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Abhyanga : Different contemporary massage technique and its importance in Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a 'science of life' which provides not only curative but also preventive principles for healthy and long life. Ayurveda is a life style, a science and an art of appropriate living that ensures health and longevity of human being. *Abhyanga* (oil massage) which is one among the *Dinacharya*, is also a part of pre therapeutic procedures of *Panchakarma*. *Abhyanga* is to be considered in *Snehana* therapy. As it nourishes the senses of mind and gives the strength. but if done in any region like localised in head, neck, legs etc then it is termed as *Shiroabhyanga*, *Padabhyanga* etc. Full body massage gives strength to whole body but localised massage gives strength to that particular part of the body. Localised massage can be practised by oneself. Thus it is easy to practise. But for *Abhyanga* one need to be dependent on massage trainer. The instructions to be followed under localised massage also. It gives its benefits; when it is done in right manner only.

Key words: *Abhyanga*, *massage*, *Snehana*, *oleation*.

INTRODUCTION

Abhyanga (oil massage) which is one among the *Dinacharya*, is also a part of pre therapeutic procedures of *Panchakarma*. *Abhyanga* comes under the classification of the *Bahya Snehana*.^[1] Oleation or *Snehana* is told as *Purva Karma* of *Panchakarma*. *Snehana* is further divided into *Bahya* and *Abhyantara* types, obviously *Abhyanga* comes under the former type *Bahya*. In the classics of Ayurveda there are different types of Massages mentioned according to the need and method. *Abhyanga* word is derived from the Sanskrit root *Anga* meaning movement and the

prefix *Abhi* meaning different against or contrary. Those who need positive health and preventing and curing his diseases should use *Abhyanga* every day. *Abhyanga* retards ageing, overcomes fatigue and annihilates effects of aggravated vata. It improves clarity of vision, nourishes the body. It promotes longevity, good sleep, good skin and a sturdy physique. Regular massage should be performed over whole body including head ear and soles.

Definition

Massage of the body with the help of *Taila*, *Ghrita* etc. in the same direction of the body (*Anulomana Gati*) is called as *Abhyanga*.

Paryaya

The two synonyms of *Abhyanga* are *Abhyanjana* and *Snehana*.

Abhyanjana

The word *Abhyanjana* derived from the root *Anj* by adding of *Abhi Upsarga* with *Lyt Pratyaya* which means to smear or to Anoint (Shabda Kalpa Druma). The word *Abhyanjana* means applying oil all over body including *Shirah* (Head).

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Results in Better Digestion and Intestinal Function

Massage procedure increases the body's secretions and excretions. It also increases the production of gastric juices, saliva and urine. There is an increased excretion of nitrogen, inorganic phosphorus and salt also. Thus results in increasing of metabolic rate.

Relieves of Acute and Chronic pain

Massage may promote recovery from the fatigue and from aches and pains.^[8]

CONCLUSION

Abhyanga is one of the procedures to be practiced routinely in the system of once living. Different type of massage explained in Ayurveda and modern helps man to prevent the common health hazards. These will helps to lead healthy life. Massage has been used for centuries for both therapeutic and preventing purposes. Massage may also stimulate the release of endorphins and reducing level of certain stress hormones. Massage heals damaged muscle, stimulate circulation, clear waste product via lymphatic system, boost immune system, reduce pain and tension and induce a calming effect. *Abhyanga, Udwaratana, Samvahana*, nourishes *Dhatus*, pacifies the *Doshas*, relives fatigue, provide stamina pleasure and perfect sleep, nourishes all parts of the body. So everyone should do different massage technique explained in modern and Ayurveda.

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CONCLUSION

Body parts are manipulated during massage and udvartana hence benefit of passive exercise can be obtained through this procedure although intensity of the benefit may vary. Daily practice of abhyanga conceal the age related change specially maintaining the skin and muscle health. It removes waste material from the body by facilitating sweat excretion as well as by improve circulation. Improve circulation further associated with improve nutrition of the body, excretion of morbid matter from the tissue, hence it removes srama (tiredness), improves body strength and endurance power. Further blighted kapha and meda helps to prevents several disease specifically non-communicable diseases and over all it can be concluded that abhyanga effectively helps in disease prevention, health preservation as well as health promotion.

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5. **Drava Guna** – *Drava* means liquid nature, which causes humidity. By this *Snehana* drug if liquefies the *Doshas* and mobilizes them by increasing their flowing capacity. This *guna* spread quickly and bring moistening effect.
6. **Picchil Guna** – *Picchil* means slimy. It causes slimness in the body. It increases *Kapha dosha* and produces heaviness in the body. It increases body strength and maintains longevity, Thereby helps in the integrity and firmness of the body.
7. **Sara Guna** – The common meaning of *Sara* is mobility. It mobilizes the *Doshas and Malas* i.e. waste products by this property.
8. **Manda Guna** – This *guna* is indicative of sluggishness. *Manda guna* causes sluggishness of activity of *sneha dravya*. It remains in the contact with *Doshas, Dhatus* and *Malas* of body for long period.
9. **Sukshma Guna** – *Sukshma* guna means minute. This *guna* helps the drug to enter in the fine channels. This penetrating character of *sneha* is responsible for quick action of medicine.

In this way *Abhyanga* acts through the above properties of *Sneha*. It helps in fast penetration of oil deep into tissues throughout the body. Oil is capable of entering into minute pores thus promote proper functioning of *Vata dosha* and body channels by increased trans-dermal absorption of nutrients. Here all the properties are opposite to the properties *Vata dosha*, hence *Abhyanga* is considered useful treatment in the diseases occurred by provoked *Vata dosha*.

DISCUSSION

Abhyanga delays ageing, reduces stress since it is evident to reducing physiological dealings of strain, including hormonal (cortisol, epinephrine and nor-epinephrine) as well as physical (heart rate and blood pressure) variables.^[45] *Abhyanga* stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system to slow down heart rate and breathing, calm down musculature and recover digestion.^[46] This had been described as *deeptagni, shuddha kosta* in benefits of *abhyanga*. Massage augments release of endorphin, which are pain reducing neurotransmitters. Also stop transmission of pain signals, so *abhyanga* said to be *abhigata sahatva, dagdha, bhagna, kusta, rujapaha*.^[47] *Abhyanga* causes sound sleep by decreasing Beta Brainwave activity; this directed to amplify release of relaxing neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine. It decreases release of cortisol levels which facilitates deep sleep induction.^[48]

Massage dilates superficial blood vessels & enhances the rate of blood flow.^[49] It also cause assistance in overall cellular function by increasing production of skin-nurturing sebum which protects, cools, calm and maintains skin's youthful properties.^[50,51]

As *Abhyanga* boost up the lymphatic circulatory system, thus also improve the immunity.^[52] Massage has shown to unsurprisingly improve the immune system's cytotoxic capacity by escalating the Natural Killer. Since cortisol and insulin are associated with impaired immune function, massage be able to facilitate immunity by scheming levels of these stress hormones. Release of Serotonin and bacteria fighting peptides have been linked to enhanced immunity.^[53] *Abhyanga* said to prevail over fatigue, improves strength, increases body muscle mass as regular massage therapy relaxes the muscles and unreceptively stretches and lengthens them, encouraging enhanced blood perfusion to these tissues ultimately leads to healthier oxygen supply and nutrient exchange, Facilitate muscle regenerative property and reduces tension and pain. Flexible muscles around the joints, preserves their integrity and health.^[53]

CONCLUSION

Abhyanga is one of the oldest forms of treatment for human ailments which has proven his utility in prevention and cure of various diseases. *Abhyanga* is a cleanser. It increases self confidence and will power. *Abhyanga* is a powerful non drug method to promote sound sleep. *Abhyanga* done regularly stops premature ageing and thus one remains young and energetic for a long time. It adds luster to the skin and increases beauty. From above these various references we can conclude that *Abhyanga* is a protector, Preserver and a Rejuvenator of the body.

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CONCLUSION

By oil massage the *Sharira* (body) becomes strong and gains resistance to exhaustion caused by stressful jobs. *Ayurveda* says *Abhyanga* (oil massage) should be performed daily or if not daily, at least applying oil to the head, ears and foot is must to lead a healthy life thus showing the importance of massage to the most important parts such as *Shira* (head), *Karna* (ears) and *Pada* (foot). Hypothetically it can be concluded that *Abhyanga* should be done for 10 minutes daily as a part of *Dinacharya* and to treat any condition depending upon the strength, age etc.

Anatomical knowledge of *Shadanga Sharir* is quite beneficial while attempting the process of *Abhyanga*. The various kinds of *Abhyanga* (massage) therapies has been practiced today following the single rule of increase the circulation of vital fluid in the applied part, as well as to stimulate the nervous system to provide a soothing and relaxing effect to the patient. *Abhyanga* should be done in *Anuloma* (to the direction of hair growth) to prevent any damage to the hair roots. It is practiced in circular movements in the joints to facilitate the lymph drainage and venous drainage as most of the lymph nodes are situated in the joint spaces and collateral venous networks are also there in the joint regions so circular movements help in emptying the vessels. All the benefits of *Abhyanga* are directly or indirectly related with the stimulation of autonomic nervous system and central nervous system.

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aging signs for a longer time. The best benefit of daily body massage is that it helps to sleep and also helps get rid of insomnia.

Marma therapy contributes to recharge physical i.e. mechanical & physiological, mental i.e. psychological and spiritual energies.

On the physical level, mechanical effects massage effect category based on manual manipulation of soft tissue. Serves to push blood into and out of the tissue, create changes in muscle fibers, and move food through the digestive system. These effects results from: Squeezing, compressing, pushing, pulling, rubbing and stretching. Physiologic effects Massage effect category based on a direct result of mechanical and psychological effects. These effects can be measured objectively. These effects include changes in: blood pressure and muscle fiber structure, hormone and neurotransmitter levels. It helps to revitalize or reenergize the body tissues; at cellular level, it improves the vital functions like digestion, respiration, blood circulation and excretion

Psychologic effects massage effect category that can be measured subjectively, through the use of questionnaires, surveys, and interviews. These effects include: Tempered anxiety and stress levels, improved well-being, and promotes a mind-body connection. Useful in treating hyperactivity disorders, helpful in treating victims of violence and abuse, directing it in the positive direction, treat many psychosomatic ailments without any drugs. It harmonizes the functioning of nervous and endocrine systems to control psychological disorders.

The spiritual level, reasoning of mind, regulation and transformation of thoughts in positive direction helps to concentrate towards the ultimate goal of life. As a preventive

measure it helps to cope with the situations arising from different diseases.

Conclusion:

Indian system of medicine has a potential to overcome get going problems in today's era. *Marma Sharira* is the one of the principal in it, which can be utilized in a specific way that the health related problem might be abolished in prospective years. The science of vital point helps to maintain the equilibrium in the body likewise Chinese meridian system. This concept of vital point gives opportunity in the field of research. Moreover, it can be utilized in the oleation therapy to provide utmost benefit in minimum time period. So, it is the extensive vision to figure out the applicability of *Marma Sharira* in the domain of oleation therapy.

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A Study which was titled effect of oil massage on growth and neurobehavior in very low birth weight preterm neonates from Department of Pediatrics, Maulana Azad Medical College and Associated Lok Nayak Hospital, New Delhi was done in three groups a) massage with coconut oil (b) massage without oil and (c) no massage indicates that, in group A which was massage with oil showed the improved weight gain was probably due to oil absorption as the weight gain in the only massage group was no different from controls. The mechanism by which cutaneous application of oil improves weight gain is unclear. The early trials on use of cutaneous application of oil for reversal of essential fatty acid deficiency in neonates receiving total parenteral nutrition have documented its absorption and beneficial effect. Hence it is proved that oil application in neonates' leads to weight gain.¹²

C.sleep and wakefulness:

Massage therapy, which causes compression of soft tissue, may counteract negative effects of stress and sleep deprivation by providing tactile-kinesthetic stimulation and increasing parasympathetic (vagal) activity. This may result in stress reduction and is calming for infants. Massage reduces stress hormones, and this in turn may indirectly affect sleep.¹³ Hence both group A and group B shows positive effect on sleep and wakefulness but group A (dhanvantar tail) shows early positive effect on sleep and wakefulness, as it contains of sesame oil, godugdha, jeevaniya gan drayas which are vatshamak, sthairyakar in properties than coconut oil.

Conclusion:

The logical conclusion drawn on basis of discussion was as follows:-

- .Massage therapy is considered a safe practice and there are no significant harmful effects, if performed in the traditional method by a trained person.
- Dhanvantar tail due to its brihaniya, vatahara, jeevaniya, and rasayana properties has shown to be positive effect on physical growth parameters such as weight, length, head circumference, chest circumference after Dhanvantar tail massage.
- Coconut Oil also gives nourishment to body of late preterm and shows positive effect on physical growth in late preterm babies.
- Massage reduces stress hormones, and this in turn may indirectly affect sleep. Hence both group A and group B shows positive effect on sleep and wakefulness but group A (dhanvantar tail) shows early positive effect on sleep and wakefulness, as it contains of til taila, dashmoolas, godugdha, jeevaniya gan drayas which are vatshamak, sthairyakar in properties than coconut oil.
- Coconut Oil also gives nourishment to body of late preterm and shows positive effect on physical growth in late preterm babies.

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IN VATAVYADHI**

AUTHOR : DR.DINESH KR. MEENA*
***JR.3RD DEPT. OF SIDDHANT DARSHANA IMS,BHU VARANASI**



muscle if refreshes the muscle and joints¹².

Mahamasa taila-

Helpful for hemiplegia and other neuromuscular disorders.¹³

Pinda Oil-

Useful for painful arthritis and gout.¹⁴

Satavari oil-

This tail helpful in myalgia, sciatica, stiffening of the body(like a stick and falling down), gout¹⁵

Bala tail-

For neuromuscular disease.¹⁶

Masadi taila (Oil)-

This oil useful in Cervical spondylitis, pain in the shoulder and hand, emaciation of half of the body, convulsion, gripping in the thighs, pain and swelling in the knee joint, bell`s palsy and other neurological disorders.¹⁷

Prasarini taila (Oil)-

This tail helpful in treating hunch-back, lameness, stiffening in the lower limbs and joints (like in lathyrism), sciatica, bell`s palsy and stiffness in the Jaws, back, head, neck, and low back and also other severe condition of Vata imbalance are cured instantly by this medicine.¹⁸

Baladi taila(Oil)-

Useful in suffering with any type of Vata disorder.¹⁹

Mahavisha garbha taila (Oil)-

This taila is useful in pain, joint pain, backache, sciatica, best in painkiller.²⁰

Discussion-

Abhyanga is used either locally to a particular part of the body or are done on the whole body Application of medicated oil can assume in two wayi.e. physical manipulations and the effect of the drug in the medicated oil. Physical manipulation in the form of massage increases the circulation of blood and plasma, it can stimulate and strengthen the lymphatic system and remove internal waste products Application of medicated oil on foot followed by synchronous massage is popularly known as Padabhyanga. Usually Padabhyanga is performed as a part of Sharirabhyanga. In addition to its whole body benefits.

Conclusion-

Thus at last Abhyanga is useful neuromuscular disease, sleep skin problem and maintain youthfulness. It can bind a joint which is too loose and looser a joint that is too rigid so it is most popular demand today for Vata Vyadhis. It can be done regularly to a person for the prevention of several diseases and for the maintenance as well as promotion of positive health. It can also be done as a special therapy for a limited period. This special massage therapy is generally carried out for the purposes of, Rejuvenating the body to prevent and arrest the ageing process; and curing several obstinate and otherwise incurable diseases. Apart from the above mentioned purposes, Abhyanga therapy along with fomentation is also given before administering several categories of elimination therapies like Vamana(Induced vomiting), Virechaana (Purgation), Basti (medicated enema) and Nasya (medicated nasal drops).

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Role of Sesame Oil *Abhyanga* in Daily Routine as a Preventative Measure in *Vatavyadhi*

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ABSTRACT

As mentioned by Acharya Charaka that Oil is the best remedy for *Vatika* disorders. In the oil, most preferable oil is Sesame oil as given by Acharya Charaka in Sutra sthana. The continuous use of Sesame oil alleviates *Vata*, as oil is unctuous (*Snigdha*), hot (*Ushana*), and heavy (*Guru*) while *Vata* being dry (*Ruksha*), cold (*Sheeta*) and light (*Laghu*) is of the opposite nature. Sesame oil *Abhyanga* is the best remedy to protect once from the disorders caused due to imbalanced *Vatadosha*. Here we will know about the importance of Sesame oil *Abhyanga* as a preventative measure in *Vatavyadhi*. As prevention is always better than cure as Ayurveda always focuses on maintaining health through natural practices.

Key Words

Abhyanga, Vatavyadhi, Dincharya, Sesame oil

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INTRODUCTION

Vayu is life, strength and sustainer of creatures. It is the master of all in the nature and in body too. The person whose *Vayu Dosh* is with unimpeded movements and in normal state lives long for hundred years devoid of disorders said by Acharya Charaka. Being the most important of the three *Doshas*, *vatadosha* regulates the functions of *Pitta* and *Kapha* as well. As primary *Dosha* in human body, *Vata* is known to be responsible for all physical processes. Considering these factors, any changes in *Vatadosha* level and *Gauna* may have severe

implications on the body in comparison to the *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas*.

There are five types of *Vayu*. They all in equilibrium and are located in their places performing their normal functions by which body is sustained free from disorders. If these five *Vayu* move on wrong path or are unbalanced and thus they afflict the body with disorders relating to their location and functions and take away life shortly. Most of the disease are caused due to *Vatadosha* while *Sneha*(oil) holds the exact opposite *Gun*as of that of *Vatadosha*. Thus *Abhyanga* will help to normalise unbalance *Vata Dosh*a. When there is the interaction between

innumerable. However, the principal ailment cause by *Vatadosha* are 80 in number. Oil is the best remedy for *Vatadosha*. As given in table no. 3 of the symptoms due to vitiated *Vayu* and the benefits of Sesame oil we can understand *Vatadosha* and *Sneha*(oil) has opposite *Gunas*. *Vayu* is predominant in tactile Sense organ that is in skin, sesame oil *Abhyanga* is the most beneficial for skin, *Abhyanga* destroys *Vata*, softens body and removes retention of excrements.

Acharya Charaka states that as Sesame oil is good for digestive strength thus appetite is normalised by Sesame oil application. As in Ayurveda *Agni* has great importance as *Agnidushti* is the root of all diseases. Balanced *doshasis* the best means of preventing disease and health can mean longer life.

The functioning of the sense organs benefits and improve from the lubricating and releasing actions of oil. A Sesame oil makes tissue stronger and more flexible

CONCLUSION

Imbalance *Vata* produces *Vatavyadhi*. Thus in day to day life we do many activities which are responsible for vitiated *Vatadosha*. The use of Sesame oil alleviates *Vata*, as oil is unctuous (*Snigdha*), hot (*Ushana*), and heavy (*Guru*) while *Vata* being dry (*Ruksha*), cold (*Sheeta*) and light (*Laghu*) is of the opposite nature. In the present era life is running very fast and man has to run faster than his capacity. This is the reason to

imbalance *Vata* and produce *Vatavyadhi*. Sesame oil *Abhyangais* especially useful and pacifying for persons with *Vata* Constitution or excess *Vata*, as it is considered to be very warming and nourishing. It has good ability to be absorbed by the skin and its deep penetrating and rejuvenating properties. Hence Sesame oil *Abhyanga* is a preventative measure in *Vatavyadhi*.

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