

Abhyanga Therapy For Growth And Development Of Infants

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‘Abhyanga’ word is derived from Abhi + anj (ghanchkrutwa) i.e. Taila mardana (oil massage) (Ref. Sabdakalpadruma).

Abhyanga particularly tailabhyanga has been practiced since the ancient period for maintenance of the health status and as a therapy for the morbid individuals. However its origin seems to be from ancient Indian medical science ‘Ayurveda’. A large number of traditional practices are innocuous but are widely practiced. Abhyanga is one among them. Tailabhyanga started just after cutting of umbilical cord i.e. from the starting of life. The hazards of abhyanga yet under ignorance, but in recent era research works has been conducted in different fields for determination of its effectiveness.

Techniques Of Abhyanga :

As ayurvedic science believes doshik involvement for diseases. Hence these important techniques has been practiced for pacification of vitiated doshas. They are as follows.

1. Active massage i.e. with strong pressure.
2. Passive massage i.e. delicate stroking.
3. Persuasive massage i.e. technique of pinching or kneading the small muscles between the thumb and forefinger.

Vata and Pitta conditions are treated with the combination of active and passive massage. Kaphaja vitiations are treated with active and persuasive massage.

But in infantile period is with kaphaja predominance, hence active and persuasive massage should be given as per rule, but it will be harmful because samhita shows that in Bala period

Dhatus are with Apakwa avastha, if one will give excessive of diet/medicine like adult that may cause morbidity or mortality. So mrudu abhyanga with mild hot oil as per season should under practice.

Abhyanga technique for different areas

1. Soothing rubbing movements - Legs and arms
2. Pinching technique - Chest, Arms, Legs, Back
3. Kneading technique - Entire body

4. Pressing technique - Hard surface
5. Small circular thumb movements - Only the essential Marma points of the body.

Order of massage :-

1. Shirobhyanga
2. Padabhyanga
3. Abhyanga to arms and hand
4. Abhyanga to abdomen and chest
5. Back
6. Special to hip
7. Special to abdomen

For infants abhyanga with tila tails, Eranda Taila, Sarsapa taila and Narikela taila has been practiced in different localities in different seasons. However medicated oils like Ashwagandha bala lakshadi taila, Bala taila, Chandan Bala lakshyadi taila, Prasaini taila, Ksheerabala taila, etc. are under practice in special condition of different Ayurvedic hospitals.

Effects of Massage according to different research works.

The research study on preterm infants to assess effect of massage therapy by Scafidi et. Al. (1993) exhibited that 15 minutes massage therapy thrice daily for 10 days in trial group infants gained significantly more weight per day (32g V29g) than the control group infants, overall outcome suggests 70% of the massage taking infants were high weight gainers.

Discriminant functional analysis determining the characteristics that distinguished the high from the low weight gainers suggested that the control infants who before study consumed more calories and spent less time in intermediate care gained more weight.

Massage therapy effects by Field TM (1998) revealed that massage therapy is older than recorded time and rubbing was the primary form of medicine until the pharmaceutical revolution of 1940's, popularized again as part of the alternative medicine. Movements, massage therapy has recently received empirical support for facilitating growth, reducing

pain, increasing alertness, diminishing depression and enhancing immune function.

Another study on massage therapy (Field - 2002) has revealed that the therapy improved growth in preterm infants, however depression addictive problems, pain syndromes immune and anti immune conditions also have found alleviated. After the therapy improvement in clinical conditions like sleep patterns, immune status has also been noticed.

Conclusion :

With the view of different research fields and by taking the references from Ayurvedic texts, it may be concluded that practice of abhyanga therapy must be life - sustaining way of manipulating the body to produce strength, morbidity, flexibility of the gross body and provides pleasure.

Vagbhatta described abhyanga is one natural remedy for providing natural energy in all individuals of different age group. He mentioned that

- (i) It prevents and corrects aging process (i.e.Jara)
- (ii) It helps to overcome fatigue.
- (iii) It prevents and corrects vatik vitiation
- (iv) It promotes eye sight
- (v) Helps for nourishment of body
- (vi) Promotes longevity
- (vii) Helps for good sleep
- (viii) Promotes sturdiness of the body and mind.

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