

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF VATAKANTAKA W.S.R. PLANTAR FASCIITIS BY AGNIKARMA WITH SUVARNA SHALAKA: A CASE REPORTSupriya Arora¹, Rajender Singh²

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**ABSTRACT**

Background: A married Sikh female patient of 42 years of age visited OPD of Shri Krishna Government Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Kurukshetra, Haryana on November 27, 2021, who was having chief complaint of pain in right heel, tenderness & pain during walking. **Methodology:** On detailed history, Dosha assessment was done based on the clinical features & mainly Vata Dosha was found to be vitiated in the present patient. Considering this, she was diagnosed with Vatakantaka, and treatment was given to her based on the line of treatment explained for Vatakantaka in classics i.e., Agnikarma. **Result:** The patient showed complete relief in extreme pain and was able to walk without pain.

Keywords: Agnikarma, Plantar fasciitis, *Heelpain*, *Suvarnashalaka*, *Vatakantaka*

INTRODUCTION

According to Acharya Sushruta, Vatakantaka is a Vata Pradhana vyadhi (predominance of Vata dosha) partic-

ularly caused by walking on uneven surfaces or by Atishrama (excessive exertion), which produces pain in Khudukapradesha^[1,2] Madhavkar in Madhav Nidan

mentioned that Vatakantaka is a pain in ankle region which arrives due to improper position of the foot during its movements^[3]. Heel pain is observed in several conditions like Calcaneal knob, Bursitis, Bony spur, Pagets, Osteomyelitis, Acute & Chronic Plantar Fasciitis. Amongst these Vatakantaka can be correlated with Plantar Fasciitis. 1 in 10 people develop heel pain in their lifetime. Incidence occurs between 40 & 60 years of age^[4,5]. Plantar Fasciitis is caused due to silent & repeated injury resulting in inflammation of the plantar fascia which results in the painful heel. Prevalence increases due to inclination towards wearing high heeled & hard footwear, improperly fitting footwear & in exercise especially jumping & standing for a prolonged period. More than 10 million cases per year in India report Plantar Fasciitis^[6]. Patient experiences severe pain with the first step arising in the morning. On examination, maximum tenderness is evoked on palpation over the inferior heel corresponding to the site of attachment of the Plantar fascia. Its management includes the use of anti-inflammatory drugs and analgesics, local injections of steroids, physiotherapy, footwear correction, use of heel pads, cold & hot water fomentations etc. Surgical intervention is

rarely adopted. Despite adequate treatment, the symptoms persist for a long time.

Vatakantaka is a Snayu Asthi Sandi Ashrit Vyadhi (disease of tendon, bone & joint). Acharya Sushruta mentioned different treatment modalities like the application of Taila (medicated oils), Upnaha (poultice), Agnikarma, Bandhanakarma (Bandaging) in the management of Vatakantaka^[7]. According to the above reference, in this article, an attempt has been made to analyze the effect of Agnikarma in the case of Vatakantaka.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

CASE REPORT:

A married Sikh female patient of 42 years of age visited OPD of Shalya Tantra Vibhag of Shri Krishna Government Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Kurukshetra, Haryana on November 27, 2021, having complaints of pain in the right heel, early morning stiffness and restricted movements of the right heel. She developed pain while standing after a long rest or standing for a long time.

She had taken analgesics for 4-6 months from a private hospital but did not get relief. So, she came to OPD of SKAGH in hope of cure & better treatment.

EXAMINATION:	Systemic Examination:
Physical Examination: Body Built: Moderate Height: 5'5'' Weight: 65 Kg Pulse: 80/min BP: 120/80mm Hg RR: 18/min	Respiratory system: Inspection: B/L Chest Symmetrical Auscultation: Air entry equal on both sides Cardiovascular system: Auscultation: Normal Heart Sound Central Nervous System Orientation: The patient was well oriented

Past Surgical History: NIL

Family History: Not Significant

N/H/O: DM

N/H/O: HTN

Personal History:

Diet: Vegetarian

Appetite: Normal

Sleep: Sound Sleep

Bowel Habits: Irregular (Constipated Sometimes)

Micturition: Clear

Allergic History: Not any

Table 1: Dashavidha Pariksha

Prakruti	Vata-Pittaja
Vikruti	Vataja
Sara	Asthisara
Samhana	Madhyama
Pramana	Madhyama
Satmaya	Sarvarasa Satmaya
Satva	Madhyama
Aahar Shakti	Abhyavahrana Shakti: Madhyama Jarana Shakti: Madhyama
Vyayama Shakti	Madhyama
Vaya	Adhiroodha

- Plantar reflex, knee & ankle jerk of both limbs were normal
- Local examination of the right heel showed no swelling or redness.
- **Investigation (X-ray)** X-ray of right foot AP & lateral view observed within normal limits.
- **Diagnosis (according to Ayurvedic Science):** Vatakantaka
- **Diagnosis (according to Modern Medical Science):** Plantar Fasciitis
- **Line of treatment:** Agnikarma with Suvarna Shalaka



Duration- 7 days

Agnikarma is divided into 3 phases: -

- Poorvakarma: Pre-operative procedure
- Pradhankarma: Operative procedure
- Paschatkarma: Post-operative procedure

● **Poorvakarma**

- Preparation of part with the help of distilled water & wiping out with dry sterilized gauze piece.
- Most painful sites were marked with a marker.

● **Pradhankarma**

- Bindu type of Suvarnashalaka was placed on the marked site and the other end was burnt with lighter to produce continuous heat. After heat sensation, shalaka was removed & was placed on other sites of pain & tenderness.

● **Paschat karma**

- Immediately after Agnikarma, aloe vera pulp was applied on the site of Agnikarma to avoid burning scars.
- The patient was advised to avoid vatvardhak aahar & vihar.

OBSERVATION & RESULT –

Clinical assessment was done before & after treatment by relief of pain using a VAS (Visual Analogue Score), tenderness & walking capacity.

Table 2: Gradation of tenderness

Parameters	Grade
Nil	0
Mild tenderness, causing the patient to wince on digital pressure	1
Moderate tenderness, causing the patient to wince and withdraw on digital pressure	2
Severe tenderness: the patient does not allow to touch.	3

Parameters	Grade
Very happy, no hurt	0
Hurts a just little bit	2
Hurts a little more	4
Hurts even more	6
Hurts a whole lot	8
Hurts as much as one can imagine (don't have to be crying to feel this much pain)	10

Subjective parameters before & after treatment

Symptoms	BT	AT
Heel pain	VAS-8	VAS-0
Difficulty in walking	Pain during walking	Can walk without pain
Tenderness	Grade-3	Grade-0

*BT- Before Treatment

AT- After treatment

DISCUSSION

Vatakantaka is a vyadhi of vitiated vata dosha & comes under vatadosha. The improper pattern of walking on uneven pathways and excessive walking comprises the aetiology. Vitiated vata dosha is responsible for shoola (pain), stambha (stiffness) & Kaphanubandha (association of Kapha) is responsible for Shotha (inflammation) in the heel. Agnikarma is a time-tested ancient treatment. The procedure primary involves a topical application of a controlled heated rod to treat various disorders. Acharya Sushruta said that agni is superior to kshara as disease treated with Agni karma never return & provides long term relief. Acharya Sushruta mentioned that it is easy to perform, effective in many incurable diseases & with no recurrence of the disease. Agnikarma is indicated in many diseases, including severe pain in Asthi (bone) & Sandhi (joints)^[8] The choice of material used for Agnikarma depends on the extent of heat required. Among metals, the lowest temperature is reported to of gold (62⁰ C). Gold remains conductive for a longer time as compared to other metals. Also, gold does not corrode. That's why the patient was treated with Suvarna Shalaka.

Probable mode of Action of Agnikarma

Agnikarma chikitsa introduces Agni (heat) to the affected area. Physical heat from Shalaka is transferred as therapeutic heat to Twakdhatu. The Ushna, Tikshna,

Laghu, Sukshma, Vyavayi Vikashi & Ashukari properties of Agni helps to remove Srotavarodha (Obstruction of Channels) pacifies the vitiated vata-kapha dosha & maintain their equilibrium thus breaking the pathology. After Agnikarma, the Ushna (hot) guna of Agni pacifies the Shita (cold) guna of vayu & reduces the pain. Acharya Charak has described that Agni is the best treatment for Shoola (pain)^[9]. It reduces Kaphanubandha thereby relieving the shoth (inflammation). According to Ayurveda, every Dhatu (tissue) have its own Dhatwagni & when it becomes low, the disease begins to manifest. In this condition, Agnikarma works by giving external heat, which goes to the deeper Dhatus (tissues) thereby increasing the Dhatwagni, which helps to digest aggravated Doshas & hence cures the diseases^[10].

The therapeutic heat increases blood circulation at the ankle joint, leading to proper nutrition of the tissue. This induced circulation helps to flush away the pain, producing substances from the affected site ultimately reducing the local inflammation.^[11] Therapeutic heat stimulates the lateral spinothalamic tract, leading to stimulation of descending pain in inhibitory fibres, causing the release of endogenous opioid peptide, which blocks the transmission of the pain^[12]. In this procedure, the temperature at the applied site is increased which reduces nerve reflexes resulting in relaxation of the muscle thereby causing a reduction of stiffness.

CONCLUSION

Vatkantaka is a vata Pradhana vyadhi particularly caused by walking on uneven surfaces or by excessive exertion which produces pain in the ankle joint. The incidence is that more than 10 million cases per year in India report Plantar fasciitis^[13] and modern medical science has limited treatment modalities. So, Ayurveda has a great scope in this area as Agni karma is a simple, easy & economical procedure that can be performed at the OPD level. It causes alleviation of vata thus helpful in reducing pain, stiffness & inflammation. So, from this study, we can conclude that Agni karma with Suvarna shalaka is effective in the management of Vatakantaka.

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