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Conceptual study on *Agnikarma* in *Ayurveda*

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ABSTRACT

Sushruta known as father of surgery has described various surgical procedures along with some parasurgical measures. '*Agnikarma*' is one amongst these parasurgical procedures. *Agnikarma* has been given special place in surgery by *Sushruta* and it is believed that disease treated by *Agnikarma* never reoccurs. *Agni* 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. Now a days it is used and it is termed as therapeutic burns or cauterization. This paper deals with details of various aspects of *Agnikarma* and its use in present context.

Key words: *Agnikarma, Dagdha, Cauterization, Parasurgical measures.*

INTRODUCTION

Shalyatantra is one of the eminent branches of *Ayurveda* based on six major methods of management such as *Bhesajkarma, Kasharkarma, Agnikarma, Raktamokshan*. *Agnikarma* is greater among them and boon for local *Vataj* and *Kaphaj Vyadhi* as disease treated by it do not recur and also gives instant relief to the patients.^[1] *Sushruta* indicated '*Agnikarma*' in various disorders of skin, muscles, vessels, ligaments, joints and bones. The approach of *Agnikarma* has been mentioned in the context diseases like *Arsha, Arbuda, Bhagandar, Sira, Snayu, Asthi, Sandhigata Vata Vikar* and *Gridhrasi*.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Dahanopakarna (Equipment's required for burning)^[2]

SN	<i>Dahanopakarana</i>	Site of burning according to disease ^[3]
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*

Agnikarma can be classified based on

1. Type of *Akruti*
2. *Sthana*/part to be cauterized
3. Based on *Dravya* used
4. Based on disease site
5. Based on Nature of disease

1. Based on Type of *Akruti*

According to *Acharya Sushruta*

Valaya

Bindu

Vilekha

Pratisarana^[4]

According to Acharya Vagbhat

Valaya Ardha Chandra

Bindu Swastik

Vilekha Ashtapad^[5]

Pratisarana

2. Based on Sthana

1. *Twak Dagdha* (on skin)
2. *Mamsa Dagdha* (on muscle)

Acharya Sushruta explains that *Agnikarma* in *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Sandhi Asthi Dhatu* is also not prohibited.^[6]

3. Based On Dravya Used^[7]

- *Snigdha Agni Karma* - *Madhu*, *Ghritha* & *Tail* which is used in *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Sandhi*, *Asthi*.
- *Ruksha Agni Karma* - *Pippali*, *Shara*, *Shalaka*, *Godanta* which is used in *Twak* & *Mamsa Dhatu*.

4. Based to the Disease Site

- *Sthanik* in condition like *Kadara* and *Arshas*
- *Sthanantariya* (distal to the site of disease) in condition like *Pleehodara* and *Antra Vruddhi*.

5. Based On Disease

- In disease like *Kadara*, *Arshas* etc. where *Agnikarma* is done after *Chedana Karma*.
- In disease like *fistula*, *sinus* etc. *Agnikarma* done after *Bhedana Karma*
- In *Krimidanta* condition, *Agnikarma* after filling the cavity with *Guda* (jaggery), *Madhuchista* (beeswax) etc.

Features of proper Agnikarma^[8]

- *Twak Dagdha* - Production of crackling sound, bad odour and contraction of skin are signs of proper *Agnikarma*.

- *Mamsa Dagdha* - Colour like that of *pegeon* i.e., ashy, dark grey, mild swelling, mild pain, and dry contracted wound are the signs of proper *Mamsa Dagdha*.
- *Sira Snayu Dagdha* - Black colorations, elevation of site, stoppage of discharge are the signs of proper *Sira Snayu Dagdha*.
- *Sandhi Asthi Dagdha* - Dryness, dark red colouration, roughness and stability of part are the signs and symptoms of *Sandhi Asthi Dagdha*.

Agni Karma Kala

According to Acharya Sushruta, *Agni Karma* can be done in all seasons, except *Sharad Ritu* and *Grishma Ritu*. It is because in *Sharad* season there is a *Prakopa* of *Pitta* and *Agni Karma* also aggravates *Pitta* which may lead to *Pitta Prakopa*, leading to production of various disorders due to vitiated *pitta*. *Agnikarma* is contraindicated in *Grishma Ritu* as it is the hot season which will again cause *Pitta* aggravation. But in emergency, *Agnikarma* can be done in any season.

Indications of Agnikarma

- Cystic lesion, Tumor, Sinus lymphadenopathy, fistula, hemorrhoids, filarial, hernia, skin tag, joint disorder.
- *Agnikarma* indicated to stop bleeding from cut vessels.
- In chronic wound having some hard elevated tissue.^[9]

Contraindications of Agnikarma

- *Agnikarma* can be done in all season of the year except in *Sharad* (Autumn) & *Grishma* (Summer).^[10]
- All types of *Pittaja* and *Raktaja* disorders, patient with concealed bleeding, retain foreign body, Intestinal perforation, children, weak person, old age person, patient with multiple wounds, who are not fit for *Swedana Karma* are rendered unfit for this procedure.^[11]
- Should not be done in *Vrana* of *Snayu*, *Marma*, *Netra*, *Kushta*, and *Vrana* with *Visha* and *Shalya*.^[12]

- Person who are contraindicated for *Kshara Karma*.^[13]

Procedure of Agnikarma

Purvakarma

- Before performing out the *Pradhan Karma* the procedures and preparations carried out is called *Purva Karma*.
- After having carefully analyzed the seat of the disease and examining the individual for the strength, the locations of the *Marma*, disease and season should resort to *Agnikarma*.^[14]
- In all diseases and in all seasons, the patient should be fed on a diet which is *Picchila* before *Agnikarma*; while the patient should be on empty stomach before the therapy, in case of *Asmari* (renal stone), *Mudhagarbha* (malpresentation of fetus), *Arsa* (haemorrhoids), *Bhagandara* (fistula in ano), *Udara* (ascites), *Mukha Roga* (diseases of oral cavity).^[15]

Pradhankarma

Agnikarma should be initiated with *Swasthikvachan* towards the patient. The patient kept in suitable position by keeping head in the east direction and held by expert assistants to avoid movement. Then the surgeon should make the different shapes of *Agnikarma* viz. *Valaya*, *Ardhachandra*, *Swastika* etc. as per need by heated *Shalaka* in a smoke free fire of *Khadira* or *Badara*. Once the *Pradhana Karma* is carried out, it is important to assess the *Samyak Dagdha Lakshana* i.e., signs and symptoms of proper cautery.^[16]

Samyak Dagdha Lakshaan^[17]

- Anaawagadhavranata* (wound which is not deep)
- Talaphalavarnata* (colour resembling fruit of tala tree)
- Susamsitavrana* (without elevation or depression)

Paschat Karma

- Application of *Madhu* (honey) and *Ghrita* (ghee) after *Agnikarma* procedure.

- Use paste of *Tugakshiri*, *Plaksha*, *Chandana*, *Amrita* & *Gairika* with *Ghrit*.
- Paste of flesh of some animals like horse, pig etc.
- If person doesn't get relief from above medicine then surgeon should follow the line of treatment like *Pitta Vidradhi*.^[18]
- Madhuchisth Ghrita* prepared by processing of wax in *Ghrit* with *Yashtimadhu*, *Lodhra*, *Raal*, *Sarjaras*, *Manjistha*, *Raktachandana*, *Murv*.^[19]

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 which 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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