



Review Article

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POORVAKARMA FOR SNEHANA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHODHANANGA SNEHAPANA: A REVIEW

Haritha KS^{1*}, P. Murali Krishna²

¹ PG Scholar, PG Department of Panchakarma, Sri Venkateswara Ayurvedic College, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India

² Principal, Sri Venkateswara Ayurvedic College, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India

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*Corresponding author

E-mail: mereenakoliyil@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Snehapana is the administration of Sneha (a medicated or non-medicated lipid substance) internally with a definite therapeutic purpose. According to the mode of action, it is of three types: Samana snehapana (palliating type of medicated lipid intake), Shodhana snehapana (eliminating type of medicated lipid intake), and Brimhana snehapana (nourishing type of medicated lipid intake). Among these three, Shodhananga snehapana is the most important poorvakarma (pre-operative procedure) for Shodhana (bio purification), like Vamana (therapeutic emesis) and Virechana (therapeutic purgation). The whole outcome of Shodhana therapy is determined by Shodhana snehapana as it brings the doshas situated in the sakha (peripheral tissues) to the koshta (gastrointestinal system) so that they can be expelled out easily. For an excellent Snehana and a perfect Shodhana, we have to do poorvakarma for Shodhanartha snehapana, i.e., deepana (appetizer), pachana (digestives), and rookshana (drying therapy). The present article attempts to understand the importance of poorvakarma for Shodhananga snehapana.

Keywords: Snehapana, Poorva karma, Panchakarma.

INTRODUCTION

'Snehana' is oleation therapy that produces snigdha or oiliness in the body. Shodhanartha snehapana is a kind of Snehana karma that is performed as a pre-operative procedure for Shodhana karma¹. Shodhana karma is meant to purify the body by removing the accumulated morbid humours responsible for disease manifestation. And to create an ideal environment for the proper functioning of the body.

The entire shodhana procedure depends upon the proper mobilization of dosha from the sakha to koshta², which is achieved with the help of Snehana and Swedana. Out of these two, Snehana is a significant therapy which decides the whole outcome of the Shodhana procedure.

Although Shodhanartha snehapana is a poorvakarma for Vamana and Virechana, we must perform poorvakarma for it, which includes deepana-pachana³ and rookshana⁴.

Definition: Acharya Charaka defines Snehana as a procedure by which sneha (unctuous), vishyandana (diffusion), mriduta (softness), and kledana (moistness) of the body are brought about⁵.

Types of snehana based on the action

Shodhana snehapana

Shodhana snehapana is a pre-operative procedure for shodhana chikitsa, in which sneha dravya (medicated fat) is given to achieve upasthita dosha avastha (making the doshas ready to be eliminated by bio purification procedure) and to make the vitiated doshas easier to eliminate. Upasthita dosha refers to the presence of dosha in the koshta that is ready for expulsion.⁶

Specific indications for Sodhanartha snehapana

Acharya Charaka elaborately mentioned the clinical conditions in which madhyama matra of sneha is to be administered. (Table 2)¹¹

Contraindications for snehana

Acharya didn't mention specific contraindications for Shodhanartha snehapana. The general contraindications mentioned for snehapana should be followed. (Table 3)

Duration for Sodhana snehapana

Even though Acharyas mentioned the period of snehana, i.e., krura koshta (extremely hard bowel) – 7 days, madhyama koshta (moderate bowel) – 5 days, mridu koshta (soft bowel) – 3 days¹², Arunadatta comments that snehana should be continued till the appearance of samyak snigdha lakshana. The duration of snehana should be decided by assessing the samyak snigdha lakshana (symptoms of adequate snehana) and not merely counting the days. (Table 4)

Samyak snigdha lakshanas of snehapana: Samyak snigdha lakshana is mentioned by some Acharyas in the context of Shodhanartha snehapana, while others, such as Kashyapa, mentioned it in the context of Shamana snehapana. As a result, there is no distinction between the samyak snigdha lakshana and the type of snehapana.

The samyak snigdha lakshanas explained by Acharya Vagbhata are illustrated in Figure 2.

Importance of Agni (digestive fire) in snehapana

Agni plays a significant role in the physiological functioning of the body. According to Acharya Sushruta, there are six main functions that Agni performs in the body. (Figure 3)¹⁴

These functions are performed respectively by Ranjak Agni, Pacak Agni, Sadhak Agni, Alocak Agni, and Bhrajak Agni as opined by Acharya Dalhana.

If the Agni is not properly functioning, it will ultimately result in the formation of ama¹⁵, i.e., undigested or half-digested unmetabolized food products that circulate in the body as toxins. Ayurveda has named such toxins "ama." Ayurveda considers ama the root cause of all diseases. Instead of this, in the ama condition, if a physician is administering Shodhana medicine, there is a chance of commencement of Shodhana therapy in the opposite direction, i.e., Vamana drugs may produce Virechana and vice versa¹⁶.

In the presence of ama, there may be obstructions inside the srotasas, depletion of body strength, heaviness, changes in normal directions of Vata, etc. Without correcting this ama dosha, the physician can't even imagine the commencement of abhyanthara snehapana. So, before starting the abhyanthara snehapana, it is mandatory to conduct poorva karma for it.

The administration of sneha without consideration of the strength of Agni is irrational. ¹⁷ Initially, sneha should only be given in hrasva matra (the lowest dose). If sneha is administered in prabhuta matra (the highest dose), it may result in loss of life for the patient.

Deepana

The drugs that increase the Agni but do not digest the ama (toxic substances) are termed deepana dravyas. The best example of deepana karma is Satapushpa (*Anethum sowa*). Tikta rasa dravyas are the sresta (superior) dravyas in deepana. It is because of the predominance of Vayu (air element) and Akasha (space element) mahabhuta. Here, Akasha mahabhuta provides space for flaming Agni, and Vayu mahabhuta kindles it. To attain deepana purpose, drugs have to be given in between meals or with the bolus. ^{18,19}

Pachana

The drugs that digest the ama but do not increase the Agni are termed pachana dravyas. The best example of a pachana drug is Nagakesara (*Mesua ferrea*). It is laghu, ushna, and rooksha. The rooksha guna brings Kleda shoshana, i.e., amaharana, and ushna

guna does its pachana. Since there is no tikshna guna, it does not stimulate the Agni. Here the undigested materials are made into digest by adding the natural quality of Agni. For attaining pachana purpose, drugs have to be preferably given at night. ²⁰

Importance of Deepana-pachana before Shodhanartha snehapana

Drugs that quantitatively and qualitatively increase Agni are termed deepana- pachana dravyas. Both medicines aid in bringing the same state of nirama, which is essential for an effective snehapana and proper conduction of Shodhana therapy. If Shodhana therapy is administered in an ama condition, it will destroy the body in the same way that extracting juice from unripe fruit, and there is a chance of working the therapy in the opposite direction²¹.

Rooksha prayoga

Any therapy that dries out the body's oily, sticky, and fatty elements and eliminates excess mucus, fat, and water from body tissues is known as rookshana. Before planning for a Shodhananga snehapana, those who are stout, obese, with Kapha predominance, unpredictable digestion, and habitually use fat should undergo Virukshana therapy²². It prevents the complications of Snehana therapy, and the fat used for Snehana therapy will not get acclimatized to the body, thus helping in the proper mobilization of doshas from sakha to koshta. Rooksha prayoga can be done externally or internally; external rookshana can be achieved through rooksha swedas, dhanyamla dhara, udwarthanam, etc., and internally by takrapana. Thakra²⁴ has the property of deepana and Kapha-Vata shaman. It bears the power to ignite Agni by alleviating impediments in the srothases, and the therapeutical application of takra is highly effective. Medicated takra, i.e., administration of takra with any deepana drugs like Vaiswanara choornam, Ashta choornam, etc, is recommended. If the patient is severely hampered, Agni, takra is the best choice of medicine ²³.

When to stop Rookshana

Acharya has explained when to stop rookshana. (Figure 4)²⁴

Table 1: Criteria for Sodhana snehapana

Criteria	Sodhana Snehapana
Purpose of Snehana.	Doshotklesana.
Form of Snehana.	Accha & Vicharana.
Dose of Sneha	Uttama ⁷ /Madhyama ⁸
Time of administration.	Morning, Akshudita
Duration	Maximum for 7 days ⁹

Table 2: Specific indications for Sodhanartha snehapana

Aruska (Eruptions)	Kushta (Skin disorders)
Sphota (Boils)	Vatarakta (Gout)
Pidaka (Pimples)	Na ati bahu asina (Who are not taking much food)
Kandu (Itching)	Mrdu koshta (Those who have soft bowels)
Paama (Scabies)	Madhyama bala (Persons having medium strength) ¹⁰

Table 3: Contraindications for Snehana

Those are eligible only for dry therapy without purificatory measures.
Those in whom Kapha and Medas are aggravated.
Those having secretions from the mouth and anus.
Those have less power of digestion continuously.
Those who are suffering from thirst and fainting.
Those are pregnant.
Those suffering from the dryness of the palate.
Those having an aversion to food.
Those suffering from vomiting, abdominal disorders, Aama dosha, Artificial poisoning, Weakness, emaciated, Aversion to taking unctuous substances, and intoxicated.
Those who have just undergone Nasya and Vasti therapies.

Table 4: Duration for Sodhana snehapana according to Koshta

Type of Koshta	Duration of Sodhana Snehapana ¹³ (Days)
Mridu tama	1
Mridu tara	2
Mridu	3
Madhyama tama	4
Madhyama tara	5
Madhyama	6
Krura tama	7
Krura tara	8
Krura	9

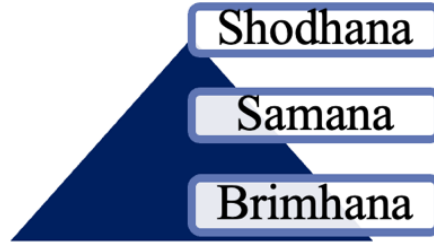


Figure 1: Types of snehana based on the action.

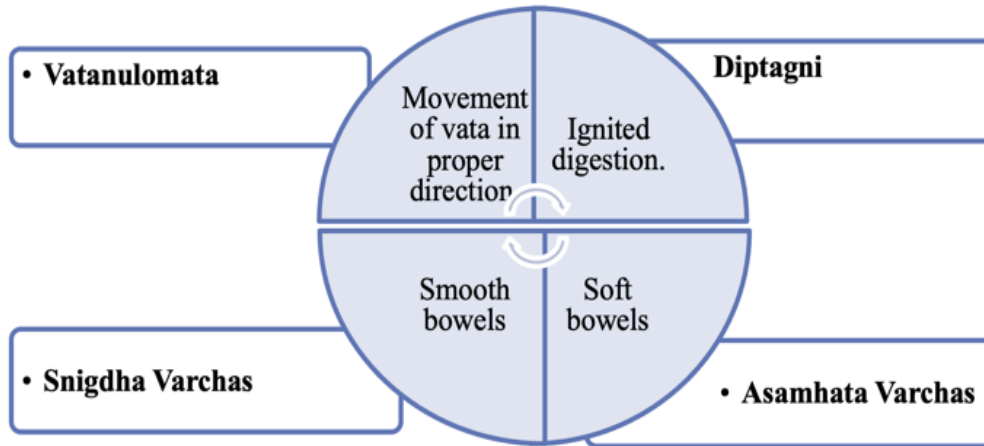


Figure 2: Samyak snigdha lakshanas of snehapana

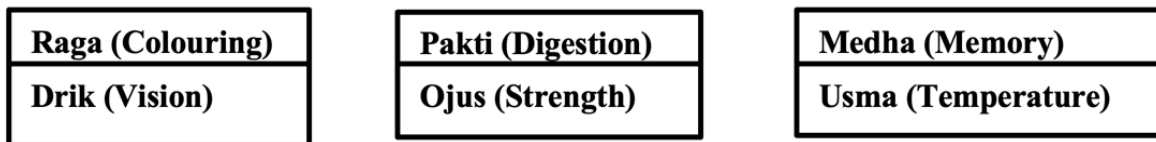


Figure 3: Importance of Agni in snehapana

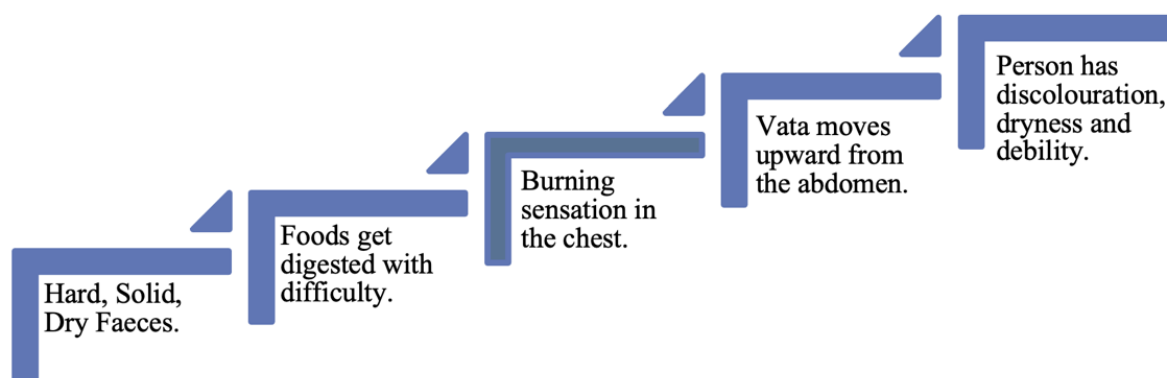


Figure 4: When to stop Rookshana

CONCLUSION

Internal Sneha vidhi or Shodhananga snehapana is considered a unique procedure observed in Ayurveda. Judicious application of the theories regarding Agni is evident during the whole course of this therapy. The ingested sneha reaches the srothas, where the sathanasamsraya occurs during shadkriyakala. Dymetabolic waste products formed by dosha-doshya sammoochana (pathogenesis of a disease) get diluted by sneha and drain back to koshta. If snehapana is not perfectly executed, there is no question of dosha coming to the koshta and no meaning to doing Shodhana. Here, poorvakarma helps to achieve the best response to the pradhana karma, i.e., Shodhana. Even though Shodhanartha snehapana is considered an important poorvakarma for Shodhana, it is mandatory to do a poorvakarma for Shodhana snehapana, i.e., deepana-pachana and rookshana. The efficacy of Snehana therapy is solely dependent on the poorvakarmas we perform for it.

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