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## Effect of *Agnikarma* in the management of *Vatakantaka* (Calcaneal spur): A Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

*Vatakantaka* (Calcaneal Spur) is the most common form of heel pain. Calcaneal spur is a small osteophyte located on the heel bone (Calcaneus). It is most irritating and usually affects middle aged women. *Vatakantaka* is a condition caused by vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha*. When a foot bone is constantly exposed to stress; small osteophytes forms in the form of calcium deposits at the bottom of the heel bone leads to the condition called *Vatakantaka* (Calcaneal spur). *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned *Agnikarma* procedure in the management *Vatakantaka*. So in this study we had used only *Agnikarma* treatment till satisfactory relief from pain was obtained. The patient was given 3 settings of *Agnikarma* therapy at the interval of 5 days and the patient got relief from symptoms. Follow-up was taken to observe further recurrence for the next 1 month.

### KEYWORDS

*Vatakantaka*, *Calcaneal spur*, *Agnikarma*



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## INTRODUCTION

*Vatakantaka* is a disease affecting heel which is caused by vitiated *Vata* and *kapha*, it can be co-related with calcaneal spur in modern medicinal aspect. Calcaneal spur is pathological *Asthivridhhi* as a result of continuous external *kshata* or improper posture of heel.<sup>1</sup> Mild trauma or overuse or improper use will lead to the formation of spur which is fairly shaped as *Kantaka*, hence *Vatakantaka* name. Now a day sheel pain is the commonly faced problem in middle aged peoples due to sedentary lifestyle. Obese people, women who constantly wear high heels, flatfooted peoples and people who are having history of long standing are more prone to have this condition.

Calcaneal spur is a small osteophyte, bone spur located on calcaneus (heel bone). This condition is generally diagnosed with the help of radiological examination. When calcaneus is exposed to constant stress, calcium deposits build up on the bottom of it causing the spur. Repeated damage can cause these deposits to pile up on each other, causing a spur shaped deformity which is called calcaneal spur.

In *vatakantaka* pain will be severe after period of rest. Here this condition is very painful and causes disruption in day to day activity such as walking, running etc.,

which makes it concerning and hence treatment which gives complete relief is expected.

According to modern science, treatment for such condition comprises of Analgesics and in advanced cases surgery. The modern medicine approach has limitations such as side effects of long term of analgesic use and recurrence after surgical removal. Due to the effect of this disease, treatment with complete pain relief and cure without surgery is expected. Procedures like *Agnikarma*, one of the *Ayurvedic* therapies have shown promising results in such conditions.

*Agnikarma* is indicated in *Kapha Vaat Dosh Dushti* in *Asthi Dhatu* diseases. It is one of the para surgical procedures mentioned in ancient text *Sushruta Samhita*. In treatment of any disease four main treatment protocol have been described by *Acharya Sushruta* as follows; *Aushadha*, *Shashtra karma*, *Kshar karma* and *Agni karma*. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Agnikarma* is best in all given treatment protocol.<sup>2</sup> Diseases which cannot be cured by medicine, surgery or by *Kshar karma* can be definitely treated by *Agnikarma*.

*Agnikarma* can be closely related to thermal cautery in terms of modern medicine.

## CASE STUDY



In this case study, a 40 year old female patient working as housewife; suffering from *Vatakantaka* was selected for *Agnikarma* Chikitsa. The patient visited to Panchakarma OPD, Dr. D. Y. Patil College of Ayurved and research Centre, Pimpri, Pune on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019 with complaints of right heel pain which was severe during morning, tenderness and difficulty in walking since 4 months. The history suggested that patient had received allopathic treatment like analgesic, anti-inflammatory drugs, but without satisfactory relief. X-ray examination of right heel revealed presence of calcaneal spur. After detailed history, examination and assessment it was diagnosed as *Vataknataka* (calcaneal spur) and decided to treat it with *Agnikarma* Chikitsa only with the interval of 5 days up to complete relief from symptoms.

Patient got relief from pain after first setting. After second setting, patient got relief from pain as well as tenderness. On third setting, patient got relief from all symptoms. During treatment no any adverse effects were seen. To observe any recurrence in symptoms patient was advised to take follow up after 1 month, but there were no any recurrence symptoms observed. The patient was satisfied with *Agnikarma Chikitsa*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS:

**Materials** *Lauha Shalaka* of *Bindu* type of projection, *Goghrita* for local application, cotton, match box, gas stove.

**Method:** The procedure carried out in three steps i.e. *Poorvakarma*, *Pradhan Karma*, *Pashchat Karma*.

*Poorva Karma:* Patient was asked to sleep in supine position before starting the procedure. First area of right heel cleaned with spirit. Then more painful point was marked. Then *Lauha Shalaka* was heated up till it gets red hot.

*Pradhan Karma:* Once the *Shalaka* gets red hot *Bindu* type *Dagdha* was done at the site marked till *Samyak Dagdha Lakshana* occurred i.e. *Durgandhata*, *Twakasankoch* etc.<sup>3</sup>

*Pashchat Karma:* After *Agnikarma Goghrit* is applied at that site for *Ropana Karma*<sup>4</sup>.

## RESULTS:

Pre and post assessment was done by NRS (Numerical Rating Scale)<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1** Results of treatment

Symptom	Before Agnikarma treatment	After Agnikarma treatment
Pain (NRS)	9 (severe pain)	2 (mild pain)

## DISCUSSION

In classics calcaneal spur is associated with the ancient term *Vatakantak*.



According to *Acharya Sushruta* the disease *Vatakantaka* is caused by vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* due to constant standing and walking on uneven surface resulting in pain in foot. It is characterized by *Shool* (pain) and *Shotha* (inflammation) at *Khudak* (heel region). *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* are the causative factors for *Shoola* and *Shotha* in the heel.<sup>6</sup>

*Agnikarma* is a parasurgical procedure which is useful in *Vatajand Kaphaj Dushti*. The *Ushna, Tikshna, Laghu Guna* of *Agni* breaks the *Vatakaphanubandha* which results in decrease in *shotha* and eliminates *Vata* which results in relief from *Shoola*.

Hence *Agnikarma* is effective in *Vatakantaka* and also it is safe, cost effective, having fewer complications and gives sudden Pain relief.

## CONCLUSION

From the above case it can be concluded that *Agnikarma* is an effective treatment in the management of *vatakantaka*. It is also cost effective, safe, having fewer complications, with less chances of recurrence. It proves that *Agnikarma* is better therapy than any other treatment. *Agnikarma* gives significant result in *Vatakantaka*.



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