



Agnikarma practices in the management of *Manyastambha* w.s.r to cervical spondylosis – an *Ayurvedic* review

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Abstract-

In *Ayurveda* *Vatavyadhis* is a group of diseases manifested by *dhatu kshaya* or *margavarana* and those are classified according to *hetu*, *sthana* and *lakshana*. In the classification of *dhatukshayajanya vatavyadhis*, many degenerative conditions are considered. Cervical spondylosis can be considered one among them and can be compared with '*Manyastambha*'.

Manyastambha is one of the *Vata Vyadhis* mentioned in *Vata Nanatmaja Vyadhi*. According to *Sushruta Nidana Sthana* the *Vata* covered by *Kapha* is caused by day sleep, sitting and standing (in fixed position), and constantly gazing upward these are some of the important *Nidanas* of *Manyastambha*. *Ruksha* and *Stambha* (pain and stiffness) are the sign and symptoms mentioned in our text. *Abhyanga*, other *Ayurvedic* treatments, particularly *Panchakarma*, can aid in successful management.

Agnikarma is a time-tested ancient treatment modality, practiced in India for more than three thousand years. The procedure primarily involves a topical application of controlled heated rod of specific qualities to treat various kind of diseases and or disorders.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES- To explain the role of *Agnikarma* through *Swarna Shalaka* enumerated in ancient *Ayurvedic* texts which will be beneficial in management of *Manyastambha*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS- As the study is a review study, the available literature *Samhitas* and other books are searched for the disease and analyzed to get a comprehensive concept in the management of *Manyastambh*.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION- *Agnikarma* through *Swarna Shalaka* shows effective results in curing the cervical spondylosis

Key words – *Vatavyadhi*, *Agnikarma*, *Manyastambha*, *Swarna Shalaka*, *dhatu kshaya*, *Vata Nanatmaja Vyadhi*,

Introduction –

We live in a fast-paced, modern world where everyone is busy and stressed out. As a result of these changes in lifestyle, the modern human body is experiencing several imbalances. The prevalence of cervical spondylosis is increasing as a result of advancements in a busy social, professional life, poor posture in offices; continuous work, long computer hours, night jobs, prolonged television viewing, abnormally soft mattresses and pillows and a minimal emphasis placed on maintaining good physical, mental, and nutritional habits.

In the present era *Manyastambha* is the common disease due to stress, nature of work and unpleasant components of current lifestyle. *Manyastambh* term derived from words as “*Manya*” means nape of neck and “*Stambh*” means stiffness, rigidity. It is a *Vataja nanatmaja vyadhi* due to *Vata prakopaka nidana sevana*. The gets vitiated and lodges in *manya* causing *stambha* and *ruja* of the neck that ultimately led to *manyastambha*. It can be more or less studied under broad heading of cervical spondylosis as both of these are having similar signs and symptoms. Cervical spondylosis is a degenerative condition of the cervical spine it is age related condition that affects the neck vertebra. The disease not only negatively impacts a person's health but also greatly impairs quality of life and daily activities.

A degenerative condition affecting the cervical spine, joints in the cervical area, and intervertebral discs is called cervical spondylosis^[1]. This is a degenerative cervical spine disorder that affects practically all people over 50. The intervertebral disc degenerates, resulting in its protrusion and the bony overgrowth of neighboring vertebrae. This narrows the cervical canal and intervertebral foramina, compressing nerve roots, cords, and other supporting structures.

Symptoms of cervical spondylosis manifest as neck pain and neck stiffness and can be accompanied by radicular symptoms when there is compression of neural structures. X-rays can reveal vertebral spurs, joint thickening, and narrowing of the spaces between the intervertebral discs. MRI scans are the most effective for visualizing the intervertebral discs and determining the extent of disc herniation.

Manyastambha is a painful illness mostly linked to *vata & vyana vayu* vitiation. The vitiated *vata* becomes trapped in the neck area, causing muscular soreness there. The cervical spine, vertebral bodies, facet joints, and longitudinal ligaments are the key areas affected by this chronic degenerative disorder. The clinical Presentation of *Manyastambh* resembles the Cervical Spondylosis. It is a type of *Vatavyadhi*. It can occur as *Nanatmaja Vikara*^{[2][3]} as well as *Kaphavruta Vata*^{[4][5]}. In Allopathy use of Steroids, Analgesics and Anti-inflammatory Drugs does not yield long term relief and cannot satisfy the objective of an ideal therapy.

Nidana Panchaka of Manyastambha-

The *Nidana* (etiology) of the disease has not been mentioned directly but *Manyastambh* is one of the *Vatananatmaja Vikara*. There is not much difference in the causative factors of *Vatavyadhis*^[6].

1. *Sannikrishta nidana* – As described by Acharya Charaka^[7], Acharya Sushruta, Ashtang Hridaya^[8] and Madhav Nidana^[9] *ativyayam* (excessive physical exercise), *Abhighata* (Injury to neck) and *Marmaghata* (Injury to vital points of cervical region) can be assessed as the *sannikrishta nidana* of *Manyastambh*.
2. *Viprakrishta nidana* –
 - (I) *Rasa- Kashaya, Katu, Tikta.*
 - (II) *Guna – Ruksha, Sheeta, Laghu.*
 - (III) *Aharakrama – Alpahara, Abhojana, Vishamashana, Adhyashana, Pramitashana.*
 - (IV) *Manasika - Chinta, Shoka, Krodha, Bhaya.*
 - (V) *Viharaja - Ativyayama, Ativyavaya, Atijagarana, Vishamopachara, Langhana.*
 - (VI) *Anya – Raktasrava, Dhatukshaya.*
3. *Vishishta nidana-* as described by Acharya Sushruta^[11], Madhav nidana^[10], Bhaav Praskash^l and Yoga Ratnakar Diwaswapna, *Asanastha vikruti* and *Urdhwanirekshana* can be ruled out as the *vikrishta nidana* of *Manyastambha*.

Poorvaroopa-The occurrence of symptoms at minimal severity was the *poorvaroopa* for *Vatavyadhi*. So, here in the context of *Manyashoola* the occasional occurrence of back pain, and stiffness was the *poorvaroopa*.

Roopa-The vitiated *Vata* spreads to the *Manyapradesha* i.e., the *Snayu, Peshi, Asthi* of *Katipradesha* occasionally causing pain, stiffness at the *Manyapradesha* and restricted range of movement of *Manya*.

Samprapti- Due to *Nidana sevana Vata* gets vitiated and gets *Avrudha* by *Kapha* which in turn does *Sthabdatha* of 14 *Manya Siras* situated in the back of neck and results in *Manyastambh* (*Stambhana & Ruja* of neck).

Vyakta Avastha- The *dosha* vitiates the *dushya* (*asthi, snayu, peshi, majja*) by confining itself to the *Manyapradesha* and manifest as a disease. This stage is marked by the presence of pain, stiffness and restricted range of movement.

Bhedavastha- As the negligence continues the disease proceeds into more severe forms due to extensive *dhatukshaya*. It finally attains *asadhyata* in this stage. This stage can make the condition worse by manifestation of degenerative changes in the *dushya* (*asthi*) which are irreversible.

Samprapti ghataka-

Dosha	<i>Vata- Vyanavata</i> <i>Kapha – Shleshmaka Kapha</i>
Dushya	<i>Asthi, Majja, Snayu, Mamsa</i>
Agni	<i>Mandya</i>
Shrotas	<i>Asthivaha, Majjavaha</i>
Shrotodushti prakara	<i>Sanga</i>
Udbhava sthana	<i>Pakwashaya</i>
Vyakta sthana	<i>Greeva pradesh</i>
Rogmarg	<i>Madhyama Rogamarga</i>

Discussion and Conclusion-

Agnikarma - The word “*Agni Karma*” comprises of two terms ‘*Agni*’ and ‘*Karma*’, which represents fire and procedure respectively. Collectively, it can be defined as a procedure with the aid of fire. In *Ayurveda*, *Agni Karma* is referred to as a treatment that involves heat burns. It is also referred to as “*Dahan Karma*” in some texts.

Agnikarma has been cited for varied purposes in the ancient texts, beginning from the Vedic period [1750–500 BCE]. In *Atharvaveda* *Agnikarma* is indicated for *Krimi Chikitsa* and the word ‘*Agni*’ is used as ‘*Bheshaja*’. In *Rigaveda* *Agni* is used as ‘*Bheshaja*’ for the treatment of disease and *Agni* in ‘*Yagnya*’ is indicated to kill the bacteria which cause disease. The diseases which are incurable by *Shastrakarma* (surgical operation) or *Ksharakarma* (Ayurvedic herbal medicine) can be easily cured with *Agnikarma*. The disorders treated by *Agnikarma* have no recurrence. In *Charaka Samhita - Sutrasthana - Agnikarma* is used as a ‘*Trasana Chikista*’ for the management of ‘*Sanyasa*’ and used as a remedy for the management of ‘*Mansagata Vyadhi*’. In *Sushruta Samhita – Sutrasthana*, *Agni* is described under *Agropaharaniya* equipment. *Agni* is described under ‘*Anushalya*’ and a whole chapter is dedicated to *Agnikarma* including details, description, indication, contraindication and *Vidhi*.

Both *Agnikarma* and *kshara karma* are described under *upyantra* and *anushashtra* *Acharya Sushruta* gives complete description of *Agnikarma* in *sutrasthanam* chapter 12. In the beginning of chapter he mentions that *Agnikarma* is superior to *kshara karma*. The disease treated with *Agnikarma* has no recurrence and there are some diseases where medication, surgery and *kshara karma* are not effective or not possible. *Agnikarma* treats these conditions easily and successfully. Materials used in *Agnikarma*⁴ are stated according to use as *pipali*, stool pills of goat, *godant* (teeth of cow), *shar* and *shalaka* are used in the *tvacha gat rog*, *jambosth* and *loha* (metals or alloys) are used for *Agnikarma* in *mamsagat* (muscular area) *rog*, *Madhu*, *guda* and *sneha* is used for purpose of *dahan* in the *Sira* (vessels), *Snayu* (tendon) and *sandhi*(joints) and *Asthigatvyadhi*.

Acharya Vagbhata added *pichuvarti*, *suryakant* and wax for the *Agnikarma* purpose. *Agnikarma* is contraindicated in *Sharad* and *Grishma ritu*, but in emergency it can be performed with due precaution. Patient should be advised *agniviruddha ahar* specially *pichila ahara* prior to procedure. *Manyastambh/ Grivagraha* is proved to be very effective through *Ayurvedic* management. As per *Ayurveda*, *Dosha* (biological humour) predominance of *Vata dosha*. Human body is composed of seven *Dhatu*s among which the fifth one is *Asthi* (bone). Since *Vata* is having an *ashraya-ashrayi bhava* (interdependence) with *Asthi* (bone), the degenerative changes are more pronounced in *Asthi-Sandhi* (bone -joint). *Vata kopa* (vitiated air humour) happens due to 2 reasons- *Dhatukshaya* (degeneration) and *Margavarana* (obstruction). *Kupithavata* (vitiated air humour) will take abode in different parts of the body were *Khavaigunya* (abnormality) exist, leading to the manifestation of diseases. When *Vata* takes its abode in different *Sandhi* (joints) it leads to a condition called cervical pain when it lodged in *Manya/ Griva pradesha*. This case shows degenerative changes in MRI of Cervial Spine which is caused by *Dhathukshaya* according to the *ayurveda* which leads to *vataviriddhi* and when we consider the *amsamsa kalpana* (qualities altered), *Atmarupa Guna* of *Vata* are leads to *Anavasthitat* (Inorganized) responsible for the condition *Sanga* (Collection or accumulations), *Rukshata* (Dryness) is responsible for increasing *vata* leads to *Bheda* (Breaked Pain), *Toda* (Pricking Pain), *Sheetalta* (Coaldness), *Laghuta* (Lightness), *Vishadata guna* responsible for *Gatiavrodha* (immobilization), *Saad* (Fatigue), *Harsh*, *Varta* (Dizziness), *Supti* (Numbness), *Sankochana* (Constricted), *Stambhan* (Stiffness), *Graham* (spasticity). The present work has been discussing the effect of *Agni karma with Swarna shalaka in manyastambha*, as *Shaman Chikitsa*.

Suitable time for *agnikarma*- *Agnikarma* can be done in all seasons, except *Sharad* (autumn) and *Grishma* (Summer); because, in *Sharad* there is a *Prakopa* of *Pitta* and *Agnikarma* also aggravates.^[12]



Fig. Demonstration of *Agnikarma* with *Swarna shalaka*

PROBABLE MODE OF ACTION:

The probable mode of action of *agnikarma* may be the property of *agni*. The properties of *agni* are *sukhsma*, *laghu*, *tikhsna* and *usnaguna*. It works on both *vata* and *kapha dosa*. It works on *vata* by its *ushna* and *tikhsnaguna* and on the *kaphadosa* by *laghu*, *sukhsma*, *tikhsna* and *ushnaguna*. It works deep in the tissue because of its power of penetration to deep tissue by virtue of *laghu*, *sukhsma* and *tikhsna guna*. Besides working on the *doshaagni* it also destroys the dead tissue on wound surface by its mechanical burn causing thermal injury. Probable mode of action of *agnikarma* is determined by the position of dermatomes. The term “dermatome” is a combination of two Greek words; “derma” meaning “skin”, and “tome”, meaning “cutting” or “thin segment”. Dermatomes are areas of the skin whose sensory distribution is innervated by the afferent nerve fibres from the dorsal root of a specific single spinal nerve root, which is that portion of a peripheral nerve that “connects” the nerve to the spinal cord.

Swarna has *Brimhana*, *Lekhana*, *Tridoshahara*, *Varnya*, *Garahara*, *Rasayana* and *Vishnashana* properties due to which *Swarna shalaka* has been found very effective in curing pain occurring due to cervical spondylosis. It also has anti-inflammatory and healing property. *Swarna shalaka* have additional rapid healing property which repairs the damaged epithelium by rejuvenative action.

Contra-indications for Agni Karma: Agni Karma should not be carried out for the following conditions: Pitta Prakriti, Bhinna Kostha, Durbalya, Vriddha, Antah Shonita, Anuddhrata Shalya, Bala, Bhiru, a person afflicted with a large number of Vrana and a person who is forbidden for Swedana. Swedana is contraindicated for suffering from: Pandu, Atisara, Guda Bhramsa, Udara Roga, Nasta Sangya, Chhardi, Shonhita, person under influence of alcohol, Vidagdha Rakta Pitta, Sthula, Ajirna, Kruddha, Trishna, Adhya Rogi, Garbhini, Prameha, Ruksha, Daurbalya, Shrantā, Visha, Kshudha, Timir, Kshata and Oja Kshaya.

Hence, it can be concluded that Agnikarma with the Swarna shalaka can be very effective in the management of pain caused due to manyastambh (cervical spondylitis).

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