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Shodhana Snehapana: A Review

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Abstract

Snehapana is internal administration of *Sneha* (medicated or non-medicated lipid substance) with definite therapeutic aim. Apart from nutritive value, it gains importance even in therapeutic application especially in *Ayurveda*. *Panchakarma*, the unique treatment modality of *Ayurveda*, is basically designed to purify the body of human being by detoxification of all systems. *Snehana* therapy is administered to a person in two different ways, external such as *Abhyanga*, *Unmardana*, *Parisheka*, *Janu Basti*, *Kati Basti* etc. Internal application has been divided into three varieties on the basis of their effect viz., *Brihana*, *Shamana* and *Shodhana* (detoxification therapy). Present study is critical analysis of role of *Snehapana* as a prerequisite to *Shodhana karma* only and it shall be further postulated the mechanism of *Snehapana* in augmentation of *Shodhana karma* without disturbing the body functions.

Key words: *Shodhana Snehapana, Panchakarma*

Introduction

Amongst *Panchakarma*, *Snehana karma* is regarded as the most important preparatory measure before *Shodhana* therapy like *Vamana* and *Virechana*. As per the literature found in *Charaka Samhita*, *Snehana karma* has been included as one of the *Shadvidhopakramas*[1]. In the treatment regimen, *Shodhana* therapies are major procedures or *Pradhana karma*. They are preceded by certain preparatory procedures known as *Purva Karma* and followed by certain recovery procedures known as *Paschat Karma*. The entire *Shodhana* procedure depends upon the proper mobilization of *Doshas* from the channels, which is achieved with the help of *Snehana* and *Swedana*.

Out of these two, the *Snehana* is a major procedure which leads and decides the whole outcome of *Shodhana procedure*. It is the first and foremost procedure of *Panchakarma*. Though it is not included in *Panchakarma*, yet without this procedure, any therapy cannot be performed.

Shodhana Snehapana – It is a pre-operative procedure for *Shodhana Chikitsa* where *Sneha dravya* (medicated fat) is administered for attainment of *Upasthita Dosha Avastha* and further eases elimination of the vitiated *doshas*. Here, *Upasthita Dosha* refers to presence of *Dosha* in the *Koshtha* for expulsion. The proper mobilization of *dosha* from *Shakha* to *Koshtha* is achieved by the action of *Snehana* and *Swedana*.

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SNEHA- It is derived from ‘Snihdhatu’ and has two meanings-

‘Snih-preetau’-means to render affection.

‘Snih-snehane’-means to render lubrication.

The term *sneha* implies to a substance that brings softness, oiliness in the body. *Acharya Charaka* defines

Snehana as the procedure by which *Snigdha*, *Vishyandana*, *Mardavata* and *Kledana* are produced in the body [2].

PROPERTIES OF SNEHA DRAVYA-

All *Sneha dravya* have *Prithvi* and *Jala Mahabhuta*. The properties of *Sneha dravya*'s are like *Sukshma*, *Sara*, *Snigdha*, *Drava*, *Picchila*, *Guru*, *Shita*, *Manda* and *Mridu* [3].

Table No. 1: Showing Guna, Bhoutika Sanghatana & Karmukata of Sneha Dravyas

Guna	Dominant Mahabhutha					Karmukata
	Prithvi	Apya	Teja	Vayu	Akasha	
Picchila		++++				Lepana, Jivana, Sanghata, Sandhana, Balya, Gauravata
Sukshma			++	++	+++	Srotovishodhana, Vivaranta, Soushiryakara
Sara		++		+		Anulomana, Vyaptisheela, Preranasheela
Snigdha	+	++++				Snehana, Mardavata, Kledana, Bandhana, Vishyandana,
Drava		++++				Prakledana, Vilodhana, Prasari.
Guru	++++	++				Brumhana, Malavriddhikara, Tarpana, Angaglani, Balakara
Shita		+++		++		Sthambhaka, Hladana
Manda	++	+				Shamana
Mridu		++			+++	Shaithilya of Avayava, Mardavata.

By the above table it can be concluded that *Sneha dravyas* are predominantly *Apya mahabhuta pradhana*.

Accha Sneha- Oral administration of the ghee or other fat substances alone is called as *Accha Sneha*[4] In this procedure of *Snehana*, fat substances are not given in combination with other substances e.g. foods. *Dalhana* opines that, *Kevala sneha* is the synonym of *Accha sneha*, which means administration of processed or unprocessed *sneha* alone, without mixing with other liquids[5]. This method of *Snehana* is most ideal in patients who are capable of digesting the fat substances properly. It is always preferred in moderate climatic conditions. Depending upon the purpose of *Snehapana*, it is categorised into two as *Shodhana Snehapana* and *Shamana Snehapana*.

Shodhana Sneha- When the *Snehapana* is carried out as preliminary procedure during the *Shodhana* therapy (*Vamana* and *Virechana*) it is known as *Shodhana Snehapana*[6]. As a part of *Shodhana* procedure, the *Snehapana* is carried out to facilitate the mobilization of the *Dosha* from the site of its manifestation to the site of elimination i.e. *koshtha*. In this process, *Utklesha* state of the *dosha* is achieved by the *Snehapana*. It is given early in the morning.

Shodhana procedure depends upon the proper mobilization of *doshas* from the channels, which is achieved with the help of *Snehana* and *Swedana*. The importance of *sneha* is quoted in *samhita*'s that, administration of *Panchakarma* without administering proper *sneha* may destroy the body as a dry wood breaks, if bent without smearing with oil[7]. It may act as *Pradhana karma* when administered to pacify *dosha* or mitigate the disease. It is a procedure which leads and decides the whole outcome of *Shodhana* therapy. It is the process of administering *Sneha* to achieve the desired effect in a precise duration prior to *Vamana* and *Virechana Karma*, with due consideration of dose, time, duration, etc. The aim of the *Shodhana Snehapana* is to prepare the body for *Shodhana* by bringing the *doshas* situated in peripheral tissues to the *Koshtha*, which are then easily expelled out just as *Klishta mala* of any cloth is easily washed by water, once loosen from its site, in the similar way, *malas* are easily expelled out by *Shodhana* if we take them to *Utklishta* stage by *purvakarma* i.e. *Snehana* and *Swedana*[8].

Discussion

While explaining the *Snehana karma*, *Acharya Charaka* states [9]

- **Snehoanilamhanti-** *Sneha* is having exactly opposite *guna* to *Vatadosha*, *Sneha* induces the proper *gati* of *vata*. *Vatanigraha* is one of the criteria mentioned by *Charaka* to bring *dosha* back to *koshtha* and therefore, it helps to bring the *Shakhagata dosha* to *koshtha*.
- **Mridukarotideham-** *Sneha* by virtue of its *Snigdha*, *mridu* qualities brings softness in *Dosha sanghata*, *Srotas* and *Deha* which helps in bringing *doshas* from *koshtha* to *shakha*.
- **Malanamvinihantisangam-** *Mala Sanga* occurs due to *Rukshata*, *Sneha* decreases this *Rukshata* by its *Snigha* and *Vishyanda* properties

It is a well-known fact that the *Doshas* are present in and travel throughout the body having their own *gati* viz. *Urdhava*, *Adha* and *Triyak* etc[10]. However, in *vyadhitavastha* they travel from *koshtha* to *shakha* and do *sthansanshray* in *Srotasa* having *Kha vaigunya* due to which *roga* is formed. *Shodhana Chikitsa* aims at expulsion of these vitiated *doshas* from the body from *Urdhvamarga* (inducing *Vamana*) or *Adhomarga* (inducing *Virechana*).

Doshas are brought back to *Koshtha* by *Vridhhi* (excessive increase of *dosha*), *Vishyandana* (liquefaction of *dosha*), *paka* (digestion of *dosha*), *srotomukhavishodhana* (cleaning and opening of channels) and *vayunigrahat* (controlling of *vayu*) which can be achieved by *Snehana* and *Swedana* Karmas[11]. *Acharya Charaka* gives simile that, as from a smooth container, contents easily separate without any effort, similarly *Kaphadi Doshas* get easily expelled out from well oiled body[12].

Sneha, by its *Sukshma Guna* and *Kledana Karma*, brings the *Doshas* present in the other *margas* to *koshtha* wherein *Kledana Karma* acts as a solvent of the morbid *doshas*. Here the fat-soluble impurities in the body get eliminated as *Shodhana Dravya* brings the *Doshas* to *Koshtha* for elimination.

Sinha Kaushal et al. concluded in their study that entire Procedure of *Shodhana* depends upon the proper mobilization of *Dosha* from the *Shakha* to *koshtha* which is achieved with the help of *Snehana* and *Swedana*. That makes changes in vitiated *Doshas* to mobilize them without trouble, and thus easily expelled from the body tissues without harming the body[13].

After ingestion *Sneha* by virtue of its properties, is absorbed from the gut and rapidly enters the micro channels (*Sukshma Srotas*) of the body and reach the remotest target area. After reaching the target area, it binds with the vitiated *doshas* (toxic elements/free radicals) and leads to *Vridhhi* which can also be

understood by the fact that *Sneha* is hydrophilic, hence after appropriate oral ingestion of *Sneha* the cells of body become saturated with fats. Then the fat material is transported out of the cell to extra-cellular fluid by the process of osmosis. The levels of fatty acids increases in the blood resulting in the high plasma volume as there is a quantitative increase due to the aqueous properties of *Sneha* and liquefied metabolic waste brought from the tissues (*mala*). The equilibrium of the normal plasma level is maintained and so the extra amount of liquid reaches to the *Koshtha* (Gastro Intestinal Tract) to be expelled out of the body (*Anupravanabhava*)[14].

Vishyadana is vilayana or liquification of *doshas*, which is achieved by *snigdha*, *mridu* and *drava guna* of *sneha*. By liquefying the *doshas* and *dhatu*s it helps in bringing them to *koshtha* from *shakha* for their easy expulsion during *shodhana* process. *Paka* means the *dosha* which were initially *sama* in nature, achieved *niramavastha* and leads to *abhaddhata* or dislodgement of *dosha* from *shakha* and move towards *koshtha*[15]. *Srotomukha vishodhana karma* is achieved by *Sukshma guna* of *sneha dravyas*. It helps in removal of *margavrodha* and *vayurnigrahana* means pacification of aggravated *vata* which initially pushed the morbid *doshas* out of the *koshtha*, which in turns facilitates the natural return of the *doshas* to the *koshtha*.

When *Snehapana* is followed by *swedana* (Sudation) it further facilitates to bring back the *Sneha* bound *doshas* to the gut, where they can be easily removed out of the body by *Shodhana karmas* like *vamana*, *virechana karma*. It is further stressed that this ingestion of *Sneha* prior to *Shodhana karma* is not harmful to body in any way as whatever *Sneha* is ingested is extracted out of the body and is there is no cause of worry that it will cause hyperlipidimia, the fact which is favoured by several studies. It is also remarkable that *Sneha* bound *doshas* not only travel to gut but also are discharged out of the body through micro sweat channels. The guidelines mentioned in the classics should be taken into proper consideration for proper *snehapana*, otherwise complications may occur which may put the life into danger.

Patil et al. in their study concluded that oral ingestion of lipids does not cause rise in the level of lipids rather it facilitates in bringing the increased level lipids to normal; even if the lipid levels increase during oral ingestion of lipids (*Snehapana*) it is transient and comes to normal after purification (*Samyaka Shodhana*)[16].

When emetics or purgatives are administered, these increased amounts of the body fluids are evacuated by which the vitiated *dosha* (humours) and metabolic

waste (*mala*) are also expelled out resulting in the radical cure of the disease.

Dr. Aparna Bagul concluded in their study that the rise in lipids is transient and comes to normal after *Samyaka shodhana*. *Shodhanartha Snehana* is safer, if proper *Vamana* and *Sansarjana Krama* are performed afterwards and at the end of therapy there is improvement in the serum lipid levels of patients even after administration of lipids in increasing order[17].

Conclusion

After critical review and analysis of the available ancient literature and various clinical studies, it can be speculated and affirmed that *Shodhana Snehapana* (internal oleation) certainly helps in detoxification of the body by facilitating all the prerequisites of *dosha gati*. It is also submitted that this short duration ingestion of *sneha* prior to *shodhana karma* does not harm the body in any way viz fear of hyperlipidimia.

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