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Review article

Ayurvedokta Panchakarma focus on Abhyanga

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ABSTRACT:

Abhyanga has been used as an effective procedure for the Vata disorders. Dalhana has mentioned that the Sneha used in Abhyanga may reach even up to Majja Dhatu if Abhyanga is done for the repeated time. According to modern medical science absorption through the skin can be enhanced by suspending the drug in an oily vehicle and rubbing the resulting preparation into the skin (Goodman & Gilman – 1996). In this way it is proved by both the sciences that, the drug used in Abhyanga is absorbed through the skin.

KEY WORDS: Sneha, Dhatu, Abhyanga, Skin, Oil, Majja etc.

INTRODUCTION:

The effect of Abhyanga can assume in two way i.e. physical manipulations and the effect of the drug in the medicated oil. Physical manipulation in the form of massage increases the circulation of blood and plasma, it can stimulate and strengthen the lymphatic system and remove internal waste products. Muscles and deep connective tissues get relaxation. The strokes used in Abhyanga viz. kneading and friction have also effect like increase in flow of circulation local to the area treated. Reduction of tone in muscles, which are in a state of excess tension. Stretching of tight fascia and restoration of mobility of soft tissues. **Relief in pain is obtained by releasing acute or chronic tension in muscles and by affecting** pressure and touch nerve endings. Where there is chronic oedema, the fibrin within the fluid can be stretched, so facilitating drainage of the fluid in to lymph vessels. (Thomson UI al, 1996) Bala Taila was choosen for Abhyanga containing Atibala and Tila Taila. Tila Taila is a Snehana drug having properties opposite to the properties of vitiated Vata. Atibala has the properties like Vedanasthapana, Sothahara, Nadibalya, Vatahara, Balya and Brmhana. Hence, Bala Taila acts through the combined properties of both these drugs.

Aims & Objectives-

Ayurvedokta Panchakarma focus on Abhyanga and study, Ayurveda review of Conceptual study Abhyanga.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

Source of Data - Sushruta Samhita, Charaka Samhita, Vagbhata Samhita, Dhallan Commentary, Sharangadhara Samhita, Madhava Nidana, E-Journal and compile available literature on Abhyanga. In this articles all the references from Ayurveda Samhita and respective commentaries regarding Ayurvedokta Panchakarma focus on Abhyanga.

Review of literature -

Snehana Drug -

The durg having properties like Drava (liquid), Suksma (Subtle), Sara (fluid), snigdha (unctuous), Picchil (Slimy), Guru (heavy), Sitala (cold), Manda (sluggish) and Mrdu (soft) is called the snehana drug (Ca. Su. 23/15, A.H. Su. 16/1).

General indications of Snehana-

1. Persons who are to be given Svadana or Shodhana i.e. elimination therapy.
2. Roughness in the skin.
3. Disease caused by vitiated Vata.
4. Persons who indulge in physical exercise, wine and women.
5. Those who suffer from mental strain.
6. In children and old persons.
7. Those who are lean and weak.
8. Individuals having decreased blood and semen.
9. In the disease of eye. (Ca. Su. 13/52, A.H. Su. 16/4,5)

Contra indications of Snehana therapy -

Oleation therapy should not be administered in the patients,

- 1) Who are eligible for Ruksana therapy.
- 2) Those in whom Kapha and Meda are aggravated.
- 3) Those in whose cases the aggravated condition of Kapha reflects itself in the form of mucus secretion from the mouth and anus.
- 4) Whose power of digestion i.e. Agni is continuously weak.
- 5) Who are suffering from thirst and fainting (Murccha).
- 6) The pregnant women.

- 7) Those whose palate gets dried up.
- 8) Persons having aversion to food (Annadvista).
- 9) Patients suffering due to improper digestion as well as metabolism.
- 10) Those afflicted with Gara type of poison. (Ca. Su. 13/53-56, Su.S. Ci. 31/19, A.H. Su. 16/6-7)

Types of Snehana -

The Snehana is classified mainly in two types according to its route of administration.

(A) Internal Snehana -

It is administered prior to Sodhana therapy as a Purvakarma or

independently as a Samana therapy. It is administered by the oral route in the

form of pure Sneha or medicated Sneha.

(B) External Snehana -

Charaka etc Acharyas have not described the types of external Snehana but they have described the various methods for the external Snehana. On the basis of these types, many authors have described the following types of external oleation.

Types of external Snehana -

Abhyanga, Gandusa, Udvartana, Murdha Taila, Lepa, Aksi Tarpana, Mardana, Nasa Tarpana, Padaghata, Karna Purana, Pariseka, Mastiskya, Samvahana, Snehavagahana.

Significance -

A person should resort to Abhyanga every day if he wants to keep himself healthy. In classics, Abhyanga has been mentioned as the part of Dinacarya i.e. daily routine (Ca. Su. 5/89, A.H. Su. 2/8). It is very useful before performing physical exercise. The importance of Abhyanga has been shown by the way of different metaphoric illustrations. As a pitcher or a dry leather or an axis of a wheel become strong and resistant to wear and tear by the application of oil. Similarly by the Abhyanga of oil, human body becomes strong and smooth – skinned; it becomes unsuceptible to the disease of Vata and resistant to exhaustions and exertions (Ca. Su. 5/85,86). The body is compared to the tree. If the root of tree is given water regularly, then it lives for a long time. Similarly, on the above analogy, if the body of an individual is oleated properly through Abhyanga, then he lives for a long time, without any decay of disease.

Contra indications -

Abhyanga is the best in both the conditions i.e. health and disease except few exceptions, which are as follows:

1. Patients suffering by Kaphaja or Kapha dominant diseases.
2. Those who have given Vamana or Virecana.
3. Persons suffering from indigestion.
4. Persons having Amadosa
5. Taruna Jvara.
6. Those who have given the Niruha Basti

7. In the diseases caused by excessive nutrition. (A.H. Su. 2/9, Su. Ci. 24/35,37)

The Abhyanga in these conditions causes Agnimandhya and increase in those diseases.

Purpose of Abhyanga therapy -

Abhyanga can be done to a person for two different purposes.

- 1) It can be done regularly to a person for the prevention of several diseases and for the maintenance as well as promotion of positive health.
- 2) It can also be done as a special therapy for a limited period. This special massage therapy is generally carried out for the purposes of,
 - a) Rejuvenating the body to prevent and arrest the ageing process; and
 - b) Curing several obstinate and otherwise incurable diseases.

Apart from the above mentioned purposes, Abhyanga therapy along with fomentation is also given before administering several categories of elimination therapies like Vamana, Virecana, Basti and Nasya.

Method of Abhyanga -

Abhyanga should be done with luke-warm medicated oil or ghee, prepared with aromatic and Dosaghna drugs suitable to the season, Prakrti, disease, Dosa etc. It should be applied slowly, gently and in the direction of hair. Abhyanga is done particularly on head, leg and ear daily (A.H. Su. 2/9). For the Abhyanga on head cold or luke-warm oil may be used, because head is the place of all senses and it is considered as the most vital part, hence, it should be protected from heat. Abhyanga on limbs should be applied with warm oil. In this way Abhyanga may be administered with warm oil in cold season and with cold oil in hot season. Abhyanga may be applied in the direction of hairs on relatively broad and large organs. It should be done in round pattern on joints like elbow, shoulder, knee, ankle and lumber joints.

The Abhyanga should be done in the following seven positions:

1. Sitting position
2. Supine position – lying on back
3. Left lateral lying position
4. Again supine position
5. Right lateral lying position
6. Supine position
7. Sitting position

Effect on Dhatu -

Dalhana the commentator of Susruta has described the effect of Abhyanga according to the duration of it is done, the oil used in Abhyanga reaches to the root of hair of the skin if Abhyanga is performed up to 300 Matras i.e. approximately 65 seconds. It reaches in the skin in 400 Matras (133 sec.), in the Rakta in 500 Matras (160 sec.), reaches up to Mamsa in 600 Matras

(190 sec.), in Meda in 700 Matras (228 sec.), in the Asthi in 800 Matras (240 sec.) and it reaches to the Majja if Abhyanga performed upto 900 Matras – approximately 285 seconds (Dalhana on Su.S. Ci. 24/30). Thus Abhyanga should be applied atleast 5 minutes in each position if one wants to get its effect in deeper tissues like Majja. The drugs used in Abhyanga have the Sneha property. They acts as their properties, are apposite to the properties of Vata. The mode of action of Abhyanga can be understood by the properties of Snehana drugs in the following way:

1. Snigdha Guna- This is the main property of Snehana drug. Snigdha Guna acts through its Vatahara, Kaphakara and Vrsya properties. It performs the action like Snehana, Kledana and Visyandana at cellular level of the body.

2. Guru Guna- It increases the bodily strength and Kapha. Hemadri called it nutritious for the body. According to Bhavaprakasa Guru Guna has the properties like Vatahara, Kaphakara and Pustikara. Due to these properties it alleviates the morbid Vata, increases the decreased Kapha and nutrishes the body.

3. Sita Guna- It keeps the mind healthy by increasing pleasure and enthusiasm. It prevents fainting, decrease the perspiration. It stabilizes the muscles and organs.

4. Mrdu Guna - Mrdu means soft. This is the opposite attribute of Kathina i.e. hard. By this property Abhyanga reduces the stiffness.

5. Drava Guna- Drava means liquid, which causes humidity. By this Snehana drug propagates swiftly all over the body. It liquifies the Dosas and mobilizes them by increasing their flowing capacity.

6. Picchil Guna- Picchil means slimy. It causes longevity, increases body strength and maintains the structure at molecular level. It increases Kapha and produces heavy-ness.

7. Sara Guna- The common meaning of Sara is to slip or mobility. It mobilizes the Dosas and Malas i.e. waste products by this property.

8. Manda Guna- It is indicative of sluggishness. The snehana drug diffuses slowly by this and it remains in the context of Dosas, Dhatus and Malas for long time.

9. Suksma Guna

Mode of Action of Abhyanga -

Dalhana has explained in detail about the absorption of Sneha used in Abhyanga procedure, accordingly the oil used in Abhyanga can reach up to the different Dhatus if it is applied for the sufficient time. Hence, it is clear that the drug used in the Abhyanga gets absorbed by the skin. Dalhana also mentions that when Snehana drug reaches to the particular Dhatu it subsides or cures the diseases of that particular Dhatu. Caraka has also described that Vayu dominates in the Sparshanendriya i.e. tactile sensory organ, and this sensory organ is lodged in the skin. The Abhyanga is exceedingly beneficial to the skin, so one should practice it regularly (Ca. Su. 5/87). Indriyas are in close contact of mind,

hence if Indriyas remain healthy mind automatically remains healthy. Thus, Abhyanga keeps body and mind healthy.

RESULT & DISCUSSION:

Abhyanga has been considered as important part of the external Snehana. In the classics Snehana means oleation. Its literal meaning is love or tenderness. Caraka says that whatever causes unctuousness, fluidity, softness and moistness in the body is Snehana or oleation therapy (Ca. Su. 22/11). The word Snehana is derived from the root 'Snih' with 'Lyut' Prataya. Snehana also means Abhyanga with Tail etc. (Vacaspathyam). The fatty substances used in this therapy are for the purpose of producing lubrication, anointing or oleating effect on the internal as well as external organs. This treatment has qualities like restfulness, strength, invigoration and cognition. This is mainly done with substances like Tila – Taila and Ghruta. The Vasa and Majja are rarely used now the days.

CONCLUSION:

Proper knowledge of the Abhyanga helps in understanding the process of manifestation of best treatment in Vatavyadhi also the knowledge of Abhyanga is helpful for getting the success in the treatment of various diseases.

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