

ABHYANGA TO CONTROL PRE-MATURE AGEING

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ABSTRACT:

Premature ageing is by definition unnatural ageing. Aging is a physiological process that at times is remotely connected to chronological age of a person. Without diseases of premature ageing human life expectancy is expected to be 120 years. The conventional medical care system is not much focused on reversing the accelerated aging process, which will potentially be more effective in long term. If premature ageing is halted, it will not only improve the longevity but also the quality of life without pain. Ayurveda is the science which focuses on prevention of diseases and maintain good health. *Abhyanga* has been advocated to be performed on regular basis to maintain the strength and vigor in individuals.

Abhyanga produces effect on the largest organ of human body that is the skin. *Abhyanga* improves the *bhrajak pitta* and also the *vata dosha*. It improves the blood circulation, lymphatic drainage, and benefits the muscular and nervous system. Acharya Sushrut advised to use *Ghrut* , tail or any form of *sneh* as per the *prakruti* of the individual as well as the enviromental factors for *abhyanga*. The

antioxidant properties of *abhyanga* helps neutralize the free radicals preventing cell damage and thus premature ageing. *abhyanga* is also advised as treatment in neuro muscular disease, musculoskeletal disease , skin disease and also psychiatric disorders.

Hence the premature ageing of cells and tissues can be prevented by til tail *abhyanga*.

KEY WORDS :

INTRODUCTION:

Aging is an inevitable process that begins in the early middle age, due to which many bodily functions begin to decline. Individual cells and organs change with aging which reflects in functions and appearance. Aging can be due to extrinsic as well as intrinsic factors. The intrinsic factor is the natural aging process and the extrinsic are stress, smoking, alcohol etc. which leads to accelerated cell damage. Without premature aging the human life expectancy would be way more than it is today. Although the disease process and aging process may run concurrently but they are not the same thing. As per Ayurveda aging is a result of *uttarottar dhatu dushti*. Due to wrong lifestyle and eating habits, there is *aam utpatti* which results in *dhatu dushti*. This gives rise to diseases and reduced efficacy. Thus, to prevent this *dhatu dushti* Acharya have mentioned certain *dincharya* and *rutucharya*. Acharya Vagbhata has mentioned *Abhyanga* as a prime therapy to prevent the signs of aging.

Abhyanga is a part of *dincharya* and also a type of *Bahya snehan*. In Ayurveda, Acharyas mentioned 7 layers of skin & the disease that originate from each of these layer. *Abhyanga* improves the quality of *Bhrajak pitt* along with *vata dosh* .It produces beneficial effect on circulation of blood & lymphatic drainage, Muscular & nervous system. *Abhyanga* makes human body become strong physically and mentally. Makes the person non-susceptible to disease stop early changes in skin.

Abhyanga is a procedure involving the application of sneh dravya on the body with certain measure of pressure in specific directions.

AREA OF ACTION:

- Abhyanga has action on the largest organ of the body that is the skin.
- Tvacha is sparshan indriya.
- It is the seat of vaat and bhrajak pitta
- Abhyanga done with sneha pacifies the vaata dosh which is the key responsible factor for all catabolic actions. This slows down the process of cell aging.

SYMPTOMS OF PRE-MATURE AGING INCLUDES:

- Pain
- Hair fall and hair greying
- Decreased vision, hearing and other senses
- Reduced skin elasticity
- Loss of muscle tone, muscular weakness, slow reaction time.
- Early Osteoporosis
- Loss of interest
- Occurrence of disease condition like atherosclerosis, joint pains, cataract, low levels of DHEA, testosterone, estrogen etc.

Why Abhyanga?

अभ्यंग आचरेन्नित्यं स जरा श्रम वातहा
द्रन्नटिः प्रसाद पुष्ट्यायुः स्वप्न सुत्वक् दार्ढ्यं क्रुत्

A.H.Su.2-7

Acharya Vagbhata describes *Abhyanga* as a therapy which if practiced regularly will prevent Jara, and disorders of Vata. It will enhance vision, skin, energy and strength, fertility and immunity.

Acharya Charak has stated in Sutra sthan that the body of one who uses oil massage regularly does not become affected much, even if subjected to accidental injuries or strenuous work. By using oil massage daily, a person is endowed with pleasant touch, trimmed body parts, and becomes strong, charming and least affected by old age.

Hence, we observe that abhyanga takes care of all the systems and prevents pre-mature aging.

METHODS:

Procedure of Abhyanga:

Abhyanga should be done with Sneha dravya.

It should be applied slow, gently in the direction of hair on relatively broad and large organ in Anuloma gati. It should be done in round pattern on joints like elbow, shoulder, knee, ankle, and lumbar region. Time period: 35-40 minutes

Tvacha: Ayurvedic and Modern perspective:

1. Avabhasini: Outermost layer. It reflects the complexion and the quality of Rasa dhatu. It acts as a mirror
2. Lohita: This layer supports the outermost layer. It indicates the quality of Rakt dhatu. If there is Ama in blood it impacts the aura of the outer layer and accentuates sensitivity to sun
3. Shweta: This is a white layer and it provides balance to skin colour
4. Tamra: This layer nurtures the upper layers of the skin. It supports the immune system. Skin infections reflect an imbalance in this layer
5. Vedini: This layer sensually links the skin to the rest of the body. It is the center for transfer of sensation
6. Rohini: This layer supports healing and regeneration. Imbalance in this layer retards healing and disappearance of scars over time
7. Mamsadhara: This innermost layer is the platform for skin's stability and firmness. When this layer is in balance the skin looks young and supple

Tvacha Modern view: 3 layers:

Hypodermis:

The hypodermis is the deepest section of the skin. The hypodermis refers to the fat tissue below the dermis that insulates the body from cold temperatures and provides shock absorption. Fat cells of the hypodermis also store nutrients and energy. The hypodermis is the thickest in the buttocks, palms of the hands, and soles of the feet. As we age, the hypodermis begins to atrophy, contributing to the thinning of aging skin.

Dermis:

The dermis is located between the hypodermis and the epidermis. It is a fibrous network of tissue that provides structure and resilience to the skin. While dermal thickness varies, it is on average about 2 mm thick. The major components of the dermis work together as a network.

This mesh-

like network is composed of structural proteins (collagen and elastin), blood and lymph vessels, and specialized cells called mast cells and fibroblasts. These are surrounded by a gel-like substance called the ground substance, composed mostly of glycosaminoglycans. The ground substance plays a critical role in the hydration and moisture levels within the skin.

Epidermis:

The epidermis is the outermost layer of the skin. Categorized into five horizontal layers, the epidermis actually consists of anywhere between 50 cell layers (in thin areas) to 100 cell layers (in thick areas). The average epidermal thickness is 0.1 millimeters, which is about the thickness of one sheet of paper. The epidermis acts as a protective shield for the body and totally renews itself approximately every 28 days.

Abhyanga action on Sapt tvacha:

It nourishes the sapt tvacha and in turn also the sapt dhatu, maintaining the quality of skin and also the dhatus.

Absorption of drug used in abhyanga at cellular level:

Cell membrane is the outer covering made of proteins and lipids making it easy for cell to exchange matter with other cells.

Through the mechanism behind absorption of local applications we understand that lipid soluble substances are absorbed and enter circulation faster. Hence the oil medium used in Abhyanga is well absorbed by the skin and enters the circulation.

Abhyanga action on Saptdhatu:

Acharya Dalhan's tika on Sushrut samhita chikitsa sthan explains the prabhav of abhyanga therapy at dhatu level. Abhyanga has an effect on every dhatu and the time required to reach each dhatu is mentioned as follows:

Romant	300 matra	1 minute 35 seconds
Tvak / Ras dhatu	400 matra	2 minute 7 seconds
Rakt dhatu	500 matra	2 minute 40 seconds
Mans dhatu	600 matra	3 minute 10 seconds
Meda dhatu	700 matra	3 minute 42 seconds
Asthi dhatu	800 matra	4 minute 14 seconds
Majja dhatu	900 matra	4 minute 45 seconds

Thus, we conclude that abhyanga has to be performed for minimum five minutes in each position for nourishing the sapt dhatu. Abhyanga done regularly will nourish the sapt dhatus, rejuvenating each and every cell preventing early damage and degeneration.

Abhyanga action against the causes of Pre-mature aging:

Causes of Premature Aging

Action of Abhyanga

Excess toxin accumulation leading to cell damage by free radicals

- Antioxidant action neutralises the free radicals, blocks the process of oxidation, thus minimizes the damage caused at cellular level

Stagnated flow and decreased circulation

Abhyanga increases peripheral circulation and vaso dilatation which is responsible to increase more oxygenated blood flow to the muscle as well as removal of waste products from the body

Stress and disturbed sleep

Abhyanga leads to an increase in oxytocin level and reduction in nitric oxide, ACTH, and beta endorphins. This increase in oxytocin level leads to enhanced immunity function and decrease in anxiety, depression, improving the quality of sleep.

Systemic Action:

Circulatory system:

- Transport O₂ & nutrients to cell
- Destroy bacteria with the help of WBC
- Abhyanga increase venous flow to the heart, increase O₂ in tissue which helps to regenerate the cells & tissue

Muscular System:

- Overlapping bundles of fiber and cells with blood, lymph and nerves.
- Abhyanga helps to dispel the hard knots caused by spasm and improve the quality of skin. maintain muscle tone, increase the secretion of glands, organs and stop early ageing of organs.

Lymphatic system:

- Helps to maintain fluid balance
- Lymphatic drainage is improved by Abhyanga
- Bacteria from tissue filtered out by lymph nodes. Abhyanga stimulates lymphatic flow and expels excessive lactic acid produced in the body due to exercise.

Nervous System:

- Receive impulse from internal and external stimuli
- Abhyanga regenerates the nerves, nerve endings and axons by oleation
- Regulate the body system by relaxing and toning the nerves.

Benefits of Abhyanga:



Contraindicated conditions for Abhyanga:

- During the menstrual cycle
- During pregnancy
- Over swollen, painful areas or masses on the body
- Over infected or broken skin
- When there is high ama or great physical discomfort
- A thick, white coating on the tongue often indicates high levels of ama.
- During any sort of acute illness such as fever, chills, flu, or acute indigestion
- Directly after taking emetics or purgatives

DISCUSSION:

Premature aging is a degenerative condition which brings about changes in cells and tissues affection the functioning of all systems. Diseases of the old age group are seen in middle age groups due to early degeneration. Thus, to prevent this Abhyanga is an effective tool. Physical manipulation in the form of abhyanga increase the circulation of blood and plasma, it can stimulate the lymphatic system and remove the internal as well as external waste product.

Maintain the Physical health, relieves the stress, calms the mind. Also, since it is a cheap procedure which can be done at home without any help, it proves to be the ideal therapy that should be adopted as a part of dincharya.

CONCLUSION:

Thus, Abhyanga is useful in neuromuscular disease musculoskeletal disease, skin problems and maintain youthfulness. It can be done regularly to a person for the prevention of several disease and for the maintenance as well as prevention of positive health, Rejuvenating the body & prevent the ageing process.

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