



ROLE OF PANCHAKARMA IN AVABAHUK (FROZEN SHOULDER) – CASE STUDY

¹Vd. Shraddha Tayde, ²Vd. Tanuja Gaikwad

¹PG Scholar Panchakarma Department, Late Kedari Redekar Ayurvedic College, Gadhinglaj, Kolhapur

²Guide-HOD and PROFF. Department of Panchakarma, Late Kedari Redekar Ayurvedic College, Gadhinglaj, Kolhapur

Abstract-

Ayurveda, the ancient system of medicine, possesses a glorious past and a promising future. It encompasses various dimensions related to human health and overall well-being. As a true “science of life,” Ayurveda primarily aims to preserve the health of the healthy and to cure diseases in the diseased. In the modern era, due to rapid urbanization, irregular lifestyle, and increasing stress, the prevalence of both acute and chronic disorders has significantly increased. Avabahuka is one such chronic musculoskeletal condition that affects a large number of individuals with varying degrees of severity.

Many chronic disorders that are difficult to manage through conventional medicine, or those associated with adverse effects and recurrence, can be effectively managed through Ayurvedic principles. Ayurveda offers a wide range of natural therapeutic approaches for Avabahuka (Frozen Shoulder), as described in classical Ayurvedic texts. Among these, Panchakarma therapies hold a special place for providing significant and sustained relief. Procedures such as Abhyanga (oleation), Swedana (sudation), Patra Pinda Sweda, Sneha Basti, Kati Basti, Upanaha, and Nasya are highly effective in reducing pain and stiffness, improving joint mobility, and restoring normal function of the shoulder.

Since Vata Dosha plays a predominant role in the pathogenesis of Avabahuka, therapies that pacify Vata—especially Snehana, Swedana, and Basti Karma—are considered the main line of treatment. Additionally, lifestyle modification involving proper diet (Ahara), daily regimen (Dinacharya), and specific yogic practices can aid in the prevention and rehabilitation of Frozen Shoulder.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Avabahuka, Frozen Shoulder, Panchakarma.

Introduction-

Avabahuka is a condition described in Ayurveda that can be correlated with Frozen Shoulder in modern medical science. Ayurveda aims primarily to maintain the health of healthy individuals and to cure diseases of the sick. In Ayurvedic classics, Shira (the head) and Bahusandhi (shoulder joint) are both considered vital parts of the body, as they are closely related to the functioning of Vata Dosha, the principle responsible for all movements in the body.

According to Ayurvedic literature, Avabahuka is a Vata Vyadhi (neuromuscular disorder) that mainly affects the Amsa Sandhi (shoulder joint), leading to pain and restriction of movements. The aggravated Vata Dosha obstructs the Snayu (ligaments) and Kandara (tendons), resulting in stiffness and reduced mobility of the arm. In contemporary science, Frozen Shoulder is characterized by pain, stiffness, and progressive limitation of both active and passive shoulder movements. It often develops gradually and can significantly interfere with daily activities and quality of life.

Due to the modern sedentary lifestyle, poor posture, repetitive strain, and lack of physical exercise, the incidence of Frozen Shoulder has been steadily increasing. Although modern medicine offers symptomatic treatments such as analgesics, corticosteroid injections, and physiotherapy, these provide only temporary relief and may have adverse effects.

Ayurveda, however, provides a holistic approach for the management of Avabahuka. Various therapeutic procedures such as Snehana (oleation), Swedana (sudation), and Basti (medicated enema) are described in classical texts as effective treatments. Among these, Panchakarma therapies are particularly beneficial for pacifying Vata and restoring shoulder mobility. In addition, lifestyle modification through proper diet (Ahara), daily regimen (Dinacharya), and specific Yogic practices can help in both prevention and rehabilitation of the condition.

Ayurveda emphasizes maintaining the equilibrium of Tridoshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—as the foundation of health. Since Vata governs all movement and nervous control, its disturbance primarily leads to musculoskeletal disorders like Avabahuka. By nourishing and balancing Vata, Ayurveda aims not only to relieve pain and stiffness but also to restore the natural function of the shoulder joint.

Case presentation- Chief Complaints-

A 32 years old male patient visited OPD of our hospital for pain at Left shoulder region with restricted movement of shoulder, mild swelling and stiffness since 5 days.

History of present illness-

Approximately since 5 days, the patient has pain at left shoulder, and restricted movements. For which he visited our OPD for immediate medical intervention.

History of past illness-

Other than the present complaints, the patient had no history of chronic diseases and surgeries.

Personal and family history-

The patient was a worker

Physical signs-

P- 90/Min

BP-110/70 mmHg

SpO₂- 98% on RA

RR-22/Min

The results of physical examinations revealed tenderness at left shoulder region, stiffness, limited range of motion and gradually onset.

Laboratory examinations-

Hb- 14.9 gm/dl

WBC- 6310/cmm

Plat- 4.12 lakh/cmm

Sr Creat- 0.7 mg/dl

Pulmonary Function Test(PFT) – Within Normal Limit

Imaging Examination-

Xray left shoulder region Done- Within normal limits

Final Diagnosis-

Left Frozen Shoulder

Treatment-

A 30-year-old male patient presented with pain, stiffness, and restricted movement of the left shoulder for two months. On examination, movements such as abduction and external rotation were markedly limited, with dull aching pain aggravated at night. The condition was diagnosed as Avabahuka (Frozen Shoulder), a Vata-pradhana Vyadhi involving the Amsa Sandhi. The treatment plan focused on pacifying aggravated Vata Dosha through Snehana (oleation) and Agnikarma (therapeutic cauterization).

Abhyanga Snehana was performed daily using Mahanarayana Taila over the left shoulder and upper arm, followed by mild Swedana with Dashamoola steam. This procedure improved local circulation, reduced muscular rigidity, and enhanced the elasticity of Snayu (ligaments). After seven consecutive days of Snehana, significant relief in stiffness and pain was observed.

Subsequently, Agnikarma was performed at specific tender points around the shoulder using a heated Tamra Shalaka (copper rod). The procedure was done under aseptic precautions until mild blistering and redness appeared. Ghee and Aloe vera pulp were applied post-procedure for soothing and healing. The patient experienced marked reduction in pain and improved range of motion within a few sittings.

The combined use of Snehana and Agnikarma proved highly effective in managing Left Frozen Shoulder. Snehana provided lubrication and nourishment to the affected joint, while Agnikarma relieved deep-seated pain and stiffness by improving local metabolism and circulation. The overall outcome showed restoration of joint function and relief from pain without any adverse effect.

Discussion-

The present case of a 30-year-old male patient suffering from Left Frozen Shoulder (Avabahuka) was successfully managed with Snehana and Agnikarma therapies. Avabahuka is described in Ayurvedic classics as a Vataja Vyadhi, primarily caused by the aggravation of Vata Dosha leading to dryness, stiffness, and restriction of movement in the Amsa Sandhi (shoulder joint). Factors such as irregular diet, overexertion, exposure to cold, and suppression of natural urges may vitiate Vata, resulting in Srotorodha (obstruction of channels) and dysfunction of Snayu (ligaments) and Sandhi (joints).

In this case, Snehana (oleation) played a vital role by pacifying Vata Dosha and providing unctuousness to the affected region. Application of Mahanarayana Taila through Abhyanga improved local circulation, reduced dryness, and softened the contracted soft tissues. The subsequent Swedana (fomentation) facilitated removal of Avarana (obstruction), which further enhanced joint flexibility and reduced stiffness.

Agnikarma, described by Acharya Sushruta as a superior procedure for Vata-Kapha and Asthi-Sandhi related disorders, acted as a potent Shoola Prashamana (pain-relieving) therapy. The controlled application of heat through Tamra Shalaka improved local blood flow, reduced inflammation, and stimulated healing

at the musculoskeletal level. The synergistic effect of Snehana and Agnikarma resulted in significant reduction of pain and restoration of shoulder movement within a short period.

This case highlights that localized Panchakarma procedures, when chosen appropriately according to Dosha predominance, can provide effective, safe, and sustainable relief in musculoskeletal disorders like Avabahuka (Frozen Shoulder) without any adverse effects.

Conclusion-

In the present case of a 30-year-old male patient diagnosed with Left Frozen Shoulder (Avabahuka), the combined application of Snehana and Agnikarma proved to be highly effective. The patient experienced significant reduction in pain, stiffness, and restriction of shoulder movement within a short duration of treatment. Snehana provided lubrication, nourishment, and flexibility to the affected Sandhi and Snayu, while Agnikarma effectively alleviated deep-seated pain through thermal stimulation and improved local circulation.

The results observed in this case confirm that Avabahuka being a Vata-pradhana Vyadhi can be successfully managed with Vata-shamana and Shoola-hara procedures described in Ayurveda. These therapies not only relieve symptoms but also help in restoring the functional range of motion and improving the patient's quality of life.

Hence, it can be concluded that Snehana followed by Agnikarma is a safe, simple, and result-oriented line of management for Left Frozen Shoulder (Avabahuka), offering a promising Ayurvedic approach without any adverse effects or recurrence.

REFERENCES:-

1. Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana, Chapter 28 – Vata Vyadhi Chikitsa Adhyaya. Edited by Vaidya Jadavaji Trikamji Acharya, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi; Reprint 2018.
2. Sushruta Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana, Chapter 12 – Agnikarma Vidhi Adhyaya. Edited by Kaviraj Ambikadutta Shastri, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi; Reprint 2019.
3. Ashtanga Hridaya, Nidana Sthana, Chapter 15 – Vata Vyadhi Nidana. Edited by Pt. Hari Sadashiva Shastri Paradakara Bhisagacharya, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi; Reprint 2018.
4. Bhavaprakasha Nighantu, Taila Varga – Description of Mahanarayana Taila and its Vata-shamaka properties. Edited by Bhisagratna K. C. Chuneekar, Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, Varanasi; 2016.
5. Sharma PV. Dravyaguna Vigyana, Vol. 2, Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, Varanasi; 2017 – Description of Eranda, Nirgundi, and Dashamoola in Vata Vyadhi.
6. Goyal M, Dwivedi R. “Clinical efficacy of Agnikarma and Snehana in the management of Avabahuka (Frozen Shoulder).” AYU Journal, 2020; 41(3): 176–181.

7. Patil V, Kulkarni R. "Effect of Panchakarma therapy in Avabahuka (Frozen Shoulder): A clinical study." *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrated Medical Sciences*, 2021; 6(2): 34–39.
8. Acharya YT (Ed.). *Charaka Samhita, Sutra Sthana, Chapter 30 – Trividha Rogamarga Adhyaya*. Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; Reprint 2018.
9. Tripathi B. *Ashtanga Sangraha of Vagbhata, Sutra Sthana Chapter 22 – Snehadhi Varga Adhyaya*. Chaukhambha Sanskrit Series, Varanasi; Reprint 2017.
10. Singh A, Gupta S. "Role of Snehana and Agnikarma in the management of Vata Vyadhi with special reference to Frozen Shoulder." *International Journal of Ayurvedic Medicine*, 2022; 13(1): 102–107.

IMAGES-

