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**Vasti Karma (Enema Therapy) in Agada Tantra – A Review**

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**ABSTRACT**

Agada tantra uses shodhana karma in management of all poisons. Shodhanakarma includes all panchakarma but in agada tantra usage of vasti karma is restricted or limited. Objective of this research work is to find out the causes for the restriction of vasti karma in management of poisoning in samhitas. Thorough review of literature was done on vastikarma, mode of action, relation with marma, indication, side effects, contraindication etc. All agada tantra references in vuddhatrayas were reviewed for any indication of vasti related to agada tantra. Possible mode of action was discussed in this article with the correlation of modern medical views and possible interaction of poisonous substances with vasti medicines are discussed in this article. Relation of marma and vasti is and effects of poison with vasti to marma especially sadyapranahara marma is elaborated in the discussion. Contraindications of anuvasana vasti and niruha vasti according to vuddhatrayas are analysed to probe the relation with poisonous substances. It was found that most of contraindicated symptoms are elicited in poisoning cases. After thorough review of literature in agada tantra sections of Charaka, Susruta and Ashtanga Hridayasamhitas, only one indication of vasti was found in relation to agada tantra. Which is indicated by vagbhata acharya in 36th chapter of uttara stana. With the analysis of all reference it is concluded that vasti is not indicated in agada tantra by acharyas with the knowledge of adverse reactions and interactions with poisons.

**KEYWORDS**

Vasti Karma, Basti, Agada Tantra, Enema Therapy
INTRODUCTION

Agada tantra is the science which deals with jangama visha stavara visha and krithima or garavisha. In treatment modalities used in agada tantra include most of shodana therapies as well as shamana therapies. Vastikarma (both anuvasana and niruha) is indicated rarely. Comparing with the other panchakarma chikitsa indicated in agada tantra. Charaka acharya has described twenty four treatment modalities in management of poison. In those chathurvinshathi upakrama all other panchakarmas are included apart from vasti karmas. Vasti karma is designated as ardhachikitsa. Even though it is an important chikitsa, it is not indicated widely in agada tantra. Objective of this study is to find out the possible factors for the restriction or limitation of use of vasti in agada tantra.

Vasti is the karma in which the medicine prepared is administered through rectal canal. It has the action up to the nabhipradesha, kati, parshva and kukshi. (They are the anatomical landmarks on the abdomen denoting intestines). Vasti churns the accumulated dosha and purisha (morbid humours and fecal matter). It spreads the unctuousness (potency of drug) all over the body and easily comes out along with the churned purisha and dosha (impurity). The term vasti denotes niruha and anuvasana, both as it do elimination of purisha and dosha.

Importance of vasti

Relation of vasti and vata

Vata is said to be lord of Ayurveda because it not only causes diseases but it is also the one which destines the fate of pitta and kapha doshas. It has supreme powers to assimilate things on the one hand and at the same time disintegrate them too. Considering dhatus, malas, poshana karmas all are at the mercy of vata. As vata is responsible in the various disease pathogenesis (samprapti), we need to pacify it. In classics there is no remedy other than vasti for pacification of diseases caused by aggravated vata.

Marmas and vasti

Marmas are chetanani bandha vaishyayath (seats of chetana in our body). The vital points are situated in skandha (middle body) and are more importance to us than shakas (extremities) due to two reasons:

1. Middle body marmas provide nutrition to the extremity marmas.
2. The marmas located in middle part of body are sadyapranahara.

Thus one should always protect marmas from abhighata and vatadi doshas. Marmas need to be protected from aggravated by means of doshic vitiation, injuries, mental anxiety, over exercise, etc. It is widely...
established that for *vata*, there is no other treatment than *vasti*. Therefore, it is believed that *vasti* therapy alone can safeguard the vital points of our body.\(^6\)

**Vasti and its relation to dhatus and doshas**

*Susruta* has a different classification of giving *snehavastis* for respective *dathus*.

The first *vasti* produces *snigdhatata* (unctuousness) in *vasti* (urinary bladder) and in *vankshna pradesha*. The second one wins over the *shiroghata* *vata*. Third *vasti* gives *varna* (colour) and *bala* (strength) to the body. Fourth produces *snigdhatata* in *rasa dhatu*; fifth to *rakta* (blood). Sixth to *mamsa* (muscle tissue). Seventh bestows nourishment to *medas* (fat); eight to *asthi* (bone tissue) and ninth to *majja* (bone marrow).\(^7\)

**Side effects of vasti**

If niruhavasti is not administered properly, it turns toxic.\(^8\)

**Modern view of vasti**

Doctors consider colon as the third lung because it has the ability to absorb 70% of the oxygen. It strengthens the immune system to combat allergies. Prevents colon cancers, IBS and colitis and improve mineral absorption. *Vasti* is having cholesterol lowering effect with lowering hypertension. Reduces inflammation and prevents infections via harmful bacterial growth. It is a detoxifying technique. It irrigates the large intestine with water and cleans out the toxins and accumulated waste along the lining of its walls. Removal of waste improves colon function, digestion and nutrient absorption function. High colonic irrigation kills harmful bacteria, parasites, yeast infections, and virus.\(^9\)

**Indication of vasti karma in agada tantra**

**In charaka Samhita**

In Charaka samhita 23\(^{rd}\) chapter of *chikitsa stana* is dedicated for *agada tantra* or *visha chikitsa*. In this chapter twenty four therapeutic measures are given in order to cure the patients afflicted with poison, *vasti karma* is not indicated among these 24 therapeutic measures. Throughout the whole chapter *vasti* is not indicated anywhere.

**In Ashtanga Hrdaya samhita**

Four chapters 35\(^{th}\), 36\(^{th}\), 37\(^{th}\) & 38\(^{th}\) of *uttara stana* are dedicated for *agada tantra*. In *sarpa visha pratisheda adyaya* while describing the treatment for *pitta kopa* after elimination of *visha vagbhata* acharya indicate *sneha vasti*.\(^10\) Usual indication of *vasti* is for mitigating *vata*, but here it is indicated for *pitta* rather than *vata dosha*. In the same reference for mitigating *vata dosha* he stated “*snehadibhir upachareth*” which means *vata* mitigating therapies including *vasti karma*. Major *vata* mitigation therapy is considered as *vasti* by all *acharyas* therefore we can consider this reference as a indication of *vasti*. No other
indication of vasti found in Ashtanga hridya samhita related to agada tantra.  

**In Susrutasamhit**

Entire Kalpastana of susrutasamhita with eight chapters dedicated for agada tantra. In first chapter of Kalpastana “anna panarakshakalpa” while describing general treatments, he indicated all panchakarma except vasti karma. In all 8 chapters of kalpastana no any single indication of vasti except in fifth chapter of kalpastana (sarpadashta visha chikitsa kalpa). Same as in ashtanga hridaya, anuvasana and niruha was indicated in conditions of aggravation of pitta dosha.

**DISCUSSION**

Major characteristic action of vasti is rapid spreading over the body. In cases of poisoning this is a disadvantage, because it might spread poison over the body quickly causing high morbidity and mortality. This may be a one cause for not indicating vasti in agada tantra.

Vasti is the main treatment for vata dosha predominance. By vasti it mitigates the action of vata dosha specially apana vata. In cases of acute poisoning treatment is aimed at elimination of poison by excessive action of vata. In this context vasti is a disadvantage for excessive elimination.

Vasti karma is have strong relation with marma (vital points). It stimulate vital points. Administration of vasti in poisoning can stimulate the vital points, which increases the action of poisoning in vital points specially situated in middle part of the body which are sadapranaahara in nature. Augmented action of poison in these vital points can cause sudden death.

Oil or thila thaila is a main ingredient in anuvasana vasti as well as in niruha vasti. Thaila is a main contraindication for visha. Use of vasti can cause more poisonous effects due to thaila.

Kashyapa Acharya in chikitsastana while describing the side effects of niruhavasti he clearly stated that improper administration of niruha vasti can be act as a toxic substance. It may be a another cause for limited use of vasti in poisoning.

Vamana or chardi (vomiting) is stated as a contraindication for vasti by all three acharyas. On the other hand vomiting is a one major symptom in poisoning specially vegetative poisoning. This may be one reason to prohibit vasti in poison cases.

Nishtivana is also common symptom in poisoning. Charaka and Vagbhata both consider nishtivana as a contraindication for vasti. Furthermore they stated that complication of abdominal distention which can leads to death can be happen if vasti is given in condition of nishtivana.
Charaka acharya contraindicated vasti in condition of bhita (fearful). Fearfulness is common in almost all the cases of poisoning, therefore it also proves that vasti cannot be used in poisoning cases.

Matta (intoxicated), murchita (unconscious) are considered as contraindication for vasti by both acharyas charaka and susruta. Samgnanasa and hrdyopagata are the complications of vasti if it is used in foresaid contraindications. These two symptoms are also considered as cardinal symptoms of poisoning. Therefore the condition of the patient may be worsen by using of vasti karma.

If vasti is given for patients with svasapraskta (dyspnoea) ,hikkaprasakta (hiccups) death by distension may occur according to all acharyas. These symptoms are very common with inhaled poison.

Dakodara (ascitis type) is a main complication of most type of poisoning. charaka and vagbhata acharyas contraindicate dakodara for vasti. If vasti is given to such patients death may occur by distension. Charaka acharya stated bhrama (giddiness) as a contraindication for vasti which is a main symptom of poisoning cases.

Unamada (insanity) and shokagrasta (sorrowful) are very common with poisoning conditions with psychological effects. These symptoms are considered as contraindication for vasti.

Kanhasosha (dry throat) is a common symptom of ingested poison, which is contraindicated in vasti by Charaka acharya. Shopa payu (oedema in anus) may be present in cases when route of administration of poison is rectal. In that condition also vasti is contraindicated by Vagbhata acharya.

Considering the contraindications of anuvasana vasti of Charaka and Vagbhata acharyas It is clearly mentioned visapita (poisoned) and Garapita (toxicosis) as contraindications.

Summarising the contraindications of both niruha and anuvasana vasti it is understood that most of contraindications are directly related to poisoning conditions therefore all acharyas very rarely indicated vasti in agada tantra. On the other hand when we consider the types of poisoning, ingested, inhaled, contact, injected etc. most of symptoms caused by all types of poisoning are contraindicated for niruha and anuvasana vasti.11-15.

**CONCLUSION**

Anuvasana vasti is directly contraindicated in visha pita and gara pita (toxicosis). Most of clinical conditions contraindicated in vasti are related to poisoning. Therefore
restriction of vasti in agada tantra by acharya was based on scientific basis of interaction of poison with vasti and considering the adverse effects of vasti. Non-indication of vasti in agada tantra can be considered as safety precaution to prevent complications.
REFERENCES

