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Review Article

CONCEPT OF *NABHI BASTI* IN AYURVEDA - A COMPILATION STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Nabhi (umbilicus) is a vital region in the body, mentioned among *Marma* (vital region) as *Nabhi Marma.* Its importance is quoted in ancient texts as its injury is considered to be *Sadhyopranahara* (fatal). *Nabhi Basti* is a unique type of external therapy where *Snehadravya* (fat) is made to retain in the *Nabhi* for a specific duration of time. *Nabhi Basti* synonymously mentioned as *Nabhi Poorana* in ancient literatures like, *Charaka, Bhavaprakasha.* In classical texts of Ayurveda there is no direct references of *Nabhi Basti* but it is mentioned among the treatment modalities in contexts like *Atisara chikitsa* and *Udarachikitsa*. There is also use of *Nabhi Poorana* in folklore practices in abdominal colics and bloating. Procedure of *Nabhi Basti* is similar as that of *Katibasti*, *Greevabasti* and *Karnapoorana*. *Nabhi basti* is helpful in diseases such as *Vataja grahani*, *Atisara*, Umbilical hernia. Benefits of *Nabhi basti* are *Snehana, Mrudu Swedana* and *Vatashamana* and also strengthens the umbilical region. There is only few available researches and review articles on *Nabhi Basti* where the importance of *Nabhi* as an anatomical structure, its importance in surgery and also the use of *Nabhi Basti* in *Vataja grahani* was explained. As there is no detailed explanation regarding *Nabhi Basti*, since *Nabhi* holds such importance in the body as *Marma*, also *Nabhi purana/Nabhi basti* plays an important treatment in many diseases which was less reviewed or given less importance, hence an attempt has been made in the article to compile and review the scattered references on *Nabhi Basti.*

INTRODUCTION

Nabhi is a vital region in the body, mentioned among *Marma* as *Nabhi marma*[1]. It is the seat of *Prana*. *Nabhi* is the *Sthana* of *Pitta*[2], specifically *Pachaka pitta* and prime location of *Samana Vayu* where life force energy is situated. The *Nabhi* region is connected to third Chakra known as *Manipura chakra* which is located near the spine, parallel to navel. This energy centre is linked to physical and emotional well-being, governing digestion, metabolism and a sense of personal power, purpose and self-esteem. So, *Nabhi* is not only physically an important region but also emotionally connected. Fetal development in the womb, *Nabhi* and umbilical cord (*Nabhi Nadi*) serve as the critical link for nutrition and the flow of mother s *Ahara Rasa* to foetus. *Acharya Sushruta* describes *Nabhi* as the origin point of *Siras* and *Dhamanis*.

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Its importance is quoted in ancient texts as its injury considered to be *Sadhyopranahara* (fatal). *Nabhi basti* is a unique type of external therapy where *Snehadravya* (any fat) is made to retain in the *Nabhi* for a specific duration of time. *Nabhi basti* synonymously mentioned as *Nabhi Poorana* in ancient literatures like *Charaka* and *Bhavaprakasha*. In classical texts of Ayurveda there is no direct references but it is mentioned among treatment modalities in contexts like *Atisara chikits* and *Udarachikitsa*. We also get reference of *Nabhipoorana* in folklore practices in abdominal colic and bloating. Procedure of *Nabhi basti* is similar as that of *Katibasti, Greevabasti* and *Karnapoorana.* Benefits of *Nabhi Basti* are *Snehana, Mrudu Swedana* and *Vatashamana*. As there is no detailed explanation regarding *Nabhi Basti* and since *Nabhi* holds such importance in the body as *Marma* also *Nabhi Purana/Nabhi Basti* plays an important treatment in many diseases which was less reviewed or given less importance, hence an attempt has been made in the article to compile and review the scattered references on *Nabhi basti*.

Anatomical Position of *Nabhi*

The place of *Nabhi* is *Udara* (abdomen) located between *Amashaya* and *Pakwashaya.*[3,15]

Nabhi is *Swapanithala* or *Chaturangula* in *Pramana.*[4]

Review of Literature

1. *Nabhi* as *Marma* is mentioned in *Charaka Samhita Shareerasthana* 7/9 [7]
   Nabhi is mentioned as one among the *Dasha pranayatana* and quoted as *Marma* also where the *Prana* resides. *Nabhi* also mentioned under 15 *Koshtangas* in the next verse.
2. *Nabhi* is the *Sthana* of *Udanavata* and *Apanavata* mentioned in *Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana* 28/7, 10. [8]
3. *Nabhi* is the main *Sthana* of *Pitta* mentioned in *Ashtanga Hrudaya Sutrasthana* 12/2.[9]
4. *Nabhi* is mentioned as the main *Sthana* from where the prognosis of *Udararoga* starts is mentioned in *Charaka Udarachikitsadhyaya* 13/48.[10]
5. In *Bhavaprakasha* there is clear explanation of *Nabhi basti* in *Atisara chikitsa*[6]. It is explained as, *Alvala* means a circular ring is to be constructed over the *Nabhi* region. This is the important explanation of *Nabhi basti* that is available in classics.
6. In *Kashyapa Samhita Shareerasthana*, *Nabhi* is mentioned as *Sukshma srotas*[11].

***Nabhi purana*/*Nabhi abhyanga* in folklore practices**

- *Nabhi purana* with *Eranda taila* is an age-old folklore practice which is practiced when the person is having increased *Pitta* in the body.
- Local *Swedana* is given in *Nabhi* region using warm beetel leaf after *purana* which helps in relieving increased *Pitta* and also aids in proper digestion and balances *Samana* and *Udana vata*.
- There is also a folklore practice of wearing ornament worn in the area of *Nabhi* which stimulates the functions of *Nabhi Marma.*

Derivation

1. ***Nabhi:*** The word *Nabhi* derived from Sanskrit word where, *Nah* means to bind. The word *Nabh* means to burst as under or into a hole and word Nabhi also means central point.
2. ***Basti*:** The word *Basti* is derived from '*Vasathi*' which means '*to stay*' or '*To dwell'.*

Basti literally means *'to stay*' or '*to reside*' for sometime. Therefore, in some local applications where oil is kept on external parts of the body for prescribed time is named as *Basti* by adding adjective of the name of that region[5].

Vagbhata has described *Shirobasti* under *Murdhataila*, where oil is kept on head by making an artificial pit for prescribed time. Local *Basti* procedures are described from this reference.

Nabhi Basti

Nabhi Basti is a procedure in which, retaining of warm medicated oil within a specially formed frame in the Nabhi region is done. It performs the combined action of *Snehana* and *Swedana*. In *Bhavapraksha, Bhavamishra* has explained as the *Pishti* should be made into circular ring constructed around Nabhi to hold the medicine which is similar to the construction of *Nabhi basti*[6].

Indications

Atisara (as told in *Bhavaprakasha*)[6], Pain abdomen without any inflammation, umbilical hernia, *Ajeerna*, *Vata* and *Vit sangha.*

Contraindications

Acute inflammatory conditions, wound in *Nabhi* region.

Purvakarma

Materials Needed

Black gram flour -250gms

1. Medicated oil-*Mahanarayana taila /Mahamasha taila /Ksheerabala taila/Dhanvantara taila* based on the condition, Quantity-200ml
   Vessel-2
   Spoon-1
2. Preparation of *Basti*-Add sufficient quantity of water and prepare dough from black gram flour (*Masha churna*). Make a round pit of about 15-20cm, thickness of 3cm, height of 5 cm.
3. Preparation of patient- Patient should lie in supine position exposing naval region, draping should be done to the remaining parts of the body. Prepared dough is fixed on the area to be treated in a circular shape; steel or plastic rings can also be used. Ensure proper sealing to avoid leaking of oil.

Pradhanakarma

The prescribed medicated oil should be warmed by keeping the vessel on hot water bath. After ensuring the tolerable temperature, oil should be poured inside along the sides of the dough. The temperature of the oil, should be maintained at 32-43°C by replacing a small quantity after reheating on hot water bath.

Precautions

- Uniform temperature is maintained throughout the procedure.
- Be cautious about the temperature of the oil to avoid accidental burns especially in *Nabhi Basti* lukewarm temperature is optimum as it is a *Marma* region.
- Ensure proper sealing to avoid leaking of oil.

  Duration- 30minutes, usually done for a period of 7-14 days.

Paschat karma

After removing the dough, the part is massaged with circular, linear strokes. The part is given fomentation either with *Nadi Sweda* or *Patasweda* (any *Mrudu Sweda* can be given).

Complication and Management

Accidental burns are the common complication. If there are burns stop the procedure and do *Agnidagda chikitsa* like application of aloe vera gel or *Shatadoutha Gritha* etc.

Mode of Action[5]

- *Bahya shamana chikitsa*
- *Bahya Snehana* and *Swedana*
- Different actions as per selection of oil
- Local rise in temperature which facilitates quick absorption and action of the medicines in the oil.

Local increase in circulation due to dilatation of capillaries at terminal region leads to contraction of internal vessels, thereby blood is drawn towards periphery finally promoting phagocytosis and also combating inflammatory process. Drainage of excessive fluid through lymphatics also takes place[5].

***Nabhi* and *Nabhi Basti* in Recent Researches**

1. *Nabhibasti*, its efficacy using *Bilwataila* in the management of *Vataja Grahani* vis irritable bowel syndrome.[12]
2. The anatomical land mark of *Nabhi* and its importance has been collected from various references from classics and also the modern point of view also been told.[13]
3. *Nabhi* plays an important role in surgery and also plays as an important anatomical landmark. It is also named as *Shalya Vishyarda.[14]*

DISCUSSION

Nabhi has an important role since birth. Acharyas has given prime importance to *Nabhi* and mentioned it has *Marma* and *Koshtanga.* But the treatment described for the ailments of *Nabhi* is very less. Local *Bastis* in Ayurveda has given instant and good results in many conditions even though they are the modified version of local therapies in panchakarma. So, in this article there is an attempt to combine all the available references of *Nabh*i and *Nabhi basti*. Though directly *Nabhi basti* was not described by our Acharyas, there is similar explanations related to *Nabhi basti* which plays an important role in different diseases of *Amashaya, Pakwashaya*, hernia. So, on the basis of these references, we can practice *Nabhi basti* and can modify as *Nabhi Pichu*, *Nabhi Poorana,* according to different conditions. *Nabhi basti* procedure can be followed as *Katibasti* or *Urobasti*.

CONCLUSION

By considering the *Nabhi* as *Marma* and its importance from the birth, it plays a vital role in many functions of the *Amashaya, Pakwashaya*, so the treatment for *Nabhi* involved diseases also has prime importance. One such local treatment used is *Nabhi basti/Nabhi poorana* which is less practiced. So, by looking to the previous references, we can know the benefits of the treatment in different ailments of *Nabhi* and to utilise the procedure of *Nabhibasti* for both physical and mental wellbeing of the patients.

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