

**AN OVERVIEW OF AGNIKARMA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Life (*Ayu*) is the combination (*samyoga*) of body, sense, mind and reincarnating soul.<sup>[1]</sup> *Ayurveda* is the most sacred science of life, beneficial to human both in the world or world beyond. We feel aggrieved to see the people suffering from physical mental and exogenous disorders associated with various type of pain and injury and thereby crying and moving restlessly like orphans though having proper security. In order to ameliorate disease of those desiring health and happiness and also for our healthy living and for welfare of the people we want to deliver *Ayurveda* in today era.<sup>[2]</sup> In *Ayurveda Samhitas* lots of medical procedures like *Ksharkarma*, *Jalaukavacharan*, *lepana* etc. *Agnikarma* is the most important procedure described in *Ayurveda*. *Agni* (fire) is considered to be very high in therapy because the disease treated with it have no relapse and also those which are incurable by medicine, surgery and *alkali* application are cure by the fire therapy.<sup>[3]</sup>

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda*, *AgniKarma*, fire.

**INTRODUCTION**

*Shalyatantra* is one of the eminent branches of *Ayurveda* based on six major methods of Management such as *Bhesajkarma*, *Kasharkakarma*, *Agnikarma Shastrakarm*, *Yantrakarm* and *Raktamokshan*. *Agnikarma* is Greater

among them and boon for local *vataj* and *kaphaj vyadhi* as diseases treated by it do not recur and also gives instant relief to the patients.<sup>[4]</sup>

The procedure done with or through fire is fire therapy.<sup>[5]</sup>

***Agnikarma* in *samhita***

***Agnikarma* in *chikitsa* mentioned in various references in *Ayurvedic* literatures.**

S.N.	Name of <i>Samhita</i>	Chapter in which <i>agnikarma</i> mention
1	<i>Charak samhita</i>	<i>Agnikarma Chikitsa- Shastra Pranidhan</i> <sup>[6]</sup> <i>Dwivraniya</i> <sup>[7]</sup> <i>chikitsa</i> -detail description of <i>agnikarma</i> . <i>Gulmachikitsa</i> , <sup>[8]</sup> <i>Bhagandarchikisa</i> , <sup>[9]</sup> <i>Plihodara</i> , <sup>[10]</sup> <i>Arshachikitsa</i> , <sup>[11]</sup> <i>Visarpachikitsa</i> , <sup>[12]</sup> <i>Arditchikitsa</i> , <sup>[13]</sup>
2	<i>Sushruta samhita</i>	<i>Agnikarma vidhi adhyaya sutrastana</i> <sup>12</sup> <i>Arsharogchikitsa</i> <sup>[14]</sup> <i>Ashmarichikitsa</i> <sup>[15]</sup> <i>Bhagandarchikitsa</i> <sup>[16]</sup> <i>Granthipachaya Arbudachikitsa</i> <sup>[17]</sup> <i>Vridhiupadhansha chikitsa</i> <sup>[18]</sup> <i>Kshudra rog chikitsa</i> <sup>[19]</sup> <i>Sarpavisha chikitsa</i> <sup>[20]</sup>
3	<i>Ashtang samgraha</i>	40 <sup>th</sup> chapter of <i>sutrasthana</i> <sup>[21]</sup>
4	<i>Ashtang Hridaya</i>	30 <sup>th</sup> chapter of <i>sutrasthana</i> <sup>[22]</sup>

**MATERIAL AND METHOD**

To review the foremost *ayurvedic* classics in the content of *agnikarma* explained in various *samhitas*. Also refer

to websites and journals related to the *agnikarma*. For the present review study detailed literary study is performed.

S.N.	<i>Dahanopakarana</i> (equipments required for burning) <sup>[23]</sup>	Site of burning according to disease <sup>[24]</sup>
1	<i>Pippali</i> , Goats excreta, Cow teeth, Arrow head and metal	Disease of Skin ( <i>Twakadagdha</i> )
2	<i>Jumbavostha</i> rods of metals	Disease of muscles ( <i>Mamsadagdha</i> )
3	Honey jaggery and fats	Disease present in veins, ligaments, bones and joints ( <i>Sira, Snayu, Asthi, Sandhidagdha</i> )

**Classification of *agnikarma*****On the basis of *dahana akrti* (patterns of branding)**

Ring like burning mark is made at the root of the disease which is called *Valaya*; *Bindu* is spot at the tip of the rod; *Vilekha* horizontal straight and curve lines are made by the burning with the help of a rod at the tip of which

these lines are made. *Pratisaran* is rubbing with red hot rod or any such instrument at site of the disease.<sup>(25)</sup>

*Valaya* (circular, ring like)

*Bindu* (dot)

*Vilekha* (straight line/lateral line)

*Pratisaran* (spread wide, flat) are the different patterns (shapes/ marks) of branding.

**According to *dhatu* involvement<sup>[26]</sup>**

S.N.	<i>Dhatu</i> involvement in <i>agnikarma</i>	Sign and symptoms produce after <i>agnikarma</i>
1	<i>Twakadagdha</i>	-Crackling sound -Bad odour -Contraction of skin
2	<i>Mamsadagdha</i>	-Pigeon like discoloration of the part(ashy, dark grey) -Mild pain -Inflammation -lesion get dried up -Shrivelled
3	<i>Sirasnayudagdha</i>	-Black discoloration -Swelling of lesion -Cessation of discharge
4	<i>Asthi</i> and <i>sandhidagdha</i>	-Dryness -Redness -Hardness -Fixity of lesion

***Agnikarma* in head and eye disease**

In diseases of head and *adhimantha*(a disease of eye)-branding should be done-on Brows, forehead and/or the.

Accordingly an ulcer incidental to such a burning is characterized by extreme pain etc.(Scald/wet *dagdha*).<sup>[29]</sup>

In the disease of eyelid-branding should be done-on the follicles of hairs(eyelashes) after covering the area of vision(Pupil and cornea)with a pad of wet cloth.<sup>[27]</sup>

**Kinds of burning other than branding**

Features of the burns caused in other way (accidentally and not as a parasurgical measures).Fire associated with unctuous or rough substance causes burn (*dry dagdha*). Fatty substances heated on fire causes burn immediately by entering into skin etc due to circulating in minute blood vessels that's why there is severe pain in case of burn with fatty substance.<sup>[28]</sup>

Fire feeds both upon fatty and hard fuel (such as oil and logs of wood etc).Hot or boiling oil has the property or permeating or entering into the minutest nerves and veins and hence it is capable of burning the skin etc.

## Four kinds of burn caused by fire

S.N.	Kind of burns <sup>[30]</sup>	Correlation modern correlation <sup>[30]</sup>	Symptoms and Signs <sup>[30,31]</sup>	Treatment <sup>[31]</sup>
1	<i>Plusta</i>	Scorched burn	Discoloration and blistering from the root ( <i>plusa</i> )	-Hot and dry fomentation -Warm plasters -Hot food and drink
2	<i>Durdagdha</i>	Blistered burn	-Raising of big blisters with burning sensation -reddening ulceration -severe pain -it takes longer time for palliation	Warm and cold measures are adopted. -application of ghee poultice and bathing the body should be done in cold state
3	<i>Samyak dagdh</i>	Superficial burn	-Not so deep -Having the colour of <i>palmyrah</i> fruit ( <i>Tala</i> fruit) -Evenly formed - Having previous symptomatology	Ghee processed with <i>tugaksiri, plaksa, chandan Sheri plans Chandan garick and Amrita</i> should be applied over the body -Paste of meat of domestic animals apply
4	<i>Atidagdh</i>	Deep burn	Hanging of muscle tissue -Separation of the particular part of limb -Painful disturbances in the vein, ligament, joint, bones -Complications like fever, burning sensation, thirst, Syncope -wound made by such burning take long time for healing and it becomes discolored after healing	Hanging loose muscle removed by cutting followed by cold therapies -Apply paste Of Broken rice, <i>tinduki</i> bark mixed with ghee and cover the wound with leaves of <i>guduchi</i> or adequate plant like lotus same as <i>visarp</i> treatment

AgniKarma Methodology includes three steps

1. *PurvaKarma* (Pre-procedure of AgniKarma)

*Pre AgniKarma Diet*

The *Agnikarma* is deployed on the patients in all the disease and during all the seasons after giving sticky food. In *Mudha garbha* (obstructed labour), *Ashmari* (urinary calculi), *Bhagandara* (fistula-in-ano), *udara* (abdominal disorder), *Arsha* (piles) and *Mukha roga* (diseases of buccal cavity) it should be done before eating.<sup>[32]</sup>

Suitable season for *Agnikarma*

The *Agnikarma* is done in all seasons except *Sharad* (moonlight) and *Grishma* (summer). In the case of emergency in the disease that are curable by fire therapy. It should be deployed after taking proper care.<sup>[33]</sup>

*Preagnikarma* assessment

A Physician after having carefully considered the seat of the disease and judiciously ascertained the patient's strength and situation of the *marmas* (the vital parts of the patient's body) should resort to cauterisation with an eye to the nature of the malady and then prevailing season of the year.<sup>[34]</sup>

Patient in which contraindication of *Agnikarma*

Branding by fire (thermal cautery) should be avoided

: In person of Pitta predominant constitution

: In whom blood has accumulated inside the abdomen

: When there is rupture of abdominal organs

: Foreign body has not been removed

: The debilitated, children, very aged and fearful

: Those suffering from multiple wounds

: Person who are unfit for sudation therapy.<sup>[35]</sup>

2. *PradhanaKarma* (Principal procedure of *Agnikarma*)

Before doing the procedure of *Agnikarma*, *swasthikvachan* should be done; the patient kept in suitable position by keeping head in the East direction and held by expert assistants to avoid movement. After this the surgeon should make the different shapes of.

*Agnikarma* viz.: - *Valaya, Ardhchandra, Swastika*, etc. as per need by heated

*Shalaka* in a smoke free fire of *Khadira* or *Badara* with the help a blower or a fan. During this period if patients feel discomfort then keep them satisfied by courageous, consolations talks, give cold water for drink and sprinkle cold water. But procedure of *Agnikarma* should be done till production of complete cauterisation.<sup>[36]</sup>

3. *Paschyat Karma* (Post *Agnikarma* Management)

After proper cauterization, honey and ghee applied profusely.

Application of honey and ghee are to bring back normalcy in Rakta and Pitta which get vitiated by *Agnikarma* and to pacify the pain.<sup>[37]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

त्वङ्मांससिरास्नायुसन्ध्यस्थिस्थितेऽत्युग्ररुजि  
घायावुच्छ्रितकठिनसुप्तमांसे व्रणे ग्रन्थ्यर्शोऽर्बुद  
भगन्दरापचीश्लीपदचर्मकीलतिलकालकान्त्रवृद्धिसन्धिसिरा  
च्छेदनादिषु नाडीशोणितातिप्रवृत्तिषु चाग्निकर्म कुर्यात् ॥ १०  
॥ सु.सू.12/10

*Agnikarma* is also performed in these conditions viz. Wounds which are situated in the skin, muscle, ligaments, joints and bones associated with severe pain and the muscle tissue becomes hard and numb aggravated *Vata*, in *Granthi* (muscular knots), *Arshas* (piles), *Arbuda* (tumor), *Bhagandar* (fistula in ano) *Apachi* (short lived and continuous tumour around the neck), *Slipada* (Filariasis), *Charmakila* (warts), *Tilakalaka* (blemish/blackheads), *Antravrddhi* (hernia) cuts etc., in the joints and veins and also in profuse discharge of blood in sinus wounds.<sup>[37]</sup>

**In Nibandhsangrah**

*Atyugraruje Vayau*--when there is severe pain due to aggravated *Vata*.

*Ucchritam*— high risen

*Suptam*--inactive (numb)

*Agnikarma* in *Gridhrasi*

*Agnikarma* therapy is result-oriented for sthanik involvement of *Vata* in *Vatakaphaj* disorders. *Gridhrasi* is seen as panic condition in the society as it is one of the burning problem especially in the life of daily labourers. *Agnikarma* produce seems to be more effective by providing timely relief.<sup>[38]</sup>

**Agnikarma in Snayugata Vata**

According to *Ayurveda Snayugata Vata* can be correlated with the condition of tennis elbow. *Sushruta* has advised that *Agnikarma* for disorder of *Snayu* (ligament and tendon), *Asthi* (bone), *Sandhi* (joint) etc. Tennis elbow is a painful condition and causes restricted movement of forearm which require treatment for long period.

*Agnikarma* is also known to be effective in other cases of musculoskeletal disorders such as Osteoarthritis, lumbar Spondylosis, Cervical Spondylosis, Sciatica Frozen shoulder, Carpal tunnel syndrome, Trigger thumb etc.<sup>[39]</sup>

*Agnikarma* in *Sandhigata Vata*

*Sandhigata Vata* is one of *Vata Vyadhi* characterized by the symptoms such as *Santhishool* (joint pain) and *Sandhishopha* (swelling of joint).

Osteoarthritis is degenerative joint disorder represent failure of diarthrodial (movable, synovial lined) joint.

After *Agnikarma* the *ushna* (hot) *guna* of *Agni* pacifies the *shita* (cold) *guna* of *Vayu* and reduces the joint pain in the case of the *sandhigata vata*.

*Acharya Charak* described the *Agni* is the best treatment for *shool* (pain). *Ushna* (hot) *guna* of *Agni* helps to remove the *Avaran* effectively and stabilize the movement of *Vata*, which provide relief from *shool*.<sup>[40]</sup>

**Agnikarma in Warts**

Wart is one of the most common problem among society it appears mostly in middle aged people. After *Agnikarma* there is relief from the disease wart in the patient. Wart is produced by *Vitiated Vata dosha* and *anubandh* of *Kapha*. So, *Agnikarma* is considered as best therapy to pacify these *doshas*.<sup>[41]</sup>

**Agnikarma in Corns**

*Kadara*, the seat of the disease should be scraped off (with the aid of a knife) and cauterised with (the application of) heated oil. *Acharya Sushruta* has advices 'Chedana' (excision) and 'Agnikarma' (Thermocoagulation cautery). it is best treatment for prevent recurrences of *Kadara*.

As per *Ayurvedic* concept, *Kadara* may develop as the vitiation of *Vata* with *Kapha Dosha*. *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* have been considered as the important factors for causation of *Shotha* (inflammation) and *Shoola* (pain).<sup>[42]</sup> *Agnikarma* (*Tailpatana*) introduces heat in the affected area. This heat is *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, *Laghu*, *Sukshma*, *Vyavayi* and *Vikashi* in properties, which is helpful to break the *Kapha* thus reducing *Shotha* and ultimately *Vata Dosha* gets pacify so that *Shool* (pain) is relieved.<sup>[43]</sup>

*Kadara* is formed due to vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha doshas* lodged in *Meda* and *Rakta Dhatu* leading to formation of cone shaped, *Katina granthi*. Therefore management of *Kadara* needs *Shashtra Karma* like *Chedana*, *Bhedana* *Lekhana*, *Dahana*.<sup>[44]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

"अग्नितप्तेन शस्त्रेण, छिन्द्यात् अतप्तशस्त्रच्छेदने  
पाकभयं स्यात्" । इल्हण सु.चि.2 /46

The surgical excision should be done with the sharp instrument, which is heated by *Agni* with benefit of asepsis, otherwise there will be sepsis by unheated instrument. Therefore *Agnikarma* is superior than other procedures.<sup>[45]</sup>

क्षारादग्निर्गरीयान् क्रियासु व्याख्यातः । तद्गुणानां रोगाणाम  
पुनर्भावाद् भेषजशस्त्रक्षारैरसाध्यानां तत्साध्यत्वाच्च ॥  
सु.सू.12/2

A fire (cautery) is better than Alkali as far as its healing property is concerned. A disease burnt with fire, is cured for good and knows no recrudescence; and diseases which ordinarily baffle the skill of surgeon or physician, and never prove themselves amendable to medicinal or surgical remedies, are found to yield to fire.<sup>[46]</sup>

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