

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 *dhatu*s (tissues) at different time interval

- ***Dhatu***
Time Interval
- Roots of Hair (*Roma Koopa*)
300*matrakala* (65 sec)
- *Twacha* (Skin)
400*matrakala* (133 sec)
- *Rakta* (Blood)
500*matrakala* (160 sec)
- *Mamsa* (Muscle)
600*matrakala* (190 sec)
- *Meda* (Fat)
700*matrakala* (228 sec)
- *Asthi* (Bone)
800*matrakala* (240 sec)
- *Majja* (Bone Marrow)
900*matrakala* (285 sec)

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 diseases of *Vatik* origin, *Manyasthambha* (Torticollis / 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 PADABHYANGA (FOOT MASSAGE):⁷

PREVENTIVE: Person will not suffer from *Gridhrasi* (sciatica), *Vipadika* (cracks on the feet), *Suptata & sankocha* (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 1/2 *karsha* (6 ml) to feet and soles

ACTION OF ABHYANGA (EXTERNAL OLEATION):⁹

- *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.¹⁰

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