



Review Article

## THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL THERAPEUTIC APPLICATIONS OF UPANAHA SWEDA

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### ABSTRACT

*Upanaha* is one among the *Sweda karma* which is *Purvakarma* and also acts as *Pradhana karma*. *Acharya Charaka* and *Acharya Vagbhata* it is under *Niragni sweda* and *Acharya Susrutha* it is placed under *Saagni sweda*. It is the local treatment where in combination of different *Aushadhi* such as *Churnas*, *Sneha*, *Kanji*, *Lavana* and other herbs is freshly prepared and applied at site. The purpose of the study is to explore various forms of *Upanaha sweda* with its clinical applications in patients of musculo-skeletal and neurological disorders. *Upanaha* is a type of *Bandana*. Present study explores various forms of *Upanaha's* such as *Snigdha*, *Ruksha upanaha*, *Salavana upanaha*, *Vatahara*. *Upanaha* acts as topical analgesic apart from reducing muscle spasm. *Upanaha* cures the disease of vitiated *Vata*. It can also be practiced in *Kapha* and *Pitta* associated conditions. What makes *Upanaha* more effective and unique than other *Sweda's* is its longer time of stay and larger area of contact to the affected site. **Conclusion:** The present conceptual study is to explore the methods of *Upanaha sweda* in *Panchakarma*. *Upanaha* is one such type of potential fomentation procedure, which can be utilized for the management of the patients with pain and stiffness.

### INTRODUCTION

*Sweda karma* is one the *Purvakarma* that is usually performed before the administration of *Sodhana* procedures. However on some occasions *Sweda karma* advised as a sole curative therapy, where it becomes a prime therapy entitled to be denoted as *Pradhana karma*. *Upanaha* is one such type of potential fomentation procedure that can be utilized for the management of the patient pain and stiffness.

उपनाहस्वेदो वातघ्नः (su.chi.32)

*Upanaha* (poultice fomentation) cures the diseases of vitiated *Vata*. It is counted both among *Agni* and *Niragni sweda*. Which means it can be done with and without the direct use of fire. *Upanaha* is derived from two syllables *Upa* and *Nah*. *Upa* is an *Upasaya* meaning near and *Nah* meaning *Bandhana-tie/bind*.


*Upanaha*, that is neither too hot nor too mild, administered with suitable drugs and applied as per disease condition at affected part of the body helps to get desired result. Based on the assessment of *Vata*, *Vata* or *Kapha* dominant condition, sweating therapy is to be applied with the help of *Snigdha-ruksha*, *Snigda* and *Ruksha* drugs respectively. General benefits of *Sweda karma* are also applicable for *Upanaha sweda*.

स्तम्भगौरवशीतघ्नं स्वेदनं स्वेदकारकम्॥ (Ca.Su.22/11)

A well administered *Upanaha* therapy relieves pain and stiffness and cures various disorders of *Vata* and *Kapha* origin.

The fomentation therapy is stopped when the patient is relieved from feeling of cold, pain, stiffness, heaviness and feels softness in the body at least for that moment of time. Such therapy procedure has to be repeated for 7 days or 14 days depending on the disease and patient condition.

*Upanaha* is the second type of treatment mentioned amongst *Sapta Upakarma*. *Upanaha* comprises of two procedures taken from the 60 treatments (*Shashti upakrama* of *Vrana*) which need to be selectively done as per the condition of the wound.

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विदद्यमाने गुल्म उपनाहनम्-दाहशूलानिल क्षोभ स्वप्नशाशरुचिज्वरैः ।  
विदह्यमानं जानीयाद् गुल्मं तदुपानाहयेत् ॥ २५

Burning sensation, colic pain, miserable feeling, sleeplessness, anorexia, and fever indicate the suppuration of *Gulma*. Such conditions should be treated with *Upanaha* (*Chakradatta gulma chikista 32*)

### Specificity of Upanaha on Tridosha

Kevala vata	Vachadi upanaha
Pitta samsrishta vata	Padmakadi gana (Kakolyadi gana.su)
Kapha samsrishta vata	Surasadi gana

### AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The affect of temperature and to relieve the symptoms like pain and stiffness of the affected part.

### Methods employed for Upanaha sweda

Though the word meaning of *Upanaha* is indicative of *Bandhana*, however, in practical sense, *Upanaha sweda* is performed under the following three methods.

- Lepa** - The said *Vatahara dravyas* are made into a paste and is to be applied on the affected part for a period of 4 to five hours.
- Bandhana** - The paste of the *Vatahara dravyas* is slightly heated and applied over the affected part and covered with leaves of *Arka* or *Eranda* and ties with a cloth piece. The *Bandhana* should be left over for 10 to 12 hours.
- Pottali sweda** - The disease/*Dosha* specific *Vata hara dravyas* should be slightly warmed over a heating pan with the addition of *Vatahara Taila* and

1. Lavana	11. Krisara	21. Dadhi	31. Agar
2. Grita	12. Jivaniya Gana	22. Godhuma	32. Musta
3. Taila	13. Sataphushpa	23. Ela	33. Yoghurt
4. Tila	14. Yava	24. Rasna	34. Dashamula
5. Mamsa	15. Surahva	25. Sharshapa	35. Kakalyadi Gana
6. Ksheera	16. Mudga	26. Devadar	36. Sana
7. Kushta	17. Bala	27. Jivanti	37. Harenu
8. Veshavara	18. Atasi	28. Madhuka	38. Kanji
9. Kinva	19. Masha	29. Mulaka	39. Mastya
10. Majja	20. Vacha	30. Danti	40. Takra

A comprehensive search of the *Samhitas* reveals following drugs mentioned under the section of *Upanah*.

### Material needed for Bandhana form of Upanaha

- Medicinal powders
- Bandage cloth (15cm x 2m)- 1
- Leaves of *Eranda*, *Arka* etc (to cover the area)
- Amla Dravya* (*Dhanyamla Takra/Vinegar*)
- Oil for *Upanaha*

made into *Pottali* and used for the purpose of local fomentation. This also called a form of *Sankara sweda*.

### Indications

- Vata Vyadhi* like *Janusandhigata Vata*, *Pakshagata*, *Twak*, *Mamsa*, *Asruk*, *Sira*, *Sandhi* and *Asthigatavata*.
- Akshi Rogas* like *Alaji*, *Pooyalasa*, *Abhishyanda* and *Arbuda*.
- Guda Rogas* like *Arshas*, *Bhagandara*.
- Other conditions like *Vrana*, *Vidradi*, *Granti*, *Vataja Mutrakruchra*, *Shleepada*, *Kukshishoola*, *Visarpa* (*Granti Visarpa*), *Visha*.
- Sushruta* opines that *Upanaha Sweda* is specially indicated in case of *Sankuchayamana* (contractures), *Rujarta*, *Stabda* *Gatrata*.
- Indu* mentioned *Agni Samskara Rahita Upanaha* i.e., *Upanaha* prepared without heating to be done in case of *Vata* associated with *Pitta*.

**Contraindication:** *Pittavarana* condition

### Drugs enlisted for the purpose of Upanaha

गोधूमशकल धूर्मैर्यवानाम्लसंयुतैः

सस्नेहकिण्वलवणैरुपनाहः प्रशस्यते ॥

गन्धैः सुरायाः किण्वेन जीवन्त्या शतपुष्पया।

चर्मभिश्चोपनद्धव्यः सलोमभिरपूतिभिः उष्णवीर्यैरलाभे तु  
कौशेयाविकटशाटकैः ॥

सस्नेहकिण्वलवणैरुपनाहः प्रशस्यते ॥ Ca.Su. 14/35-37

6. Oil for *Abhyanga*

7. *Saindhava*

Medicine for *Upanaha* can be made with or without heating according to disease. *Churna*, *Saindhava*, *Taila* (oils), *Amla Dravya* are added in order to make a paste. Then it must be heated in case of *Saagni Upanaha* up to 39°C-41°C or applied as such in case of *Niragni Upanaha*. Skin sensitivity should be tested before tying.

## Procedure

The patient should be allowed to be in a comfortable position, exposing the joint or body part to be tied with *Upanaha Dravya*. The part is cleaned and *Abhyanga* should be done locally with lukewarm oil, if indicated. The prepared *Upanaha Dravyas* should be pasted on the affected part thickly and uniformly about 1-2cm thickness and is covered with available *Vatahara Patras*, after slight warming. Then it should be tied according to region as the type of *Bandana* said by *acharya Susrutha* in *Bhagna chikista*. *Bandhana* is usually done in *Ekanga Upanaha*. It is also done as *Sankara (Pottali)* type of *Sweda* in *Sarvanga upanaha*. Apply suitable bandage in a position comfortable for the patient.

## Post-operative Procedure

According to *Acharyas*, poultice tied during night should be removed during day and that tied during day should be removed during night. If any burning sensation, then apply *Shatadhoutha grita*.

## Precautions

1. The bandage should not be too tight or too loose.
2. The *Upanaha Dravya* must be of suitable consistency, so that it should not fall off from its position.
3. It should not be applied to wounds.
4. Check the sensitivity of the skin before the procedure.
5. It is better to avoid oil for the first 2-3 days.

## Special varieties of Upanaha

### 1. *Snigdha Upanaha - Ruksha Upanaha* [1]

#### Ingredients

*Dashamula, Shatavari, Kulutta, Badara, Masha, Tila, Rasna*

*Snigdha upanaha* can be used in conditions as

*Sandhivata*  
*Khalli vata*  
*Snayugata vata*  
*Vishwachi*

### 5. *Maha Salavana Upanaha/Vatahara Upanaha* [5]

A) <i>Astanga hrudaya</i> [5]	B) <i>Mahasalavana upanaha</i> [6]	
<i>Vacha</i>	<i>Mamsa</i>	<i>Shephali</i>
<i>Kinva</i>	<i>Jivaniya Gana</i>	<i>Sthula Jiraka</i>
<i>Satahva</i>	<i>Dadhi</i>	<i>Eranda Mula, Beeja</i>
<i>Devadaru</i>	<i>Souviraka</i>	<i>Rasna</i>
<i>Rasna</i>	<i>Ksheera</i>	<i>Mulaka</i>
<i>Eranda</i>	<i>Virataruvadi Gana</i>	<i>Sigru</i>
<i>Mamsa</i>	<i>Kullataka</i>	<i>Mishi</i>
<i>Udrikta Lavana</i>	<i>Masha</i>	<i>Kutheraka</i>
<i>Sneha</i>	<i>Godhuam</i>	<i>Lavanas</i>

## *Stambha/Vata* conditions

***Seeta Upanaha-*** *Chandana, Usira, Sariba, Manjista, Yastimadhu, Nimba*

*Daha/Pitta* conditions

## ***Ruksha Upanaha***

### Ingredients

*Kola, Kuluttha, Triphala* can be used in conditions as

*Katigraha*  
*Vata kaphaja*  
*Gridrasi*  
*Apabhahuka*  
*Ama/Kapha* conditions  
*Manyastambha*

### 2. *Jeevantyadi upanaha* [2]

It is mentioned in *Charaka Samhitha* in *Chikista stana Rajyayakshmaadhyaya*

### Ingredients

*Jivanti, Shatapushpa, Bala, Madhuka, Vacha, Veshavara, Grita, Taila, Vasa, Majja* which mainly indicated as *Upanaha* in conditions as

*Shiroruja*  
*Parshvasula*  
*Amsa shola*

And in practically it is also used in *Mamsagata Vata* as *Brimhana* purpose in which symptoms like weakness of muscles, stiffness of muscles and it is showing that muscle relaxation.

### 3. *Vatahara Upanaha* [3]

This is mentioned in *Charaksamhitha chikista stana Vatavyadhi*.

### 4. *Salavana Upanaha* [4]

In *Susruthasamhitha* it is mentioned that according to the *Doshas* the *Upanaha* is used as follows

*Vata-kakolyadi gana*  
*Pitta-Eladi gana*  
*Kapha-Surasadi gana*

<i>Chukra</i>	<i>Tila</i>	<i>Amlas</i>
<i>Takra</i>	<i>Sharshapa</i>	<i>Prasarini</i>
<i>Paya</i>	<i>Sataphushpa</i>	<i>Aswaghandha</i>
	<i>Devadaru</i>	<i>Bala and Atibala</i>
	<i>Gudichi</i>	<i>Dasamula</i>
	<i>Varunibija</i>	

## 6. Upanaha acc to Acharya Kashyap<sup>[7]</sup>

*Kinva*

*Atasi*

*Dadhi*

*Ksheera*

*Lavana*

*Amla*

*Chikkanai*

*Kushta*

*Sneha*

## 7. Atasya Upanaha<sup>[8]</sup>

Ingredients as follow

*Atasibeeja churna*

*Haridra churna*

*Moorchitha taila*

*Go grita*

*Saindhava lavana*

**Indication:** *Siraja granthi*

## 8. Panchakola Upanaha<sup>[9]</sup>

It is mentioned in *Bhaishjya ratnavali* and it is mainly used as *Pana* in *Amavata* in which *Pipasa* (morbid thirst) is one of the symptom, but practically it is in pain in *Amavata* cases in pain and swelling has reduced, and in *Katigraha*.

The ingredients as follow

*Pippali*

*Pippalimula*

*Chavya*

*Chitraka*

*Nagara*

Drugs used in *Panchakoladi Upanaha* are *Ushna*, *Tikshna* in nature and due to its counter irritant effect, helped in relieving pain.

## 9. Devadaravdi Upanaha:<sup>[10]</sup>

### Ingredients

The drugs are *Devadaru*, *Jatamansi*, *Masha*, *Yava*, *Rasna*, *Kushtha* and *Kulattha* as well as *Godhuma* along with *TilaTaila* and *Kanji*.

They have *Shulaprashamana*, *Shothahara* and *Vatakaphashamana* Properties

It is used in *Sandhigatavata*.

## 10. Evadarvadikalkoupanaha<sup>[11]</sup>

The drugs are as follow as *Devadaru*, *Palasha*, *Arka*, *Hasti pippali*, *Sigru*, and *Aswagandha* (in equal quantities) triturate with cows urine

Indication: Gently rubbed over the abdomen.

## 11. Suryavartorasona Upanaha<sup>[12]</sup>

*Upanaha* type of *Swedana* prepared of *Suryavarto* and *Rasona*

Indication: *Galaganda*

## 12. Sa Tiladisaktu Upanaha<sup>[13]</sup>

*Kalka* prepared with *Saktu*, *Tila*, seeds of *Atasi*, *Amla*, *Kinva*, *Kushta*, *Lavana*.

Indication: *Vrana Sotha*

## 13. Pacanartha Upanaha<sup>[14]</sup>

Ingredients as follows

*Sana*, *Mulaka*, *Sigru*, *Tila*, *Sharshapa*, *Saktu*, *Kinva*, *Atasi*,

Indication: *Vrana*

## 14. Salavana Upanaha<sup>[15]</sup>

*Salavana Upanaha* is a herbal compound drug consisting of *Godhuma Churna*, *Rasna Churna*, *Devadaru Churna*, *Eranda Moola Churna*, *Vacha Churna*, *Vidanga Churna*, and *Saindhava Lavana* is used extensively in management of spastic cerebral palsy.

## 15. Godhumadi Upanaha and Panchkoladi Upanaha<sup>[16]</sup>

It is used in *Sama* and *Nirama* stages of *Katigraha*.

*Upanaha* can be done in 2 conditions of *Vrana Shotha* i.e., swelling around wounds and ulcers-

- Ama/Apakva Shotha*- Immature swelling
- Vidagdha/Ardhapakva Shotha*- Partly matured swellings

When done in unripe swellings *Upanaha* will bring about subsidence of these swellings.

When done in partly ripened swellings *Upanaha* will help in maturation of the swelling and bring about their ripening.

### Practical perspective of Sweda

- *Sweda* should be extended with gaps.
- Care should be taken to check sensation to the part where *Sweda* is given.
- Local significant inflammation to be checked

**Sweda act as**

- Local analgesic effect
- Relieving muscle spasm
- Increasing vascularity
- endorphin secretion
- serotonin stimulation
- Influencing peripheral nervous system
- absorption

**Benefits of Upanaha**

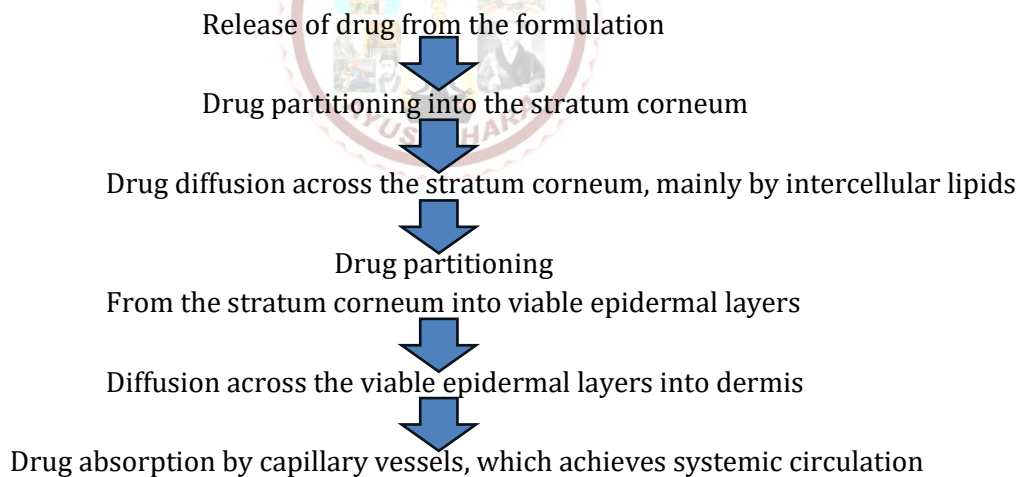
1. It involves applying medicinal mixtures on the disease affected body part of the patient and leaving it undisturbed for an extended period of time.
2. Relieves localized pain, swelling and inflammation.
3. Promotes better circulation by removing stagnant blood, fluids and toxins from the injured area.
4. Improves muscle flexibility and joint mobility.
5. It is recommended for strains and sprains, joint injuries.
6. It induces hyperthermia which improves local blood and lymphatic circulation

**Physicochemical Factors**

- Skin hydration

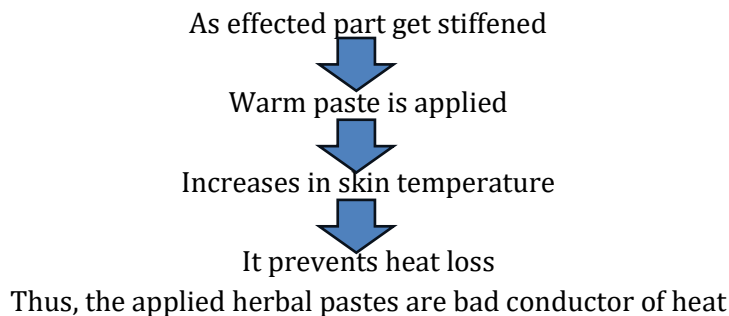
**Drug transport in the skin as a process involving several steps**

Dissolution



**Mode of action of Upanaha**

**Works on conduction:** The process by which heat is transferred from hotter end to cooler end. Here, *Sheetgna* is done by conduction.



- Temperature and pH
- Drug concentration
- Area and time of application
- Molecular size and shape

**DISCUSSION**

**Upanaha Sweda is likely to be absorbed**

- The larger the area of application, the more drug is absorbed.
- Generally, the longer the time of medicated application is permitted, to remain in contact with the skin, the greater is the total drug absorption.

**Drug concentration**

- Drug concentration is an important factor.
- Generally, the amount of drug percutaneously absorbed per unit of surface area per time interval increases with an increase in the concentration of the drug in TDDS.
- The rate of drug movement across this layer depends on its concentration in the vehicle, its aqueous solubility and the oil-water partition coefficient between the stratum corneum and the vehicle.

Commonly *Arkapatra*, *Charma* or *Kshaumavastra* are applied over *Upanaha*. All these are bad conductor of heat thus prevents heat loss through radiation and conduction. *Arkapatra* especially is a xerophytic plant that lives in arid conditions and have elaborate structural and

physiological modifications that reduce water loss. Desert plants show high stomatal resistance, to reduce water loss.

**Humidity:** Humidity affects thermoregulation as it limits the evaporation of sweat and heat loss.

**OBSERVATION**



**Fig 1**



**Fig 2**



**Fig 3**



**Fig 4**

**CONCLUSION**

*Upanaha Swedana* can be utilized as a simple yet effective topical measure for relieving pain and stiffness. It can also significantly reduce other associated symptoms and therefore improve the physical status of the patient. The *Upanaha Dravya*, due to their *Virya*, enter into the body through the *Roma Koopa*, then undergo *Paka* by *Bhrajaka Pitta* and produces the desired effect based on the *Dravya* selected for use. Application of the *Upanaha* produces pain relieving effect at the affected part by causing local vasodilation, stimulation/soothing of superficial nerve endings and increased blood flow which increases nutrition supply and metabolism.

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