



Review Article

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A CRITICAL REVIEW OF PADABHYANGA IN VISUAL PATHWAY

Shubhangi Turkar ^{1*}, Megha Survase ², Neralkar UK ³

¹ PG Scholar, Department of Panchakarma, CSMSS Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Kanchanwadi, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India

² Associate Professor, Department of Panchakarma, CSMSS Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Kanchanwadi, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India

³ HOD, Department of Panchakarma, CSMSS Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Kanchanwadi, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India

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*Corresponding author

E-mail: vd.shubhangiturkar1994@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Ayurvedic therapy called padabhyanga involves massaging the foot with warm oil infused with herbs. It is claimed to be a component of the dinacharya (daily Ayurvedic routine) for sustaining good health. The health of the feet and foot care plays a significant role in the body's overall well-being. According to ancient Ayurvedic scriptures, "Diseases do not go near one who massages his feet before sleeping, just as snakes do not approach eagles." Worsening lifestyle changes and excessive use of screens on computers, TVs, and mobile devices worsen ocular clarity and generate different netra roga. Abhyanga (massage) to the feet makes the feet strong (sthairya) and induces sleep (nidra). According to Charaka and Vagbhata, padabhyanga is described as dristiprasadaka and according to Sushruta chakshushya. The chakshu gets benefits and shows its specific action over the visual pathway. Here, an attempt has been made to review the information on pada abhyanga in the visual pathway.

Keywords: Padabhyanga, foot massage, drishtiprasadan, visual pathway

INTRODUCTION

A kind of bahya snehana called padabhyanga involves applying medicinal sneha to the foot in various ways to provide local and systemic benefits. The Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita both mentioned padabhyanga in the context of sadvritta as a preventative strategy. As a part of sarvanga abhyanga, padabhyanga to be carried out is mentioned in Ashtanga Hridaya and Yogaratnakar. Because of sneha and local absorption, padabhyanga may have a localized effect. It is quite helpful to massage the soles of the feet before bed.

According to ancient Ayurvedic scriptures: "Diseases do not go near one who massages his feet before sleeping, just as snakes do not approach eagles."¹ According to the science of reflexology, there are links between the body's organs and the soles of the feet. Therefore, a proper foot massage using particular oils, regardless of location, prevents and treats a variety of illnesses.² This study claims that massaging the foot can activate various organs, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, and intestines.³

Padabhyanga

Padabhyanga is massaging the feet after applying oil or another sneha dravya. It falls under the category of bahya snehana. The words ang-dhatu (to smear) and abhi-upasarga are the roots of the word abhyanga. Lower body parts are described by the word pada. As a result, the term "padabhyanga" literally refers to the meticulous application of sneha dravya to the lower extremities, particularly the sole. The anuloma direction should be used while applying it. Ayurvedic texts have recommended it as a daily

regimen to enhance health since it shields people against ailments like netra, paada gridhrasi vata, sankocha of sira, and snayu. Padabhyanga is referred to as netra- prasadanakara or dristiprasadanakara in Brihatrayee.⁴

Padabhyanga – The Foot Massage

The Vata dosha is located in pada, and its vitiation results in 80 different varieties of nanatmaja rogas. We can manage the Vata dosha by padabhyanga. The marma (vital spots) in the sole area are stimulated by padabhyanga. The marma points in the sole that are massaged during the padabhyanga method are kshipra, kurcha, talahridaya, kurchashira, and gulpha. The body's prana lives in the marmas or vital points. By activating marma, padabhyanga itself replenishes prana.

Importance of Pada Abhyanga

- Stabdata- cures stiffness,
- Rukshata – corrects excessive dryness of feet,
- Kharatwa - removes the soles' roughness,
- Sthairya - promotes strength of the feet of pada and improved
- Shrama – relieves exhaustion of feet,
- Drustiprasaadakara - nourishment to eyes. It prevents Grudrasi Vata, pada sputana, sirasnaayu sankocha.
- Suptata of Pada - cures the numbness of feet, bala ⁵

Contraindication for Padabhyanga

- Fever, cold, flu, indigestion
- Toxin-induced trauma, lymphatic infection
- Acute trauma to the foot.
- Abnormal skin condition.⁶

Methods of Padabhyanga

The Hand Techniques: This technique incorporates stroking and rubbing; by doing so, we can improve the foot's circulatory circulation. The friction also increases the energy flow, guiding it in the desired direction. Tila taila (sesame oil) is frequently used in this method.

Marma Therapy: This is the term used to describe foot massage and reflexology techniques. The total number of marmas, according to Ayurveda, is 107. Marmavijnana's philosophy of marma therapy is where acupressure, acupuncture, and reflexology first appeared. This means that when we perform acupressure, acupuncture, and reflexology therapies on patients, we are just addressing the marmas and attempting to calm them to restore the free flow of energy in all the body's energy channels. Our system is claimed to be cleansed and rejuvenated by marma therapy. By focusing on the marma points, we may control prana, allowing us to discharge negative energy and eventually control our complete mind-body complex, including our sensory and motor organs.

The Kasa Bowl: Kasa (or kansya, kansa, kasa) is derived from the Sanskrit word Kansya, which means 'bronze'. The bowl is traditionally meant to contain seven metals that relate to the various body tissues. However, it mainly comprises 2 metals - copper (major part) and tin (minor part) - a bronze bowl. This is also called Kansa vati foot massage. Massage with it balances the tridoshas. Kansa is useful in netra roga.

The Kasa bowl is made hot and dipped in medicated oil until its temperature drops to tolerable heat. The bowl is then brought in contact with the plantar surface of the foot (bottom of your feet) and massaged with circular motions and strokes.⁷

CORELATIONS OF PADABHYANGA

Padabhyanga And Nadi Vijnana: Nadi Darpana has enumerated ten nadis in the head, among which Gandhari is related to the left eye, whereas Hastijihva is to the right eye. The colour of Gandhari is of peacock's neck surrounding Ida nadi, extends from pada and ends in the left netra. However, Hastijihva has a colour of blue lotus that covers the Pingala nadi, extends from the pada and ends in netra on the right side.⁸ Netraprakasha has enumerated seven nadi from the foot, which in turn joins the Ida, and Pingalanadi has a relation with both eyes.⁹ This relation signifies the role of padabhyanga with netra. Routine abhyanga over the feet will help to strengthen the visual activity.

Padabhyanga with Reflexology: Sage, vision reflexology, and reflexology, pressure is given to reflex sites on the feet that correspond to different organs. The eye's reflexology points are located on the second and third toes' undersides. By nourishing the eyes, massage therapy on these spots helps to preserve eye health and reduces symptoms of myopia, computer vision syndrome, dry eye, and other eye conditions.

According to the science of reflexology, there are links between the body's organs and the soles of the feet. On the bottom of the foot, right below the three middle toes, lies the foot's pressure point that directly influences the eyes and ears. Correct foot massage both prevents and treats several illnesses. It uses reflexology to ease eye strain. Aching eyes, headache, weariness, and blurriness are signs of eyestrain. Reflex points for the head, neck, and back are addressed in addition to the reflex points for the eyes because eyestrain can also impact these areas of the body. On both feet, the second toe has reflex points. Applying pressure

to the second toe, which corresponds to the eyes, will relax the muscles of the eye.¹⁰

Padabhyanga and Acupressure for vision: An alternative medical practice is acupressure. It is predicated on the idea that the life force travels along "meridians" within the body. Acupuncture points are physically compressed during treatment to unblock obstructions in these meridians. You can exert pressure with your hand, elbow, or several tools.

According to acupressure principles, massaging the tips of the toes and fingers strengthens vision. When we meticulously pressurize or massage this region, it improves vision and eye health. Furthermore, Baran points out that several eye acupressure spots are thought to help vision issues like nearsightedness and night blindness.

DISCUSSION

Every Ayurvedic concept is written in sutra form. The classics of Ayurveda do not provide a thorough explanation of padabhyanga or its process. All three of Brihatrayee's works discuss the effects of padabhyanga, frequently referred to as dristiprasadana, netraprasadana, or chakashushya.^{11,12}

Netra is a gyanendriya, and pada is a karmendriya. Pada and netra are said to have formed in the third month of intrauterine life in the description of masanumashik garbha vriddhi, the same month as the formation of pada. Aatmaja bhava encompasses both netra and pada. According to shruti utpatti karma, netra, and pada, both descended from vaikarik and rajashik ahankara. This implies that pada and netra share numerous similarities from an embryological point of view. Given this, we can say that abhyanga to the pada region will benefit netra in accordance with the samanya-vishesh siddhanta.

PROBABLE MODE OF ACTION OF PADABHYANGA

According to Acharya Charaka, Vayu is said to predominate in the sparshanendriya, or tactile sensory organ embedded in the skin. Abhyanga balances Vata, which is extremely helpful to the skin. Since indriyas and minds are intimately connected, when indriyas are in good health, so is the mind. This will improve Chakshu Buddhi's accurate perception.

According to Vagbhata, 4 major nerves are in the centre of the feet, directly connected to both eyes. These nerves help maintain good vision and relieve eyestrain by transmitting the potency of medicine applied over the feet as padabhyanga.¹³

Padabhyanga is important for preventing eye illnesses and keeping excellent vision since, in Chakradatta's opinion, it is a component of Chakshushya Varga.¹⁴

Netra and Pada are the two extreme poles of our body, and siras serve as a bridge between them. Therefore, any medicine administered at one pole will impact the other pole, from the feet to the eyes. Yogashashtra claims that these siras, also known as Pusha and Gandhari, are two nadis that cannot be seen with the naked eye. Pusha and Gandhari link the right toe to the right eye and the left toe to the left eye, respectively, and Netra roga can use it.¹⁵

Acharya Dalhan, in Sushruta Samhita's commentary, has mentioned Padabhyanga as Vatashamak and having netraprasadana activity by improving the circulation of the eye. Padabhyanga is helpful for eye strain. It may be due to reflex action.¹⁵

According to Acharya Dalhana's commentary on Sushruta, during abhyanga, the medicinal oil given to the skin progressively moves through each dhatu level, reaching majja dhatu after 900 matra. Netra is majja dhatu's upadhatu. By nourishing majja dhatu, padabhyanga indirectly nourishes the netra.

Acharya Bhela has mentioned that the site of alochaka pitta is pada. Alochaka Pitta is responsible for rupa in the netra. Therefore, it clearly states that padabhyanga has a beneficial effect on drusti.

CONCLUSION

Padabhyanga is commonly practised in Panchakarma therapy. Since the dawn of time, it has also been practised in numerous Indian communities. Foot massage is a common technique in many indigenous medical systems, including Traditional Chinese Medicine, Acupressure Therapy, Reflexology, Aromatherapy, etc. Both a local and a systemic positive effect are provided by padabhyanga. Padabhyanga is encouraged by Ayurveda as part of the regular morning ritual. However, we can employ it as a novel therapy to treat various local and systemic illnesses in both a preventative and curative capacity.

Along with helping to control multiple ocular problems, padabhyanga is beneficial for improving vision. Though many types of research are conducted on the padabhyanga shows even with gentle stimulation, distant areas "like the chakshu" get benefits. Thus, it may be concluded that this procedure has specific action over the visual pathway.

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