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# Role of Sesame Oil *Abhyanga* in Daily Routine as a Preventative Measure in *Vatavyadhi*

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## ABSTRACT

As mentioned by Acharya Charaka that Oil is the best remedy for *Vatika* disorders. In the oil, most preferable oil is Sesame oil as given by Acharya Charaka in Sutra sthana. The continuous use of Sesame oil alleviates *Vata*, as oil is unctuous (*Snigdha*), hot (*Ushana*), and heavy (*Guru*) while *Vata* being dry (*Ruksha*), cold (*Sheeta*) and light (*Laghu*) is of the opposite nature. Sesame oil *Abhyanga* is the best remedy to protect once from the disorders caused due to imbalanced *Vatadosha*. Here we will know about the importance of Sesame oil *Abhyanga* as a preventative measure in *Vatavyadhi*. As prevention is always better than cure as Ayurveda always focuses on maintaining health through natural practices.

## Key Words

*Abhyanga, Vatavyadhi, Dincharya, Sesame oil*

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## INTRODUCTION

*Vayu* is life, strength and sustainer of creatures. It is the master of all in the nature and in body too. The person whose *Vayu Dosh* is with unimpeded movements and in normal state lives long for hundred years devoid of disorders said by Acharya Charaka. Being the most important of the three *Doshas*, *vatadosha* regulates the functions of *Pitta* and *Kapha* as well. As primary *Dosha* in human body, *Vata* is known to be responsible for all physical processes. Considering these factors, any changes in *Vatadosha* level and *Gauna* may have severe

implications on the body in comparison to the *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas*.

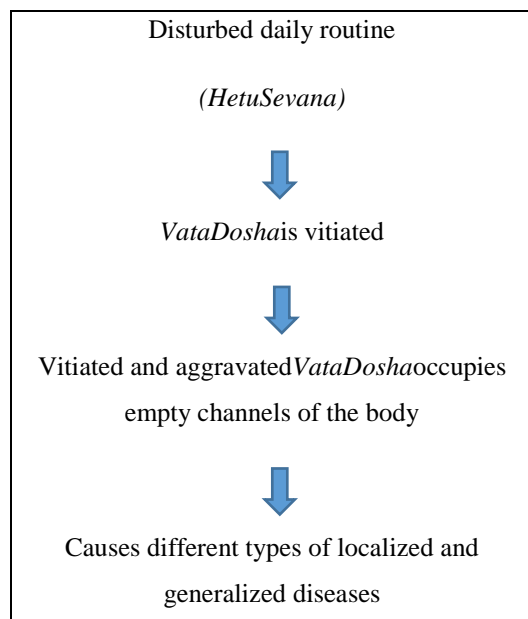
There are five types of *Vayu*. They all in equilibrium and are located in their places performing their normal functions by which body is sustained free from disorders. If these five *Vayu* move on wrong path or are unbalanced and thus they afflict the body with disorders relating to their location and functions and take away life shortly. Most of the disease are caused due to *Vatadosha* while *Sneha*(oil) holds the exact opposite *Gun*as of that of *Vatadosha*. Thus *Abhyanga* will help to normalise unbalance *Vata Dosh*a. When there is the interaction between

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substances having mutually opposite *Guna*, the stronger dominates over the weaker, therefore continuous use of Sesame oil *Abhyanga* alleviates *Vata*.

The application of *Sneha* (oil) to the pot made from mud makes it soft and sturdy. Repeated application of oil/ grease to the wheels of the vehicle facilitates the smooth running of the wheel. The absorption of oil in the muscle allows the smooth functioning of the body. It enhances beauty. It develops the capacity of the body to bear diseases caused due to the predominance of *Vata Dosha*<sup>1</sup>. The lifestyle described by Ayurveda builds muscles, strengthens the body, as well as stabilizes the mind.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS



### *Vatavyadhi*–

The group of diseases primarily caused by vitiated *Vata* are collectively called *Vatavyadhi*,

which constitute the majority of diseases affecting mankind<sup>2</sup>.

### *Hetu* :

*Vatadosha* gets vitiated by many factors, like

- *AaharatmakHetu*- Excessively dry, cold food habits, food not associated with Ghee or oil, and food which is very much less than needed,
- *ViharatmakHetu*- Activities like excessive walking, leaping, jumping; uncomfortable bed and seat (chair), excessive elimination of impurity and blood, late night sleep, not sleeping at night; wasting of *Dhatu*, Psychological factors like overthinking, fear, anger; day sleep, suppression of urges, injury, fasting, injury in vital parts (*Marmaghata*), falling down from elephant, horses and other fast vehicles. Due to these *Hetus* *Vayu* get aggravated in the body produces various types of localized and generalized disorders<sup>3,4</sup>.

### *Lakshana*:

Contracture, stiffness in joint, tearing in bones and joints, horripilation, delirium, stiffness in hand, back and head, limping, crippledness, humpedness, drying of organs, sleeplessness, destruction of foetus, sperms and ovum, pulsation, numbness in organs, crookedness (*Vakrata*) of head, nose, eyes, clavicular region and neck, tearing, piercing pain, distress, convulsion, mental confusion and exhaustion these are the symptoms produced by the vitiated *Vayu*<sup>5</sup>.

### *Dincharya* (Daily routine):

According to Ayurveda *Dincharya* is a daily routine that promotes self-care through our  
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different daily activities. Our daily routine and habits play an integral role in our long term health. Activities under *Dincharya* includes serially *Prathah Uthana, Shauchvidhi, Dantdhavan, Jivhanirlekhana, Anjana, Nasya, Dhumpana, Abhyanga, Vyayam, Udvartan, Snana, Hitkar Bhojan.*

### **Abhyanga :**

*Abhyanga* is a process in which there is an application of oil in certain direction to different parts of the body and lightly massaging the body. *Abhyanga* therapy is one of the daily used an ancient practice. Early humans practiced life sustaining ways for manipulating the body to increase body strength, mobility and flexibility.

*Abhyanga* should be done regularly, it wards off old age, exertion and helps to correct the unbalance Guna of *Vata*<sup>6</sup>. The benefits of *Abhyanga* are given in Table no.2.

### **AbhyangaKaala:**

Ayurveda is a science which not only deals with the curative aspect of disease but gives more importance to preventive aspect. *Dincharya* is one of preventive principle of Ayurveda. As told in Ayurveda, early morning hours are ideal for *Abhyanga Karma*. Before *Abhyanga* one should be empty stomach and also the food that is consumed the previous day should be digested properly<sup>7</sup>. In Table no.1 has given the effect of *Abhyanga* on *Dhatu* according to the *AbhyangaKaala* (Penetrating time of oil) of different *Dhatu* of body.

**Sesame oil (*Til taila*)<sup>8,9</sup>-**

The liquid oily extract from seeds like Sesame is called *Taila* (oil). All types of oil pacify *Vata* and more particularly Sesame oil



Sesame oil is heavy, endows body with stamina, strength and complexion. Spreads quickly, minutely penetrating, hot in potency but cold to touch, nourishing, depletes body fats, appetizer. It provides lightness to the body, pacifies the pain orienting from ears, female genitalia and upper clavicular area. Applied externally, it is beneficial for skin, hair and eyes. It is useful in all types of injury like cuts, lacerations, abrasions, spasms, wound, cracks, dislocations of joints and fractures. It is also useful in other types of injuries and animal bites. It is useful for administration into ear and nose, external application and for soaking (*Avgaha*).

Sesame oil helps to keep balanced functioning by balancing *Vata*. As regular *Abhyanga* gives stability, improve skin texture and it makes tissue stronger and more flexible. Sesame oil is the most popular *Abhyanga* oil in Ayurveda and Ayurvedic text lists the many benefits of Sesame oil and claims it to be the best of all oils. For this

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reason Sesame oil is used as a base oil in many medicated oils and Sesame oil affordable to all.

### Sesame Oil qualities:

*Rasa- Madhura, Tikta*

*Anurasa- Kashaya*

*Vipaka – Madhura*

*Virya – Ushana* (Hot potency)

*Guna- sukshma* (Minute, enters minute body channels), *Ushana* (hot), *Vyavayi* (Gets absorbed and enters body channels very quickly), *Tikshana* (Strong, piercing), *Vishada* (Clear), *Guru* (heaviness), *Vikasi*(loosen joints), *Lekhana* (scraping)

Types of Sesame seeds: Black, White, Red

As per *Bhavprakash*- The black sesame seeds are the best. White Sesame seeds are of medium quality and the rest of the sesame seeds are of inferior quality including red sesame seeds.

### Effect on Tridosha-

Balances *Vata* and *Kapha Dosh*a, Aggravate *Pitta dosha*.

*Balakara* – improves body strength and immunity

*Deepana*- Improves digestive strength of body

*Srotovishodhana*- Clears and cleanses body channels

*Twachya*- Good for skin

The **bioactive components** present in the sesame seed include vital minerals, vitamins, phytosterols, polyunsaturated fatty acids, tocopherols and unique class of lignans such as sesamin and sesamol<sup>10</sup>.

### Indications of *Abhyanga* as a Preventative:

1. *Abhyanga* in daily routine- *Abhyanga* is included in daily routine. Regular practice of

*Abhyanga* is advised to maintain the physical fitness<sup>11</sup>.

2. *Abhyanga* in different seasons- *Abhyanga* is advised to protect the body from extreme or biting cold of *Hemmantaritu*. Similarly extreme cold and dry weather of *Shishiraraitu*. *Abhyanga* is beneficial in this season to counteract the effect of cold weather<sup>12</sup>.

### *Abhyanga* Contraindications:

In condition such as Suffering from *Kaphaj* disorder, who have just undergone purification therapies or *Shodhan* procedure, Suffering from *Aama* condition, Diseases caused by over nourishment, Suffering from impaired digestive activity/ indigestion, acute fever (*Navjwar*)<sup>13</sup>.

Contraindication for Sesame oil *Abhyanga*- *Pitta prakruti* people, disorders due to vitiated *Pitta dosha* (As Sesame oil increases *Pitta dosha*)

### *Abhyanga* Karmukta (Mode of action):

Application of oil to the skin followed by massage in specific direction is well known by the name *Abhyanga* in Ayurveda. Massage in specific direction improves blood circulation and vasodilation. It provides more oxygenated blood and energy to muscle, facilitate removal of the toxins from the tissues, improves the functioning of musculoskeletal system, clears stiffness and heaviness of body and leads to feeling of lightness. It assists development and improvement of healthy body. It also helps in the improvement of body figure and reduces body weight as well as fat<sup>7</sup>.

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Due to daily use of *Abhyanga*, body become firm, tolerant of exertions and exercise.  
smooth-skinned, free from disturbances of *Vata* and

**Table 1** Effect of *Abhyanga* on *Dhatu* according to the *AbhyangaKaala* (Penetrating time of oil) of different *Dhatu* of body<sup>14A</sup>

Sr. no.	Name of <i>Dhatu</i>	Penetrating time of oil 1 Matra =19/60 second
1	<i>Romantakupa</i>	300 Matra
2	<i>Twak</i>	400 Matra
3	<i>Rakta</i>	500 Matra
4	<i>Mansa</i>	600 Matra
5	<i>Meda</i>	700 Matra
6	<i>Asthi</i>	800 Matra
7	<i>Majja</i>	900 Matra (~ 5 minute)

**Table 2** Benefits of *Abhyang*<sup>1B,6B</sup>:

• It wards off old age, exertion and aggravation of <i>Vata</i>	• Reduces the effect of trauma if any
• It gives good vision	• Help to overcome anxiety as well as stress
• Nourishment to the body	• Relaxes muscle and relieves fatigue
• Improves the body complexion	• Promotes the excellence of body tissue
• Helps to maintain the elasticity of skin,	• Induce sound sleep
• Restores natural immunity	• Increase moisture for softer skin

**Table 3** Symptoms produce by the vitiated *Vatavyadhi* and Beneficial effects of Sesame oil *Abhyanga*

Symptoms produce by the vitiated <i>Vatavyadhi</i> <sup>5B</sup>	Beneficial effects of Sesame oil <i>Abhyanga</i> <sup>14B,15</sup>
• Contracture ( <i>Sankoch</i> )	• Endows the body with stamina, strength and complexion.
• Stiffness in joint ( <i>Stambha</i> )	• Spread quickly/ absorbed fastly.
• Tearing in bones and joints ( <i>Athibheda</i> )	• Minutely penetrating
• Stiffness in hand, back and head	• Nourishing
• Drying of organs ( <i>shosha</i> )	• It promotes intellect, softness, muscle, firmness.
• Sleeplessness	• Igneous nature ( <i>Ushnavirya, Tikshna</i> )
• Pulsation	• Hot in potency but cold to touch
• Numbness in organs	• It provides lightness to the body
• Horripilation ( <i>Lomaharsha</i> )	• Depletes body fat
• Delirium ( <i>Pralapa</i> )	• It beneficial for skin, hair and eyes.
• Piercing pain ( <i>Toda</i> )	• Pacifies the pain originating from Ears, female genitalia and upper clavicular area.
• Convulsion ( <i>Aakshepa</i> )	• Useful in all types of cuts, laceration, abrasions, spasm, wounds.
• Mental confusion ( <i>Moha</i> )	• Useful in cracks, dislocation of joints and fractures.
• Exhaustion ( <i>Aayas</i> )	• Pacifies <i>Vata</i> and <i>Kapha</i> .
	• Wholesome for eyes.

## RESULT

Daily use of Sesame oil *Abhyanga* plays an important role as preventative measure in *Vatavyadhi*.

## DISCUSSION

Ayurveda gives more importance on prevention of disease. Most of the disease are caused due to *Vata*. From three *doshas*, *Vata* is a prime driving force behind all the activities of the body. When this *Vata* gets disturbed it disturbs all the events in the body and causes many sorts of damages and diseases. Diseases caused by *Vatadosha* are

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innumerable. However, the principal ailment cause by *Vatadosha* are 80 in number. Oil is the best remedy for *Vatadosha*. As given in table no. 3 of the symptoms due to vitiated *Vayu* and the benefits of Sesame oil we can understand *Vatadosha* and *Sneha*(oil) has opposite *Gunas*. *Vayu* is predominant in tactile Sense organ that is in skin, sesame oil *Abhyanga* is the most beneficial for skin, *Abhyanga* destroys *Vata*, softens body and removes retention of excrements.

Acharya Charaka states that as Sesame oil is good for digestive strength thus appetite is normalised by Sesame oil application. As in Ayurveda *Agni* has great importance as *Agnidushti* is the root of all diseases. Balanced *doshasis* the best means of preventing disease and health can mean longer life.

The functioning of the sense organs benefits and improve from the lubricating and releasing actions of oil. A Sesame oil makes tissue stronger and more flexible

## CONCLUSION

Imbalance *Vata* produces *Vatavyadhi*. Thus in day to day life we do many activities which are responsible for vitiated *Vatadosha*. The use of Sesame oil alleviates *Vata*, as oil is unctuous (*Snigdha*), hot (*Ushana*), and heavy (*Guru*) while *Vata* being dry (*Ruksha*), cold (*Sheeta*) and light (*Laghu*) is of the opposite nature. In the present era life is running very fast and man has to run faster than his capacity. This is the reason to

imbalance *Vata* and produce *Vatavyadhi*. Sesame oil *Abhyangais* especially useful and pacifying for persons with *Vata* Constitution or excess *Vata*, as it is considered to be very warming and nourishing. It has good ability to be absorbed by the skin and its deep penetrating and rejuvenating properties. Hence Sesame oil *Abhyanga* is a preventative measure in *Vatavyadhi*.

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### Image:

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