



Review Article

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IMPORTANCE OF DRAVA SVEDA: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Classic literatures of Ayurveda describe number of therapeutic procedures for the treatment of different diseases. Santarpana and Apatarpana are the basic Chikitsa concept under which a disease can be treated. Further Santarpana and Apatarpana Chikitsa can be classified into Snehana (oleation), Svedana (fomentation), Langhana, Brumhana, Rukshana and Stambhana i.e Shadupakramas (six therapeutic procedures) on which entire clinical practice depends. Svedana-karma is one significant Upakrama or Poorvakarma for Panchakarma out of Shadupakramas. Svedana-karma (fomentation) means the use of thermal or non-thermal procedure which relieves Stambha (stiffness), Gaurav (heaviness) and Sheeta (cold) and produces Sveda (sweating) in the body. Acharya Shushruta classified Sveda into Tapa, Ushma, Drava and Upanaha Sveda. The Svedana procedure which is done by using the Drava Dravya is known as Drava Sveda. Drava Sveda is Mainly Indicated for Pitta and Kapha Samshrita Vyadhis (diseases). Different types of Svedana are discussed in Ayurveda considering different diseases and their stages. In this article the Drava Sveda (sudation with liquid) has been discussed for the indication and mode of action on various condition.

Keywords: Svedana, Drava Sveda, Fomentation therapy, Sudation.

INTRODUCTION

Svedana is a therapeutic procedure which relieves Stambha (stiffness), Gaurav (heaviness) and Sheeta (coldness) of the body, and induces Sveda (sweating).¹ It is one among the important Purva-karma (preoperative) which should be done prior to Shodhana (detoxification) as well as an independent procedure for treatment of many diseased condition. Svedana means perspiration i.e. the sweating therapy. It is also termed as sudation or fomentation therapy. Infect sweating is a physiological function in the body, however the application of artificial means to induce or aggravate sweating is called therapeutic Svedana karma. Drava Sveda is done by using the Dravya having Drava and Sara-guna. Drava Sveda is indicated in Pittaanubandha Vata and Kapha conditions.

Drava Sveda

Svedana can be classified broadly into Tapa (dry heat), Ushma (steam), Upanaha (poultice) and Drava-sveda (fomentation with liquid media).² In Ayurveda classics different Acharya has given different classification of Svedana. According to Acharya Shushruta Tapa, Ushma, Upana and Drava are the types of Svedana. Acharya Charaka has classified Svedana into Shanakar (bolus), Prastar (stone block), Nadi (tube), Parisheka (pouring liquid), Avagaha (immersion), Jentaka, Ashmaghna, Karshu, Kuti (hut), Bhu, Kumbhi (earthen pot), Kupa and Hollaka Sveda.³ In Bhela Samhita the Svedana is classified as Sankar, Prastar, Parisheka, Nadi, Droni, Jala, Udaka and Kuti Sveda. In kashyapa Samhita Hasta-sveda Pradeha-Sveda Nadi-Sveda, Prastar-sveda, Sankar-Sveda, Upanaha-Sveda, Avagaha-Sveda and Parisheka Sveda has been described.⁴ Acharya Shushruta has clubbed all kinds of Sveda which are done by using Drava (liquid) under Drava Sveda.

Drava Sveda can be broadly classified into Parisheka and Avagaha. As per indication it can be discussed under Drava Sveda for Swastha (healthy) and Drava Sveda for Aatura-avastha (diseased condition). In this article the Drava sveda is discussed under indication of Avagaha and Parisheka for different conditions.

Avagaha Sveda

The word 'Avagaha' means to immerse. Avagaha Sveda is a type of Svedana (sudation therapy) which is included in Drava Sveda. In this procedure the patient is made to sit or lie in a tub containing medicated Drava dravya (Taila/Kashaya) to induce sudation to the body. The patient or healthy individual should have made comfortable in Droni/tub filled with medicated Drava dravya in such a way that lower part of the body gets immersed till the level of umbilicus. Sarvanga Avagaha Sveda should be performed submerging the body up to neck. The temperature of Drava Dravya should be maintained uniformly so when the temperature comes down some amount should be replaced by warm Dravadravaya. Avagaha Sveda is indicated for Swastha persons in Hemant-rutu under Rutucharya and in case of Atura or diseased it can be performed in any Kala (season).

In Swastha as a preventive measure Avagaha Svedana is done after proper Abhyanga (massage). In Hemanta rutu a person should undergo Abhyanga, after proper Abhyanga, the Sneha (oil) from body should be removed with Kashaya dravya and then person should take Yatha vidhi Snana i.e. Avagaha Snana. For Snana Ushna jala or Kashaya can be used.⁵

In Aturavastha Avagaha has been described in many diseased conditions such as Arsha, Bhagandra, Vatavyadhi, Udara roga, Bhagna chikitsa and Ashmari. Arsha (piles) is of two types that are Shushkarsha which does not have any kind of blood discharge

and another is Parishtravi Arsha or Rakta arsha where there is bleeding from the pile mass. In Arsha especially in Raktarsha when there is association of Kleda and Daha there Avagaha Sveda can be done with Madhuka, Mrinal, Padmak, Chandana, Kush and Kash Kwatha. This procedure relieves the Lakshnas like Daha (burning sensation) and Kleda around the anal region.⁶

In context of Bhagandara Chikitsa Avagaha Sveda is indicated as a post-operative measure. Bhagandara is a disease which is considered as a Shalya sadhya vyadhi. After the Shalya karma of Bhagandara patient has unbearable pain, Avagaha Sveda relieves pain. Here specifically Ushnodaka (hot water) Avagaha is indicated which does Shamana of Vedana.⁷

The main cause of Vata vyadhi manifestation is either Vata vridhhi or Dhatu kshaya. Both condition leads to Vata vyadhi. To treat Vata vyadhi the Avagaha Svedana should be done with Vatanashaka-Patra kashaya, Aushadha Siddha Ksheera or Vata nashaka taila. The drugs used in Avagaha are absorbed through the Shira Mukha and Lomakupa then goes to Dhamani for circulation and does Dhatu poshana.⁸

Badhagudodar and Parishtravi udara are the types of Udara roga, where the Shalya karma is the ultimate treatment. Avagahana is a post-operative measure of Udara Shalya Chikitsa. Acharya Shushruta described Shalya Chikitsa in that after Antra Seevana karma the intestine should be replaced in abdominal cavity after smearing with Ghrita. Then Seevana karma of Shalya Vrana over abdomen has to be performed and over the sutured portion Vrana Bandhana karma is to be done. For Bandhana Krishna Mrittika Lepa is used. After Bandhana Karma Patient should be immersed in Taila Droni and as food only milk has to be given.⁹

The mentioning of Avagaha Sveda in Bhagna Chikitsa is also having its own importance for treatment of Fractures. In context of Parshuka Bhagna or rib fractures Sushruta described that patient should be smeared with Ghrita or Mrudu Abhyanga has to be done. Then the left or right Nibandhini has to be stretched depending on the site of fracture and after keeping a gauze piece over the fractured rib patient should be immersed in Taila Droni.¹⁰

During ancient time Ashmari chikitsa was also a complicated procedure where Avagaha is described as a post-operative measure. In this procedure Ashmari is removed from the Basti by manipulating its position with pressure of hands, during this procedure there is possibility of Vrana or trauma inside the bladder which may result in bleeding and can cause accumulation of blood. To prevent the accumulation of blood in Bladder patient should be immersed in Ushnodaka.¹¹

Table 1: Diseases and their Avastha where Avagaha Sveda is indicated

Disease	Avastha
Arsha	Raktarsha
Bhagandara	Pain due to Shastra-karma
Vata-vyadhi	Vata-vridhhi, Dhatu-ksahya
Udara roga	Post-operative
Bhagna-chikitsa	Parshva Bhagna
Ashmari	Post-operative

Parisheka

Pouring of Kwatha (decoction), Taila, Amla or Ksheer prepared with herbs which are having some medicinal property, over the body is called Parisheka. The liquid used are Ushna in temperature so it can produce fomentation effect over body. Thus,

Parisheka Sweda means stream pouring of hot medicinal liquids over the body so as to produce sweating.

In context of Raktapitta Chikitsa when the Pitta Lakshana are more than Kapha Avagaha and Parisheka should be done with Bhadrashriya ityadi Dravya Kwatha (decoction). The Bhadrashriyadi Dravya consist of Shwetachandana, Pundrika (lotus) etc which are having Property of Kashaya Rasa and Sheeta Veerya so they will pacify the Pitta Lakshanas.¹²

The Arsha Vyadi having condition of Daha ie. Rakta and Pitta predominance, there Madhuka, Panchavalkala, Badar and Udumbar Kwatha parishechana should be done. In this treatment procedure the temperature of Kwatha should be Sukhoshana means temperature should be slight more than the normal body temperature. Another indication of Parisheka and Avagaha has been mentioned as post-operative procedure after Kshara Karma on Arsha. Either Sinchana (spray) of Kwatha should be done or can be used as Avagaha (sitz bath) for patient.¹³

Udara is condition where the Doshas will accumulate in Koshta, to remove the Doshas Abhyantarapana and Parisheka with Eight types of Mutra should be done. Mutra is having Bhedi property so slowly and regularly it will remove Dosh from Koshta and as Udara is Kleda Pradhana Vyadhi so Rukshana effect would be produced externally by Parisheka.¹⁴

In Vrana Shotha with Shoola dominant condition, Parisheka should be done with Dwipanchamoola Kwatha, Ghrita, milk or taila. It reduces pain and inflammation of that particular Shoth.¹⁵

Urustambha is a Vyadhi where all the Panchakarma are contraindicated in that condition for Shleshma Kshapana Parisheka with Dravya like Kwatha of Shayonaka, Khadir, Bilva, Brihati etc drugs should be used. It does the Shleshma Kshapana or reduces the Kapha and thus removes the Aavarana and then the Vata can be tackled by modalities of Panchakarma.¹⁶

Ksharataila, Gomutra and Jala are told as ideal drugs which should be used for Parisheka in Vatarakta basically in Kapha predominant is a condition and where there is Vata Pradhana condition then Parisheka should be done with Kosha Sarpi to reduce the pain.¹⁷

There are different types of Shotha or oedema mentioned in Ayurveda and for them different types of Parishekas has been mentioned. In Vataja Shotha for Vedana Shamana Sarpi (butter), Taila, Dhanyamla, Mamsarasa and Vatahara Kwatha should be used for Parisheka. For Kaphaja Shotha where the swelling will be more than Taila, Mutra (urine), Ksharayukta Jala, Sura, Sukta and Kaphaghna Aushadhi should be used for Parisheka in Ushna temperature. The condition of Shoth where the Hetu is Pitta, Rakta, Aghata or Visha then the choice of Parisheka Dravya will be Dugdha, Ghrita, Madhu, sugarcane juice, Madhur Aaushadhi like kakolyadigana. Here Acharya has given a simile that if Spray of water is done on Agni it extinguishes same in the case of Doshas, when Parisheka is done Dosh gets pacify very quickly.¹⁸ In Bhagna when the condition is Vedanayukta, Parisheka with Laghu-panchamula Sidhha Ghrita or Chakrataila is indicated.¹⁹ Similarly in Vataja Visarpa condition Musta, Shatavha, Surdaru, Kushta, Varahi, kustumbaru and krishnagandha Kwatha is indicated for Parisheka.

Table 2: Indications of Parisheka Sveda and Avastha

Disease	Avastha
Raktta-pitta	Daha and Shoola
Arsha	Rakta-pitta lakshana, Kshara-karma
Udara	All conditions
Rajyakshama	Dhatu-kshaya
Vrana	Shoolayukta-vranashotha
Urustambha	For Kaphakshapana
Visharpa	Vataja-visarpa
Bhigna	Parshuka-Bhigna
Ashmari	Post-operative
Shotha	Vata-kaphaja samsrista pitta rakta
Vata-shonita	Kapha-pradhana vata shonita

Mode of action

Mode of action of Drava Sveda can be understood by dividing the whole action into three i.e. Dravyatah means action of Dravya or substance used for Drava Sveda modality, Karmatah means the effect of procedure and Gunatah refers to Guna or qualities of Drava Sveda.

Dravyatah-Generally the Procedure of Drava Sveda is done by using Vasa, Talia, Ksheera, Mutra and Kanji as liquid media. Along with procedural effect, this Dravyas are having their own importance because of their properties. Vasa is having Snehana property which does the Vata Dosha Shamana action beside that it is very effective in Karna, Shiroroga, Bhagna and Aghataja Condition.²⁰ Taila is having Snigdha, Ushna and Guru guna with virtue of these properties it pacifies Vata and Kapha also increases Bala.²¹ Ksheera or milk has Mrudu, Guru and Snigdha guna which basically Pacifies Pitta Dosha and does Brumhana of body. Mutra is having Tiktsna, Ushna and Katu guna. Does Kapha-Vata Shamana and very beneficial in Gulma, Arsha, Udara, Shoth, Aruchi, Pandu conditions also it is having Agnideepaka and Aama Dosha Pachaka properties. Ghrita is having Sheeta Guna Pradhana and Snigdha property so it pacifies Vata and Pitta.²² Amla Kanjik is having Sheeta and Ruksha properties so it pacifies Daha and Jwara by its Sparsh only.²³ So with these properties the Drugs used in procedure does the Shamana (pacifies) of the Doshas.

Gunatah- Svedana or fomentation is having Sara, Ushna, Tikshana, Sukshma and Drava Guna with which the therapeutic effect during the procedure may reach to deep tissues level and does fomentation very well.

Karmatah- Sneha or other Drava used in Drava Sveda are absorbed by Shira and Loma-Kupa present on the skin and then Circulated to all part of body by Dhamanis. The absorbed Drava does the Tarpana or Nourishment of Dhatus of the body thus Dhatu Vriddhi occurs. Depending upon the properties of Dravyas, the action of Drava Sveda can be achieved like Rukshna, Brumhana and Svedana etc.

DISCUSSION

The outermost layer of body is skin which is exposed to the treatment directly. The skin's barrier properties come from the highly impermeable outer layer called stratum corneum, which is just 10 – 20 µm thick. Drugs or lipids that crosses the stratum corneum barrier may diffuse to deeper capillaries which may go to systemic distribution. So approach to increase the skin permeability involves heating the skin either by exposing it to high temperature for very short duration or by exposing skin to low temperature for long duration.²⁴ Similarly the in the

procedure of Drava Sveda the skin is exposed to a temperature of 38-40 °C for minimum half hour thus this procedure increases the temperature of skin which increases the permeability so the chances of Transdermal drug delivery may be possible by the Drava Sveda procedure.

Effect on circulatory system-The circulatory system also responds quickly to the changes of temperature on the surface of body. The core temperature is maintained for 37 °C which is controlled by a negative feedback system. The hypothalamus is the temperature-regulating centre of the body situated in brain. It is having receptors which are able to sense the temperature of the blood flowing from heart through the brain. Temperature sensitive receptors present in the skin also gives feedback information to the hypothalamus in brain about the temperature status of the skin surface. Rise or decrease in core body temperature cause the hypothalamus to send information in form of nerve impulses to the sweat glands, muscles and blood vessels to raise or lower the temperature. When there is rise in temperature, body tends to lose the temperature by the capillaries leading to skin. The capillaries leading to skin dilates and allows to flow lot of blood near the skin and the heat of blood or body is lost through the skin by convection and radiation. To further reduce the temperature, sweating occurs.

Effect on capillary permeability- Rise of temperature from 38-40 degree Celsius is known to lead to capillary and arteriole dilation enables more filtration results in transportation sufficient amount of nutrients and oxygen to the organs and facilitate removal of waste products from the intercellular space and the cells.²⁵ This mechanism does the fast recovery or development of the organs.

So, when we are doing Svedana or fomentation with Parisheka or Avagaha modality the receptors of skin and hypothalamus receives increased heat sensation. That makes hypothalamus to send nerve impulse for the skin and muscles to lose the heat that results in Vasodilation. As a result of Vasodilation more of blood flows in surface for losing heat by radiation and when further heat is applied through Svedana procedure body starts sweating then evaporation takes place. Drava Sveda has shown significant result in Krida Ayurveda i.e. sports medicine for management of anterior cruciate ligament injury.²⁶ Drava Sveda has important role in the management of chronic and painful conditions of rheumatoid arthritis with special reference to Amavata.²⁷

CONCLUSION

Drava Sveda is a modality of treatment which is having a combined effect of Snehana, Rukshana, Brumhana, Langhana and Svedana together. It may be used as substitute of massage therapy in painful and tender conditions such as Amavata. It is highly beneficial therapy for pure Vataja, Kaphaja and diseases caused by Pittanubandhi Vata or Kapha. The advantage of Drava Sveda over other Sveda is the absorption rate which is more in wet skin because water and other liquid media conducts heat faster than dry modalities and heat penetrates better with liquid media.

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