is indicated in vata and kapha related diseases.
- It is used in treatment of diseases like arsha, bhagandar, arbuda, apache, shlipada, charmakila, gulma, nadivrana and shiroroga, gridhrasi, after excision of cysts, mass, wart, tumour and fistula.<sup>[8]</sup>

#### Contraindications

- Agnikarma is contraindicated in pitta related diseases
- Children
- Old age person,
- Pregnant women
- Anemia
- Perforated abdomen
- Bleeding disorders<sup>[8]</sup>

#### 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 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

- Gritha 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

- Twaka dagda: Production of crackling sound, bad odour and contraction of skin.
- Mansa dagda: Peigon like colour, mild swelling, mild pain, and dry contracted vrana.
- Sira snayu dagda: Black colourations, elevation of site and no discharge.
- 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*. This *Guna* acts against *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*, thereby relieving pain and inflammation at that site.<sup>[9]</sup>

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 vasodilation, increase in the elasticity of connective tissue, and exudation of fluid with increase in white blood cells and antibodies.<sup>[10]</sup> 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.<sup>[11]</sup> 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.

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