



PANCHAKARMA THERAPY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF FIBROMYALGIA: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT:

Fibromyalgia is a condition of generalized pain and consequent disability. It has a detrimental effect on the patient's quality of life. The disease is unresponsive towards analgesics and NSAIDs. Treatment with physiotherapy often makes the FM pain worse. No permanent cure is established for the FM. Hence, the main aim of physician should be to improve the functions and give better quality of life rather than pain elimination. In *Ayurvedic* system of medicine we can correlate fibromyalgia with *Mamsagatavata*. The present report deals with a case of FM managed by *Panchakarma* therapy and internal medications. Assessment of patient was done subjectively. Encouraging and astounding results were found in the symptoms of FM.

Keywords: Fibromyalgia, *Mamsagatavata*, *Panchakarma*.

INTRODUCTION:

Fibromyalgia (FM) is characterized by chronic widespread musculoskeletal pain and tenderness associated with neuropsychological symptoms of fatigue, unrefreshing sleep, cognitive dysfunction, anxiety and depression [1]. After osteoarthritis, Fibromyalgia is the second most common 'rheumatic disorder' [2]. Patients with FM have increased prevalence of other syndromes such as chronic fatigue syndrome, facial/jaw pain, regional myofascial pain particularly involving back and neck, chronic headaches, irritable bowel syndrome, interstitial cystitis, and other pelvic pain disorders [3]. The pain in FM is poorly localized, difficult to ignore, severe in intensity and associated with reduced functional capacity. For a diagnosis of FM, pain should have been present most of the day on most days for at least 3 months [4]. Depending upon the Diagnostic criteria used earlier (tender point assessment), its prevalence is about 2% in general population and is far more common in women than in men with a ratio of 9:1. But with newer diagnostic criteria, it has a female: male ratio of 2:1 [5]. Fibromyalgia can begin at any age, right from childhood. The prevalence is similar in different countries, cultures, and ethnic groups [6]. Fibromyalgia can be thought of as a centralized pain state. "Centralized" refers to

central nervous system origins of or amplification of pain. The aetiology and pathogenesis of fibromyalgia are still not fully understood. Several factors such as dysfunction of the central and autonomic nervous systems, neurotransmitters, hormones, immune system, external stressors, psychiatric aspects, and others seem to be involved [7].

There are no references of Fibromyalgia in Ayurveda, but on the basis of signs and symptoms we can co relate Fibromyalgia with *Mamsagatavata*.

In modern system of medicine sedating antidepressants such as amitriptyline, analgesics and antidepressants/anxiolytic drugs such as duloxetine or milnacipran are the first choice. However, these also have side effects when continued for a long time.

On the basis of symptoms *Snehana* and *Swedana* are thought to be efficient in relieving the pain and psychological symptoms.

CASE REPORT:

A female patient, aged 18 years, registration no. 39619, resident of Jodhpur (Rajasthan), college student by profession visited the OPD of Panchakarma for ayurvedic treatment.

Patient weighed 45 kg came with the complains of generalized weakness, chronic

pain (especially in back and neck), fatigue, difficulty performing daily activities, pain in multiple joints (more in knee and shoulder joint) unable to sit in class and disturbed sleep cycle. Because of Chronic pain she felt extremely hopeless and depressed as she was not able to attend her classes regularly. She had these symptoms from last 1 and ½ years which become severe over time. Patient had

been on NSAID's for relief in pain. But condition got worsened over time. Patient's blood pressure, pulse rate and respiratory rate were found to be in normal limits. She was already a diagnosed case of Fibromyalgia. On further assessment based on "American rheumatological association criteria", "Fibromyalgia impact questionnaire" she was confirmed as the case of FM.

Table 1: Panchakarma Procedure timeline –

Duration	Details of Procedure
14Days (26 Nov 2022 – 9 Dec 2022)	<p><i>Sarvanga Abhyanga</i> and <i>Patra Pinda Swedana Sarvanga</i> simultaneously with a gap of half hour were done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sarvanga Abhyanga</i> with 100 ml/day <i>Mahamasha taila</i>, 100ml/day <i>Ksheerabala taila</i> and 50ml/day <i>Lakshadi taila</i>. • <i>Patra Pinda Swedana Sarvanga</i> with 50 ml/day <i>Mahamasha taila</i> and 50 ml/day <i>Ksheerabala taila</i>

Table 2: Internal medicines details

Duration	Internal Medicine Administered	Dose
14 Days (26 November 2022 – 9 December 2022)	<p>Cap. Ksheerbala101</p> <p>Ashwagandha churna</p> <p>Chopchini powder</p> <p>Eranda bhrishta Haritaki</p>	<p>2 capsule twice a day with lukewarm milk before food.</p> <p>3 grams</p> <p>2 grams, Twice a day with lukewarm water before food.</p> <p>5 grams at night with lukewarm water.</p>

Follow up

Before starting the procedure Patient was asked to fill Fibromyalgia impact questionnaire (FIQR) [8]. Follow up was done on 14th day and 30th day. Initially before starting the procedure, FIQR score was 64. After *Panchakarma* procedures were administered for 14 days, FIQR score Drop down to 20. The Score remain constant even on 30th day of follow up. This shows significant improvement in the symptoms of patient.

Basically improvement was observed in her quality of life. Her sleep quality was improved, she was now able to attend her classes regularly without any fatigue, pain in back and neck was reduced to minimal and she performed her daily activities without any discomfort.

Result – There was marked improvement in her symptoms.

Table 3 Shows FIQR Score before and after treatment.

Fibromyalgia impact questionnaire (FIQR)		
Before Treatment	64	
After Treatment	14 th day	20

	30 th day	20
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DISCUSSION

The symptom of Fibromyalgia corelates with *Mamsagatavata* as described in *Ayurvedic* text. Acharya *Charaka* mentions in chapter 28 of *chikitsa sthana* “*Vatavyadhichikitsitam*”-

गुर्वङ्गंतुद्यतेऽत्यर्थं दण्डमुष्टिहतं तथा । सरूक् श्रमितमत्यर्थं मांसमेदोगतेऽनिले ॥ (च.चि. 28/32)

This means if the *Vata* located in muscles get provoked, there occurs heaviness of the body, severe aches as if the body had been beaten with cudgel or fist cuffs, pain and extreme exhaustion [9]. Use of *Snehana*, *Virechana*, *Niruha Basti* and various internal medicines are advised in *Mamsagatvata*[10]. *Sarvanga Abhyanga* means massaging the whole body with medicated oil in seven different positions. It is a type of external oleation therapy. *Abhyanga* helps prevent *Jara*, *Shrama* and *Vata* (जराश्रमवातहा) [11]. *Abhyanga* makes the person *kleshasahatva* i.e tolerant to tension and life stresses. *Abhyanga* prevents *Kapha* and *Vata*. This means *Abhyanga* subsides pain and heaviness from the body. Acharya *Dalhana* has explained in detail that the oil used in *Abhaynga* will hit various *dhatu*s when it is applied for a sufficient amount of time [12].

Hence the medication used in the *Abhyanga* is easily absorbed by the skin. *Acharya Charaka* has identified that *Vayu* dominates in the *sparshanendriya* i.e., tactile sensory organ and this sensory organ is lodged in the skin. Other *indriyas* are dependent on *sparshanendiya* for their *Vishayagrahana*. *Abhyanga* benefits directly from *Sparshanendriya* and thus benefits all the *indriyas*. *Indriyas* are in direct touch with the mind so if *indriyas* remain healthy, mind automatically remains healthy. So *Abhyanga* helps to keep active both body and mind.

Abhyanga influences the mental emotional status. The efficacy can be enhanced by using some specially medicated oil. *Mridusamvahana*, *hasta-padatata* *abhyanga* etc are of great value. A slow rhythmic *samvahana* with light stroke can induce tranquility. *Anulomagati* (movements toward caudal direction) in neck and back is very much beneficial for our nervous system. Hence *Abhyanga* subsides Somatic as well as psychic symptoms of patient.

Patra Pinda Swedana is a type of *Swedana* where the sudation is done by heated bolus bags (*pinda*) containing leaves of medicinal plant. It is a type of *Snigdha Sweda* and is an important treatment modality in *Vata* and *Kapha* Disorders. As *Acharya Charaka* mentions *Swedana* relieves pain, stiffness,

heaviness and coldness from the body [13]. Hence remove the body toxins. *Patra Pinda Swedana* is usually done with *Nirgundi Patra*, *Shigru Patra*, *Eranda Patra*, *Arka Patra* etc. These leaves possess properties such as analgesics, anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant, bone regeneration, muscle relaxant. *Patra Pinda Swedana* is done in 7 positions i.e the positions as mentioned for *Abhyanga*.

Ksheerabala Taila contains *Bala*, *Tila taila* and milk. *Bala* has *Balya* (strengthening), *Brimhana* (nourishing) and *Vatahara* (subsides *Vata*) effect. *Tila taila* has the best *Vatashamaka* property. Hence *Ksheerabala taila* can be used in 80 types of *Vataroga* [14].

Mahamasha taila is a medicated oil comprising of herbs like *Masha* (*Vigna mungo*), *Eranda* (*Ricinus communis*), *Rasna* (*Pluchea lanceolata*), *Dashmoola* etc. in a nourishing base of sesame oil. The oil possess anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, neuroprotective, analgesic properties [15].

Lakshadi taila has ingredients such as *Ashwagandha*, *Rasna*, *Chandana* etc and is indicated in conditions such as *Kshaya*, *Sarvajwara* etc [16].

Role of internal medicines administered –

The *Ksheerabala 101 Capsule* is a unique *Ayurvedic* formulation that uses oil as a base but is in the form of a capsule. Apart from

keeping the central nervous system in order, *Ksheerabala* 101 is also known to be a great supplement to help with joint inflammation. Neuromuscular disorders regularly cause a great deal of discomfort in the joints and muscles, and this *Ayurvedic* compound is highly effective in helping ease the pains that accompany these conditions.

Ashwagandha is a *Rasayana* that is the best nervine tonic in *Ayurveda*. It possesses properties such as anti-stress, anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory etc. It is extremely useful in insomnia, lumbar pain and nervous disorders.

Chopchini or the China Root acts as *Deepana*, *Anulomana*, *Vatavyadhihara*, *Vedanahara*, *Shoolahara* etc. It is anti-inflammatory and act as a nervine tonic^[17].

Eranda Bhrishta Haritaki was given for *Koshtha shuddhi* (acts as laxative). In this *Eranda taila* is processed with *Haritaki churna* and both are appreciated as good laxatives. *Haritaki* is a *Vatanulomaka* and *Eranda taila* is best for *Virechana* among *sthavara taila*^[18].

CONCLUSION

Panchakarma treatment modality *Abhyanga* and *Patra Pinda Swedana* are highly effective in subsiding the symptoms of Fibromyalgia. *Abhyanga* with *Ksheerbala*, *Mahamasha* and *Lakshadi taila* relieves not only pain, fatigue

and weakness but also improved the sleep quality of patient, thus reducing the hopelessness and depression that she had. Hence it can be confer that *Abhyanga* have both psychic and somatic effects. *Patra Pinda Swedana* on the other hand acts as icing on the cake by alleviating the symptoms further due to its *Vata kaphahar actions*. The approach used for treatment in this case signifies fruitfulness of *Panchakarma* therapy.

Declaration of Patient consent –

Authors certify that they have taken patient's consent form before initiating the procedure and patient do not have any issues regarding reporting of the case along with clinical information mentioned in the journal. The patient understand that her name and other personal information will not be published and efforts shall be made to conceal her identity but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

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