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KSHEERA DHOOMA: A TRADITIONAL PRACTICE WITH MULTIFOLD APPLICATION

Swathi Bhat¹, Ananta S Desai²

¹Post Graduate Scholar, ²Prof and Head, Department of Post Graduate Studies in Panchakarma, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Corresponding Author: swathibhat37@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Ksheera Dhooma is an effective and popular Ayurvedic procedure in which decoction of herbal medicines and cow's milk are mixed, heated and the emitted vapours are directed through a rubber tube. The steam coming out of the tube is applied to the whole body or the affected part of the patient's body. It is used in the treatment of facial paralysis, lock jaw and disorders of head and neck, with Vata Dosha imbalance. Though Ksheera Dhooma is considered as a type of Sweda, it is termed as Dhooma because steam is inhaled with gaping mouth. Ksheera Dhooma has multi-fold benefits like facilitating proper blood circulation of the body and relaxation of the mind, lubrication of the joints, relief from pain, spasms and stiffness of the muscles and joints. This study was performed with an aim to review the procedure of Ksheera Dhooma or Palpuka Swedam, understand the standard operating procedure and its efficacy.

Keywords: Ksheera Dhooma, Palpuka Swedam, Vatavyadhi, Ardita, Nadi Sweda, Traditional Keraliya practice

INTRODUCTION

Ksheera Dhooma or Palpuka Swedam, is a traditional practice unique to Keraliya Panchakarma methods. It is widely used in the treatment of Jatrurdhwagata Vata Vyadhi like Jihwastambha, Hanustambha, Swarabhanga, Anantavata etc. It is a form of Swedana

that comes under the umbrella of *Nadi Sweda* and *Bashpa Sweda* according to the different types of classifications of *Swedana* explained in our classics. The procedure is carried out after prior application of suitable medicated oil or ghee as per requirement.

Disease specific milk decoction is prepared, and the emitted vapours are used for fomentation. Swedana therapy is one of the prime treatment modalities explained in Vata Vyadhi Chikitsa¹. A combination of Abhyanga and Swedana together are highly effective in treating neurological disorders, painful conditions, muscle weakness, stiffness and spasm, all of which primarily arise due to impaired *Vata Dosha*. This study was performed with an aim to review the procedure of Ksheera Dhooma or Palpuka Swedam, understand the standard operating procedure and its efficacy.

Materials and Methods: References regarding Ksheera Dhooma were collected from various textbooks, published research papers and previous works done. Concept of Ksheera Dhooma and the procedure was studied in detail.

Review of Procedure: Swedana is one among the Poorvakarma before administering Shodhana², and also an independent treatment procedure as explained in Shadupakrama³. It is a treatment method in which sweating is induced by means of giving heat directly in the form of steam, by contact of hot objects or indirectly by fasting, exercise, exposure to sun etc. The term Ksheera Dhooma is comprised of 2 words

- i) Ksheera Milk (preferably Go Ksheera)
- ii) Dhooma Vapours, smoke, mist

This refers to the use of fumes of medicated Ksheera for the purpose of treatment. Ksheera Dhooma is a variety of Snigdha Sweda with unique combination of Go Ksheera and disease specific medicaments. It achieves the benefits of both Snehana and Swedana simultaneously, and along with drug effects brings about Dosha Shamana. Snehana helps to achieve Snigdhata (unctuousness), Vishyandata (liquefaction), Mardavata (smoothness), Kledata (Moistening)⁴. Swedana helps in limitation of Stambha (stiffness), Gaurava (heaviness), Sheeta (cold) by inducing Sweda (sweating)⁵. Together this procedure can be executed to attain benefits like Mruduta, Twak Prasadana, srotoshodhana, overcoming Stabdhata of Sandhi, and ease of movements- Cheshta⁶. Though Ksheera *Dhooma* is considered as type of *Sweda*, it is termed as *Dhooma* because steam is inhaled with gaping mouth.

POORVA KARMA

- 1) Collection of necessary equipment Sambhara Sangraha
- 2) Preparation of medicaments Dravya Siddhata
- 3) Preparation of patient Atura Siddhata
- 1) COLLECTION OF NECESSARY EQUIPMENTS -SAMBHARA SANGRAHA
- i) Raw drugs/ ingredients for Ksheera Dhooma⁷
- (1) Balamoola Qwatha Churna 12 Pala
- (2) Water 12 *Prastha*
- (3) Go Dugdha 3 Prastha
- (4) Medicated oil quantity sufficient for the purpose of Abhyanga
- (5) Kamala 2-5 nos.
- ii) Equipment
- (1) A large vessel with a lid having narrow opening Nadi Swedana Yantra or a pressure cooking with heat and leak resistant long tube being fit to its nozzle tightly.
- (2) Stove, lighter
- (3) Blanket, bath towel
- (4) Bandage cloth, cotton swab or large pieces of cotton cut uniformly into square shapes, tissue papers, sterile cloth
- (5) Massage table, reclining chair
- 2) PREPARATION OF MEDICAMENTS- DRAVYA SIDDHATA8
- i) 12 Pala of Balamoola Qwatha Churna is added to 12 Prastha of water and heated on low flame till it is reduced to 3 Prastha. The decoction is filtered, and filtrate is collected.
- ii) 3 Prastha of Go Ksheera is taken in a pressure cooker attached to a rubber tube and kept boiling.
- iii) To this boiling milk, the freshly prepared filtrate of the Balamoola Kashaya is added.
- iv) The lid is closed, and heating is continued on low flame to produce Ksheera Dhooma.
- 3) PREPARATION OF PATIENT ATURA **SIDDHATA**
- i) Patient is thoroughly examined to obtain the Prakriti and Vikriti in detail. Suitability of the procedure, to the patient and disease is assessed.
- ii) Patient is asked to pass natural urges of urine and stool and must be in empty stomach.
- iii) Patient is made to lie down on the massage table.

- iv) Oil suitable to disease and patient is selected.
- v) Ekanga or Sarvanga Abhyanga is carried out as per disease condition.
- vi) Amalaki Tala Dharana

A small ring is constructed over the crown of the scalp with paste of Amalaki (Emblica officinalis) and freshly churned buttermilk. Space within the ring is filled with coolant oils like ChandanaBalaLakshadi Taila, KsheeraBala Taila. Lakshadi taila etc. Over this. Vatahara patra like Nirgundi (Vitex nigundo), Eranda (Ricinus communis), Kadali (Musa paradisiaca) etc are placed and fastened with a bandage cloth to wrap around the constructed ring and a knot is tied behind the ear.

Tala Dharana gives a coolant effect on body and mind, preventing side effects of excess heating.

vii) Netra Bandhana

If the area of Swedana involves face, as in case of Ardita, then protection of eyes is very essential. Lotus petals dipped in water are placed over closed eyes and tied with bandage cloth, loosely knotted behind the head.

In non-availability if lotus petals, one can use sterile cotton pads dipped in milk, squeezed and kept damp on closed eyes, ties with a bandage and loosely knotted behind.

viii) Hridaya Pradesha Rakshana

While Sarvanga Swedana is done or Swedana is directed to chest region, one has to cover the precordial region with wet lotus petals or cotton pads dipped in cold water

PRADHANA KARMA

- 1. The patient is made to lie down comfortably on the massage table. Ekanga or Sarvanga Abhyanga is given with ChandanaBalaLakshadi KsheeraBala Taila, Lakshadi taila based on the disease condition. Generally, a gentle massage is given for 20-30 minutes.
- 2. The patient subjected to Abhyanga is made to sit comfortably on the chair.
- 3. The steam from the pressure cooker is directed to the required part like joints or face according to necessity, by the rubber tube attached at the nozzle of the cooker.

- 4. This procedure is mainly practised for diseases affecting above the neck region. Hence the person is advised to slowly inhale the vapours coming from the rubber tube through his mouth, keeping his mouth wide open, so as to expose the tongue.
- 5. While Ksheera Dhooma is being administered, the rest of the body of the patient is covered with a blanket up to shoulders.
- 6. The procedure is conducted for 25-30 minutes or till Samyak Swinna Lakshanas like Sweda Pradurbhava over forehead etc are obtained.
- 7. Properly done Swedana karma brings about the following benefits
- Sheetoparama- pacification of cold feeling
- Shooloparama-pacification of pain
- Stambha Nigraha- reduction of stiffness
- Gaurava Nigraha- reduction of heaviness
- Mardava smoothness of body or body parts⁹
- Sweda Pradurbhava- sweating of body parts subjected to fomentation even after cessation of Swedana
- Roga Lakshana Prashamana- pacification or reduction of symptoms of disease
- Sheetarthitvam- liking towards cold objects¹⁰
- 8. Care should be taken to avoid deficit or excessive sweating.
- 9. Symptoms of deficient fomentation are opposite to proper sweating and are as follows:
- Dehasya Gurutva- heaviness of body
- Dehasya Kaathinya- hardness of the body or lack of smoothness
- *Ushnabhilasha* liking towards warm objects¹¹.
- 10. Criteria to assess excessive fomentation are:
- Pitta Prakopa- aggravation of pitta
- Murcha- loss if consciousness
- Shareera Sadana- weakness of body
- *Bhrama* giddiness
- Daha- burning sensation
- Swara Dourbalya- weakness of voice¹²
- Sandhi Peeda- joint discomfort
- Sphototpatti- formation of blisters over the part subjected to Swedana
- *Trishna* excessive thirst¹³

PASCHAT KARMA

- 1. After the Samyak Swinna Lakshanas are observed, the steaming tube is directed away from the patient and the contents are discarded.
- 2. Sterile cloth or tissue papers are used to wipe off sweat from the face.
- 3. Removal of Talam- Amalaki Talam is gently removed and the scalp is wiped with sterile cloth or cotton pads dipped in sterile water.
- 4. Patient is advised to relax for a while and to avoid exposure to wind, excessive heat and cold weather.
- 5. After resting for a while, the patient is instructed to take a hot water bath.

DISCUSSION

Ksheera Dhooma is a unique treatment where a patient is treated with *Dhooma* or steam emerging from heating medicated milk decoction. With the vapours of milk decoction, the body part sweats, and this opens up the pores. This helps in relieving the inflammation and stiffness of the affected parts. The treatment also allows movement of elements through the channels. It is widely practised in facial palsies, speech disorders, ptosis, interpalpebral muscle palsy etc.

Generally steaming is contra indicated in Jatrurdhwa Pradesha (region above head and neck) because of presence of about 37 Marma Sthanas in this region¹⁴. These are important structures of anatomical and physiological importance which are sensitive to intense heat. Use of hot water for head bath is also contraindicated on the same grounds. Hence very mild heat has to be supplied for the purpose of Swedana.

PROCEDURAL EFFECT

- Abhyanga followed by Snigdha Sweda in the form of Ksheera Dhooma relieves Stabdhata by Ushna Guna, Rukshata by Snigdha Guna, Sthanika Srotovivarana by Ushna Guna, Mridutva and Balya effects are achieved by steam of mixture of Ksheera and Balamoola Qwatha.
- Dhooma of Ksheera and Balamoola Kashaya is one of the best Brimhana Chikitsa, which can normalise Bodhaka Kapha Vikruti¹⁵.
- Swedana has the quality to excite the nerve endings and thus improve tactile sensibility.
- Primary dilation of capillary vessels is seen due to the vasomotor nerve influence.
- Swedana also improves the strength of striated voluntary muscles.
- This procedure helps in vasodilation and is effective in diseases like paralysis, where vasoconstriction is the root pathology.

EFFECT OF DRUG

Based on the disease condition and Dosha involvement, one has to plan the use of drugs efficiently.

1. KSHEERA - being the common drug for all conditions, is considered first for discussion:

Table 1: Showing qualities of *Go Ksheera*

Dravya	Rasa	Guna	Veerya	Vipaka	Karma		
Go	Madhura	Mrudu, Snigdha, Shlakshna, Picchila,	Sheeta	Madhura	Jeevaniya,	Rasayana,	Balya,
ksheera		Bahala, Guru			Raktapitta N	ashana	

Madhura quality of goksheera is SaptaDhatuVardhaka and Indriva Prasadaka helps in DhatuKshaya and improves sensory functions. Due to its Snighdha property it will mitigate Vatadosha. Guru Guna of Go Ksheera stabilizes the normalcy of Kapha Dosha. Use of milk for external purposes is indicated in following conditions:

- In degenerative diseases like SandhiVata
- To calm burning sensation

- To pacify nerve irritation and nerve pain
- To nourish and strengthen muscles and ligaments. Some of the drugs which can be used specific to different diseases are enlisted as follows
- 1. IN DISEASES AFFECTING PARTS ABOVE NECK REGION. **ALONG** WITH **SPEECH** DISTURBANCES AS IN ARDITA, HANUGRAHA, **SVARABHANGA**

The drugs selected are *Vatashamaka*, promote strength and work towards reducing inflammation of the facial nerve. They act as good nervine tonic, remove neuritic atrophy and synaptic loss. Vacha is specifically beneficial in treating slurred speech by preventing neurodegeneration and improving speech function.

Table 2: Showing qualities of drugs for Jatrurdhwa Gata Vata Vikara

Dravya	Rasa	Guna	Veerya	Vipaka	Karma
Balamoola Madhura		Laghu, Snigdha,	Sheeta	Madhura	Balya, Brimhaneeya, Vatashamana
(Sida cordifolia)		Pichhila			
Rasna	Tikta	Guru	Ushna	Katu	Kaphavatashamana, Vayasthapana
(Plucha lanceolata)					
Vacha Katu, Tikta		Laghu,	Ushna	Katu	Vakswaraprada, Sheetaprashamana,
(Acorus calamus)		Teekshna			Medhya, Kanthya
Ashwagandha	Katu, Tikta,	Snigdha, Laghu	Ushna	Katu	Balya, Pushtiprada, Vrushya,
(Withania somniferaa)	Kashaya				Rasayani

2. NEURALGIA ASSOCIATED WITH STIFFNESS AS IN CERVICAL SPONDYLOSIS, FROZEN SHOULDER

The combination of drugs in *Dashamoola* are proven to be analgesic, anti-inflammatory, anti-arthritic and anti-rheumatic combination¹⁶.

Table 3: Showing qualities of *Dashamoola*

Dravya	Rasa	Guna	Veerya	Vipaka	Karma
Bilwa (Aegle marmelos)	Tikta, Katu,	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Shothahara, anti-inflammatory
	Kashaya				
Agnimantha (Premna	Tikta, Katu,	Laghu Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Shothahara, Sheetaprashaman,
serratifolia)	Kashaya				Vatashamana
Shyonaka (Oroxylum indicum)	Tikta, Kashaya	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Shothahara, Sheetaprashamana
Patala (Stereospermum	Tikta, Kashaya	Laghu, Ruksha	Anushna	Katu	Shothahara, anti-inflammatory
sauveolens)			sheeta		
Gambhari (Gmelina arborea)	Madhura, Tikta,	Guru	Ushna	Katu	Shothahara, Dahaprashaman
	Kashaya				
Brihati (Solanum indicum)	Katu, Tikta	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Shothara, Kantya
Shalaparni (desmodium	Madhura, Tikta	Guru, Snigdha	Ushna	Madhura	Angamarda Prashamana,
gangeticum)					Shothahara, Balya
Prishniparni (Uraria picta)	Madhura, Tikta	Guru, Snigdha	Ushna	Madhura	Angamarda Prashamana,
					Shothahara
Gokshura (Tribulus terrestris)	Madhura	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	Shothahara, anti-inflammatory

3. IN CONDITIONS WHERE THERE IS PITTA **DUSHTI** ALONG WITH VATA AS IN VISARPA

Combination of Ksheera with Pittahara drugs acts highly effective against diseases where Vata and Pitta co-exist. Dhooma has anti-viral and anti-microbial action as well. It also helps to relieve nerve irritation in

Visarpa and decreases symptoms like burning sensation, prior Abhyanga with Shatadhauta Ghrita is advisable. Some of the drugs which can be used are selected from the Lepa Chikitsa for Visarpa and are as follows¹⁷.

Table 4: Showing qualities of drugs which can be used for *Visarpa*

Dravya	Rasa	Guna	Veerya	Vipaka	Karma
Yashtimadhu	Madhura	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	Kandughna, Varnya, Rasayana,
(Glycyrrhiza glabra)					Jeevaniya
Nyagrodha (Ficus	Kashaya	Guru, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Vranaghna, Visarpaghna,
bengalensis)					Shophapaha
Kadalikanda (musa	Madhura,	Guru, Ruksha	Sheeta	Madhura	Balya, KaphaPittahara
paradisica)	Kashaya				
Chandana (Santalum	Tikta, Madhura	Laghu, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Daha Prashamana, Angamarda
album)					Prashamana, Kandughna
Sariva (Hemidesmus	Madhura, Tikta	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	Daha Prashamana, Jwarahara,
indicus)					Kandughna
Utpala (Nymphaea	Madhura,	Laghu, Snigdha,	Sheeta	Madhura	Raktapitta Prashamana,
alba)	Kashaya, Tikta	Picchila			Dahanashana

4. IN CONDITIONS WHERE VATA AND RAKTA ARE INVOLVED TOGETHER AS IN VATARAKTA

Ksheera Dhooma helps in providing strength to joints and soft tissues, at the same time helps in relieving pain and burning sensation. It should not be very hot but mild fomentation can be done, after prior Abhyanga with disease suitable oils like Pinda Taila. KsheeraBala Taila.

Table 5: Showing qualities of drugs indicated in *Vatarakta*

Dravya	Rasa	Guna	Veerya	Vipaka	Karma		
Madhuka	Madhura	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	Kandughna, Balakrit, Vranashothapaha		
(glycirrhiza glabra)							
Ashwattha (Ficus	Kashaya,	Guru, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Tridoshaghna, Pittasraghna,		
religiosa)	Madhura				Dahaprashamana		
Priyala Madhura		Snigdha,	Sheeta	Madhura	Pittakaphasraghna,		
(Buchanania lenzan)		Guru, Sara			Dahajwaratrishapaham, Balya		
Daruharidra	Tikta,	Laghu,	Ushna	Katu	Ruja nashayet, Kandu Nashayet,		
(Berberis aristata)	Kashaya	Ruksha			Visarpahara, Twak Dosha Hara		
Ushira ¹⁸ (Vetiveria	Tikta,	Ruksha,	Sheeta	Katu	Kushtahara, Vranahara,		
zizanoides)	Madhura	Laghu			DahaPrashamana, Angamarda		
					Prashamana		

Special consideration to AjaKsheera is given in the management of Vatarakta for purpose of external application of Lepas¹⁹. Hence, the same can be incorporated even here, and instead of Go Ksheera, one can use AjaKsheera for better results.

Table 6: Showing qualities of Aja Ksheera

Dravya	Rasa	Guna	Verya	Vipaka	Karma
Aja Ksheera	Kashaya, Madhura	Laghu	Katu	Sheeta	Rasashukra Pushtida, anti-inflammatory

5. TO IMPROVE COMPLEXION

Ksheera Dhooma also enhances colour and complexion of the skin. It removes skin debris and cleanses the pores. By enhancing blood supply and proper nerve conduction, it helps in detoxification and keeps the skin healthy and immune against diseases. Varnya Dashemani of Charaka²⁰ can be taken into consideration here.

6. IN TAMAKA SHWASA

Milk processed with coarse powder of Yashtimadhu is used for producing Ksheera Dhooma. This is practised by some of the physicians and has been observed to provide instant relief from breathlessness, clears breathing passages and makes breathing easy.

7. IN VARICOSE VEINS

Use of Manjishtadi Ksheera Dhooma in combination with Virechana and Raktamokshana was found effective in relieving the patient from pain, edema, skin pigmentation and induration²¹.

8. IN THE MANAGEMENT OF TRIGEMINAL **NEURALGIA**

Ayurvedic Panchakarma treatments like Nasya Karma, Ksheera Dhooma, Ghrita Pana, Lepa and Karna Poorana found to be useful in management of acute pain episodes of Trigeminal Neuralgia²².

LIMITATIONS OF THE PROCEDURE

- It has to be carefully administered or avoided in a patient with a history of cardiac diseases or breathlessness of cardiac origin and those patients who panic on taking vapours.
- It has to be absolutely avoided in cases of uncontrolled hypertension, Glaucoma and in people with sensitive skin.

CONCLUSION

Ksheera Dhooma is a Snigdha variety of Nadi Sweda, mainly practised in VataVyadhi affecting regions above the neck like Ardita, Hanugraha etc. It pacifies Vata and gives Brimhana effect. Mode of action is based on the medicine taken for treatment along with procedural effects. The procedure has a scope of innovative treatment planning based on disease condition and Dosha Avastha. It can be skilfully planned as a single treatment or in combination with other external therapies and oral medications. It is a unique traditional practise with multifold application, and an area where in detail research works can be further carried out.

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