

Trayodashang Guggulu and Agnikarma: Holistic Pain Relief Unveiled

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Abstract: Background: Chronic pain problems, particularly musculoskeletal and neurological pain, are major health issues worldwide. Conventional pharmacological treatments, while successful, are frequently associated with side effects and limits. Ayurveda, the ancient Indian medical system, provides unique and holistic pain management treatments such as Trayodashang Guggulu and Agnikarma. Trayodashang Guggulu is a well-known polyherbal composition that predominantly treats vata disorders such as sciatica, arthritis, and joint pain. Agnikarma, a para-surgical therapy that involves the application of heat to damaged tissues, is known for its powerful analgesic and anti-inflammatory effects. Together, these Ayurvedic therapies offer promising options for controlling chronic pain in a safe and effective manner.

Objectives: This review explores the role of Trayodashang Guggulu and Agnikarma in pain management, their therapeutic efficacy, clinical relevance in musculoskeletal and neurological pain, and their potential benefits as holistic alternatives to traditional treatments. **Methods:** The review discusses Ayurvedic literature, clinical investigations, and peer-reviewed journals, focusing on Trayodashang guggulu's chemical and medicinal properties, vata-related illnesses, and its effectiveness in sciatica, arthritis, and joint pain, and Agnikarma's techniques, physiological effects, and analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties. **Discussion:** Trayodashang Guggulu and Agnikarma are Ayurvedic pain management techniques that effectively balance vata dosha, reduce inflammation, and relieve pain. These treatments are effective for illnesses like sciatica and arthritis, with fewer side effects than traditional medicines. Agnikarma, a para-surgical procedure, provides instant treatment by addressing afflicted tissues directly, improving blood circulation, reducing stiffness, and lowering inflammation. These non-invasive, outpatient treatments offer a holistic alternative to pharmaceutical therapies, requiring further research for validation and worldwide adoption.

Keywords: Trayodashang Guggulu, Agnikarma, Pain Management, Ayurveda, Traditional Medicine, Holistic Healing.

Introduction: Pain, as a universal experience, has been described as a "dukhaprada" (pain-giving) condition in Ayurveda. Chronic pain conditions like musculoskeletal disorders, lower back pain, sciatica, and arthritis significantly impact the quality of life. While modern pain management strategies depend heavily on analgesics, their long-term use leads to dependency and side effects.

In modern science also pain starts from back and radiates up to posterior aspect of thigh, calf muscle, lateral aspect of foot with distribution of sciatica nerve; Charaka Samhita specifically mentions pain radiates through the posterior aspect of Uru, Janu, Jangha and Pad (lower limb).

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Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, provides effective and natural solutions for pain management. Therapies like *Trayodashang Guggulu* (a polyherbal formulation) and *Agnikarma* (therapeutic cauterization) are well-documented in Ayurvedic texts for their ability to alleviate pain. This review explores their efficacy through traditional wisdom, scientific evidence, and practical application.

Pain destroys vitality and enthusiasm; therefore, effective therapies must be employed to bring relief.

Pain is a multifaceted experience that affects physical, emotional, and mental well-being. In recent years, musculoskeletal and neurological disorders such as arthritis, sciatica, lower back pain, and joint stiffness have become increasingly prevalent. Conventional treatments for pain often involve NSAIDs, corticosteroids, and opioids, which may cause side effects like gastrointestinal disturbances, dependency, and systemic toxicity. As a result, there is a growing interest in alternative therapies such as Ayurveda, which focuses on restoring balance and eliminating the root causes of pain.

In Ayurveda, *Vata dosha* is primarily responsible for pain. *Trayodashang Guggulu*, an herbal formulation, and *Agnikarma*, a localized therapeutic heat procedure, have been extensively described in classical Ayurvedic texts as effective pain relievers. This paper reviews these two therapies as holistic pain management approaches and their potential applications in modern clinical practice.

Trayodashang Guggulu: Composition and Properties

In *Bhavprakash Samhita Trayodashang Guggulu* has been mentioned in the management of *Gridhrasi*. Many drugs are mentioned in our classic for *Gridhrasi* among them *Trayodashang Guggulu* is having more importance because as it has the properties of *Vata* and *Kapha shamana* and *Anulomana* property.

Bhaishajya Ratnavali Shloka

त्रयोदशाङ्गगुग्गुलुं वातव्याधिहरं परम्।

स्नायुशूलं गतसन्धिशूलं चापि प्रशाम्यति॥

"Trayodashang Guggulu is highly effective in alleviating Vata disorders. It relieves nerve pain and joint pain while promoting mobility."

2.1 Composition of Trayodashang Guggulu

Trayodashang Guggulu is a classical Ayurvedic formulation composed of the following ingredients:

- Guggulu (*Commiphora mukul*) 13 parts
- Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) 1 part
- Aabha (*Babbul*) (*Acacia arabica*) 1 part
- Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) 1 part
- Hapusha (*Juniperus communis*) 1 part
- Shatavari (*Asparagus recemosus*) 1 part
- Vriddhadaru (*Argyria speciosa*) 1 part

- Rasna (*Pluchea lanceolata*) 1 part
- Karchur (*Curcuma zedoaria*) 1 part
- Shatapushpa (*Anethum sowa*) 1 part
- Yavani (*Trachyspermum ammi*) 1 part
- Shunthi (*Zingiber officinale*) 1 part
- Gokshur (*Tribulus Terrestris*) 1 part
- Ghee (Clarified butter) ½ part

2.2 Pharmacological Properties:

- **Analgesic and Anti-inflammatory:** Ingredients like *Guggulu* and *Rasna* exhibit potent anti-inflammatory properties, which alleviate joint and nerve pain.
- **Neuroprotective:** Herbs like *Ashwagandha* and *Guduchi* strengthen the nervous system and reduce neuropathic pain.
- **Antioxidant:** *Amalaki*, *Haritaki*, and *Bibhitaki* provide antioxidant benefits, neutralizing free radicals responsible for oxidative stress in tissues.
- **Anti-arthritic:** *Guggulu's vatahara* properties specifically address arthritis and joint stiffness.

2.3 Mechanism of Action: The ingredients in *Trayodashang Guggulu* act synergistically to balance *Vata dosha*, reduce inflammation, improve circulation, and promote tissue regeneration. By targeting the root cause of pain (imbalanced *Vata*), it provides long-term relief without causing significant side effects.

Previously mentioned research papers, publications, and books examined the characteristics of particular medications. *Guggulu* has properties like *Snigdha*, *Picchila* (stickiness), *Ushna Virya* (hot in potency), *Vatanashaka* and *Vedanasthapaka* (analgesic action). *Guggulu* contains essential oil mainly consisting of myrecene, dimyrecene, polymyrecene, z-guggulusterone, E-guggulusterone. These isolates have been found useful in curing diseases like rheumatism, arthritis, inflammation. The constituents like *Shatavari*, *Ashwagandha* and *Guduchi* are known as rejuvenators and provides strength to *Dhatus*. *Shunthi* and *Ajamoda* improve *Jatharagni* whereas *Babul* especially acts on *Asthidhatwangi*. protective effect against collagen induced Arthritis. It also acts as an anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant agent in decreasing the arthritic effect in collagen induced arthritis. *Hapusha* leaf oil has analgesic, anti-inflammatory, detoxifying, anti-rheumatic, neurotonic properties. *Guduchi* acts as general tonic, anti-spasmodic, anti-inflammatory. *Rasna* plant extract has anti-inflammatory properties due to the presence of prostaglandin production. *Goghrit's Yogvahi* characteristic promotes medication absorption and penetration. Thus, *Trayodashang Guggulu* has a direct impact on the etiology of *Gridhrasi*.

2.4 Indications:

- Sciatica (*Gridhrasi*)
- Osteoarthritis (*Sandhigata Vata*)
- Rheumatoid arthritis (*Amavata*)

- Neurological pain and joint stiffness
- Lower back pain and spondylosis

Agnikarma: Concept and Practice

3.1 Introduction to Agnikarma

"Vataat cha shoolam janayati"

(Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 20/11)

"Pain arises due to the aggravation of Vata Dosha."

"Tikto Ushno Laghu Krimighno Medhya Vata Kapha Pranuti."

(Bhavaprakasha Nighantu 18/45)

"Guggulu is bitter, hot, light, anti-inflammatory, and pacifies Vata and Kapha Dosha."

Na hi agnikrutam dukkham punarbhavati"

(Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana 12/10)

"The pain treated with Agnikarma does not return."

Sushruta Samhita:

*न हि वातादृते शूलं कदाचित् सम्भवत्यतः।
अग्निकर्मण तं शूलं जघ्नाति सविशेषतः॥*

"Pain does not arise without Vata involvement. Agnikarma effectively alleviates such pain with precision."

2.2 Types of Agnikarma

1. *Teekshna Agnikarma* (Intensive heat): For severe pain
2. *Mridu Agnikarma* (Mild heat): For delicate areas like joints
3. *Madhyam Agnikarma* (Moderate heat): For chronic musculoskeletal pain

Agnikarma is an ancient para-surgical procedure described in Ayurveda for pain management. The term *Agnikarma* refers to therapeutic cauterization, where heat is applied to specific points of the body to alleviate pain.

3.2 Mechanism of Action:

- *Agnikarma* works on the principles of *Vata-Shamana* (balancing Vata) and *Kapha-Shamana* (balancing Kapha).
- The localized application of heat stimulates blood circulation, relaxes muscles, and relieves pain by reducing inflammation.
- The heat destroys *Ama* (toxins) accumulated in tissues, thereby restoring physiological balance.

3.3 Procedure of Agnikarma:

- A metallic instrument such as a *Shalaka* (rod) is heated and applied to the affected site.
- *Agnikarma* points are selected based on *Marma* (vital points) and the type of pain.
- Common techniques include *Bindu* (dot-shaped burns), *Valaya* (circular burns), and *Pratisarana* (scraping method).

3.4 Clinical Applications of Agnikarma:

- **Sciatica and lower back pain:** Immediate relief from nerve compression pain.
- **Arthritis:** Reduces swelling and stiffness in joints.
- **Tendonitis and frozen shoulder:** Enhances mobility and reduces inflammation.
- **Chronic muscular pain:** Relaxation of muscles and ligaments.

3.5 Advantages of Agnikarma:

- Quick and long-lasting pain relief
- No adverse systemic effects
- Minimal invasiveness
- Safe, cost-effective, and easy to perform

Clinical Evidence:

Several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of *Trayodashang Guggulu* and *Agnikarma* in pain management.

- **Trayodashang Guggulu:** In a clinical trial involving patients with sciatica, 70% experienced significant pain reduction after 8 weeks of treatment. Similar improvements were reported in arthritis patients using this formulation.
- **Agnikarma:** In a randomized study on lower back pain, 80% of patients reported immediate and sustained relief after undergoing *Agnikarma*. In osteoarthritis cases, *Agnikarma* improved joint function and reduced stiffness effectively.

Comparative Analysis:

Parameter	Trayodashang Guggulu	Agnikarma
Mode of Action	Balances <i>Vata dosha</i>	Localized heat application
Indications	Chronic joint and nerve pain	Acute and chronic pain
Duration of Relief	Gradual and long-term	Immediate and sustained
Side Effects	Minimal	Minimal (localized burns)
Ease of Administration	Oral formulation	Requires expertise

Discussion: Ayurvedic therapies like *Trayodashang Guggulu* and *Agnikarma* offer effective and holistic alternatives to modern pharmacological approaches. While *Trayodashang Guggulu* targets the systemic causes of pain by balancing *Vata dosha*, *Agnikarma* provides localized pain relief through heat therapy. Both approaches address not only the symptoms but also the root causes of pain, ensuring sustainable relief.

Conclusion: Chronic pain disorders, particularly musculoskeletal and neurological pain, are major health concerns globally. Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, offers unique treatment modalities such as *Trayodashang Guggulu* and *Agnikarma* for pain management. *Trayodashang Guggulu* is a polyherbal formulation widely used to treat vata disorders, including sciatica, arthritis, and joint pain. On the other hand, *Agnikarma*, a para-surgical procedure involving the application of heat on affected tissues, is known for its analgesic and anti-inflammatory effects. This review explores the role of *Trayodashang Guggulu* and

Agnikarma in pain management, their mechanisms of action, clinical applications, and the potential benefits as safe and holistic alternatives to conventional pharmacological treatments.

Trayodashang Guggulu and *Agnikarma* represent significant contributions of Ayurveda in pain management. Their ability to address musculoskeletal and neurological pain, coupled with minimal side effects, makes them valuable alternatives to conventional treatments. Integrating these Ayurvedic therapies with modern healthcare practices can enhance patient outcomes, reduce dependency on pharmaceuticals, and promote holistic healing. Future research, including large-scale clinical trials, will further validate their efficacy and potential global applicability.

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