Therapeutic Aspects of Agnikarma and its Importance in Current Ayurvedic Practice

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Abstract: Ayurveda is the everlasting supreme science of medicine, because it deals with promotion of health and curing the disease. Acharya Shushrut known as father of surgery has described various surgical procedures along with some para surgical measures in different disease condition. Agnikarma is one amongst these para surgical procedure. Agnikarma is one of the superior para surgical techniques mentioned in Ayurveda. In Agnikarma therapeutic burning with special tools are done on specific on specific sites. Agnikarma has been given special place in surgery by Shushrut and it is believed that disease treated by Agnikarma never recovers. In modern time also it is used and termed as therapeutic burns or cautерisation. In this paper attempt is being made to review various aspects of Agnikarma and principles of Agnikarma in management of various disease. This study concludes that Agnikarma is very effective easy and simple procedure that can employed as outpatient procedure.

Keywords: Agnikarma, Dagdha, Dahanopakaran

1. Introduction

Shalyantantra is one of the eminent branch of Ayurveda, Acharya Shushrut has mentioned different methods of management of disease such as bhashaja karma, kshar karma, Agnikarma, shashira karma and raktamokshan. Agnikarma means application of Agni directly or indirectly with the help of different materials to relieve the patient from disease. Agnikarma is the prime para surgical procedure to treat chronic diseases, which are mostly difficult to manage because of antagonist property of doshas, like diseases caused by vata and kapha. Atharva Veda has identified Agni as god and treatment for disease. It is clear that Agni was used to protect the body from invading microorganisms. Now a days also the sterilisation by heating process can be interpreted as the above idea of atharvaVeda.

Classification of Agnikarma

It can be classified on various basis as below:-

1) According to Akrita
   A) Valaya–circular shape, encircling the root of the diseased portion.
   B) Bindu–dots made with the tip of shalaka.
   C) Vilekha–Straight curved or horizontal lines drawn with shalaka.
   D) Pratiscaran–rubbing with the side of shalaka.

Acharya Vagbhata in Asthang Sangraha mention that it can be also be of

A) Ardhachandra–semilunar, crescent shape.
B) Swastika–Swastika shaped.
C) Ashtapada–directed in eight directions.

2) According to Dravya used
   A) Snigdha Agnikarma–performed by means of madhu, gritha, tailam, used for Agnikarma to treat diseased situated in sira, snayu, sandhi, asthi.
   B) Ruksha Agnikarma–performed by means of pippali, shara, shalaka, godanta, used for Agnikarma to treat diseases situated in twaka and mamsa dhatu.

3) According to site
   A) Sthana–(local) as in vicharchika, arsha, kadara.
   B) Sthanantariya–as in visuchika, apachi, grudhthra.

4) According to Dhatus
   A) Twak dagdha
   B) Mamsa dagdha
   C) Sira dagdha
   D) Sandhi asthi dagdha

Dahanopakaran used for Agnikarma

In classics, there are different dahanopakaran have been described during the description of diseased cured by Agnikarma. Dahanopakaran means accessories like drugs, articles, and substance used for Agnikarma each of them is having their own peculiarity.

Twaka dagdha–for superficial diseases involving skin pippali, Ajushakrut, Godanta, Shara, Shalaka.
Mamsa dagdha–for disease involving muscles jambavaushta and other metals like kansya, Rajat, Tamra etc. should be used.
Sira, Snayu, Asthi, Sandhigata dagdha-Madhu, Guda, Sneha should be used.

Indication

Agnikarma is indicated in many diseases like Arsha, Granthi, Arbuda, Bhagandara, Apachi, Antravridhi, Shlipad, Nadivrana, Upadamsa, Gulma, Shigorog, tikalak, excessive pain in twak, mamsa, sira, snayu, sandhi and asthi. Snayu, Asthi and sandhigata vata vikara. excessive bleeding from sandhi, siracheda.
Contraindications
According to Acharya Sushrut internal haemorrhage, rupture of internal organs, bleeding disorders, perforation, retained foreign body should not be practiced. Fearful persons, old aged, debilited and children are also exempted because of their mental health. In person with dominant pitta traits and the persons contraindicated for svedana are contraindicated for Agnikarma as it causes further vitiation of pitta. [7]
According to charaka Agnikarma should not be done in the vrana of sneya, marma, netra, kushtha and vrana with visha and Shalya. [8]
According to Ashtanga vangraham Agnikarma should not be done in the patient who takes virechana, suffering from atisaar, who has Shalya in his body, who has boils on body, who is contraindicated for Kshar karma. [9]

Agnikarma kala- [10]
Agnikarma can be done in all seasons except sharad and grishma due to increase ease in pitta, which generated out of the excessive hot climate. but in emergency Agnikarma can be done in any season.

As per dhatus features of proper Agnikarma-- [11]
Twaka dagdh-Production of cracking sound, foul smell, contraction of skin
Mamsa dagdha-Asby dark grey colour (like pigeon), less swelling and pain, dry contracted wound
Sira Snayu dagdha- black colour, elevation of site, stoppage of discharge.
Santhi asthi dagdha-dryness, dark red discolouration, roughness and stability of part.

Procedure of Agnikarma
Preoperative– Before going to any surgical or para surgical procedure complete assessment should be carried out regarding all the factors, instruments required for Agnikarma like pippali, shalaka, plota, pichu, grita, madhu, source of agni should be kept ready. pichhilaanma should be given before the procedure. [12] Patient should be empty stomach in case like obstructed labour, fistula in ano, urolithiasis, abdominal disease, piles and diseases of oral cavity. [13]

Operative–Before performing Agnikarma chanting of mantras should be done. The patient kept in suitable position, by keeping head in the east direction and hold by expert assistant to avoid movements. exact site of Agnikarma should be marked, cleaned and then it is performed at the expected site as per the condition and up to the optimum sign of cauterisation (samyakdagdha lakshan).

Post operative–After completion of Agnikarmamadhu and gritha apply on the part where Agnikarma has done for ropana of dagdha vrana. [14]

Effects and Superiority
Acharya Shushrut and Acharya Vagbhat have both given superior place to Agnikarma than bshheja, ksharkarma and shashstra karma. chances of recurrence not present. [15] Disease which cannot be cured with medicine, kshar and surgery can be cured with agni. [16] Also have effects of sterilization, Agnikarma eradicates disease from its roots. It shows samyak effects on both vata and kapha. Its causes coagulation and closure of bleeding vessels and thus helps in haemostasis.

Mode of action of Agnikarma
Agnikarma (Ushna, tikshna, sukshmaguna)
Activate dhavagni and digest the aggrevated doshas
It release of sangha (obstruction) of vayu and pacifies vata and decrease the pain.
It stimulate dhavagni (stimulate tissue metabolism)—remove awarana—Amapachana.
It stimulate sirsankochana—helps for raktastambhan (haemostasis)

2. Conclusion and Result
Agni karma is pain management procedure described in ayurved. From ancient period this procedure performed in different name. the technique and equipment’s have become advance but the basic principles are still the same. This procedure is superior than others.

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