



## **A Critical Review on Pain Management by various Ayurvedic Treatment Modalities**

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### **Abstract:**

Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage. So literally the word Vedana means an experience good or bad. Pain is a protective mechanism of the body. Pain not only interferes with physical functioning but also causes impairment in attention control, memory, mental flexibility, trouble-shooter and information processing speed. Chronic pain sometimes may lead to depression or anxiety and even sometime death too. Consumption of analgesics for a longer period leads to relieve pain causes renal and Liver impairment. Pain management in Ayurveda has a holistic view which incorporates several therapeutic procedures and behavioural modifications under the light of basic principles narrated in Ayurveda. In Ayurveda of Snehan, Swedana, Agnikarma, Jalaukaavcharan, Vedhankarma, Lepankarma, Bastikarma are more effective in pain management.

**Keywords:** Pain, Vedana, Snehan, Swedana, Agnikarma, Jalaukaavcharan.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Pain or *vedana* is the unpleasant feeling that we have, when a part of our body or mind has been hurt or when we are ill. The word *vedana* is evolved from the root 'ved' which means an experience. So literally the word *Vedana* means an experience

good or bad. No matter how the pain is it may be mild it may be moderate or it may be severe it will affect the daily routine activity of the person. Pain can be explained in terms of a symptom underlying another disease or complication of the other disease. Pain is a major symptom in many

medical conditions and is the most common reason for physician consultation. It interferes with person's quality of life. The pain not only interferes with physical functioning but also causes impairment in attention control, memory, mental flexibility, trouble-shooter and information processing speed. Chronic pain sometimes may lead to depression or anxiety and even sometime death too. To relieve this pain every person consumes analgesics (NSAID's). But Consumption of analgesics for a longer period leads to renal and Liver impairment. Thus, there is a need and scope for another medications or procedures for pain management which could be classical procedures and drugs of *Ayurveda*, which has maximum benefits with no side effects. On this parameter *Ayurvedic* procedures and medicines seem to be more effective. In spite of rapid progress Surgeons diverting attention from conventional surgery to minimal or non-invasive procedures.

### **AIM AND OBJECTIVE**

To discuss the different treatment modalities for pain management in *Ayurveda*.

To increase threshold of pain and bring balance of doshas to subside pain through various Ayurvedic drugs and procedures.

### **Literary Review:**

Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage. The word unpleasant comprises the whole range of disagreeable feelings from being merely inconvenienced to misery, anguish, anxiety, depression and ultimately suicide.

### **Purpose of pain:**

Pain is a protective mechanism of the body. It occurs whenever any tissues are being irritated by stimulus, the individual reacts to remove the pain stimulus. Thus, to begin with the pain is physiological but if the stimulus continuous to irritate and starts damaging the tissue it becomes pathological.

### **Pain receptors and their stimulation:**

The pain receptors, which are situated in the skin and other tissues, are all free nerve endings. They are widespread in the superficial layers of the skin as well as in certain internal tissues such as periosteum, the arterial walls, the joint surfaces and the fold

and tentorium of the cranial vault. Most other deep tissues are not extensively supplied with pain endings but one sparsely supplied, nevertheless any widespread tissue damage can still stimulate to cause the slow and chronic aching type of pain in these areas.

Three types of stimuli excite Pain receptors: they are

1. Mechanical
2. Thermal

### Classification of pain



**Pain control:** The degree to which each person reacts to pain varies tremendously. This results partly from the capability of brain itself to control the degree of input of pain signals to the nervous system by activation of a pain control system called analgesia system.

3. Chemical – Bradykinin, Serotonin, histamine, potassium or acids etc.

### Dual transmission of pain signal into the Central nervous system:

1. Fast-sharp pain pathways
2. Slow-chronic pathways

### Dual pain pathways in the Cord and Brain stem:

On entering the spinal cord, the pain signals take two different pathways to the brain. They are:

1. The Neospinothalamic Tract
2. Paleospinothalamic Tract

### ANALGESICS

Analgesics are drugs, which relieve pain without causing loss of consciousness.

The stages of pain perception can be summarized as follows.

1. Noxious stimuli are detected at pain receptors.
2. Sensory nerves through the dorsal root ganglia transfer the signals generated by these

receptors to the dorsal horn of spinal cord.

3. The signal received through the peripheral sensory mechanisms is processed by the spinal cord segment and transferred via various ascending spinal cord pathways to various parts of brain.
4. The signals received in the thalamic nuclei, peri-ventricular grey matter and brainstem reticular formation are processed and passed on to the sensory cortex, giving the subject the sensation of pain.
5. Signals received at several sites, particularly in the reticular formation of medulla descend through polysynaptic pathways to the dorsal horn of the spinal cord where they may either facilitate or inhibit the activity.

### Ayurvedic Review.

**Origin of *Shoola* -**

### Mythological description

As per the Religious Scriptures, *Shoola* originated from the weapon of Lord *Shiva*. i.e. *Tri-Shoola*. It has been mentioned in *Harit Samhita* that Lord *Shiva* threw on *Kamadeva* to kill him. So *Kamadeva* took shelter in the body

of Lord *Vishnu*. He soared from his mouth through which *Kamadeva* fainted. From this onwards *Shoola* is considered to afflict all creatures in this universe<sup>27</sup>.

### Vyutpatti - Derivation:

*Shoola* has been derived from the root " *Shul*" With "Ach" *Praty*, i.e. *Shoolatilakamiti*, that which causes pain (*Siddhantakaumudi*)

### Vyakhya - Definition:

*Shoola* has been defined as " *Shoola Nyayam Sanghoshe Cha*", that means pain, disease or noise. For pain in *Ayurveda* there are many terms such as *Shoola*, *vedana*, *ruja* etc. This *Shoola* or *vedana* is described in *Ayurveda* as symptom of many diseases or as complications of some diseases. *Ayurveda* came into existence to eliminate the pain and suffering of living being. *Charaka* clearly says that health is happiness and diseases is pain.

### *Shoola* Bhedha:

Based on intensity *Shoola* will be of three types

1. *Teevra*
2. *Madhya*
3. *Mruda*

It is also mentioned by *Acharya Charaka* that *Shoola* has got direct relation with *satva* of an Individual<sup>29</sup>.

**Shoola which is also known as dukha, has been described as,**

1. *Adhyatmika* -Psychosomatic pain.
2. *Adhibhautika*- Pain produced by animate and non-animate substances.

*Adhidaivika* - Pain brought about through divine and evil sources.

Further, **Adhyatmikadukha** has been sub divided in to two types,

1. *Sharirik*
2. *Manasika*

**Predominance of dosha in**

**Shoola:** *Vata* is the main dosha involved in *Shoola*. It is the main factor for generating and spreading of *Shoola*. But for specific type of pain in specific region, a specific type of *vayu* is responsible. Few examples are given below.

- SarvangaShoola* - *Vyanavayu*  
*Shira Shoola* - *Prana and Vyanavayu*  
*Udara Shoola* -*Samanavayu*  
*HrutShoola* - *Vyana and Prana vayu*

**Management of Pain in Ayurveda:**

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Pain management in *Ayurveda* has a holistic view which incorporates several therapeutic procedures and behavioural modifications under the light of basic principles narrated in *Ayurveda*. Hence, prescription writing for pain in *Ayurveda* is varied as *Ayurveda* considers pain as subjective phenomenon which includes therapy to both body and mind.

**Snehan:** Snehan implies oleation of the body and is described as one of the important *Purvakarma*(precursor) to *Panchakarma*. As *Vata Dosha* (*Dhatukshayjanya*) gets pacified by *Sneha* (oleation), this therapeutic procedure includes lubrication of body chiefly with medicated oil. As per the patients' requirement, *Snehan* is classified as *AbhyantarSnehan* (Internal oleation) and *BahyaSnehan* (Outer oleation).

**Swedan:** *Swedan* implies hot fomentation which is also the precursor procedure to *Panchakarma* which helps in inducing sweating to the patient. This procedure is done to curb the *Vata Dosha* vitiated due to increase in its *Sheeta* property. The role of *Swedan* is best understood with Transient Receptor Potential Channels. These receptors are mainly found in

nociceptive neurons of peripheral nervous system. Upon further literary search, it is known that TRPV1 channels are responsible for perception of heat and pain both thereby, facilitating the role of Swedan in management of pain.

**Agnikarma:** *Agnikarma* is one of the most effective para surgical procedure mentioned for the management of pain which is done with the help of *shalaka* (metal probe). *Agni Karma* is an *Anushastrakarma* (Para surgical procedure) elaborately described in *Sushruta Samhita*. *Agni Karma* procedure is the best & most important procedure. This procedure is very easy to perform, diseases once treated by this do not reoccur & it cures *asadyarogas* also. *Agni Karma* is performed by various materials which are termed as *dahanaupakaranas*. *Agni Karma* procedure relieves the pain instantly. This unique procedure helps in relieving pain in various painful conditions chiefly of Musculoskeletal pain like *Parshnishool* (heel pain- Calcaneal spur), *Sandhigatavata* (Osteoarthritis), *Avabahuk* (Frozen shoulder); According to *Ayurveda*, due to *ushnaguna* produced during helps in

pacification of *Vata-Kapha Dosha* and helps in increasing the *Dhatvagn* thereby reducing pain.

**Jalaukaavcharan:**

*Jalaukaavcharan* is one of the therapeutic procedures of *Raktamokshan* (Bloodletting). This therapy of pain relief involves application of *Nirvish Jalauka* (Non-poisonous Leeches – *Hirudomedicinalis*) for removal of vitiated blood at the site of pain. *Hirudin* present in saliva of Leech acts as an anticoagulant and helps in dissolving the perianal hematoma. The anaesthetic substance present in the leech saliva inhibits plasma kallikarein and the occurrence of the second kininase activity which helps relieving pain during procedure.

Powerful antibiotic property is possessed by hyluronidasic acid in leech, which prevents infection too.

**Marmachikitsa** – It is an effective, non-invasive and handy method of wholesome healing. The concept of *marma* in *Ayurveda*, *chakras* in Yoga and meridian system in Acupressure or Acupuncture resemble each other closely. Through stimulation of *marma* by means of *Abhyanga* (massage), *Mardana* (Acupressure), Aroma

therapy, Pranic healing, Herbal paste application (*lepa*), *Raktamokshan* (bloodletting) and Agni karma, the Prana (vital energy) existing in marmas can be directed to remove blockages (even in remotely connected areas) and stimulate energy flow, thus resulting in a state of healthy body, mind and spirit.

**Lepa karma:** *Lepa karma* is application of medicated paste on skin. Mode of action of *Lepa karma* can be explained with the help of Transdermal absorption of drugs.

**Bastikarma:** It is one of the chief therapeutic procedures of *Panchakarma* in which the drugs are administered into the rectum of the patient. It is multidimensional treatment procedure offering wide range of clinical benefits in different diseases due to its synergistic effects. Sensation of Pain is attributed to vitiated *Vata Dosh* and in order to correct this doshic imbalance *Basti* is the chief treatment of choice as origin of *Vata Dosh* is from *Pakwashay* and hence, described *Ardhachikitsa* (as treatment of choice for numerous diseases) in *Charak Samhita*

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Pain in *Ayurveda* is aggravated mainly due to involvement of *Vatadosha* and our classical science has multi-dimensional treatment modality. Where as in contemporary science they have only temporary relief for the pain and most of the opt for surgical procedures, which has lot of risk factors and complications. But in *Ayurveda* we have complete relief of the pain by curing from the root. Also our Ayurvedic Acharyas have told different treatment modalities as explained for example in paediatrics we cannot perform *agnikarma* instead we have options like *lepa*, *abhyanga* etc.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

This poster is an attempt to explore the concept of Pain in classical texts of *Ayurveda* in light of modern science. Re-exploring of therapeutic pain management strategies which are validated & effective treatment in *Ayurveda* of *Snehan*, *Swedan*, *Agnikarma*, *Jalaukacharan*, *Vedhankarma*, *Lepankarma*, *Bastikarma* are discussed. *Agnikarma* is a procedure frequently indicated in many *Vata* and *Kapha* predominant conditions. It is very effective procedure for pain

management by inhibiting the pain pathways. Bloodletting also relieves the pain by removing the pain causing agents and by removing the vitiated doshas. On the other hand, many chemicals present in leech saliva relieves the pain by blocking the receptors responsible for producing the pain. *Snehana* and *Svedhana* pacifies *Vata*, the main culprit in causing pain. *Basti* works at the *moolsthana* (prime site) of *Vata* to remove the vitiated *Vata* from the body and hence relieving the pain of respective disease. All above measures give miraculous results in no time.

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