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UPANAHA SVEDA: CLASSICAL PERSPECTIVES AND ITS APPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Swedana Karma is undertaken by inducing sweating from the application of heat. There are many methods used to achieve this, with Upanaha Swedana being one of them. Upanaha Swedana is a standard treatment modality used in Ayurveda for the management of pain and inflammation. It is a localized treatment wherein a combination of medicinal drugs is prepared, made into a poultice, heated and applied at the affected site. This is meant to reduce the local inflammation and act as a topical analgesic. The procedure is divided into three phases which are: Purva Karma (pre-therapy procedures), the preparation of the Upanaha Sweda material is done, Pradhana Karma (main therapeutic procedures) the prepared Upanaha Sweda material is applied to the patient and Paschat Karma (post-therapy procedures) after waiting the specified time, the Upahana Sweda is removed following proper procedures. The present conceptual study was done based on the need of the day to elaborate the process of conducting Upanaha Sweda. For this, various Ayurvedic texts, digital libraries referencing Samhita were searched and the following headings were selected, types of data, types of reports and functionalities. This article seeks to explore this treatment modality and outline the general approach to be followed while conducting the procedure of Upanaha Sweda.

KEYWORDS: *Upanaha, Swedana, Bandhana, Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa*

INTRODUCTION

Swedana is considered as one of the important treatment modalities in *Ayurveda* which is a part of *Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa*. It is one among the *Shadupakramas* which relieves stiffness, heaviness, coldness and causes perspiration in the body[1]. It is mainly effective in treating various *Vata- Kaphaja* disorders. *Upanaha* is one among the four major types of *Swedana* which acts on *Vata Dosha*. It is a type of *Swedana* where warm paste of *Churnas*(medicinal powders), *Sneha*(unctuous material like oil, ghee,etc), *Kinva* (fermented liquid) and *Dhanya Churna* (powdered grains) is applied over the affected site which is wrapped with a thick material and is left undisturbed for a certain duration.[2] Various clinical conditions involving pain, stiffness, swelling can be efficiently managed by *Upanaha Swedana*.

Etymology: The word '*Upanaha*' consists of two words *Upa* and *Nah* in which *Upa* means near-by or together and *Nah* means to bind/to tie. So, the word *Upanaha* means to wrap or to cover up.[3] [4]

Synonymn: *Bandhana[5]*

Definition

Different definitions for *Upanaha Sweda* have been explained in *Samhitas* which are mentioned below:

उपनाह स्वेदः विशेषे लेपः ॥[6]

Upanaha Sweda is considered as a *Vishesha Lepa.*

उपनाह उष्णो बहलो लेपः ॥[7]

Upanaha is a form of *Sweda* done by applying thick, warm paste of medicinal drugs.

उपनाहः बहलं लेपं दत्त्वा चर्मादिभिरावृत्य व्याधियुक्तस्याङ्गस्य बन्धनम् ॥[8]

Procedure of application of paste of medicinal drugs which is covered with *Charma,*etc depending upon the disease condition and the part where it is applied.

उपनाह उष्ण पिण्ड बन्धः ॥[9]

It is a type of *Swedana* where *Ushna Pinda* is applied over the affected site and *Bandana* is done.

उपनाहो बन्धनम् ॥[10]

It is a type of *Swedana* where *Bandana* is done.

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Types

I. On the basis of *Agni Samskara*: [11]

Niragni Upanaha: *Ushnavirya Dravyas* are mixed with a suitable *Drava Dravya,* applied over the affected site and is wrapped with a *Bandana Dravya.* There is no direct contact of *Upanaha Dravyas* with the *Agni.*

Sagni Upanaha- Upanaha Dravyas are added with a suitable *Drava Dravya* which is subjected to heat and then applied over the specific part of the body and is wrapped with a *Bandana Dravya.*

II. On the basis of method of application[12]

Acharya Dalhana classifies *Upanaha* into 3 types:

Pradeha: Vatahara drugs are combined with *Amla Dravya*, *Lavana* and *Sneha Dravya* which is subjected to heat and applied in the form of a thick paste over the body without *Bandhana*. In case of drugs possessing *Ushna Virya, Upanaha* should be performed without heating. *Acharya Bhavaprakasha* also mentions to apply in the form of *Pradeha* and *Pralepa*. Acharya *Indu* also opines that *Upanaha Swedana* should be done by repeated application of *Pradeha* and *Pralepa. Swedana* has to be performed repeatedly which means the drugs applied for *Upanaha* when gets cooled should be removed and again fresh *Lepa* should be applied.

Pinda

Drugs like *Krushara, Payasa, Utkarika, Veshavara* are prepared which is made into *Pinda* and *Swedana* is performed. It can be used as *Sarvanga* or *Ekanga sweda*. *Acharya Dalhana* says that *Sankara Swedana* is also *Upanaha Swedana*.

Bandhana

In this variety, *Vatahara* drugs along with *Amla Dravya*, *Saindava Lavana, Sneha Dravyas* should be made hot, applied over the affected part and tied. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned the use of *Charma Patta* for tying which is of *Ushna Virya*. In the absence of the above, *Kausheya* (silk) or *Avika Sataka* (woolen blanket) and *Vatahara Patras* are mentioned for the purpose of tying. *Acharya Sushruta, Vaghbata, Kashyapa* and *Bhavaprakasha* have mentioned about *Bandhana* method of *Upanaha Sweda.*

III. On the basis of site of application:

Ekanga Upanaha: Performed over a particular part of the body.
Sarvanga Upanaha: *Upanaha* performed over whole body.

IV. On the basis of drugs used:

Snigdha Upanaha: It consists of *Sneha Dravya* along with *Vatahara churna*, powder of *Dhanya* and *Lavana.* It helps in causing *Sandhana Karma* and is *Rujahara.*

Rooksha Upanaha: It is devoid of *Snehadravya*, instead *Gomutra*, *Kanji* are used. It acts as mainly *Shothahara*.

***Upanaha Dravyas*[13][14]**

Dravyas	***Doshas***
Kakolyadi Gana	*Pittanugata Vata*
Surasadi Gana, Eladi Gana, Tila, Atasi	*Kaphanugata Vata*
Krusharadi, Veshavara	*Kevalavata*
Sarvagandha Dhanya, Sarshapa, Kinwa, Vachadi Gana	*Kevala Vata*
Surasadi Gana	*Kaphasamsrishta Vata*
Padmakadi Gana	*Pitta samsrishta Vata*

Indications[15][16]

Indications	***Upanaha* Dravyas**
Vata Vyadhi	*Musta, Kinwa, Tila, Kushta, Surahva, Lavana, Dadhi, Ksheera and Chathusneha*
Ardita	*Anupa Mamsa*
Pakshaghata	*Salvana Upanaha*
Vataja Oshtakopa	*Salvana Upanaha*
Vataja arbuda	*Veshavara*
Khalli	*Snigdha, Amla Lavana Dravya*
Vataja udara	*Kinwa, Sarshapa Mula Beeja Kalka*
Vataja mutrakrichra	*Dashamula, Varahavasa, Taila, Kulattha, Kola, Yava, Eranda, Shatavari*
Galaganda	*Shana Beeja Kalka*
Gata vata	
Shrotradigata	*Vatahara Dravyas*
Twak mamsagata	
Sandhi snayugata	
Twak mamsa rakta siragata	
Astisandhi snayugata	
Uttana vatarakta	*Sukhoshna* *Jeevaniya Gana Siddha Veshavara*
Pittaja arbuda	*Kakolyadi Gana*
Pooyalasa	*Yatha Dosha*
Rajayakshma	*Jeevanti, Shatapushpa, Bala, Madhuka, Vacha, Veshavara, Audaka Mamsa*

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Gulma Pachyamana	*Ushna Virya Dravya*
Siragranti	*Vataghna Dravya*
Shwasa	*Tila, Masha, Godhuma Churna*
Amavata	*Ahimsrad Snehavivarjita*
Granti Visarpa	*Veshavara*
Vrischika Visha	*Jeeraka Kalka And Saindava Fried In Ghrita*
Vrana (Shamana)	*Tila, Mudga And Payasa*
Sadyovrina	*Veshavara, Krishara*
Bhagandara-Vatakaphaja	*Salvana*

Contraindications[17]
Upanaha is contraindicated in *Pittavrita* and *Raktavrita Vata* conditions and *Stana Vidradhi*.

Upanaha Vidhi
Purva Karma
Sambhara Sangraha: Heating apparatus, vessels, weighing machine, measuring jar, *Vatahara Patras,* Kora cloth, *Upanaha Dravyas, Dravyas* for the management of complications and therapists (1-2).

Preparation of medicine
According to the *Vyadhi Avastha*, selected *Upanaha Dravyas* should be mixed well and made into semi-solid paste which should be not too thin nor too thick in consistency. Heating is done in case of *Sagni Upanaha*. *Bandana Dravyas* should be kept ready.

Preparation of the patient
Patient should be made to sit/lie in the comfortable position in *Nivatagriha*. Proper examination should be done. Affected part should be exposed properly. Skin sensitivity should be checked.

Pradhana Karma
Patient is asked to sit or lie in a supine/prone posture which is comfortable exposing the affected part. Warm paste is applied in considerable thickness and wrapped with *Vata Hara Patras* like *Eranda. Bandana* is done using *Bandana Dravyas* which should not be too tight nor too loose. Type of *Bandana* varies to each site.

Paschat karma
The applied paste is removed and affected part should be cleaned well and checked for any skin reactions. The patient should resort to *Ushnopachara.*

Duration of *Upanaha Sweda*: In Ayurvedic classics, there are references which says that *Upanaha* which is tied at morning should be removed during night and which are tied during night should be removed in the morning.[18] But this can be modified according to the severity of the disease, condition of the patient and the season.

Precautions
- Medicinal paste should not be reused again.
- Unused, prepared medicine which is kept for long duration should be discarded.
- Temperature of the medicinal paste should be checked before applying to avoid burns.
- While tying *Upanaha*, it should not be tied too tightly nor too loosely.
- *Upanaha* must be of suitable consistency so that it should not fall off from its position

DISCUSSION
Following points are discussed:
- *Bandhana Dravyas* which can be used in present era
- Mode of action of *Upanaha Sweda*[19]
- Factors enhancing the efficacy of *Upanaha Sweda*[20]

***Bandhana Dravyas* which can be used in present era**
Plastic wraps, kora cloth, plantain leaf, cotton cloth, roller bandage, self-adhesive elastic bandages can be used as *Bandana Dravyas.*

Probable Mode of action of *Upanaha Swedana*
Among the *Panchamahabhutas, Vayu Mahabhuta* is predominant in *Twak.* Hence, *Sparshanendriya* is capable of perceiving different types of sensations of the skin. *Bhrajaka Pitta* which is one among the 5 varieties of *Pitta* is present in *Twak* and its function is *Twak Bhrajana*. *Acharya Sushruta* explains that *Tiryak Dhamanis* divides into numerous branches and covers the body like a network and their openings are attached to *Romakupas.* Through these *Romakupas* the *Veeryas* of *Lepa*, *Abhyanga, Parisheka, Avagaha* gets absorbed into the skin then it undergoes *Paka* with *Bhrajaka Pitta*.

This highlights the systemic absorption of the drug applied over the skin. Thus, it can be said that *Veerya* of drugs used in *Upanaha Sweda* get absorbed through the skin and produce the action. In *Upanaha Sweda*, *Ushna Veerya Dravya Kalka* is applied over the affected part which prevent the loss of heat from the body because of its thickness and later it is wrapped with *Eranda Patra* which results in the production of *Sweda.*

Sudation
Local increase in temperature during *Swedana Karma* has both therapeutic and physiological effects. It stimulates and increases the local blood and lymphatic circulation and thereby improving the local tissue metabolism. It modifies the secretion of various inflammatory mediators which aids in reducing inflammation. By the physical effect of heat, local musculature gets relaxed and thereby reduces pain & increases rate of transdermal drug delivery.

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Effect of Heat
Diffusion through the skin is a temperature dependent process, so raising the skin temperature will enhance the Trans-dermal delivery of various drugs by increasing skin permeability, body fluid circulation, blood vessel wall permeability and drug solubility. Due to the heat there will be vasodilatation and increase in circulation particularly in superficial tissues. Stimulation of superficial nerve endings can also cause a reflex dilatation of arterioles. By this necessary oxygen and nutritive materials is supplied to the particular area.

Heat acts as a counter irritant, which is the thermal stimulus, inhibiting the pain sensation. (Theory of Melzack and Wall). Heat is having indirect effect on muscle tissue. The increase in temperature in muscle tissue leads to muscle relaxation. On the other hand application of heat over the skin or raise of temperature increases activity of sweat glands which intern results in reflex stimulation of sweat glands resulting from effect of heat on the sensory nerve ending.

Factors enhancing the efficacy of *Upanaha Swedana*…
Long duration of drug contact: Duration of drug contact is one among main cause for good absorption of active ingredients. When compared to any other *Swedana* procedure, drug contact period is more in case of *Upanaha* which results in better drug absorption.

Solubility: Absorption depends on the solubility of the drug. Since *Upanaha* consists of *Sneha Dravya* which yields lipid base, helps in better absorption of active substances and pass through the lipoidal membrane.

Permeability: Use of acidic drugs like *Takra, Chukra* or *Kanji* causes decrease in ph of medicine to moderate level. Moderate decrease in ph increases permeability of drug through skin. Earlier research proved that presence of alcoholic substance like ethanol cause easy absorption of active ingredients. *Kanji* (fermented liquid) a *Dravadravya* used in many *Upanaha* helps in quick and easy absorption of the active principles.

Self-Fermentation and Exothermic Reaction: Drugs used in *Upanaha* like *Chukra, Takra, Kanji* are responsible for continuous fermentation when they come in contact with the *Churna Dravyas* and *Sneha Dravyas*. Since fermentation is exothermic process causing self-generation of heat. Generally, if any hot substance is applied over skin, the temperature will not retain due to large surface area. But in case of *Upanaha* due to fermentation heat will remain for more duration.

Minimizing Heat Loss: *Upanaha Swedana* acts by trapping the heat inside the body by preventing the heat loss through *Romakoopas.* As soon as hot paste of medicine is applied over the skin there will be local raise in skin temperature because of heat through radiation and conduction. This heat will be trapped by thickness of paste and covering it with fresh leaves of *Eranda* and finally bandaged with thick cotton cloth. These acts as thermoregulation as they are bad conduction of heat.

Supporting and Immobilization: *Veshtana* is one among the *Vata Upakrama* which is an important factor for pacifying pain. Proper support and immobilization by the *Veshtana* results in the faster action.

CONCLUSION
Upanaha Swedana is a type of *Shamaneeya Swedana* which includes *Lepana, Bandana* and *Swedana Karma* and is considered as one among the *Vata Upakramas*. It is an exquisite *Swedana Karma* which is included under *Sagni* and *Niragni Sweda*. It is considered as exceptional due to its manifold benefits such as it is patient friendly, economically viable, can be done with the easily available drugs.

It can be done as both OPD and IPD procedures. It has the increased drug contact period which gives maximum benefit to the patient as there is continuous sudation on the affected site. *Upanaha* can be modified according to the doshas involved, method of application, Dravyas used and the stage of the disease.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
Authors must declare whether or not there is any competing financial interests in relation to the work described. This information must be included at this stage and will be published as part of the paper. Conflict of interest should also be noted on the supplementary covering letter and as part of the submission process
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