

**THE OTHER SIDE OF SNEHANA – A DOUBLE EDGED KNIFE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Snehakarma*, an internal oleation therapy is one of the essential preparatory stages of *Sodhana* process. The aim of the *Abhyantara snehapana* before *Sodhana* is to increase the vitiated *doshas* , mobilize them from *sakha* to *koshta* enabling them to get eliminated through the nearest route. So the entire outcome of the *Sodhana* depends upon how well a physician executes *Snehana* procedure. *Snehana* with such potentiality also has the other side when it is not handled with care and professionalism. It has its own hazardous effects and capable of putting the patient’s life in jeopardy. When *Snehana* is not carried out properly it causes some complications of which some are life threatening. So, here an attempt is made with a review to throw light on the other side of *Sneha karma* which apart from having the expected favourable results may also present with unanticipated outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Abhyantara snehapana*, *Sodhana*, Complications, favourable results, unanticipated outcomes

**INTRODUCTION:**A desiring denouement of *Sodhana* happens through proper *Snehana*. When a *Sodhana* procedure is carried out in pre oleated body, *doshas* are eliminated so freely like water flows easily out from an oil smeared pot<sup>1</sup>. *Sodhana* is to be performed only after *doshas* reach out *koshta*( *upasthitha dosha*)<sup>2</sup> which is achieved only through well executed *Snehana* and *Swedana*. Unless the vitiated *doshas* are made explicitly and prominently distinct, the administration of *Sodhana* therapies may

not be facilitated. *Snehana* causes quantitative increase (*vridhi*), liquefaction (*vishyandana*) of *doshas* and sliminess of channels (*mardavatva*). *Swedana* causes *paka* of *doshas* and *sroto mukha vishodhana*<sup>3</sup>. *Swedana* done without *Snehana* will disintegrate the body just like a faggot of wood devoid of lubrication breaks quickly when heated.<sup>4</sup>

So *Snehana* is an important procedure to proceed for *Sodhana*. *Snehana* with such a potentiality do have some complications if not executed properly.

**COMPLICATIONS**

**Table no: 1 showing the list of *Sneha vyapaths*<sup>5</sup>**

1. Drowsiness	2. Skin diseases	3. Thirst
4. Nausea	5. Pruritis	6. Anorexia
7. Constipation	8. Paleness	9. Rigidity
10. Fever	11. Oedema	12. Stiffness of the body
13. Unconsciousness	14. Piles	15. Colic pain
16. Diseases due to improper digestion and metabolism		

*Charaka* and *Vagbhata* have mentioned adverse effects of *Snehapana* separately but *Susrutha* has not mentioned *vyapaths* in a separate head while explaining *sneha matra*, that *Sneha* should be given in correct dose and *sneha* consumed in more quantity causes loss of life<sup>6</sup>.

**WARNING SIGNS:** A wise physician should identify the probability of occurrence of complications by observing the *atiyoga lakshanas* which are the warning signs of the *sneha vyapaths*.

Table no: 2 showing the list of Atiyoga signs according to Brihatrayee

Charaka <sup>7</sup>	Susrutha <sup>8</sup>	Vagbhata <sup>9</sup>
Paleness	Aversion to food	Appearance of yellowish white color secretions from the nose, mouth and rectum
Heaviness	Excessive salivation	
Stiffness	Burning sensation in the anus	
Stool indicative of indigestion	Dysentery	
Drowsiness	More elimination of faeces	
Anorexia		
Nausea		

**CAUSES:** The causes of the complications are of two types. They are *Rogi krutha* from the patient's end and *Vaidykrutha* from the physician's end.

**Vaidykrutha:** Overlooking the following general contraindications of *Snehapana* like *atimandagni*, *teekshnagni*, *sthula*, *durbala*, *urustambha*, *stiffness of thighs*, *atisara*, *amaroga*, *galaroga*, *gararoga*, *murcha*, *chardi*, *aruchi*, *shleshmaroga*, *trishna*, *madyapeedita*, *apaprasuta*, people who are to be administered nasal medication, enema and purgative therapies<sup>10</sup> etc.

Administration of *snehana* at inappropriate time, inappropriate dose or giving with inappropriate diet regimen.<sup>11, 12</sup>

According to *Charaka*<sup>13</sup> and *Susrutha*<sup>14</sup> administering *sneha* in day time during summer or to patients suffering from diseases of *vata pitta* causes *trishna*, *murcha*, *unmada* or *kamala* and administering *sneha* in evening time during winter or to patients suffering from diseases of *kapha* causes *anaha*, *aruchi*, *shoola* and *pandu*.

According to *Susrutha*, in certain conditions like poison, trauma, eruptions, oedema, anaemia, erysipelas, skin diseases and diabetes, *Snehapana* should be of minimal dose.<sup>15</sup>

According to *Charaka*<sup>16</sup> and *Vagbhata*<sup>17</sup>, in case of *kushta*, *prameha* and *sopha*, *sadyosneha* should not be given with *Guda*, *anupa mamsa*, *ksheera*, *tila*, *masha*, *sura*, *dadhi*. Instead to be given with *triphala*, *pippali*, *pathya* and *guggulu*.

In a nut shell, the *vaidykrutha* causes of the complications are

- Improper assessment of *koshta*
- Improper identification of *prakrithi* of patient
- Improper identification of *dosha*
- Improper assessment of *rogi* and *roga bala*
- Wrong fixation of dose
- Improper assessment of *sneha kala* i.e *ritu*, *annakala* etc.
- Inappropriate *anupana*

**Rogikrutha:** During oleation therapy, one should use hot water, abstinence from sexual indulgence, should not sleep during day or suppress natural urges, should avoid physical exercise, loud speech, anger, anxiety, cold, sun, should lie down or sit in a place well protected from the wind.<sup>18</sup>

**TYPES OF VYAPATHS:** They are divided into two categories depending upon the intensity of intervention to manage them. They are

- Which are expressed immediately
- Which are expressed later

Table no: 3 showing the types of complications

Complications		
Expressed immediately		Expressed later
<i>Tandra</i> ( drowsiness)	<i>Jwara</i> (fever)	<i>Kushta</i> (skin diseases)
<i>Trishna</i> ( thirst)	<i>Aruchi</i> (anorexia)	<i>Kandu</i> ( pruritus)
<i>Sanjna nasa</i> (delirium)	<i>Shoola</i> (pain)	<i>Pandu</i> (anaemia)
<i>Ajirna</i> and <i>Ama</i>	<i>Sthaimithya</i>	<i>Sotha</i> (oedema)

(indigestion)	(rigidity)	
<i>Utklesha</i> (nausea)		<i>Udara roga, Grahani</i> (diseases of abdomen)

If *Sneha* is administered in *ajirna* and in *udirna pitta grahani, trishna* is caused<sup>19</sup>. Also if *sneha* is administered to persons having aggravation of *vata* and *pitta* during hot seasons, it leads to *trishna*. Due to excessive amount of *sneha* or improper food regimen after *snehana*, *ajirna* is caused. *Acharya Charaka* said that *Accha peya* should not be given in *pitta* dominant diseases when associated with *ama* as it causes *sajna nasa* and also death.<sup>20</sup> Administering *sneha* in day time during summer or to patients suffering from diseases of *vata pitta* causes *trishna, murcha, unmada* or *kamala* and administering *sneha* in evening time during winter or to patients suffering from diseases of *kapha* causes *anaha, aruchi, shoola* and *pandu*.<sup>21</sup> When *sneha* is given in *ama* and *srotorodha* conditions, due to absence of *vatanulomana*, it causes *sthambha, vak nigraha, sthaimithya*.

**TREATMENT:** The treatment would be Emesis, Fomentation or Fasting. Purgation may also be administered with due regard

to the strength of the disease depending on individual cases. Complications arising out of inappropriate oleation may also be neutralized by the intake of *Takrarishta, Ruksha ahara, Mutra* and *Triphala*.<sup>22</sup>

*Vagbhata* had also told the treatment on similar lines.<sup>23</sup>

Not all the treatments mentioned above should be incorporated to all the complications but have to be used selectively as per the need of the condition. For example, *Trishna* has two types of treatments depending upon the cause. If *Trishna* is caused by taking *Sneha* in day time during summer such as *udirna pitta* or *Teekshnagni*, then the patient should be given *ushnodaka* and if it does not subside, *vamana* with *ushnodaka*, application of *sheetala dravyas* on head or *sheetala jala avagaha* should be done.<sup>24</sup> The patient should be given recourse to cold water.<sup>25</sup> If *Trishna* is caused due to *ajirna*, then he should be treated in the order of *Vamanam, sheetala jala panam, ruksha bhojanam* and again *vamanam*.<sup>26</sup>

**Table no: 4 showing the therapeutic principles and mode of therapy for complications**

Expressed symptoms	Theraupetic principles	Mode of Therapy
<i>Tandra, Utklesha, Murcha, Trishna, Aruchi, Kushta, Sopha, Arshas, Staimitya, Kandu, Shula, Vakyanigraha, Jwara</i>	<i>Ulleghanam (Vamanam)</i> <sup>27</sup> Inducing vomiting	With salt water
<i>Sthambha</i> and <i>sthaimithyam</i> <sup>28</sup>	<i>Swedam</i> (Hot fomentation)	<i>Nadi sweda</i>
<i>Jwara, Aruchi, Staimitya, Shula, Ama pradosha vikara.</i>	<i>Kala pratikshanam</i> (Wait till symptoms subside)	Wait for 1 or 2 hours
<i>Kushta, Pandu, Jatara dosha, Ama pradosha vikaras</i>	<i>Sramsanam</i> (Treating with laxative)	<i>Trivruth churna</i> 4gms
<i>Shopha, udara, arsha, grahani, mutradosha, aruchi, pleeha, gulma, ghritavyapat, and pandu.</i> <sup>29,30</sup>	<i>Takram</i> (Buttermilk supplementation)	<i>Takrarishta</i> <sup>31</sup>

<i>Gaurava, sthaimitya, srotorodha. Mahadoshas and diseases manifested in marmas of the body.</i> <sup>32</sup>	<i>Rookshanam</i>	<i>Katu , tiktha, kashaya substances,sexual indulgence, khali, pinyaka, takra, madhu.</i> <sup>33</sup>
<i>Triphala is given in kushta, meha, jwara, agnimandya.</i> <sup>34</sup>	<i>Triphala</i>	<i>Triphala churna</i>

## PREVENTION OF

**COMPLICATIONS:** In order to prevent complications or the patient from becoming *sneha satmya*, measures like *Rukshana, Deepana, Pachana* drugs should be given before going to *snehapana* and to attain proper oleation effects. But these measures should be mandatorily followed in *snigdha* patients and who have excessive *kaphotklesha*.

Vagbhata has suggested that persons who are muscular, fatty, having *Kapha* imbalance, erratic type of digestive activity, who are accustomed to fats and who need oleation therapy should be made to become dry first – by use of foods, drugs etc. and then administered oleation therapy followed with purification therapies.<sup>35</sup>

**DISCUSSION:** *Snehapana* is one of the essential preparatory procedure for *Sodhana*. The entire outcome of the *Sodhana* procedure depends on the *Snehakarma*. So we should execute it with utmost care. As we administer some excess amount of medicated or plain ghee or oil to the patient in stipulated number of days, there could be possibility of some complications. Though the *samhithas* enlisted number of adverse effects for *Snehapana*, practically we witness few of them. The important complications which are practically observed and reported by many physicians are indigestion, drowsiness, pain abdomen, fever. Simple therapies which could mitigate these complications include *ushnodaka pana, takra pana* and *sweda karma*.

But it is essential for an ayurvedic physician to have a complete and thorough knowledge of adverse effects which may

occur during *Snehapana*. He should thoroughly understand the properties of *sneha dravya* and their role in bringing the *doshas* from *sakha* to *koshta* in order to prevent the complications. Only then he will be able to give the *sneha* in correct dose and time according to the disease. The properties of *sneha dravya* are *snigdha, drava, mridu, sukshma, sara, picchila* and *guru* which are exactly the opposite qualities of *vata* and that aggravate *kapha*. So in case of *amaja* and *kapha rogas*, care should be taken in administering *sneha* as, the *snigdha, guru, picchila gunas* may aggravate the condition and cause complications. The paper discussed the complications under two heads like *Vaidykrutha* and *Rogikrutha*. Most of the complications would be prevented if proper analysis of patient is done prior to *snehapana* regarding *koshta, agni, prakruthi, dosha, roga bala, rogi bala, matra* and *anupana*.

**CONCLUSION:** *Susrutha* quotes *Snehaphala* as that the person who has undergone *Snehana* will have increased digestive power, well purified abdomen, well nourished tissues, endowed with strength and good colour, strong sense organs, slow ageing and hundred years of life.<sup>36</sup> This is indeed a very tempting quote for every physician to go for *Snehapana* to each and every patient he confronts with but *Susrutha* also warns us that considering the strength of *agni*, a wise physician should administer *sneha* in the *pradhana matra* and *sneha* consumed in more quantity causes doubt of loss of life.<sup>37</sup>

*Vagbhata* also warns us that in case of unknown *koshta*, excessive *snehapana*

may lead to death.<sup>38</sup> Therefore we can conclude by saying that *Snehana* is a double edged knife which when given properly and carefully keeping in view of all the considerations would become a **Surgeon's knife** and on the contrary when done improperly and neglectingly would become a **Butcher's knife**.

*Snehakarma* done with utmost precautions and considerations would really give us that *snigdhatata*, *vishyandata*, *mardavata* and *klinnatha*, the most desiring effects of *Sneha karma*.<sup>39</sup>

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