

A REVIEW ON *DINACHARYA* MODALITIES W.S.R TO *ABHYANGA* AS A PROPHYLACTIC MEASURE

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ABSTRACT

Abhyanga is one among the *Dinacharya* and it is a kind of *Bahyasneha*. It gives strength to the body, nourishes the sense organs, increases longevity etc. it is the most natural and powerful method of relaxing and at the same time rejuvenating the body. *Abhyanga* preserves the body energy and saves the individual from degeneration. Is also works as a cleanser and helps the individual in expelling the toxins out of the body through sweat, urine and mucus, thus rejuvenating the body. It is done to whole body or to a particular part of the body (*Shira, Karna, Pada etc*). *Abhyanga* has been highlighted with its wide spectrum of usage both for preventive and curative purpose. *Abhyanga* can be correlated to massage in contemporary science. The term is applied to certain manipulations of soft tissue which are effectively performed with the *palmar* aspect of the hand and administered for the purpose of producing effect on nervous system, muscular system as well as on the local and general circulation of blood and lymph.

Keywords: *Abhyanga*, massage, *Dinacharya*

INTRODUCTION

Abhyanga has been explained in the contest of *Dinacharya*¹, *Ritucharya*² for *Swashta* and as a *Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa*³ in diseased. Thus it can be performed in healthy individual and in diseased to maintain the health and to cure the disease respectively. Practically it is seen that *Abhyanga* is advised as *Poorvakarma* to *Shodhana karma*, *Pradhanakarma* in many *Vataja* disorders and *Paschatkarma* after *Vyayama*. As a part of *Dinacharya* if one practices it daily will prevent the ageing process, exertion and aggravation of *Vata*, bestows good vision, nourishment of the body, long life, good sleep and improves the quality of skin¹. In modern science *Abhyanga* is compared with oil massage. It is group of proce-

dures done with hands on the external surface of the body in variety of ways either with a curative, palliative or hygienic point of view⁴.

Aim and Objective:

To review the literature regarding *Abhyanga*
To review the literature regarding effects and scientific documentation regarding prophylactic effect of *Abhyanga*

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The word *Abhyanga* is derived from the word *Ang Dhatu* – to smear *Abhi Upasrga*⁵– Hence; *Abhyanga* is defined as rubbing with any kind of *Sneha Dravya* (unctuous substances).

Description of *Abhyanga* is available in *Bruhat Trayis*, *Sharangadhara* and *Bhavapraka-*

sha as for prevention and cure of disease. Other than Ayurvedic text the description of *Abhyanga* is also available in *Vatsyayana Kamasutra* as one among the 64 *Kala* (art) which has been specifically explained to enhance sexual power of an individual and in *Bahvishya Purana* different techniques of massage have been explained which specifies importance of pressure on different parts. The synonyms⁶ of *Abhyanga* are *Abhyanjana*, *Snehana*, *Vimardana* and *Samvahana*.

Types:⁷

According to *Vatsyayana Kamasutra*

- *Samvahana*- whole body massage
- *Keshamardana*- head massage
- *Utsadana*- massage with *Kalka* (paste)/*sneha*

According to **Tiruka** (author of text of *Angamardana*)

- *Shushkangamardana*
- *Tailangamardana*
- *Ksheerangamardana*
- *Swayam Angamardana*
- *Yamalangamardana*

According to **Charaka Samhita**⁸

- *Shiroabhyanga*
- *padabhyanga*
- *karnapoorana*

According to **Ashtanga Hrudaya**⁹

- *Shiroabhyanga*
- *padabhyanga*
- *karnapoorana*

Procedure¹⁰

1. *Poorvakarma*

The person should undergo *Abhyanga* only when he feels hunger (*Jata Annapanecha*)

The vitals should be checked.

The *Sneha* used for the purpose of *Abhyanga* should be indirectly warmed by keeping it over the hot water.

2. *Pradhanakarma*

First importance should be given to *Shira* (head) *Sravana* (ears) and *Pada* (foot). After

this the *Abhyanga* should be done in a synchronized manner by the two therapists standing in each side of the person in 7 postures- sitting, supine, left lateral, prone, right lateral, supine, sitting.

It is mentioned that *Abhyanga* should be performed in *Anulomagati*. Also explained the specific direction of movement depending on involvement of *Dosha* ie, *Anuloma Gati* in *Vata Dushti*, *Pratiloma Gati* in *Kapha Dushti* and alternate *Pratiloma* and *Anuloma Gati* in *Pitta Dushti*¹¹. On joints abdomen and buttocks should be in circular manner.

3. *Paschatkarma*

The procedure of *Abhyanga* should be followed by removal of the oil with a cloth, *Swedana* and *Snana*.

Penetration of *Sneha* to different *Dhatu*¹²(Therapeutic duration)

It is mentioned that it takes 300 *Matrakala* (approximately 1.5 mts) for *Sneha* to penetrate *Romakupa* (hair roots), 400 *Matrakala* (2.1 mts) to penetrate *Twak*, 500 *Matrakala* (2.6 mts) to penetrate *Rakta*, 600 *Matrakala* (3.1 mts) for *Mamsa*, 700 *Matrakala* (3.6 mts) for *Meda*, 800 *Matrakala* (4.2 mts) for *Asti* and 900 *Matrakala* (4.7 mts) for *Majja*.so for the complete benefit of *Abhyanga* one should perform it for 35 mts, 5 mts in each 7 postures.

Oil according to *Prakruti*

¹³

Sl No	<i>Prakruti</i>	<i>Taila</i>
1	<i>Vatapitta</i>	<i>Himasagarataila</i>
2	<i>Pittakapha</i>	<i>Chandanaadi taila</i> , <i>Ksheerabalataila</i>
3	<i>Kaphavata</i>	<i>Tila taila</i> , <i>bruhatsaindhavadi taila</i>

Oil according to Ritu

Si No	Ritu	Taila
1	Shishira & Hemantha	Laksjhaadi taila, Karpoo-raadi Taila, Tila taila
2	Vasanta	Triphala taila, Bruhat saindahvadi taila
3	Greeshma & Varsha	Ashvagandha bala lakshadi taila
4	Sharat ritu	Chandanadi taila

Benefits

It mitigates *Vata*, *Pustida* (nourishment), *Nidrajanaka* (induces good sleep), *Twachya* (good lustrous skin), *Bruhatwakrut* (gives strength to body) *Sramahara* (cures tiredness), *Jarapaha* (delays aging), *Drustiparsadana* (improves vision), *Ayuprada* (improves longevity), *Kaphavatahara* (mitigates the *vata* and *kapha*)

Indications¹⁴

All healthy individuals

Abhyanga specially indicated for *Bala* (children), *Vrudha* (old age people) and *Krusha* (undernourished people).

All type of *Vataroga* (nervous disorders), *Vishmajwara* (intermittent fever) and all *Twakvikara* (skin diseases).

Contra indication¹⁵

Kaphajaroga (*Kaphaja* disorders), *Ajeerna* (indigestion), *Navajwara* (acute fevers), and *Tarunajwara* (recent fevers), after *Shodhanakarma* (bio-purification), in *Santarpanotharoga* (over nutritious disorders), immediately after consumption of food because there is chance of regurgitation of food articles and delay in digestion, person accustomed to *Ruksha* and *Abhishyandhi Ahara*, it act as *Satmyavirudha* to the individual and during *Sneahpana*.

Types and Benefits of Abhyanga**Shiroabhyanga (head massage)**

Kapala and *Indriya tarpana¹⁶* (nourishes the brain and sensory and motor organs), will not suffer from *Shirashoola* (prevents headache),

Khalitya (baldness), *Palithya* (graying of hair), *Keshapatana* (hair fall), increases the *Bala* of *Shira* (strengthens the scalp) and *Kapalaa*, the hairs will be strong black and long, there will be *Indriyaprasada* (strengthens the sense organs), good for skin and renders sound sleep¹⁷. ***Karna Abhyanga/Tarpana/Poorana (massage to ears)***

Hanu, *Manya*, *Shira*, and *Karna Shoolaghna¹⁸* (relieves pain from neck and facial region). The person will not suffer from *Vataja Karnarogas*, *Manya* and *Hanusangrana* will not suffers from *Uchasruti* or *Badhirya* (deafness) who dose *karnatarpana* daily¹⁹.

Padabhyanga (foot massage)

Kharatwa, (dryness of foot), *Rooksata* (roughness of foot), *Srama* (tiredness) and *Suptata* of *Pada* (numbness of foot) will be relived immediately after *Padabhyanga*, increases the *Sukumarata*, *Bala* and *Sthirya* of *Pada* (strength and stability of foot), improves the vision, mitigates *Vata*. By doing *Padabhyanga* the person will not suffer from *Gridhrasi* (sciatica), *Padasputana* (cracking of foot), *Sira* and *Snayu Sankocha²⁰* (stiffness of tendons and ligaments).

The simile have been quoted that disease do not go near one who massages his feet before sleeping just as snake do not approach eagles²¹.

Abhyanga for Bala (child)

Susrutacharya have mentioned that the *Abhyanga* for baby should be done with *Balataila²²* (a type of medicated oil). It improves growth, renders good sleep and nourishes the *Dhatu* (tissues). Newborn is in growing phase, and growth velocity is highest in this period of life, which demands continuous nutrition. Also it is the time of development of central nervous system along with senses and *Abhyanga* helps in the healthy growth and development of baby.

Abhyanga for Garbhini (pregnant women)

Garbhini Abhyanga is only mentioned in *Yogaratanakara* in *Ksheeradosha Chikkitsa*.

In practical life also it is been practiced. Mainly *Vatahara* and *Balya Tails* (oils mitigating *Vata* and strengthening type) are used for this. While doing *Abhyanga* care should be taken that it should not be done with more pressure and the lady should be seated in her comfortable posture.

Abhyanga for Sutikastree (puerperal period)

As per *Charaka Samhita* and *Ashtanga Sangraha Sutikastree* should be done *Abhyanga* with *Sarpi* (ghee) and *Taila* (oil). In *Ashtanga Sangraha* again he specified the *Taila* as *Balataila*. *Susrutacharya* also have been mentioned *Balataila* for *Abhyanga*.

Bhavaprakasha mentioned *Sutikastree* should undergo daily *Abhyanga* and *Swedada* for one month.

Modern view on Abhyanga

Definition- massage, it's a group of procedures which are usually done with hands on the external tissue of the body in variety of way either with a curative palliative and hygienic point of view²³. In general massage has been classified as dry massage, powder massage and oil massage. And there are four techniques told for massage that is stroking, petrissage, friction, tapotment.

DISCUSSION

Mode of action of massage- Ayurvedic view

Oil applied in skin reaches up till *Majja Dhatu* and does nourishment of each *Dhatu*, if done for sufficient time and there by subsides disease related to particular *Dhatu*.

The site of *Vata* being *Twak* (skin) oil applied directly to skin mitigates *Vata*. *Stana* for *Bhrajaka Pitta* is in *Twak* which helps in easy and good absorptio²⁴. *Dashadhamanies* which starts from *Hrudaya* makes many networks and finally opens into *Romakoopa*. So oil will

be absorbed in skin and circulates through *Dhamanies*.

As per our classics *Abhyanga* is to be done in *Anuloma* direction, as the strokes will be in the direction of muscle fiber i.e., origin and insertion, and in circular manner in joints as the muscle bulk will be less and vasculature will be more and in circular manner.

Karnapoorana, *Karnatarpana* and *Karna Abhyanga* are mentioned under *Karna Abhyanga* only among this practically *Karna Abhyanga* can be done. The mode of action of *Karna Abhyanga* and *Karnapoorana* is that it comes under local levels of drug administration and the drug is absorbed through the mucous membrane of auditory canal, thus there will be provision of adequate concentration of the administered drug at this site of its action. The medicine poured into the ears thus produce immediate therapeutic effects²⁵.

While explaining the *Poorvakarma* it is told that *Abhyanga* should be performed when the subject feels hunger (*Jata Annapanecha*) it indirectly tells that the subject should be in empty stomach otherwise there will be chances of regurgitation of food materials and the digestion also will be delayed. In the benefits of *Padabhyanga* other than local benefits *Drushtiprasadana* is explained to substantiate that we will get a reference from *Ashtanga Hrudaya* that in the centre of foot two *Siras* are situated which is connected to the eyes. Any vitiation to these *Siras* causes abnormalities to the eyes and through these *Siras* the effect of drugs on external application to *Pada* is transmitted to the eyes²⁶.

In modern view the effect of massage can be assumed in two ways- by physical manipulation and by the effect of drug in medicated oil by absorption.

By physical manipulation

- Mechanical emptying of veins and lymphatic's by contraction of smooth muscles.

When the contraction increases beyond threshold the valves get open and the fluid moves to next segment thus facilitate the forward movement of venous blood²⁷.

- Improves the blood circulation of the area being massaged
- Increases RBC, HB count.
- Helps in removal of waste products.
- Increase in serum myoglobin secretion in case of muscle tension and pain²⁸.
- Massage is having the analgesic effect which is supported by the pain gate theory²⁹ i.e., by stimulating the peripheral receptors like touch and pressure which may release anti pain substance and helps in relieving pain.
- The adhesions present between the fibers are broken and maximum mobility between fibers and the adjacent structures are ensured.
- Percussion and vibration techniques of massage assist the removal of secretion from the large airways.

Absorption through skin

Absorption through the skin is due to their lipid solubility since the epidermis behaves as a lipid barrier. Dermis is freely permeable to many solutes. So the absorption via skin can be enhanced by suspending the drug in an oil vehicle and rubbing³⁰.

CONCLUSION

Abhyanga is a procedure in which oil is smeared all over the body, it improves blood circulation and helps in conveying the nourishment and oxygen to the various parts of the body. It helps to improve the skin activity. It stimulates the nervous system. It delays aging process. These benefits of *Abhyanga* can be achieved by having it daily or twice in week with suitable oil as a prophylactic measure to promote health and to achieve a disease free state.

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