



## UPANAHA SWEDA THERAPY – A REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

*Swedana* karma is purvakarma after *Snehana* and also important *Pardhana* karma for many diseases. *Upanaha Sweda* is one among four types of *Sweda* described by *Acharya Vagbhata*. The procedure of applying warm herbal paste to the effected part of the body followed by bandaging is referred to *as upanaha sweda*. Moreover, both *Charaka* and *Sushruta* have accepted it as a therapy of choice in the case of *Sandhigata Vata* (joint disorder). This therapy has *vatahara*, *shothahara* (anti-inflammatory), and *Shoolaghna* (analgesic) action. The mode of action of *Upanaha Sweda* has multiple factors. *Upanaha Swedana* is a standard treatment modality used in Ayurveda for the management of pain and inflammation. *Ayurvedic* texts option that *Upanaha Sweda* acts by trapping the heat inside the body by preventing the heat loss through *Romakupa*. The present Review was done based on the need of the day to elaborate on the process of conducting *Upanaha Swedana*.

**Keywords:** *Ayurved*, *Panchkarma*, *Upanaha*, *Sweda*, *Sandhigata Vata*

## INTRODUCTION

*Upanaha* is derived from the two syllables “Upa” + “Nah” where “Upa” is a *Upsarga* (Prefix) meaning “Near” and “Nah” *Bandhana* means to tie or bind. The function of *Upanaha* is to bandage or to bandage

with medicaments. So, the procedure of applying warm herbal paste to the effected part of the body followed by bandaging is referred to *as Upanaha sweda* <sup>[1]</sup>. It is a type of *Ekanga sweda*. *Swedana* is

one such therapy that uses primarily the *Agni Mahabhuta*. It can be done with or without heating the medicine. If *upanaha* is done during the day, it is removed at night and if done during the night, it is removed in the morning. It is usually done in osteoarthritis, joint disorder, Sciatica, Tennis elbow & *Vatakantaka*. According To *Vagbhata* application of warm paste prepared from Vacha, Satapushpa, Kushtha, Devadaru, Rasna, Eranda, Mamsa, Sneha, Lavana, amla Dravya & then binding with leather strap is called *Upanaha*. The procedure is divided into three phases which are: Purva Karma (pre-therapy procedures) the preparation of the *Upanaha Swedana* material is done, Pradhana Karma (main therapeutic procedures) the prepared *Upanaha Swedana* material is applied to the patient, and Paschat Karma (post-therapy procedures).

#### METHODOLOGY:

The present Review was done based on the need of the day to elaborate on the process of conducting. For this, various *Ayurvedic* texts, digital libraries referencing Samhita were searched and the following headings were selected. The methodology undertaken was for a Review Study.

#### TYPES OF UPANAHA:

*Acharya Chakrapani* <sup>[2]</sup> has stated that there are two types of *Upanaha*

1) *Sagni Upanaha*, where the drugs are heated first and then applied.

2) *Niragni Upanaha*, where Ushna Veerya Dravya (drugs with hot potency) are applied without heating. *Acharya Dalhana* <sup>[3]</sup> stated that there are three types of *Upanaha*:

- a) *Pradeha*-In this the Vatahara drugs are made into a paste with amlaki etc. and then added with Lavana & Sneha is applied to the affected part.
- b) *Sankara or Pind'a Sveda*- In this the Kakolyadi Gana, Eladi Gana, Surasadi Gana drugs, tila, Atasi, Sarshapa etc. Kalka, Krisara, Utkarika, Vesavara are made into Potli (bolus) and Svadana is done by applying it to the body.
- c) *Bandhana* <sup>[4]</sup>- In this, the above-said drugs are made into a paste and then heated. This heated paste is kept in cloth evenly and then the cloth is tied to the affected part.

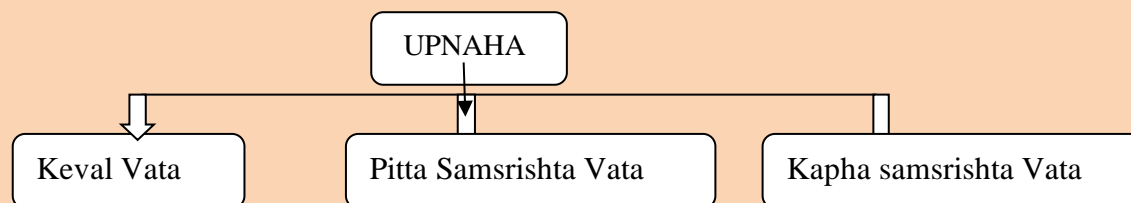
Other types of *Upanaha* Include

1. *Salavana Upanaha* <sup>[5]</sup> (Saindhava Lavana is used for *Swedana* either alone or along with other medicinal drugs).

2. *Snigdha & Ruksha Upanaha* (Drugs having Snigdha & Ruksha qualities are used respectively, along with other medicinal drugs).

*Acharya Charaka* has considered *Upanaha* as a type of *Niragni Swedana* since it does not involve direct heat.

**CLINICAL SPECTRUM OF UPANAHA:** *Upanaha* is used in various disease conditions for specific reasons. The classical indications of *Upanaha Sweda* are as follows <sup>[6]</sup>.



#### COMMONLY USED DRUGS IN UPANAHA:

Vacha, Shunthi, Devdaru, Shatapushpa, Rasna, Eranda, Masha, Punarnava, Sarshapa, Godhum, Yavachuma, Tagaradi Gandhadravayas, Jivanti, Atasi,

Kushtha, Kanji, Kinva, Nimbu swarasa, Gomutra, Arka, Eranda, Nirgundi, Dhattura, Snuhi, Kolakulatthadi churna, Kakolyadi gana, Surasadi gana, Eladi gana etc.

## DISEASE AND TYPE OF UPANAHA

Disease	Type/ Drugs of Upanaha
Osteoarthritis	Nirgundipatra Upanaha <sup>[7]</sup>
Gouty arthritis	Jadamayadi Upanaha Sweda <sup>[8]</sup>
Manyastambha	Kukkutanda Upanaha Sweda <sup>[9]</sup>
Katigraha	Godhumadi Upanaha Sweda <sup>[10]</sup>
Rheumatoid arthritis	Kottamchukadi Upanaha Sweda <sup>[11]</sup>

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:** The Procedure of *Upanaha Swedana* is divided into three main stages:

- ✓ Purva Karma
- ✓ Pradhana Karma
- ✓ Paschat Karma

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

1. Medicinal powders (Nagaradi choorna / Jatamaya-di choorna / Kottamchukadi choorna etc. according to the doshapradhanya) 50 - 100g
2. Bandage cloth (15 cm X 2 m) – 1
3. Leaves of Eranda, Arka, etc. (to cover the area) - Q.S.
4. Amla dravya (Dhanyamla / Takra / Vinegar) - 50-100 ml
5. Oil for upanaha - 50 ml
6. Oil for abhyanga - 30 ml
7. Saindhava Lavana – 20 - 30 gm
8. Attendant – 1

**PREPARATION OF MEDICINE:** Make a paste of powdered drugs using amla Dravya, Taila, Saindhava, etc. & warm it gently.

### PURVA KARMA

- ✓ In purvakarma, the patient with a calm and quiet mind who has followed *dinacharya* is allowed to sit in a suitable position according to the part in which the *sweda* should be performed.
- ✓ The examination of the patient is done with Dashvidha Pariksha and Ashtavidha Pariksha.
- ✓ Then prior to the *swedana* therapy *snehana* is done (external) with suitable medicated or non-medicated Snehas.
- ✓ Nivata Griha should be selected for the procedure to avoid wind and discomfort.

### PRADHANA KARMA

Ask the patient to lie on the *Abhyanga* table. The area of the poultice should be inspected for wounds and

examine any kind of skin allergy, or reaction to temperature. After proper oleation of the diseased part, the lukewarm paste is applied. The thickness of the paste should ideally be equal to the thickness of *Ardra Mahisha Charma*<sup>[12]</sup> (buffalo skin), which is usually three mm to five mm thick and completely cover the affected area. The paste should ideally be applied against the direction of the hair follicles<sup>[13]</sup> for faster easy absorption through the *Roma Koopa*. The application of the herbal paste covered with leaves of *Eranda* is secured in position by<sup>[14]</sup> bandaging. The usual time for keeping *Upanaha Swedana* in the affected area is twelve hours.

### PASCHAT KARMA

After removing *upanaha* dravya from the body, the part should be washed well with lukewarm water. The process should be done on consecutive days for a prescribed period.

### PRECAUTIONS

- The bandage should not be too tight or too loose.
- The *upanaha* dravya must be of a suitable consistency so that it should not fall off from its position.
- It should not be applied to wounds.
- Check the sensitivity of the skin before the procedure
- The paste should not be reused.

### MODE OF ACTION

The mode of action of *Upanaha Sweda* has multiple factors and their combine effects that include, the prevention of heat loss from the body, increasing the absorption of medicinal contents through the skin, and increasing or removing *Kleda* from the affected joint depending upon the type of drug utilized and by supporting and limiting the movement of the affected joint. Ayurvedic texts opine that *Upanaha Sweda* acts by trapping the heat inside the body by preventing

heat loss through *Romakupa*. The effect of *Upanaha Swedana* has a broader scope of action, based on the Dravya used, thickness, etc.

Basic Principles on which *Upanaha Sweda* acts can be summarised as follows.

1. Continuous sudation due to Prevention of heat loss
2. Providing oleation/ absorption of excess moisture from the affected part
3. Immobilisation of affected joint

Another theory suggests that *Acharya Susruta* [15] explains that the *Tiryak Dhamani* divides into numerous branches and covers the entire body like a complex network and their openings are attached to the *Roma Koopa*. Through the *Roma Koopa*, the *Virya* of the *Lepa* enters the body after undergoing *Paka* by *Bhrajaka Pitta* in the skin. This is how the systemic absorption of drugs applied to the skin produces an effect; in essence, the *Virya* of the drug used in *Upanaha Swedana* has the desired effect after being absorbed in the skin.

## DISCUSSION

*Upanaha swedana* is one among the types of *swedana*. The procedure of applying warm herbal paste to the effected part of the body followed by bandaging is referred to as *Upanaha sweda*. *Sweadna* is a process that relieves stiffness, heaviness, and coldness and produces sweating. It is usually done in musculoskeletal diseases i.e osteoarthritis, joint disorder, Sciatica, Tennis elbow & *vathakantaka*. Application of *Upanaha* prevents excessive movement of joints thus reducing inflammation due to reduction in this focal stress and the patient was able to go about performing daily activities with lesser difficulty than before treatment [16]. *Swedana*'s primary function is achieved by a rise in temperature, which is responsible for increased metabolic activity, increased blood flow, and stimulation of neural receptors in the skin or tissues. It opens up the pores in the skin and transfers the medicated paste and nutrients to the affected site. Heat directly affects the blood vessels, causing vasodilation, particularly in the superficial area where the temperature is highest. *Sroto-Mukha Vishodhana*; due to the *Guna* of the *Upanaha Swedana* Dravya

used, the *Leena Dosha* are liquefied and expelled pores of the sweat glands [17]. It also causes an anti-inflammatory effect on the local site by clearing the inflammatory mediators [18].

## CONCLUSION

*Upanaha sweda* is good in the treatment of musculoskeletal diseases i.e osteoarthritis, joint disorder, Sciatica, Tennis elbow & *vathakantaka*. The *vatavyadhihar upanaha* is much beneficial in the patient of *sandhigatavata* (OA knee joint) by relieving the local pain as it contains all *Ushnaviryatmak*, *Tikshna*, *Vataghna*, *Vednasthapan*, and *Shothahara* Dravya. Application of the *Upanaha* to the affected part causes local vasodilation, stimulation of superficial nerve endings, and increased blood flow which increases nutrition supply and metabolism. The application of medicaments, heat, and massage aids in eliminating the number of unhealthy elements through the skin. It can also significantly reduce other associated symptoms and therefore improve the physical status of the patient. *Upanaha sweda* can be used both as OPD and IPD levels.

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