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# Concept of Niragni Swedana - An Exploratory Study

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## ABSTRACT

The procedure of inducing sweating for various therapeutic benefits is known as *Swedana*. Different types of modalities have been explained in classics by different acharyas for *Swedana*, one among is *Agneya Bheda*; which is of two types *Sagni* and *Niragni*. Producing the benefits of *Swedana Karma* without using *Agni Guna* is the prime action of *Niragni Sweda*. It includes *Vyayama*, *Ushnasadana*, *Gurupravarana*, *Kshudha*, *Bahupana*, *Bhaya*, *Krodha*, *Upanaha*, *Ahava* and *Atapa Sevana*. These can be easily adoptable even in OP basis by the practitioners which can provide good effects on disease conditions like *Prameha*, *Sthoulya*, *Urusthambha*. The minimal chances of occurrence of complications and non-requirement of sophisticated equipment's add on to the acceptability of these kind of techniques. As in *Sagni* type here also temperature regulation mechanism plays a role in the mode of action which will be evaluated in this article.

**Key words:** *Swedana*, *Ayurveda*, *Sudation Therapy*, *Sagni Sweda*, *Niragni Sweda*.

## INTRODUCTION

*Swedana* is considered as the one of the important treatment modalities used in Ayurveda which is a part of *Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa*. It is used as *Purvakarma* before *Shodhana* procedures, as *Pradhanakarma* and *Paschatkarma* in different conditions. Various types of *Swedana* are mentioned in classics by Acharyas, among which *Agni Bheda* includes *Sagni* and *Niragni Swedas*.<sup>[1]</sup> *Vyayama*, *Ushnasadana*, *Gurupravarana*, *Kshudha*, *Bahupana*, *Bhaya*, *Krodha*, *Upanaha*, *Ahava* and *Atapa*

are the ten types of *Niragni Swedas*.<sup>[2]</sup>

According to Sushruta and Vagbhata, *Niragni Swedas* are mainly indicated in *Kapha Avrita Vata* and *Meda Avrita Vata* conditions.<sup>[3,4]</sup> Ashtanga Sangraha Kara has mentioned the use of *Niragni Sweda* in conditions of *Vata Prakopa* associated with *Pitta*.<sup>[5]</sup>

### Types of Niragni Sweda

**Table 1: Showing types of Niragni Sweda according to different authors.**

Types	C.S <sup>[6]</sup>	SS <sup>[7]</sup>	AS <sup>[8]</sup>	AH <sup>[9]</sup>	ShS <sup>[10]</sup>	BS <sup>[11]</sup>
<i>Vyayama</i>	+	+	+	+	+	-
<i>Ushnasadana</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Gurupravarana</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Kshudha</i>	+	-	+	+	-	+
<i>Trishna</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Bahupana</i>	+	-	+	+	-	-

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<i>Bhaya</i>	+	-	+	+	-	+
<i>Krodha</i>	+	+	+	+	-	+
<i>Upanaha</i>	+	-	+	-	-	-
<i>Yuddha</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Atapa</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Chinta</i>	-	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Adhvagamana</i>	-	+	-	+	+	+
<i>Bharaharana</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-
Total	10	8	10	10	7	9

CS – Charaka Samhita, SS – Sushruta Samhita, AS – Astanga Sangraha, AH – Astanga Hrudaya, ShS – Sharangadhara Samhita, BS – Bhela Samhita.

### Vyayama

The act which produces *Ayasa* (tiredness) in the body is known as *Vyayama*.<sup>[12]</sup> It varies according to individual body strength, age, diet pattern, season and climate. It is a type of *Langhana Chikitsa*.<sup>[13]</sup> An individual is indicated to do *Vyayama* till the sweat appears on *Kaksha* (armpit), *Lalata* (forehead), *Nasa* (nose), *Hastapadadi Sandhis* (joints of hands and legs), which is considered as the *Balardha Avastha* of the individual.<sup>[14]</sup>

### Benefits

Provides *Laghuta* (lightness of body), *Karmasamarthyā* (ability to do the activities), *Sthairya* (stability), *Dukha Sahishnutha* (gives ability to withstand with the troubles), *Doshakshaya* (alleviates doshas), *Agnivridhhi* (kindles the agni), *Shareera Upachaya* (imparts nourishment), *Gatra Kanti* (complexion) to body, *Suvibhaktata* (improves digestive capacity), gives strength to tolerate *Shrama*, *Klama*, *Pipasa*, *Sheeta* & *Ushna* and provides health to individual. A simile has been explained by *Sushruta* which shows the importance of *Vyayama* as diseases fly from the presence of a person, habituated to regular physical exercise, just as small animals do on seeing a lion.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Indications

As a part of *Dinacharya* in *Swastha* which helps in *Swasthya Rakshana* (promotion of health) and *Roga Anutpatti* (prevents the manifestation of disease). Regular *Vyayama* eradicates all types of *Santharpanotha Vyadhies* especially *Sthoulya*. For the diseases like *Prameha*, *Urusthambha*, *Sthoulya* specific type of *Vyayamas* are explained as follows:

**Prameha:** *Ghada Vyayama* is indicated like indulging in *Ayama*, *Niyudha*, *Gajacharya*, *Turagacharya*, *Rathacharya*, *Padacharya*, *Kreeda*, *Dhanushastra* etc. [16,17]

**Urusthambha:** Activities like walking over stony surface, swimming in a cold-water river which is clean against the current of river.<sup>[18]</sup>

**Sthoulya:** All types of *Vyayamas* are indicated which has to be done daily by gradually increasing the intensity.<sup>[19]</sup>

### Ushnasadana

The chamber which has thick walls of clay without any ventilation, and not heated by any outer source and the person is made to sit or lie down in this till sweating appears, which occurs due to rise in body temperature. Term *Nivatagriha* is used by *Vagbhata* instead of *Ushnasadana*, that means the place where there is total absence of wind.<sup>[20]</sup> It is different from *Kuti Sweda* / *Jentaka Sweda* where there is the use of heating method inside the chamber to induce sweating.

### Gurupravarana

Covering the body with *Rallakadi* (thick clothes, blankets etc) to keep body warm and to induce perspiration.<sup>[21]</sup>

### Kshudha

Abstinence from food intake even though hunger is there. It is considered as *Upavasa*, which comes under *Langhana Chikitsa*.<sup>[22]</sup> *Swedagamana* is one of the symptoms in *Samyak Langhana Lakshanas*.<sup>[23]</sup>

### Indications

Mainly indicated in *Alpa Vyadhi* and *Rogi Bala* in conditions like *Vami*, *Atisara*, *Hridroga*, *Visuchika*,

*Alasaka, Jwara, Vibhandha, Gourava, Udgara, Hrillasa, Aruchi* and in *Kaphapittaroga* where *Apatarpana* kind of *Chikitsa* is required.<sup>[24]</sup>

### **Bahupana**

*Bahupana* refers to large quantity of alcohol intake.<sup>[25]</sup> *Ashtangakara* used the term *Bhooripana*.<sup>[26]</sup> *Madya* is of different kinds like *Sura, Sukta, Seedhu* etc. which have medicinal properties when used in proper way. *Madya* predominantly have *Ushna, Teekshna, Vyavayi, Vikasi, Sukshma, Ruksha, Laghu Gunas* and *Amla Rasa*.<sup>[27]</sup> In this *Ushna Guna* counteracts with *Sheetata* and induce sweating, and others helps in removing sticky *Mala* from *Dhatus* and pacifies *Kapha* and *Meda*.

### **Bhaya and Krodha**

Emotional feeling i.e., psychological factors like fear and anger can induce sweating.

### **Upanaha**

*Upanaha* word means which continue to stay in contact, Means bandaging (*Upanaha Bandhanam*).<sup>[28]</sup> It is included under *Agni* or *Niragni* type as per *Chakrapani*,<sup>[29]</sup> but *Charaka* included it under *Niragni Sweda*.<sup>[30]</sup> In this application of *Lepa* made out of various drugs like *Vacha, Kinva, Shatahva, Devadaru*, any kind of *Dhanya, Sugandhi Dravyas, Moola* of *Rasna, Eranda, Amisha* etc. mixed with more of *Lavana, Sneha, Chukra (Amla Dravya), Takra, Paya* based on the *Roga Avastha* is done. After application, the part should be bandaged with *Charma Patta* which is *Mridu, Vigandhi, Snigdha, Ushna Veerya*. If it is not available, *Vatahara Patra* like *Eranda, Kousheya, Avika, Shataka (Vastrakhanda)* can be used.<sup>[31]</sup> *Niragni Upanaha* causes sweating by preventing the radiation of heat from the body with the help of thick paste and bandaging.<sup>[32]</sup>

### **Ahata**

*Mushtiyuddha* is known as *Ahata*.<sup>[33]</sup> *Sushruta* explained it as *Niyudha*, which is *Shareera Ayasajanaka* thus induces sweating and it is a type of *Vyayama*.<sup>[34]</sup>

### **Atapa**

Exposing to sunlight which can induce sweating and it is a type of *Langhana*.<sup>[35]</sup> *Chakrapani* opines that even

though there is involvement of hot in *Atapa*, the use of *Agni* is not there, so it is included under *Niragni* kind of *Swedana*.<sup>[36]</sup>

## **DISCUSSION**

The above-mentioned modes of sweating through *Niragni Bheda* have the specialities like easy to adopt without the help of any kind of sophisticated equipment's and without much complications. For those with obesity, diabetes mellitus these can be adopted in their daily routine as a part of therapy. When the *Samprapti* of these diseases are analysed, there is involvement of *Kapha, Meda* and *Vata* along with *Kleda Bahulyata*. The use of *Sagni Swedana* is directly contraindicated in these as the chance of *Rogavidhi* and depletion of *Shareera* is there. Also in chronic diabetes, there will be peripheral sensation loss in neuropathy conditions where sensation of temperature is absent which makes it contraindicated for hot sudations. Here comes the importance of *Niragni Sweda* methods like *Vyayama, Ahava, Ushnasadana* etc. which are beneficial in treating *Kaphamedavrita Vata Vyadhies* by inducing proper sweating.

### **Probable classification of Niragni Sweda**

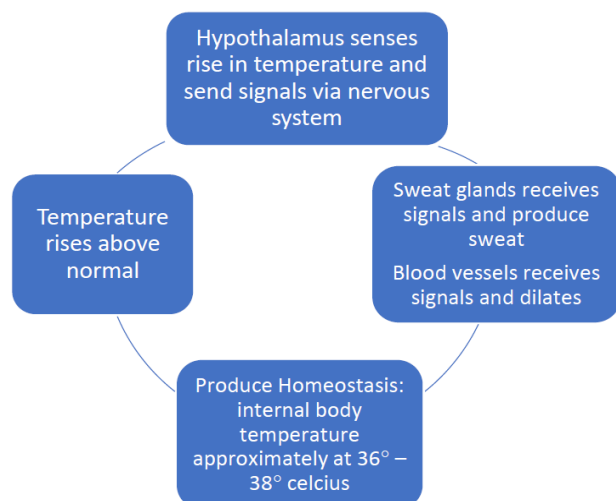
These modes of sweating are mainly used in conditions where there is more of *Kapha* and *Meda* involvement, so comes under *Ruksha Sweda* variety. As these *Swedas* won't serve the purpose of *Shodhana Purva Swedana* i.e., to make the *Doshas* in *Upasthita Avastha*<sup>[37]</sup> these are included in *Samshamaneeya* type explained by *Dalhana*.<sup>[38]</sup> Based on the body part involved all these comes under *Sarvanga* type except *Upanaha Sweda* which is an *Ekanga* type of *Sweda*.

### **Mode of action of Niragni Sweda**

Sweating which is also called as perspiration helps to regulate the body temperature, by the release of a salt-based fluid from sweat glands. Changes in body temperature, the outside temperature, or emotional state can cause sweating and sweating in normal amounts is an essential physiological process. It is well-established that the primary physiological function of sweating is heat dissipation for body temperature

regulation. The most common areas of sweating on the body include armpits, face, palms & soles mainly in *Krodha, Bhaya, Vyayama, Atapa Sevana* and whole body sweating in case of *Ushnasadana, Gurupravarana*. In *Upanaha* it depends upon the body part involved.

### Thermoregulatory sweating mechanism



### Probable mode of action of Niragni Swedana

The probable mode of action can be understood in two ways as: a) Through the involvement of heating techniques like convection, evaporation, radiation & b) Hypothalamic sweat regulation which works on the involvement of factors like fear, anger, fasting etc.

- 1. Exercises:** During exercise, a large amount of heat is produced by the contracting muscles as a byproduct of metabolism. When the body temperature rises, the sympathetic nervous system stimulates the eccrine sweat glands to secrete water to the skin surface, where it cools the body by evaporation.
- 2. Upanaha and Gurupravarana:** The usage of thick pastes or thick clothes obstructs the body's internal heat from radiating out of body which happens continuously and thus induces sweating. In case of *Upanaha*, along with the tight bandaging the materials used for the preparation of *Lepa* and for the *Bandhana* plays a role in sweat production. The use of sour products like *Amlakanji, Takra, Chukra* etc. leads to fermentation and thus induces

heat to the area of contact. Also, the bandaging materials like *Arkapatra, Charma* or *Kshaumavastra* are considered as bad conductors of heat. By which heat loss through evaporation is prevented and leads to sweating over the area.<sup>[37]</sup>

- 3. Exposure to sunlight:** Sweating occurs as natural phenomenon, mainly through radiation where infrared rays, UV rays plays a role.
- 4. Fear and Anger:** Leads to emotional sweating, occurs in response to emotive stimuli such as fear, stress, pain and anxiety. Although it can occur over the whole-body surface, it is most evident on the palms, soles, underarms and forehead.

In contrast to thermal sweating, emotional sweating occurs independent of ambient temperature. Both eccrine and apocrine glands have role in it, more evident and fast reaction by apocrine glands.

The sweat glands are controlled by the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), a subdivision of the autonomic nervous system (ANS), responsible for the "fight-or-flight response". Every time our body perceives a sensory stimulus that could change our resting state, the SNS automatically activates a physiological response that includes an acceleration of the heart rate, dilation of the pupils and increase sweat gland activity. Thus, sweating occurs when there are any emotions like fear, fright stress etc.

- 5. Alcohol Intake:** Alcohol is a known sedative and a mild anesthetic, which means that it works on the parts of the brain that are responsible for certain physiological functions. Some of the physiological changes caused by alcohol are flushing, sweating, tachycardia (increased pulse) and increases in blood pressure.

These physiological changes are thought to occur due to stimulation of the hypothalamus and the release of chemicals called sympathetic amines and pituitary-adrenal hormones.

The hypothalamus is responsible for regulating physiological processes like body temperature, breathing, thirst, hunger, and other automatic regulatory systems.



So, when the hypothalamus is stimulated by alcohol, excessive sweating can be the result. This is because it is interfering with the part of the brain that controls temperature regulation which is why the body produces sweat in the first place.

**6. Fasting:** Gustatory sweating causes a person to sweat and flush after eating, thinking, or even talking about food. This sweating and flushing may occur around the temples, cheeks, neck, forehead, chest, or lips. On fasting body makes several changes to make its stored energy more accessible. Examples include changes in nervous system activity, as well as changes in the level of hormones like insulin, noradrenaline. These changes facilitate the breakdown of body fat into free fatty acids that can be burned for required energy.

### Contemporary Non-Thermal Modalities

The usage of thermal and non-thermal agents in pain management and as a relaxing technique is common since ancient time till today's era of technology. It is applied in various forms like sauna, hot stone therapy, cold stone therapy, moxibustion in acupuncture etc.

In physiotherapy the usage of non-heating methods for the purpose of pain management are very common. Mainly the modalities applied in this context are convection, radiation and convection. IFT, UST, SWD etc. methods using convection modality where electromagnetic energy converts to heat energy. Hydrocollator therapy like whirlpool, wax therapy etc. with convection modality without heating. Infrared therapy, LASER therapy and phototherapy using radiation method.

### CONCLUSION

*Niragni Sweda*, by its wide variety of applications are useful not only as a curative aspect but also in preventive aspect. Types like *Vyayama*, *Kshudha*, *Atapa* are included in *Langhana* therapy also, which does the *Langhana* action with the help of perspiration. In conditions like *Prameha*, *Sthoulya*, *Urusthambha* which are contraindicated for *Swedana* with *Medokapha Bahulyata*, these modalities are helpful. Also, in other alternative treatment modalities,

we can find the similar therapies which are having application methods as similar to *Niragni* type of *Swedana*. In today's busy schedule most of the patients are refusing for hospitalisation, and they prefer to take medicament at home. So, *Niragni Sweda* is a good option for them where no much precaution, instruments or drugs are required.

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