



# Agnikarma in chronic pain management- A Review Article.

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**Abstract:** There is eight branches in Ayurveda, Shalya Tantra is one of the important branch of Ayurveda in which surgical and parasurgical techniques has described for management of various diseases or pain. Anushastra Karma means surgical procedure performed by non surgical items or instruments in absence of surgical instruments. Acharya Sushruta described different Anushastra, these are twakasara (bamboo bark), Sphatika, Kancha (led), kuruvind, jalauka (leech), agni (flame), kshara (alkali), nakha (nails), goji (govivha), shephalika (harasringarleave), shakapatra (sagaun leave), kareera, bala (hair) and anguli (finger) etc (Su.Su 8/15)<sup>[1]</sup>

'Pain is the most common reason a patient visits a doctor, and it is a common symptom of many different medical conditions. It has an impact on a person's general well-being and working. Apart from its detrimental effects on bodily functions, pain also impedes mentalagility, working memory, focus, problem-solving skills and speed of information processing. Persistent pain may also be associated with increased depression or worry. To ease this agony, everyone looks for a treatment that has the fewest side effects and the greatest potential benefit. Based on this metric, Ayurvedic therapies and drugs seem to be more effective. The technique of Agnikarma has been designed to relieve various muscular and joint disorders. The Agnikarma (Thermal Cautery) involves a procedure whereby heat is transferred to the affected parts of the body using a metal Shalaka (metal rod) invarious procedure heat is used directly or indirectly all these are come under the Agnikarma.<sup>[2]</sup>

**Keywords-** Agnikarma, pain management, dahanupakaran, ayurveda.

**Introduction-**Kshara karma, Agnikarma, Jalaukaavacharana are three most important anushastra karma. Agnikarma is most effective in pain management.

Acharya Sushruta, a trailblazer in the realm of surgery, introduced diverse approaches for addressing illnesses, including Bheshaja karma, Kshara karma, Agni karma, Shashtra karma, and Raktamokshana. Agni karma involves the application of Agni, either directly or indirectly, to a patient's ailment using various materials. The term "Agnikarma" is a combination of Agni and Karma, denoting the process by which Agni generates Sanyak Dagdha Varana with the assistance of ce of various Dravyas. In contemporary language, "Agnikarma" therapy can be described as the intentional induction of therapeutic heat burns.

Agnikarma, an ancient therapeutic practice derived from Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medical system, stands out as a profound method for addressing muscular and joint disorders. Positioned as a pivotal procedure in the realm of surgical treatment, Shalya Chikitsa,

Agnikarma embodies the fusion of Agni and Karma, signifying the creation of SamyakaDagdha Vrana-thoroughly burnt wounds through Agni with the aid of diverse Dravyas. In the Agnikarma process, heat is applied to affected body parts using a metal Shalaka, employing various techniques where heat is administered directly or indirectly.

Recognized as both effective and superior among surgical procedures, Agnikarma exemplifies its historical significance and therapeutic prowess in the treatment of various medical conditions.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Aims and objective** – Pain management is an important aspect in ayurveda Shalya Tantra and Sangyahan. Ayurveda provides various treatment modalities such as agnikarma, jalaukaavacharan, marma therapy etc.

### **Agni Nirukti–**

There are two kinds of niruktties associated with the word Agni, depending on its Swabhava and Swarupa. Agni is characterized by Swara as spreading to many parts or organs, but Swabahava defines Agni as ascending.

**Definition-** This term, "Karma," denotes the execution of actions, and it is the mechanism through which activities are conducted.

**Formation-**The term "Agni + Karma," combining "Heat" and "Procedure," constitutes the composite term.

**Application-** When Agni, with the aid of various Dravyas, generates Samyaka Dagdha Vrana, it is referred to as Agnikarma.

### **Historical View -**

**Vedas-**In Atharvaveda, Agni is accepted as God and Bhesaja in the reference of Krimi. In Rugveda Agnikarma Chikitsa available in the reference of obstetric disease.

In Yajurveda as a treatment of Sheeta In Samavaeda, importance of Agni is proved by the presence of the chapter known as Agneykanda. Charaka extensively discussed Agnikarma Chikitsa in various chapters of his work. In the 11th chapter of Sutra sthana, he elaborated on Agnikarma Chikitsa in the context of Shastra Pranidhana. Furthermore, Charaka provided insights into Agnikarma Chikitsa in Divamiyaadhyaya Chikitsa, specifically addressing its application as a treatment for Vrana, In the Vividhashitapitiya Adhyaya, focusing on the treatment of Mansaja Roga, he presented the relevance of Agnikarma Chikitsa. The topic continued in Gulma Chikitsa, where Charaka highlighted its significance in addressing Kaphaja Gulma. The comprehensive coverage of Agnikarma Chikitsa extended to various other areas, including Shvayathu Chikitsa, Udara Chikitsa (pertaining to Pleehodara Roga and Yakritodara Chikitsa), Arsha Chikitsa (exploring Arshashastra Karma, Kshara Karma, and Agnikarma), Visarpa Chikitsa (specifically in the context of Granthi VisarpaChikitsa), Visha Chikitsa (in reference to Visha Vega Chikitsa) and Vatavyadhi Chikitsa (particularly addressing Gridhrasi Roga Chikitsa).

In Siddhisthan, Charaka delved into Trimarmiya Chikitsa and offered insights into Agnikarma Chikitsa concerning Ardhavabhedaka Roga Chikitsa. Throughout these discussions, Acharya Sushruta made significant contributions to Ayurveda, especially regarding the application of Agnikarma Chikitsa.

The Sushruta Samhita provides numerous references to Agnikarma. In the Sutrasthana, specifically in the context of Yantravidhi Adhyaya, Agnikarma is discussed as an Upayantra. A comprehensive description of Agnikarma Vidhi is presented separately in a dedicated Adhyaya. In the Pranasta Shalya Vigyaniya Adhyaya, Agnikarma is outlined as a Shalyaniraharana Vidhi.

**Ashtangahridaya -** In Ashtanga Hridaya Sutra sthana chapter 30 deals with Agnikarmavidhi and there are many other references of other disease.

**Materials used for agnikarma-**Pippali, Aja Shakrut, Godanta, Shara, Shalaka, Jambavastha, Dhatu, Madhu, Madhuchista Guda, Vasa Ghruta, Taila, Yashtimadhu, Suchi, Varti, Suryakanta.<sup>[4]</sup>

**These dahanupkarana are distributed in 3 categories.**

1) Useful in AgnikarmaChikitsa of Twakdhatu (skin). Pippali, Ajashakrut, Godanta, Shara, Shalaka.

2) Useful in AgnikarmaChikitsa of Mamsadhatu - Jambhausta, Other Loha.

3) Useful in AgnikarmaChikitsa of Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, Asthidhatu-Madhu, Guda, Sneha.

### Classification of Agnikarma -

**1) According to Dravya a) Snigdha Agnikarma:** Madhu, Ghrita, Taila etc. are used for Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, Asthi type of Agnikarma.

**b) Ruksha Agnikarma:** Pippali, Shalaka, Godanta are used for Twak and MamsaDagdha.

### 2) According to Site-

**a) Sthanika (local):** Kadara, Arsha, Vicharchika

**b) Sthanantariya (systemic):** Apachi, Gridhrasi

### 3) According to Disease

a) In the disease like Arsha, Kadara etc. it should be done after surgical excision (Chhedan).

b) In the disease like fistula, sinus etc. it should be done after surgical incision (Bhedana).

c) In the disease like Krimidanta, it should be done after filling by the Guda.

**4) According to Akriti-** As described earlier in Dahana Vishesh.

**According to Dhatu:** Sushruta gives the meaning TwakDagdha, MamsaDagdha, Sira- snayuDagdha and AsthiDagdha. But in practice, many Chikitsaka are giving their own opinions regarding Dhatu i.e. Suvarna, Rajata, Loha, Tamra, Kansya, Panchdhatu etc.

### Agnikarma Vidhi -

**Pre-operative Measures-** Before going for agnikarma proper assessment should be made. Instruments required for agnikarma like pippali, shalaka and plota, pichu, grita, madu, source of Agni should be kept ready. Patient should be empty stomach in cases like obstructed labour, urolithiasis, fistula, in different abdominal diseases, piles and diseases, of oral cavity. Pichhila anna should be given before the procedure in all the other conditions.

**Operative -** Prior to conducting Agnikarma, it is essential to chant mantras. Thoroughly inspect the designated area for the procedure and ensure proper cleansing. The Agnikarma is executed at the site until the appearance of the desired samyaktagdha lakshana.

**Post Operative Measures -** Gritha and madhu should be applied over the wound for proper healing. After agnikarma proper diet should be taken.

**Indication of Agnikarma-** Vatakantaka, Shiroroga, Ardhavabhedaka, VratmaRoga, Pakshmakopa, ShlistaVratma, Vishavratma, Alaji, Arbuda, Puyalasa, Abhisyanda, Adhimantha, Lagana MedojOshtharoga, Danta Nadi, Krimidanta, Adhidanta, Shitadanta, Dantavruddhi, Jalarbuda, Arsha, Nasa Arsha Karnarsha, Lingarsha, Yoniarsha, Bhagandara, ChipaKunakha, Kadara, Valmika, Jatumani, Mashaka, Tilakalaka, Charmakilai, VatajashulaVishwachi, GalagandGandamala, Apachi, Granti, Antravruddhi, Shlipada, Nadivrana, Upadvansa, Gulma, Vilambika, Sanyasa, Unmada, Yakruta and Plihodara, Shonita Atipravrutti, Shira Sandhi Cheda, Visarpa.

**Contraindications of Agnikarma-** Pitta Prakruti, Bhinna Kosta, Daurbalya, Vruddha, Antah Shonita, Anuddhrata Shalya, Bala, Bhuru, Multiple Vrana, Balaka Who is contraindicated for Swedana (sudation) therapy Swedanais contraindicated for the person and suffering from Pandu, Atisara, Kshaya, Guda Bhrumsha, Udararoga, Nasa Sanga, Chhardi, Shoshita Oja Kshaya, Vigagdha, Rakta Pitta, Sthula, Ajirna, Kroddha, Trushna, Adhya Rogi, GarbhiniPrameha, Ruksha, Daurbalya, Visha, Kshudha, Timira, Kshata, According to Charaka Agnikarma should not be done in the Vrana of Snayu, Marma, Netra, Kushtha and Vrana with Vishaandshalya.



**Features of proper agnikarma -**

**Twakdagdha** - Production of crackling sound, bad odour and contraction of skin are signs of proper agnikarma.

**Mamsadagdha** -Color like that of pigeon i.e. ashy, dark grey, mild swelling, mild pain, dry contracted wound are the signs of proper mamsadagdha.

**Sirasnayudagdha**-Black colourations, elevation of site, stoppage of discharge are signs of proper sirasnayudagdha.

**Sandhi asthidagdha**- Dryness, dark red coloration, roughness and stability of part are the signs and symptoms of Sandhi asthidagdha.

**Agnikarma kala**-" According to Acharya Sushruta, Agnikarma can be done in all seasons, except Sharadritu (autumn) and Grishmaritu (summer). It is because in Sharad season there is a Prakopa of pitta and Agnikarma also aggravates Pitta.

Agnikarma provides immediate relief for chronic pain, tissue cutting, coagulation, blending and wound healing. Despite its efficacy, the precise mechanism of Agnikarma remains unknown in the medical community. Various theories attempt to explain its action, such as the pro-inflammation theory, suggesting that inducing acute inflammation rectifies chronic inflammation by attracting lymphocytes, neutrophils, histamines and prostaglandins to the site. The thermodynamics theory proposes that transferring thermal energy increases tissue internal energy, activating the body's thermostatic center to distribute the temperature rise, resulting in vasodilation, increased blood flow, and muscle relaxation, leading to reduced inflammation and pain.

**Conclusion** -Agnikarma involves the application of thermal energy within the human body, representing a potent and minimally invasive parasurgical technique applicable to both chronic conditions and emergency situations. Its modern counterparts include cauterization, laser therapy, and radiation. Numerous theories support its diverse applications, highlighting the need for further research to substantiate and validate its efficacy in Ayurveda.

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