Critical Approach on Abhyanga (External Oleation)

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Abstract

Abhyanga is one of the poorvakarma of panchakarma. Abhyanga is not merely a body massage but it has strong systemic action too. It plays major role in bringing the morbid materials from tissues to gastro intestinal tract thereby aids in panchakarma to eliminate it out of the body through shodhana (purificatory measures). Thus abhyanga is part and parcel of penta bio purification.

Keywords

Abhyanga, Poorva karma, Pancha karma, Shodhana, Bahi parimarjana chikitsa, Penta bio purification

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INTRODUCTION
In laymans language Abhyanga (External oleation) is known as body massage. Abhyanga (External oleation) is a generalized process of body massage including head also. Abhyanga is one of the bahi parimarjana chikitsa (External Therapies). Abhyanga (External oleation) comes under the poorva karma (pre operative measures) of panchakarma (penta biopurification).
Abhyanga is external oleation therapy. The word Abhyanga (External oleation) derived from “Ang” Dhatu, which is used for the meaning of motion and “Abhi” Upasarga in it. Its literary meaning is to produce some motions. Rubbing or stroking after applying Ghrita (medicated ghee), Taila (medicated oil) etc. on the skin and helps in their absorption.

CONTRAINDICATION: 1
• Kapha Rogi (suffering from diseases of kapha origin)
• On Samsarjana Krama (Person on special diet after penta bio purification)
• Ajeerni (suffering from indigestion)
• Mandagni (weak digestive power)
• Jwara (suffering from fever)

INDICATIONS OF SNEHANA (OLEATION THERAPY): 2
• Persons who want to undergo Swedana karma (Sudation therapy), Shodhana karma (Purificatory measures)
• Person whose body is dry and suffering from Vatik ailments
• One who always indulges in excess exercise, alcoholic intake, worry and sexual intercourse

DALHANAS VIEW ON ABHYANGA (EXTERNAL OLEATION): 3
Oil used for Abhyanga (External oleation) will reach different dhatus (tissues) at different time interval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhatu</th>
<th>Time Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roots of Hair (Roma Koopa)</td>
<td>300 matrakala (65 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twacha (Skin)</td>
<td>400 matrakala (133 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakta (Blood)</td>
<td>500 matrakala (160 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamsa (Muscle)</td>
<td>600 matrakala (190 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meda (Fat)</td>
<td>700 matrakala (228 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthi (Bone)</td>
<td>800 matrakala (240 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majja (Bone Marrow)</td>
<td>900 matrakala (285 sec)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POSITIONS OF ABHYANGA (ACCORDING TO H.S.KASTURE):⁴
- Sitting
- Supine
- Left Lateral
- Prone
- Right Lateral
- Supine
- Sitting

BENEFITS OF SHIRO ABHYANGA (HEAD MASSAGE):⁵
PREVENTIVE: Person will not suffer from Hair fall, Grey Hairs and Headache
Other Actions: Strengthening of Head and skull, Hair grow long, sturdy and blackish, Person will get good sleep.

BENEFITS OF KARNA POORANA (OLEATION OF EARS):⁶
PREVENTIVE: Person will not suffer from diseses of Vatik origin, Manyastambha (Torticolis / Stiff neck), Hanugraha (Lock jaw), Badhirya (Deafness) etc
Other actions: He will be able to listen all kind of sounds even in old age

BENEFITS OF PADAABHYANGA (FOOT MASSAGE):⁷
PREVENTIVE: Person will not suffer from Gridhrasi (sciatica), Vipadika (cracks on the feet), Suptata & sankochar (numbness and contractures of the ligaments, tendons) etc
Other Action: Enhanced eye sight, softening of feet, strong and sturdy feet

DISCUSSION:
- Abhyanga (External oleation) should be done at least 05 minutes in each position to reach deeper tissues
- In all swedana (Like pinda sweda-sudation by using bolus bag etc) procedures these 7 positions should be adopted
- Prior to all swedana karma (Sudation therapy); abhyanga (External Oleation) is essential (Rooksha sweda - Dry Sudation is optional)
- Shira, Shravana & padabhyanga (Head, Ear and Foot massage) are important
- As per kerala chikitsa paddhati-In Hemanta ritu (Winter) abhyanga (External Oleation) for 2 Nadikas (48 min)⁸
- Shishira ritu (Cold Season) 3 Nadikas (72min), Vasanta ritu (Spring) 5 Nadikas (120 min)
- In Greeshma ritu (Summer) 6 Nadikas (144 min or two hours & 28 min)
- If performed daily then 05 Nadikas (120 min)
- If performed once in a Nadikas week then 12 Nadikas (04 hours & 48 min)
- If performed once in fortnight then 16 Nadikas (06 hours & 24 min)
• If performed once in a month then left overnight
• Oil is applied thrice a day over the head, once into the ears, eyes and nostrils
• It is applied thrice over the legs and twice over the whole body
• In young adults if vata is dominant; one and half *pala* (1 pala - 48 ml) oil is used
• In pitta and kapha dominant conditions one *pala* (48 ml) of oil is applied
• In elderly people, 1/4th *pala* of oil is used
• 6 drops of oil into the ears and nostrils, one drop to the eyes and ½ *karsha* (6 ml) to feet and soles

**ACTION OF ABHYANGA (EXTERNAL OLEATION):**

- *Abhyanga* (External oleation) acts on skin is the seat of *vata & lasika* (*Lymph*)
- Lymphatic Drainage is the prime effect
- Lymph possess large amount of amino acid - Tryptophan, protein, glucose & histaminases
- Tryptophan increases after massage
- An increase in plasma tryptophan increase serotonin (*Neurotransmitter*)
- Fluid movement because of hydrostatic & osmotic pressure
- *Abhyanga* (External oleation) causes mechanical hydrostatic pressure in extra cellular compartment
- Forceful expulsion from peripheral vessels causes splanchnic pooling of blood
- Helps fluid to enter into viscera & tissues and dilute toxins accumulated
- When it refills the peripheral vessels after the completion of procedure
- Diluted toxins are brought into general circulation
- In due course of elimination procedures such as *Vamana* (Emesis) & *Virechana* (Purgation) they pulled into gut & expelled

**CONCLUSION**

Persons will postpone the senility if *abhyanga* (External oleation) is employed as a daily regimen. It acts as both preventive as well as curative. It is a part and parcel of *poorvakarma* to bring the dosha from shakha (*Tissues*) to koshta (*Gastrointestinal Tract*). It is a major treatment for various vatic ailments. If one adopts *abhyanga* (External oleation) for long; person will live long free from diseases. According to modern pharmacology; absorption through the skin can be enhanced by suspending the
drug in an oily vehicle and rubbing the resulting preparation into the skin.\textsuperscript{10}
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