



Effect of Agnikarma in the management of Gridhrasi with special reference to Sciatica: A Case Study

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Introduction: Gridhrasi is one among the Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhis. Nantmaja Vyadhi is caused by a single Dosha, or a powerful Dosha that can cause a disease on its own. Gridhrasi is characterized by pain that radiating to Sphik, Kati, Prishtha, Ooru, Janu, Jangha and Pada. This feature of Gridhrasi closely resembles with the clinical aspects of Sciatica. Ayurvedic management involves the procedures like Sira Vyadha, Bastikarma and Agnikarma. Agnikarma is a cost effective, easy to practice, less complicated, quick relief treatment that does not require hospitalization.

Aim and Objectives: The aim of the study was to evaluate the effect of Agnikarma in the management of Gridhrasi with special reference to Sciatica.

Materials and Methods: It is a single case study of a 23-year-old boy who was already diagnosed with sciatica in the last 1 year. He approached to Ayurvedic hospital and was treated with Agnikarma.

Results: Symptomatic assessment of the patient was done after one month and satisfactory result was there. There was very much improvement of the quality of life of the patient.

Conclusion: The management of Gridhrasi with the help of Agnikarma has a significant effect in reducing the symptoms.

Keywords: Gridhrasi, Sciatica, Agnikarma, Low back pain, Radiating pain, Ayurveda

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Introduction

As we know low back ache is a common health problem that affects millions of people worldwide. There are various reasons for low back ache such as muscle or ligament strain, herniated or bulging disc, degenerative disc disease, spinal stenosis, spondylolisthesis, poor posture, sciatica etc. Intervertebral disc prolapse is one among the primary causes of low back ache.[1]

The symptoms of sciatica syndrome are present in IVDP because the pain may just be in the low back or may also radiate along the path of the Sciatic nerve, which runs from the lower back through the hips and buttocks and down each leg. Typically affects only one side of the body and is often caused by irritation or compression of the sciatic nerve.

Sciatica is extremely common with a prevalence rate ranging from 2-5%, depending on population. Lifetime incidence is reported to be between 10% and 40% and the annual incidence of 1 to 5% in India.[2] In *Ayurveda*, *Gridhrasi* is the term used for the condition resembling sciatica in modern medicine. The word *Gridhrasi* derived from the word *Gridhra*, meaning vulture, the gait of the patient resembles like gait of a vulture.[3] *Ayurvedic* classics always consider the features of the disease while naming the disease.

The cardinal features of *Gridhrasi* are *Ruk*, *Toda*, *Muhuspandan*, *Stambha* in the *Sphik*, *Kati*, *Uru*, *Janu*, *Jangha* and *Pada* in order and *Sakthikshepanigraha*. [4] If *Kapha Dosha* is associated with *Vata* i.e. *Vatakapahaja Gridhrasi*, symptoms are *Tandra*, *Gaurava* and *Aruchi*. [5] The management provided by the modern medicine is either conservative or surgical in nature. There is various treatment modalities explained in *Ayurvedic* classics for the effective management of *Gridhrasi*. In this case study, a 23-year-old male patient with complaints of sciatica was treated with *Agnikarma*.

Case Report

A 23-year-old male came to Shalyatantra OPD of Prem Swarup Swami Ayurvedic Multispeciality Hospital, with the complaints of pain in the lower lumbar region radiating to the left lower limb in the last three weeks. He also had stiffness in the lower back region, numbness of left leg and difficulty while walking in the last two weeks.

Patient had a history of fall while participating in school sports - high jump by hitting his back on the ground. At that time, he took allopathic pain-relieving medication. One year before he developed low back pain radiating to left leg and he took allopathic conservative medicines. Three weeks before he developed pain radiating to the left lower limb along with walking difficulty. Sometimes he had numbness and tingling sensation in the left leg. He has no previous history of surgery. He had a normal bladder habit. He doesn't have any other addictions like smoking or drinking. Now the pain and numbness is much disturbing his sleep and also other activities.

Clinical Findings

General examination

- BP: 120/80 mmHg
- PR: 76/min
- RR: 18/min
- Temperature: 98.6°F
- Weight: 75 Kg
- *Nadi*: *Vata Kaphaja*
- *Mutra*: *Samyak*
- *Mala*: *Samyak*
- *Jihwa*: *Nirama*
- *Shabda*: *Prakruta*
- *Sparsha*: *Anushnasita*
- *Drik*: *Prakruta*
- *Akruti*: *Madhyama*

Samprapti Ghataka

- **Dosha**: *Vata, Kapha*
- **Dushya**: *Rasa, Rakta, Asthi, Majja, Kandara, Sira, Snayu*
- **Srotas**: *Rasa Vaha, Rakta Vaha, Asthi Vaha And Majja Vaha*
- **Srotodushti**: *Sanga*
- **Agni**: *Vishama Agni*
- **Roga Marga**: *Madhyama*
- **Adhishtana** : *Kati, Prishtha, Uru, Jangha, Pada Udbhava Sthana: Pakwashaya*
- **Vyakta Sthana**: *Sphik, Kati, Prishtha, Uru, Janu, Jangha and Pada*

Locomotor examination**Inspection**

- Antalgic gait
- Difficulty in walking and sitting for a long time
- Restricted movements of low back region & hip

Palpation

- Tenderness at L4-L5 region
- Stiffness of paraspinal muscles of low back region

Range of Movement of Lumbar Spine

- Forward flexion – Limited to 30cm above ground
- Extension limited to 10° with pain
- Right lateral flexion is limited to 20° with pain
- Left lateral flexion is limited to 20° with pain

SLR Test (Active)

- Positive at 30° on left leg
- Negative on right leg

Bragard's Test

- Positive at left leg
- Negative at right leg

Diagnosis

Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi

Therapeutic Intervention

Agnikarma with Panchadhatu Shalaka

Observation And Results

After *Agnikarma*, patient had found signif. relief in low back pain, numbness & tingling sensation. Gait was also improved. Patient got symptomatic relief.

Details of Assessment parameters before and after treatment

Assessment of patient was carried out by specific subjective and objective criteria before and after one month of treatment.

Subjective Parameters

S. N.	Parameter	Before	After 1 moth
1	Radiating pain	6+ VAS score	1+ VAS Score
2	Stiffness	5+	2+
3	Tingling sensation	4+	1+
4	Difficulty while walking	7+	2+

Objective Parameters

SN	Parameter	Before	After 1 month
1.	SLRT (Active)		
	Right leg	Negative	Negative
	Left leg	Positive at 30°	60°
2.	Bragard's test		
	Right leg	Negative	Negative
	Left leg	Positive	Negative
3.	Gait	Antalgic gait	Normal
4.	ROM lumbar spine		
	Right lateral flexion	limited to 20° with pain	35° without pain
	Left lateral flexion	limited to 20° with pain	35° without pain
	Extension	limited to 10° with pain	25° without pain
	Forward flexion	Limited to 30cm above ground	15 cm above the ground

Discussion

Sciatica is most commonly found in people over 30 years of age, but there are a few reasons why someone in their teens or 20s can experience sciatic nerve pain. Sports or workplace injuries may cause sciatica. *Gridhrasi* is one among the *Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi*. *Gridhrasi* is a painful condition affecting *Sakthi Utkshepa*; and it hampers normal activities of the person.

According to *Acharya Susrutha*, when *Vata* is found affecting *Snayu*, *Sandhi*, *Asthi*- therapies such as *Snehana*, *Upanaha*, *Agnikarma*, *Bandhana*, *Unmardana* should be done. *Agnikarma* was selected as treatment protocol for this patient because *Agnikarma* is a clinically established para surgical treatment modality for disorders of *Asthi*, *Sandhi* and *Snayugata Vyadhi* without producing any untoward complications and its effectiveness is well documented in *Ayurveda*.^[6]

Agnikarma has an important role in reducing pain and hence the use of heat either directly or indirectly helps to cure pain and restore functions.

We can consider the gate control theory of pain, spinal cord analgesia system or thermodynamics to substantiate the effect of *Agni* in pain relieving mechanism. *Agnikarma* is considered as best therapy for *Vata* and *Kapha* dosha because *Agni* possesses *Ushna*, *Sukshma*, *Tikshna Guna*, *Asukarai Guna* which are opposite to *Vata* and *Kapha*.^[7] It removes *Srotavarodha* and increase the *Rasa Raktha Samvahana* to the affected site. Heat appears to produce definite sedative effects.

Conclusion

Pain is a subjective feeling; precision of intensity is difficult to generalize. *Agnikarma* act over cutaneous receptor and first cause sharp pain through ascending pain pathway and activate the descending pathway which involves various chemicals, which are the basis of Gate Control Theory. Rise in temperature induces muscle relaxation and increases the efficiency of muscle action, as the increased blood supply ensures the optimum conditions for muscle contraction.

Pancha Dhathu Shalaka has been used on a regular basis for the purpose of *Agnikarma*. Musculoskeletal disorders are quite a significant global problem, particularly of general working population and create a heavy socioeconomic burden over the families. Hippocrates, father of medicine quotes like what drugs will not cure, the knife will: what the knife will not cure the cautery will: what the cautery will not cure must be considered as incurable.[8] *Agnikarma* can be practiced as an effective, safe and drug less therapy. It is an ambulatory treatment modality and can be performed as an op procedure in routine practice.

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