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“Efficacy of Agnikarma in the Management of Paadtal Shool (Plantar Fasciitis): An Ayurvedic Perspective”

¹Dr. Sachin Sadashiv Ganeshwadi, ²Dr. Prajakta S. Ganeshwadi,

¹Professor & Head of Department,

Rognidan Department,

KLE's Ayurveda Medical College, Chikodi, Dist. Belgavi, Karnataka, Bharat

Email : dr.ssganeshwadi@gmail.com, Mobile No. : 9890830541

²Practitioner

Shri Sadamangalam Ayurved, Sambhajanagar, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, Bharat

Abstract : Paadtal Shool, corresponding with plantar fasciitis, is characterized by heel pain arising from inflammation of the plantar fascia. This article presents an Ayurvedic perspective on managing this condition through Agnikarma, a therapeutic procedure utilizing heat application via a Tamra Shalaka (copper probe). A case study of a 43-year-old female patient illustrates the treatment's effectiveness, reporting significant pain relief and reduction in swelling. This study aims to explore the Ayurvedic principles, treatment methodology, and outcomes of Agnikarma, supported by classical texts and contemporary insights.

Keywords : Agnikarma, Paadtal Shool, Plantar Fasciitis, Ayurvedic Treatment, Tamra Shalaka

Introduction:

Plantar fasciitis is the leading cause of heel pain, primarily due to overuse and inflammation of the plantar fascia. Conventional treatment modalities include antiinflammatory medications and physical therapy. Contrarily, Ayurveda offers a holistic approach through Agnikarma, particularly suitable for addressing Vata and Kapha dosha imbalances that are prevalent in conditions like Paadtal Shool.

Case History:

A 43-year-old female, a receptionist by profession, presented with acute left heel pain and localized swelling persisting for two days. Her lifestyle included extensive standing and a diet rich in katu (pungent) and tikta (bitter) flavors.

Clinical Findings:

- Pulse Rate (Nadi) : 76/min
- Constitution (Prakruti) : Vata-Pitta
- Strength (Bala) : Madhyam
- Tongue Examination : Niraam
- B.P. : 120/80 mmHg

No addictions or systemic abnormalities were noted.

Etiopathogenesis:

According to Ayurvedic principles, the condition stemmed from:

- Nidanas (Causative Factors):
- Vata-provoking diet

- Prolonged periods of standing
- Inappropriate footwear
- Seasonal influences

Pathology:

Vitiated Vata accumulated in the asthi (bone) of the heel, causing obstruction in srotas (channels) leading to pain (paadruk) and swelling induced by Kapha.

Correlation with Modern Medicine:

Plantar fasciitis is described as a biomechanical overuse condition manifesting through degenerative changes in the plantar fascia. Classical symptoms include pain upon standing and stiffness.

Treatment Plan – Agnikarma:**- Agnikarma References:**

"Twak mamsa sira snayu sandhyasthithite atiygraruji cha agnikarma kuryaat." - Sushruta Samhita, Su. 12/10

"Tatra agnikarma twachi mamse sirasnayu sandyasthishu cha prayujyate." - Ashtanga Sangraha, Sutra 40/2

Procedure:

- Identification of the most tender point on the heel.
- Bindu (point-wise) Agnikarma was performed with a Tamra Shalaka over two sittings:
 - First Sitting (Day 1) : Reported 60% pain relief.
 - Second Sitting (Day 8) : Achieved remaining 40% relief.

Rationale for Efficacy:

Heat from the Agnikarma procedure possesses Ushna (heat), Tikshna (sharpness), and Sukshma (subtlety) properties that:

- Pacify aggravated doshas.
- Alleviate srotas blockage, thereby reducing inflammation.
- Improve blood circulation, aiding in tissue repair.

Effectiveness of Agnikarma:

Treatment resulted in substantial alleviation of pain and swelling with complete symptom resolution after 21 days, highlighting the procedure's efficacy.

Discussion:

Agnikarma demonstrates a viable management option for Paadtal Shool by aligning Ayurveda's diagnostic and treatment methodologies with principles of modern physiology. It offers a non-invasive alternative with minimal side effects compared to conventional therapies.

Challenges:

There's a need for standardized protocols for Agnikarma. - Increased awareness and training for practitioners are required to optimize this therapy.

Conclusion:

Agnikarma is an efficient modality for treating Paadtal Shool, providing both immediate and sustained relief. With continued research and practitioner training, this Ayurvedic approach can significantly integrate with contemporary practices for heel pain management.

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