

**AYURVEDA CONCEPT, PROCEDURE AND THERAPEUTIC BENEFITS OF  
AGNIKARMA; A REVIEW****Dr. Vikas Jain\***

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**ABSTRACT**

Agnikarma (Thermal Microcautery) is an Ayurveda technique used anciently in the field of traditional science of medicine. Agnikarma described as traditional approaches of Ayurveda science for curing many painful conditions. Agnikarma suggested for various musculoskeletal disorders including sciatica, osteoarthritis, frozen shoulder and spondylosis, etc. Agnikarma offers therapeutic benefits without side effects and serious complications. Agnikarma is considered as minimal invasive and cost effective procedure that can be used alternatively instead of surgical interventions. Materials used for Agnikarma are Pippali, Aja Shakrit, Godanta, Shara, Shalaka, Varti and Suryakanta, etc. Meals like Loha, Swarna, Tamra and Kamsya also used for the procedural purpose of Agnikarma.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, Agnikarma, Cauterization, Thermal Microcautery.**INTRODUCTION**

*Agnikarma* is thermal procedure which causes controlled, pointed burns with minimal invasion for relieving painful disorders. *Agnikarma* gives therapeutic benefits in many disorders where para-surgical interventions may require. *Agnikarma* helps to treat disorders of *Asthi*, *Sandhi* and *Snayu*, relieves acute as well as chronic pain. *Agnikarma* relieves pain caused by *Vata* at the site of *Sandhi*, *Sira* and *Snayu*. *Agnikarma* can be used in combination with *Sneha* and *Bandhana*.<sup>[1-4]</sup>

*Agnikarma* established as para-surgical treatment that can be used effectively for the management of pain without any complication. *Agnikarma* explained as *Anushastras* technique for curing different disorders, can be used as preventive, post operative and haemostatic measures. *Agnikarma* is useful for relieving pain associated with bone, joint and ligament, etc.

**Advantages of Agnikarma**

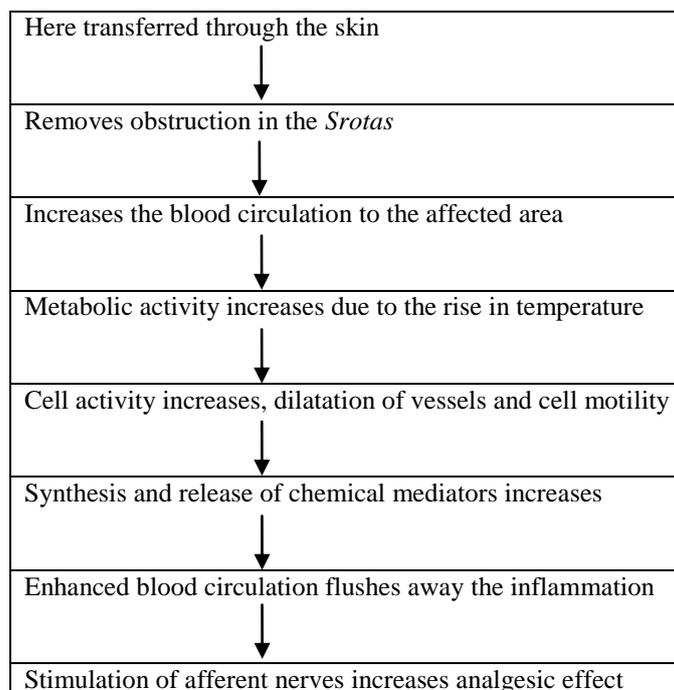
- It is a simple and easy to perform.
- Safe and no serious complication after therapy.
- Cost-effective procedure and minimal invasion.
- Helps to treat verities of diseases of muscle, tendon, ligament and joint.
- Reduces need for surgical interventions.
- It is performed without uses of drugs and other materials.
- Patient can rejoin work sooner after procedure and hospitalization not required.
- Routine day life remains unaffected.

**Indications of Agnikarma**

- Arthritis and degenerative joint disorder
- Calcaneal spur and achilles tendon
- Ankle pain, lower backache, neck pain and knee pain
- Sciatica and post fracture residual pain
- Migraine and frozen shoulder

**Probable mode of action**

*Agnikarma* acts on *Vata Kapha Dosha* and alleviates causative factor of pain. Pain reduces significantly with minimal recurrence rates. *Agnikarma* performed by metallic instrument known as *Shalaka* through which transfer of heat energy take places. This energy removes pain reduces effects of causative factors. The mild and controlled heat/energy helps to relive pain and inflammation. *Agnikarma* suppress pathological progression of diseases where para-surgical intervention requires. It imparts local effects and removes root causes of diseases.<sup>[4-8]</sup> The general mechanism of *Agnikarma* can be depicted as follows:

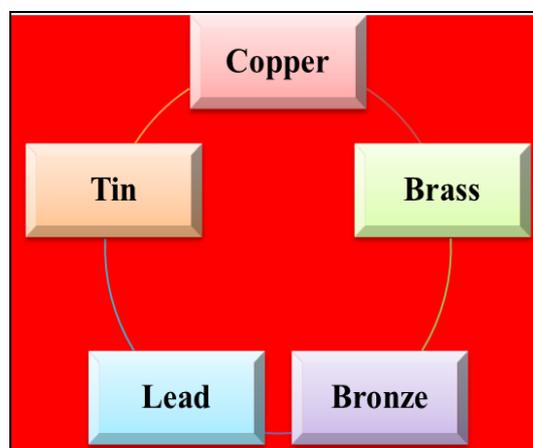


The modern view suggested proton-neutron-electron theory for explaining mode of action of *Agnikarma*, apart from this *Agnikarma* also imparts following biological effects:

1. *Agnikarma* stimulates regional nerves thus relieves pain
2. Improves local blood circulation at the affected area
3. Increases tissue metabolism and tissue regeneration process
4. Decreases local infection
5. Reduces joint stiffness and tenderness
6. Causes relaxation of muscle and improves local healing process

#### Materials used for cauterization

The needs of tools for cauterization depend upon the status of disease and materials used are of minimum latent heat. When deeper tissues objects are to be treated then maximum latent heat can be generated. The materials used for *Agnikarma* are *Piper longum*, feces of goat, teeth of cow, arrow, probes, wicks and stone, etc. Metals like iron, gold, copper and bronze are used for the diseases of muscles. Other materials like *Madhu*, *Guda*, *Vasa*, *Ghrta*, *Taila* and *Madhucchishta*, etc. also used for deeper and strong tissues like bones, tendons and vessels, etc. *Pancha dhatu shalaka* can be used on a regular basis for *Agnikarma*, the *Pancha dhatu shalaka* is made up of various metals as depicted in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1: Components of *Pancha dhatu shalaka* used for *Agnikarma*.**

#### Contraindication for *Agnikarma*

- ✓ Persons of *Pitta prakruti* should avoid *Agnikarma*
- ✓ Emaciated and feared person
- ✓ Children and elderly patient
- ✓ Pregnant lady
- ✓ Patient suffering from multiple ulcers

#### Probable complications of *Agnikarma*

- ❖ Improper conduction of *Agnikarma* procedure may lead burning sensation
- ❖ Pain and prolong inflammation
- ❖ Destruction of tissue
- ❖ Suppuration and ulcer may observe sometimes, etc.

#### General Procedure

*Agnikarma* mainly used for eliminating causative factor of pain induced by *Vata-Kapha* imbalance or aggravation of *Vata* in the body. Special pointed metallic instrument called *Shalaka* heated and then applied to the affected

parts of the body. *Agnikarma* generate mild and controlled heat which creates therapeutic burns to relieves pathological conditions. It is para-surgical procedure, inflicting micro burns on the surface of the tissue after the application of *Dahanopakaranas*.

The procedure performed in three stages; *Purva Karma*, *Pradhana Karma* and *Paschata Karma* mentioned. *Purva Karma* involves preparation of main procedure; patient was advised for light diet like; *Snigdha Picchila Annapana*. The affected site where *Agnikarma* to be performed washed with *Triphala Kwatha* and wiped with sterilized gauze.

*Pradhana Karma* involves uses of *Shalaka* at the affected body parts which heated up to red hot (*Rajata Shalaka*). The minimum space kept between two *Agnikarma* points to avoid overlapping of *Dagdha Vrana*.

*Pascha Karma* involves uses of *Ghritakumari* pulp, honey and ghee, etc. on *Dagdha Vrana* followed by dusting of *Haridra Churna*. Patient advised for *Pathyapathya* and healing of *Samyak Dagdha Vrana* observed. Contact with water at *Dagdha Vrana* site should be avoided at least for one day.<sup>[7-9]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*Agni karma* is ayurveda procedure which offers hemostatic, curative and preventive properties. *Agni karma* is effective for the diseases of *Vata* and *Kapha doshas*. *Agni karma* is indicated for several diseases like pain, arthritis, sinovitis, tendinitis, ligament rupture and myalgia, etc. Additionally *Agnikarma* indicated for the diseases like *Bhagandara*, *Arbuda*, *Arsha*, *Apachi*, *Gridhrasi* and *Antra vridhi*, etc. *Aja Shakrit*, *Godanta*, *Shara*, *Shalaka*, *Varti* and *Suryakanta*, etc. are materials used for *Agnikarma*. It is considered simple and safe technique which offers facility of minimal invasion and helps to treat diseases of muscle, tendon, ligament and joint.

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