

The Role of Agni Karma in the Management of Frozen Shoulder: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Frozen shoulder, or adhesive capsulitis, is a painful condition characterized by stiffness and limited movement of the shoulder joint. This case study highlights the effectiveness of Agni Karma (therapeutic cauterization) as per Ayurvedic practice in alleviating pain and improving shoulder mobility in a patient with frozen shoulder. The treatment showed significant improvement in pain and range of motion over a short period, suggesting Agni Karma as a promising adjunct therapy.

Keywords

Agni Karma, Frozen Shoulder, Adhesive Capsulitis, Ayurvedic treatment, Pain management

I. INTRODUCTION

Frozen shoulder, or adhesive capsulitis, is a condition marked by progressive pain and restriction of active and passive movement in the glenohumeral joint. It is considered a Vatavyadhi in Ayurveda. Conventional treatment includes physiotherapy, corticosteroid injections, and surgery. However, alternative treatments such as Agni Karma have shown promising results in managing musculoskeletal disorders.

II. CASE PRESENTATION

A 52-year-old female patient presented with pain and restricted movement in her right shoulder for 6 months. She had difficulty in daily activities such as combing her hair and lifting objects. She was diagnosed with frozen shoulder by an orthopedic specialist and opted for Ayurvedic treatment after limited relief from physiotherapy and analgesics.

Symptoms:

- Severe pain (VAS score: 8/10)
- Restricted abduction (up to 60°) and external rotation (up to 30°)
- Night pain and stiffness

III. TREATMENT PROTOCOL

Agni Karma Procedure:

- Instrument: Panchadhatu Shalaka (five-metal rod)
- Site: Tender points on the anterior and lateral aspect of the shoulder joint
- Frequency: Once every alternate day for 5 sessions
- Mode: Contact of heated Shalaka on the skin surface for a fraction of a second (tolerable heat), followed by application of Aloe vera gel

Additional Ayurvedic Management:

- Dashamoola Kashaya orally twice daily
- Nirgundi taila for local massage
- Mild shoulder mobilization exercises

IV. RESULTS

Pain Reduction:

- VAS score reduced from 8/10 to 2/10 after 5 sessions

Improvement in Mobility:

- Abduction improved from 60° to 130°
- External rotation improved from 30° to 80°

Follow-up:

- At 4 weeks, the patient reported near-complete functional recovery

V. DISCUSSION

Agni Karma acts through thermotherapy principles, reducing Vata-Kapha dosha aggravation and improving Srotoshodhana (microcirculation). The heat stimulates nerves, relieves muscle stiffness, and

restores mobility. This case supports traditional claims of Agni Karma in Sandhigata Vata and shows parallels with modern thermotherapy.

VI. CONCLUSION

Agni Karma can be an effective modality in the management of frozen shoulder, particularly when conventional therapies provide limited relief. This case highlights the need for further clinical trials to validate its broader application.

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After procedure of Agni karma chikitsa



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