

CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON NEED OF DAILY ABHYNAGA FOR WOMEN HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

In today's era life expectancy has been steadily rising over the years and women have tremendous progress in that. Today's women experience more stress factor in them and therefore hormonal imbalance seen and various menstrual problems occurs like Premenstrual syndrome, Infertility, Pre menopausal syndrome PCOD. It is mostly due to their occupation and improper lifestyle so in that we can use daily *Abhyanga* to decrease stress, control *vata* and to stay hormones in balanced state. *Abhyanga* produces relaxation of muscles and mind and addition to that *tail* used for *Abhyanga* decrease vitiated *vata* and once it get in balanced state. Hormones also come in normal level and less chances of any disorder. Therefore in today's life Daily *Abhyanga* is needed to stay Healthy.

Keywords: *Abhyanga*, women health.

INTRODUCTION

Women are the primary breadwinner in almost 40% of all households today¹. Women are empowered in so many ways like never before.

Today's woman is juggling work, marriage and family like never before. In a recent survey, in response to the question "how often do you experience stress?" 40% of the women reported that they experienced stress frequently, while another 39% of the women reported that they experienced stress sometimes.²

Ayurveda, the ultimate medicine of empowerment can equip the modern woman with its time tested

wisdom and help her achieve optimal health of body, mind and spirit. While the reach of Ayurveda is all-encompassing this paper focuses the offerings of Ayurveda as it pertains to correcting the imbalances that arise during the women's menstrual cycle – specifically PMS and other related menstrual disorders - menorrhagia, amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea and the transition to menopause.

"Prevention is better than cure" is the basic and fundamental concept of Ayurveda. Unlike modern medicine; Ayurveda treats the individual and not merely the disease. This idea of prevention explained for the

first time in Ayurveda and is the basic concept for a healthy society. To keep fit and healthy everyone should adopt a proper healthy lifestyle. Therefore everyone should understand the importance of *Dinacharya* (daily regimen) mentioned in various *Samhitagranthas*. *Dinacharya* is an instrument in the prevention of disease and promotion of ideal health. *Abhyanga* is one of the *Upkramas* mentioned in *Dinacharyas* and is an ancient Indian Ayurvedic approach adopted for healing, relaxation and treating various types of diseases.

Menstrual Cycle

The menstrual cycle is the regular natural change that occurs in the female reproductive system (specifically the uterus and ovaries) that makes pregnancy possible.

Doshic involvement in menstrual cycle-

All three *doshas* have a strong influence on the menstrual cycle.

During the follicular (also known as proliferative) phase (end of menses until ovulation or the first half of the cycle) *Kapha* is on the rise. The hormone Estrogen (*Kapha*-like in many ways), peaks during this stage of the cycle.

During the next phase of the cycle – the luteal or secretory phase (ovulation till flow begins), Progesterone, a more *Pitta* type hormone takes center stage. So during the second half of the cycle, *Pitta* dominates in the woman's body.

The time of the actual flow or menses is the time of *Vata* – specifically *Apana Vayu*, as it transports the menstrual blood out of the body.³

Premenstrual syndrome –

Refers to physical and emotional symptoms that occur in the one to two weeks before a woman's period. Symptoms often vary between women and resolve around the start of bleeding.

Doshic Involvement

PMS from an *Ayurvedic* point of view is viewed primarily as a *Vata* and *Pitta* imbalance (refer to second half of the menstrual cycle when PMS most

likely occurs – is a *Pitta* Phase culminating with *Vata* phase of the menstrual cycle). The condition can also be brought on by low *ojas*, which can cause disruptive fluctuations in the hormonal cycle and biorhythms of the body, and hence can cause many of the symptoms associated with PMS.

Physical symptoms include-

- Constipation-due to *vata*
- Palpitations- due to *vata dosha*
- Headache –due to *vata* and *pitta dosha*
- Severe cramping pain-due to *vata dosha*

Emotional symptoms include emotional instability (mood swings), insomnia, fear, irritability and anxiety. In All of above PMS symptoms stress factor is there in all types.⁴

Amenorrhea

Amenorrhea is the absence of menstrual bleeding and may be primary or secondary.

Primary amenorrhea is the absence of menstrual bleeding and secondary sexual characteristics (for example, breast development and pubic hair) in a girl by age 14 years or the absence of menstrual bleeding with normal development of secondary sexual characteristics in a girl by age 16 years.

Secondary amenorrhea is the absence of menstrual bleeding in a woman who had been menstruating but later stops menstruating for 3 or more months in the absence of pregnancy, lactation (the ability to breast-feed), cycle suppression with systemic hormonal contraceptive (birth control) pills, or menopause.

Stress causes low levels of FSH and LH along with low estrogen levels⁵

Doshic Involvement-

Known as *Nashtarakta*, amenorrhea is considered a deficiency disease largely attributed to *VataDosh*. It is a condition affecting both *rasa dhatu* (decrease in menstrual secretions) and *shukra dhatu* (lack of ovulation). In all conditions of amenorrhea, *ojas* is severely depleted.⁶

Dysmenorrhea

Dysmenorrhea is Painful periods, or menstrual cramps, is pain during menstruation. The pain is usually in the pelvis or lower abdomen.

According to *Ayurveda*, dysmenorrhea is primarily due to an imbalance in the *Vatadosha*. This imbalance results in dryness in the uterus caused by insufficiency of chemical secretions produced by the uterus.⁷ Symptoms include cramping pain, gas, bloating and constipation or alternating constipation and diarrhea, difficulty concentrating and emotional instability. *Samanavayu* is vitiated in the digestive system, as well as the mind, along with the other *Vayus*. Relocation of *vata* to the *artavavahasrota* causes painful cramps of the uterus. Although dysmenorrhea is most common in those with *Vata* type constitutions, it may also be experienced by *Pitta* and *Kapha* types.⁸

Menopause

Menopause, also known as the climacteric, is the time in most women's lives when menstrual periods stop permanently, and they are no longer able to bear children.

Doshic Involvement

Menopause is a condition primarily related to *Vata*. Hence *vata* will need to be pacified first and in addition to any other *doshic* imbalance that needs to be addressed.

Menopause symptoms – Anxiety, nervousness, worry, memory loss, insomnia, emotional instability
Physical – Constipation, palpitations, vaginal dryness and atrophy, urinary incontinence, cystitis, feelings of excessive oldness after hot flashes, dryness and thinning of the skin and hair, brittleness in the mucous membranes and the bones, joint and muscle aches, bone fractures and osteoporosis

All these indicates *vatavrudhhi* (increase in *vatadosha*)

During the first few years after menopause, women may lose bone density at a rapid rate, increasing the risk of osteoporosis.⁹

These are showing *asthikshaya lakshana* and these are seeing due to *vatavrudhhi*

Classical Ayurvedic Interpretation of the Female reproductive system

The Ayurvedic term for the diseases of the female reproductive system is *Guhyaroga*. *Garbharoga* is the term for the diseases of the uterus. Embryology is known as *Atulyagotriya*. Diseases of the vagina (*Yoni* in Sanskrit) are called *Yoni vyapat*. There are 20 types of *Yoni Vyapat* listed in the *Caraka Samhita* and *AstangaHridayam*. 11 of these are *Vata* related, 2 *Pitta*, 1 *Kapha* and 6 involve multiple *doshas*¹⁰

COURSE OF ABHYANGA

Abhyanga can be done every day or on alternate days or after a gap of two days depending upon the nature of the disease and the strength of the person. If daily massaging of the whole body is not possible, at least the feet should be massaged every night then according to *Vagbhata* "*Shir Shravan Padeshu*"¹¹ according to this daily application of tail at least on head, ear and sole. Before going to sleep and the head should be given a massage every third day.

Proper Time for Abhyanga

1. *Abhyanga* is very useful before performing any type of physical exercise.
2. *Abhyanga* should be performed only when the person has digested the food taken during the earlier meal time.
3. The effect of the massage varies with the time of day.

During the day time- it relaxes and refreshed giving increased energy.

In the evening time- it has having more tranquilizing effect.

Procedure of Abhyanga

Abhyanga is a process in which body of person is massaged with luke warm medicated oil To a normal healthy person massage should be given before bath.

Whatever oil remains over the skin is sufficient to produce the expected effects. For *Abhyanga Til Taila* (Sesame oil) is the traditional choice. Other oils are recommended based on imbalance of *doshas* and body type. *Abhyanga* can be done either in standing or sitting or lying position. It should be done slowly gently in the same direction of hair follicles with the palms. Early morning *Abhyanga* should be start by applying a small amount of slight warm oil on scalp and massaging the head very gently. Always remembers that for the massage open palms of the both hands and the flat surfaces of the fingers should be used rather than the fingertips. The massage should be done in circular way so as to stimulate the *marma*(vital) points which influences all the parts of the body. Applying oil and mild stimulation by fingers to the ears is very essential.

After completion of *Abhyanga*, person is advised to take half an hour rest, but he is not supposed to expose to the air. If the person is fit for *Swedan* therapy then he must undergo the fomentation immediately after *Abhyanga*. If person is not undergoing *Swedan* therapy he is advised to take lukewarm bath after half an hour.

MODE OF ACTION

Ayurveda always recommended that *Abhyanga* (oil massage) should be performed daily. If not possible, then at least apply oil to head, ears and feet is must to obtain a healthy life thus showing the importance of massage to the most important parts such as head, ears and feet.

According to *Acharya Charak*, *Vatadosha* dominates in the *sparshanendriya*¹² i.e. the tactile sensory organ and this sensory organ is lodged in the skin. Therefore oil massage is exceedingly beneficial to the skin. So everyone should practice *abhyanga* regularly.

Acharya Vagbhata also mentioned that, a person with a view to promoting positive health & preventing and curing all type of diseases, should use *Abhyanga* every day.

Vatadosha is major factor to form disease. As we know in *samhita* mentioned that

No any disease occurs without *Vatadosha*.

“*Pittampangukaphampangupangavomaldhatava*”

Due today's life style of women's junk food traveling sedentary life style computer work stress level are seeing increasing and here *Abhyanga* can help to reduce stress due to massaging over body blood circulation increases and soothing effect will seen.

And by doing daily *Abhyanga* with *tailavatadosha* remains in balanced state because tail acts as *vata shaman* properties so if there is hormonal imbalance, stress by doing *tail Abhyanga* daily *vatadosha* always remains in balanced state and women's will free from Ammenorhea Infertility, PMS, Menopausal syndrome, Osteoporosis.

Probable mode of action in terms of:¹³

1. Increase in tryptophan further leading to increase in serotonin (a neurotransmitter) – decreases stress
2. Changes in pressure; physical, osmotic, hydrostatic; leading to enhanced lymphatic drainage and thereby resulting in expulsion of toxins from the body
3. Strong mechanical stimuli resulting in: pain relief, peripheral arterial vasodilatation with increasing venous and lymph drainage, micro traumatization of soft tissues, and cellular stimulation.

Abhyanga stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system to slow down heart rate and breathing, calm down musculature and recover digestion.

Massage augments release of endorphin, which are pain reducing neurotransmitters. Also stop transmission of pain signals, so *abhyanga* said to be *abhigatasahatva, dagdha, bhagna, kusta, rujapaha*. *Abhyanga* causes sound sleep by decreasing Beta Brain wave activity; this directed to amplify release of relaxing neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine. It decreases release of cortisol levels which facilitates deep sleep induction. Massage dilates superficial blood vessels & enhances the rate of

blood flow. It also cause assistance in overall cellular function by increasing production of skin-nurturing sebum which protects, cools, calm and maintains skin's youthful properties.

As *Abhyanga* boost up the lymphatic circulatory system, thus also improve the immunity. Massage has shown to unsurprisingly improve the immune system's cytotoxic capacity by escalating the Natural Killer. Since cortisol and insulin are associated with impaired immune function, massage is able to facilitate immunity by scheming levels of these stress hormones. Release of Serotonin and bacteria fighting peptides have been linked to enhanced immunity.

Abyanga said to prevail over fatigue, improves strength, increases body muscle mass as regular massage therapy relaxes the muscles and unreceptively stretches and lengthens them, encouraging enhanced blood perfusion to these tissues ultimately leads to healthier oxygen supply and nutrient exchange, Facilitate muscle regenerative property and reduces tension and pain. Flexible muscles around the joints, preserves their integrity and health.

CONCLUSION

After critical analysis on *Abhyanga* it come to the notice that *Abhyanga* is not only helpful in decreasing the stress by activating PNS then symptoms and eventuated by decreasing the vitiated *vata*.

In women *vata* is the main cause which is responsible for causing all hormonal imbalances.

It ultimately helps in relieving all the outcomes of stress, vitiated *vata* that occur in women like Amenorrhea, Premenstrual syndrome, Menopause, Dysmenorrhea.

"Abhyangam acharet nityam sa jara shrama vataha Drusthi Prasad putyaayu swapna sutvaka dardhyakrut" - (Acharya Vagbhat)

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