



Review Article

Anushastra-Agnikarma and Raktamokshana as Pain Management Modality -The Concept of Acharya Sushruta

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ABSTRACT

Sushruta samhita the first surgical manuscript of Ayurveda science accommodates mostly surgical and parasurgical techniques. Simultaneously it is observed that it has a great contribution in pain management also. In the *nidansthan* which explains pathophysiology of diseases where the first place dedicated to Vatvyadhi and in that chapter all painful disorders are categorized as per the tissue i.e. *dhatu* involved in the pathophysiology. These painful disorders are named as *twakagat*, *raktagat*, *mamsagat*, *medogat*, *siragat*, *snayugat*, *sandhigat*, *asthigat*, *majjagat*, *shukragat*. The presenting symptoms of the *dhatu* involvement are mostly similar to modern counterpart. While coming to management part it is observed that in *chikitstasthan* treatment explained is local and general both. Local treatment is indicated for painful conditions related to *twakagat*, *raktagat*, *mamsagat*, *siragat*, *snayugat*, *sandhigat*, *asthigat*. Further treatment protocol is grouped in two parts where *anushastra* procedure namely raktamokshana and *agnikarma* is advocated along with other *snehanadi upakrama*. Objectives of present review is to study *anushastra* for management of painful conditions as per sushruta samhita. Study material is sushruta samhita and its commentary. It is observed that *raktamokshana* along with other *snehanadi upakrama* is indicated for *twakagat*, *raktagat*, *mamsagat*, *siragat* pathologies. *Agnikarma* along with other *snehanadi upakrama* is indicated for *snayugat*, *sandhigat*, *asthigat* pathologies. In this paper author will try to throw light on sushruta's concept of painful disorders and explain presenting symptoms as per *dhatu* involved and its local management techniques of *anushastra* and its practical approach in today's clinical practice.

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Introduction

Pain is defined as An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of

such damage.¹ And to relieve pain all Medical and paramedical systems are working simultaneously with their own modalities. So as the Ayurved science also have its own local

therapies. All basic Samhita have explained local as well as systemic meditation and procedures for the same, but local procedures are accepted the most. Sushruta Samhita the first surgical manuscript of Ayurveda Science accommodates mostly surgical and parasurgical techniques. Simultaneously it is observed that it has a great contribution in pain management also. In the Nidansthan which explains pathophysiology of diseases where the first place dedicated to Vatavyadhi². While explaining *chikitsa* in chikitsasthan it is explained in detail in two different chapters i.e. Vatavyadhi³ and Mahavatavyadhi.⁴ *Agnikarma* and *Raktamokshana* are one of the best pain management tools, but which should be used in particular painful condition is again a question. In Chikitsasthan Sushruta has explained the answer for this. All painful disorders are categorized as per the tissue i.e. Dhatu involved in the pathophysiology which is narrated in Nidansthan. These disorders are named as *Twakagat*, *Raktagat*, *Mamsagat*, *Medogat*,

Siragat, *Snayugat*, *Sandhigat*, *Asthigat*, *Majjagat*, *Shukragat*. The presenting symptoms of the Dhatu involvement are mostly similar to modern counterpart.² While coming to management part it is observed that in Chikitsasthan treatment explained is Local and general both. Local treatment is indicated for *Twakagat*, *Raktagat*, *Mamsagat*, *Siragat*, *Snayugat*, *Sandhigat*, *Asthigat* painful conditions. Further Treatment protocol is grouped in two parts where Anushatra procedure namely *Raktamokshana* and *Agnikarma* is advocated along with other *Snehanadi Upakrama*.³

Classification of Vatavyadhi in Sushruta samhita: Nidansthan, the section of pathophysiology of Diseases in Ayurveda, where Vatavyadhi have been explained in very first chapter. While in Chikitsasthan it is explained in two different chapter –Vatvyadhi and Mahavatavyadhi and it is classified as follows,²

Table 1: Classification of Vatavyadhi According to Sushruta Samhita

Classification	Name of disorder	Nidansthan	Chikitsasthan
As per Type of Vata	Diseases related to location of <i>Pranavayu</i> , <i>Udanvasyu</i> , <i>Saman Vayu</i> , <i>Apan vayu</i> , <i>Wyana vayu</i>	Vatavyadhi nidan adhyaya	Vatavyadhi chikitsa adhyaya
As per organ/tissue involved	<i>Amashaya</i> , <i>Pakwashaya</i> , <i>Dnyanedriya</i> , <i>Twakagat</i> , <i>Raktagat</i> , <i>Mamsagat</i> , <i>Medogat</i> , <i>Siragat</i> , <i>Snayugat</i> , <i>Sandhigat</i> , <i>Asthigat</i> , <i>Majjagat</i> , <i>Shukragat</i> , <i>Sarvangagat</i>		
As per awaran of other Dosha	<i>Doshawaran</i> of Pitta or Kapha – on All five <i>Vayu Prakara</i>	Mahavatavyadhi chikitsa adhyaya	
<i>Sarvadehik</i>	<i>Vatarakta</i> , <i>Akshepak</i> , <i>Apatanak</i> , <i>Pakshaghat</i> , <i>Apatantraka</i>		
<i>Jatrurdhwa</i>	<i>Manyasthambha</i> , <i>Ardit</i>		
Limb disorders	<i>Grudhrasi</i> , <i>Kostukasirsha</i> , <i>Khanja</i> , <i>Kalayakanja</i> , <i>Vatakantaka</i> , <i>Padadaha</i> , <i>Padaharsha</i> , <i>Awabahuka</i> , <i>Uurusthambha</i>		
Indriya disorders	<i>Badhirya</i> , <i>Karnaashula</i> , <i>Muka</i> , <i>Minminitwa</i> , <i>Gadgad</i>		
Abdomen disorders	<i>Tuni</i> , <i>Pratituni</i> , <i>Adhaman</i> , <i>Pratyadhaman</i> , <i>Vatashtila</i>		

Presenting symptoms of vatavyadhi where Anushatra i.e. Agnikarma or Raktamokshana is indicated:² These Vatavyadhi presenting symptoms and signs can be correlated with some modern counterparts as per the following chart.²¹

* निदानस्थानम् - १. वातव्याधिनिदानम्

वैवर्ण्यं स्फुरणं रौक्ष्यं सुप्तिं चुम्बुमायनम् ।
 त्वक्स्थो निस्तोदनं कुर्यात् त्वग्भेदं परिपोटनम् ॥२५॥
 व्रणांश्च रक्तगो, ग्रन्थीन् सशूलान् मांससंश्रितः ।
 तथा मेदःश्रितः कुर्याद्ग्रन्थीन्मन्दरुजोऽव्रणान् ॥२६॥
 कुर्यात् सिरागतः शूलं सिराकुञ्चनपूरणम् ।
 स्नायुप्राप्तः स्तम्भकम्पो शूलमाक्षेपणं तथा ॥२७॥
 हन्ति सन्धिगतः सन्धीन् शूलशोफौ करोति च ।
 अस्थिशोषं प्रभेदं च कुर्याच्छूलं च तच्छूलतः ॥२८॥
 तथा मज्जगते रुक् च न कदाचित् प्रशाम्यति ।
 अप्रवृत्तिः प्रवृत्तिर्वा विकृता शुक्रगोऽनिले ॥२९॥

Table 2: Symptoms of Vatavyadhi which are indicated for Agnikarma or Raktamokshana: Sushruta Samhita

Vatavyadhi	Presenting symptoms as per Sushruta Samhita	
Twakagat – Related to Skin	Vaivarnya -Discolouration Sfhuran -Twitching Rokshya -Roghness Supti -Numbness Cimchimayan -Tingling Todan –Priking pain Twakabheda –Sensation of tearing Paripotana- Splitting of skin	Some of symptoms can be correlated with Nerve pathologies where there is compression or degeneration in nerve at spinal or peripheral level and symptoms are seen at peripheral skin as per Dermatome theory. Cases of cervical and lumbar spondylosis, PID can be seen with similar presentation. Some symptoms are of lymphatic pathology and circulatory insufficiency ^{9,27}
Raktagat,- Related to circulatory system	Vran utpatti –Formation of Ulcer	Due to Arterial and venous insufficiency with Neurological defect, chronic ulcer are developed ¹²
Mamsagat- Related to muscular tissue	Shula-Pain Granthi-Stiffness	Muscular spasm causing pain and stiffness ¹⁰
Siragat- Related to vesseles	Shula-pain Siraakunchana- Constriction Sirapurana-Dilatation	Varicose veins appears torturous ,dilated and painful ¹¹
Snayugat – Related to ligaments and fascia	Shambha -Stiffness Kampa -Trembling Shula-Pain Aakshepan -Convulsion	Snayu means the structure which binds the bone to stabilize its action and restore the shape of body .Local or general ligament spasmodic disease can be included in this ¹³
Sandhigat- Related to Joints	Sandhinash –Deformity of joint Sandhishula-Painful joint Sandhishopha-Inflamation	Symptoms of Arthritis can be correlated here

Asthigat- Related to bones	Asthishosha ,Asthibheda - Increased porosity Asthishula-Pian at affected bone	Here Osteoporosis with pain can be correlated ¹⁹
Grudhrasi-	Restricted painful movements of lower limb with referred pain from waiste to Tarsal	Lumbago sciatic syndrome ¹⁴ -Sciatica
Vishwachi-	Bahu Karmakshayakari	Restricted movements of upper limb ¹⁵ , Brachial neuritis
Kostukasirsha	Acute painful inflammation of knee joint with collection	Synovitis of knee joint ¹⁶
Khanja,	Khanja-limping of leg causing handicap movements	As per pathology is at waste level can be correled with spinal stenosis causing foot drop ¹⁷
Kalayakanja,	Vepathu-Trembling while walking Khanjaniv Gachati-Limping of leg Shithil Bandhan- Loose joints causing imbalance	Luponosis causing spastic Paraplegia
Vatakantaka,	Pain at ankle joint	As per its pathology can be said as Ankle sprain ²⁰
Padadaha,	Daha-burning sensation while walking	It can be neuropathy
Padaharsha,	Harsh-Tingling Supti- Numbness	Peripheral neuritis ²³
Awabahuka	Ansabandhan shosha	Wasting of shoulder joint ¹⁸ , Frozen shoulder

Anushatra- Agnikarma or Raktamokshana for Vatavyadhi

Anushastra²⁶ which are 14 in number and smaller in size and supposed to use for delicate patients on non availibility of Shastra, and Agnikarma and Raktamokshana are one of them. Agnikarma is the procedure where thermal heat is used for pain management and therapeutic excision of some disease. Raktamokshana is bloodletting by vein puncture, incision by different instruments or application of Leech for various pathologies.

Out of the above mention group of diseases some are painful where pain management tools like Agnikarma and Raktamokshana are indicated for

instant relief. The list of same is narrated in below shloka. Number of sittings required is again debatable but wise answer is found to this as it should be done Atandrita means till patient get complete relief. Other local modalities like *Snehan, Abhanga, Upanaha, Mardan, Lapan, Bandhan* are also required simultaneously as per quotation in Chikitsasthan²² ch.1,4,5. Some quotations in Agnikarmavidhi ch.12, Shonitawarnaniya²⁵ ch. 14 of Sutrasthana and Siravedhavidhi ch. 8 of Sharirasthan are specifically emphasize the importance of above mention Anushatra for some painful disorders.

स्नेहाभ्यङ्गोपनाहाश्च मर्दनालेपनानि च²¹
त्वङ्मांसासृक्सिराप्राप्ते कुर्यात् चासृग्विमोक्षणम् ७

स्नेहोपनाहाग्निकर्मबन्धनोन्मर्दनानि च
स्नायुसन्ध्यस्थिसंप्राप्ते कुर्याद्वायावतन्द्रितः ८

Table 3: Types of Agnikarma or Raktamokshana for Vatavyadhi and Sites of Procedure: Sushruta Samhita

Vatavyadhi	Ahushastra	Type of Anushastra	Site of Procedure
Twakakagat	Raktamokshana	Siravedha, Jalokaawacharan, Prachan	At painful part of affected site
Raktagat,	Raktamokshana	Siravedha ,Jalokaawacharan ⁶	Near to vrana
Mamsagat	Raktamokshana	Siravedha, Prachan	On affected muscle part
Siragat,,	Raktamokshana	Siravedha	Near to affected sira
Snayugat	Agnikarma ⁵	Panchadhatu shalaka, Mrutika shalaka, Snigdha dravya	On most painful point of Snayu
Sandhigat	Agnikarma ⁵	Suvarna, Rajat, Panchadhatu Shalaka, Sneha dravya	Painful part of Sandhi-Joints
Asthigat	Agnikarma ⁵	Suvarna, Rajat, Panchadhatu Shalaka, Sneha dravya	Painful part of Bone
Grudhrasi,	Raktamokshana	Siravedha ⁷	Four Angula above or below Janu (knee)
Vishwachi	Raktamokshana	Siravedha ⁷	Four Angula above or below Karpur (Elbow)
Kostukasirsha	Raktamokshana	Siravedha ⁷	4 angula above Gulpha – Medial Malleolus
Khanja,	Raktamokshana	Siravedha ⁷	-/-
Kalayakanja	Raktamokshana	Siravedha ⁷	-/-
Vatakantaka	Raktamokshana	Siravedha ⁷	Two Angula above Khipramarma-between 1 st and 2 nd metatarsal
Padadaha,	Raktamokshana	Siravedha ⁷	-/-
Padaharsha,	Raktamokshana	Siravedha ⁷	-/-
Awabahuka	Raktamokshana	Vedhan ⁷	In middle of Shoulder joint
Vatrakta	Raktamokshana	Siravedha ³	Sarvadehic – General - Karpur Pradesh-Cubital region

In Uttartantra i.e. second part of Sushruta Samhita it is stated that if no relief of pain by Raktamokshana then Agnikarma should be done without hesitation at the same points.²⁴ This is

supported by quotation in Sutrasthan Agnikarma vidhi where Agnikarma is indicated for all painful conditions from Skin to Bone.^{5,8}

त्वद्वांससिरास्नायुसन्ध्यस्थिस्थितेऽन्युग्रुजेवायावुच्छितकठिनसुप्तमांसेवणे
सन्धिसिराच्छेदनादिषु नाडीशोणितप्रवृत्तिषु चाग्निकर्म कुर्यात्॥

सु.सू.१२/१० अग्निकर्मविधि अध्याय

Discussion

Acharya Sushruta has explained all painful disorders in the chapter Vatavyadhi of Nidansthana and classified them as per types of vata, affected body part, conjunction with other Dosha and Generalized diseases with their presenting symptoms. One can correlate them with modern counterpart for better understanding and proper diagnosis with reliable investigations. Local treatment measures are more preferred as Vata is widely spread and local therapies help to pacify it. Choice of local measures require knowledge of exact type of Vatavyadhi and for that study of Sushruta's concept of its presenting symptoms is much needed as local measures totally depend on body tissue involved in pathophysiology.

4th chapter of Chikitsasthan explains Agnikarma for painful condition of Snayu, Sandhi and Asthi as they are deep seated and hard tissues where penetration of energy is expected. Shalaka should be selected as per disease location.

Raktamokshana is described as per its types in chapters Jalukawacharaniya and Shonitawarnaniya in Sutrasthan and , Siravedhavidhi in Sharirasthan where it is stated to be almost half treatment of indicated pathologies. Adding to this even it is stated that if disease is not getting cured with other measures Raktamokshana should be tried. When in painful conditions presenting symptoms are related to Twacha, Mamsa, Rakta and Sira Raktamokshana is indicated. Type of Raktamokshana is decided as per Dosha dominance and depth of disease, in superficial skin and subcutaneous pathologies Prachan with Shruna or Allabu and in deep seated Jalauka and for generalized and some specific cases Siravedha is preferred .

11th Chapter of Sutrasthan Agnikarmavidhi explains all about Agnikarma methodology and it is said to be instant pain relief. Where Agnikarma is indicated for pain relief of disease related to Twacha, Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, Asthi where Twakagat Agnikarma is expected for pain relief.

Same is again mentioned in Uttartantra i.e. second part of Sushruta Samhita, it is stated that if no relief of pain by Raktamokshana then

Agnikarma should be done without hesitation at the same points.²⁴ This is supported by quotation in Sutrasthan Agnikarma vidhi where Agnikarma is indicated for all painful conditions from Skin to Bone.⁵ As Acharya Sushruta mention these two under same chapter of painful conditions, it proves their clear cut indications and limitations. Comparative superiority between these two modalities are not required as their indications are different and mode of action is also varies. Mode of action is not specified in Samhita but assumed theories can be cited at various research papers which has to be searched out with scientific evidence.

Number of sittings required is again debatable but wise answer is given to this as it should be done Atandrita means till patient get complete relief.

Conclusion

Agnikarma and Raktamokshana are types of Anushastra are renowned for their multifunction therapeutic uses still their use as pain management modality is scientific and unique as per Ayurved science. Study of Sushruta's concept of painful disorders and use of these modalities to treat the same is need of today to substitute hazardous medicinal drugs .To decide the option in them for pain relief is well mention in Susruta Samhita .Combination therapy of both is advisable in mix presentation of symptoms of two pathology eg. Siravedha followed by Agnikarma in Gridhrasi which has symptoms of Twakagt, Kandaragat, Sanyugat pathology. Many research studies are done on individual therapies for pain relief still more experimental clinical studies of combination therapy of Raktamokshana and Agnikarma will prove some of the concepts of pain management of Sushruta samhita.

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Conflicts of Interests

Authors do not have any conflicts of interest with the publication of the manuscript.

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