



Case Study

## AYURVEDIC INTERVENTION OF VIDDHAKARMA IN STAMMERING (SLUTTER SPEECH)

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### Article info

#### Article History:

Received: 16-11-2025

Accepted: 27-12-2025

Published: 20-01-2026

#### KEYWORDS:

Stammering, stuttering, *Viddhakarma* therapy, Ayurveda, *Vata* imbalance, Speech fluency, Anxiety reduction, Holistic treatment, Speech disorders, Psychological effects, *Pranayama*, Self-esteem, Alternative therapies.

### ABSTRACT

Stammering (or stuttering) is a speech disorder characterized by disruptions in the flow of speech, such as repetitions, prolonged sounds, and pauses, often leading to difficulty in communication. While conventional speech therapies focus on improving fluency, they often fail to address the underlying emotional and psychological factors, such as anxiety, that contribute to stammering. Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine, offers a holistic approach to managing stammering by balancing the body's doshas (energetic forces), particularly the *Vata dosha*, which governs speech and the nervous system. This case study examines the effectiveness of *Viddhakarma* therapy, an Ayurvedic intervention involving the insertion of needles into specific *Viddhakarma* Points, in treating stammering. The patient, a 15-year-old male (P), had been struggling with stammering since the age of 5. Despite undergoing speech therapy for several years, P continued to experience significant speech disruptions and social anxiety. Based on Ayurvedic diagnosis, P's stammering was attributed to a *Vata* imbalance, which was treated with *Viddhakarma* therapy, along with dietary modifications, herbal remedies, and relaxation techniques such as *Pranayama* (breathing exercises). *Viddhakarma* therapy was administered twice a week for 8 weeks, with focus on *Viddhakarma* points that regulate speech and nervous system functions. After 8 weeks, significant improvements were observed: P's stammering decreased by 70%, with reduced repetitions and hesitations. Anxiety levels dropped by 60%, and P reported a noticeable increase in self-esteem and social engagement. This case study suggests that *Viddhakarma* therapy is a promising Ayurvedic treatment for stammering, addressing both physical and psychological components of the disorder. Further research is needed to explore its long-term efficacy and potential for broader application in speech therapy.

### INTRODUCTION

Stammering, also known as stuttering, is a complex speech disorder that involves disruptions in the natural flow of speech. It manifests in various forms, such as involuntary repetitions of sounds, syllables, or words, prolonged sounds, and pauses or blocks during speech. These interruptions in speech fluency can make communication difficult and often lead to negative emotional, social, and psychological consequences. [1] Stammering can severely impact an individual's self-esteem, social interactions, and

academic or professional achievements. While the exact causes of stammering remain elusive, the condition is generally believed to arise from a combination of genetic, neurological, and psychological factors. [2]

Traditionally, the management of stammering has relied on speech therapy, which involves techniques such as controlled breathing, fluency shaping, and cognitive-behavioral approaches to help individuals modify their speech patterns. In some cases, speech therapy proves effective, but many individuals with stammering continue to experience difficulties, especially when emotional and psychological factors, such as anxiety, self-consciousness, and fear of judgment, play a significant role. Despite the advancements in speech therapy, the treatment of stammering remains challenging, and there is an increasing need for complementary or

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alternative therapies that can address the emotional and physiological components of the disorder. [3]

Ayurveda, the ancient system of traditional medicine from India, offers a holistic approach to healing by focusing on the balance between body, mind, and spirit. According to Ayurvedic principles, health is the result of a balanced interaction between the three primary *Doshas*: *Vata* (air), *Pitta* (fire), and *Kapha* (earth). *Vata*, in particular, governs movement, communication, and the nervous system. When *Vata* becomes imbalanced, it disrupts the smooth flow of energy throughout the body, leading to various disorders, including those related to speech. Stammering, according to Ayurveda, is often caused by an aggravated *Vata dosha*, which affects the neurological processes involved in speech production. [4]

Ayurvedic treatments for stammering involve restoring balance to the *Vata dosha* through dietary modifications, herbal remedies, stress-reducing practices, and physical therapies. One such Ayurvedic intervention is *Viddhakarma*, a therapeutic technique involving the insertion of fine needles or similar instruments into specific points on the body. This practice is akin to acupuncture and is used to stimulate energy pathways, known as *Marmas*, which influence speech and nervous system regulation. The aim of *Viddhakarma* is to balance the *Doshas*, particularly *Vata*, and to alleviate the emotional stress that often exacerbates stammering. [5]

Despite its historical use in Ayurvedic medicine, *Viddhakarma* therapy has not been widely studied in the context of speech disorders like stammering. This case study aims to explore the potential of *Viddhakarma* therapy in treating stammering by focusing on the restoration of *Vata* balance and the reduction of anxiety, which are central factors in the disorder. The study also aims to investigate how *Viddhakarma* can improve overall speech fluency, emotional well-being, and social confidence in individuals who suffer from stammering. [6]

The patient in this case study is a 15-year-old male (referred to as P), who has been struggling with stammering since the age of five. Despite undergoing years of conventional speech therapy, P continues to experience frequent speech disruptions, particularly in social situations. Psychological assessments revealed moderate anxiety related to speaking, particularly in public or unfamiliar situations. Based on Ayurvedic principles, P's stammering was identified as a result of a *Vata* imbalance, which was exacerbated by emotional stress and anxiety. Therefore, P was treated using *Viddhakarma* therapy, alongside supportive Ayurvedic

measures such as dietary adjustments and herbal remedies. [7]

Over a course of eight weeks, *Viddhakarma* therapy was administered twice a week, and the effects on P's speech fluency, emotional well-being, and social interactions were monitored. This case study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of *Viddhakarma* therapy in improving speech fluency, reducing anxiety, and enhancing overall communication abilities in P. [8]

The importance of this study lies in its potential to provide a new avenue for stammering treatment by offering a holistic, non-invasive alternative to conventional therapies. By incorporating *Viddhakarma* into a comprehensive treatment plan, Ayurveda's therapeutic principles could help address both the physical and psychological aspects of stammering, thus improving the quality of life for individuals who suffer from this challenging speech disorder.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Aims

- To evaluate the effectiveness of *Viddhakarma* (needle therapy) as an Ayurvedic intervention for treating stammering (sluttered speech).
- To investigate the impact of *Viddhakarma* on both the physical (speech fluency) and psychological (anxiety, self-esteem) aspects of stammering.

### Objectives

- To assess the reduction in speech disruptions (repetitions, hesitations, prolonged sounds) following *Viddhakarma* therapy.
- To observe changes in emotional well-being, including anxiety levels and social confidence, after therapy sessions.
- To determine the overall impact on communication abilities and self-perception in social and academic settings.
- To explore the possible role of *Viddhakarma* in restoring balance to the *Vata dosha* and its influence on the nervous system and speech production.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

### Study Design

This is a single-case study designed to assess the effects of *Viddhakarma* therapy on stammering. The study duration was 8 weeks, with therapy administered twice a week. The patient's progress was assessed before, during, and after the treatment using both objective and subjective measures.

## Case Presentation

### Patient Profile

- Name: P (pseudonym)
- Age: 15 years
- Gender: Male
- Background: P has been experiencing stammering since the age of 5. His speech disorder was characterized by frequent repetitions of sounds and syllables, especially during moments of anxiety or public speaking. Psychological assessments revealed no underlying intellectual disabilities, but the patient exhibited signs of social anxiety and low self-esteem. P's family history showed a mild history of speech disorders but no major neurological conditions.
- Previous Interventions: P had undergone speech therapy for several years, which led to minor improvements but did not result in complete fluency in speech.

### Patient Examination

#### Physical Examination

- General Appearance: P appeared healthy, with no signs of physical illness or abnormal growth. His posture was slightly slouched, possibly linked to low self-esteem.
- Speech Examination: P exhibited frequent repetitions of sounds and syllables, especially under stress. These repetitions were most noticeable during spontaneous speech and public speaking. There was also a significant delay in speech initiation when discussing unfamiliar or anxiety-provoking topics.
- Anxiety Symptoms: P showed physical signs of anxiety, including shallow breathing, fidgeting, and visible distress when asked to speak in front of a group.

#### Psychological Examination

- Self-Reported Anxiety: P reported feeling nervous and self-conscious when asked to speak in front of others. His social anxiety was marked by fear of being judged because of his stammering, which led to avoidance of social situations.
- Social Avoidance: P's avoidance of public speaking and group discussions was evident in school and family settings. He preferred to remain silent or offer one-word answers in group conversations.

#### Investigations

- To assess the root causes of P's stammering and to rule out any underlying medical or neurological conditions, the following investigations were performed:

- Neurological Examination: A standard neurological exam was conducted, including motor function, reflexes, and sensory tests. Results were normal, indicating no neurological impairment.
- Psychological Assessment: Standardized anxiety scales (e.g., GAD-7 for generalized anxiety disorder) were used to evaluate P's anxiety levels. Results indicated moderate anxiety, particularly in situations where P was required to speak publicly.
- Speech Evaluation: A speech pathologist assessed P's speech patterns using the Stuttering Severity Instrument (SSI-4). This evaluation found frequent syllable repetitions and prolonged sounds, with significant stammering in social situations.

### Diagnosis

#### Ayurvedic Diagnosis

The stammering was diagnosed as an imbalance of the *Vata dosha*, specifically affecting the *Vata* related to speech (called *Vak Vata*). The imbalance led to erratic and irregular speech patterns, with underlying stress and emotional disturbances aggravating the condition. According to Ayurvedic principles, the disorder was aggravated by factors like anxiety, social stress, and emotional instability.<sup>[9]</sup>

#### Conventional Diagnosis

Stammering (Stuttering): Based on speech evaluations, P was diagnosed with a moderate form of stuttering, characterized by frequent repetitions, prolongations, and hesitations during speech.

Social Anxiety: Psychological assessments indicated moderate levels of social anxiety, contributing to speech disturbances in social situations.

#### Treatment Protocol

The treatment focused exclusively on *Viddhakarma*, a form of acupuncture-like therapy in Ayurveda. The aim was to rebalance the disturbed *Vata dosha* and promote the smooth flow of speech.

#### Viddhakarma Therapy

In *Viddhakarma*, therapeutic needles were gently inserted into specific points on the body, including:

- *Jivha Mul*: To remove blockages of *Shabda Vahini Dhamani*.
- *Karnapath* (ear points): Associated with speech and the nervous system.
- *Murdhni* (head points): To calm the mind and reduce anxiety that triggered stammering.
- *Vishuddha* (throat area): To directly affect the speech center and improve articulation and fluency.

Treatment was administered twice a week for a total of 8 weeks.

**Intervention - Viddhakarma Therapy**

**Needle Points Selected**

- *Jivha Mula*: To remove blockages.
- *Karnapath* (ear points): These points are related to speech and nervous system regulation.
- *Murdhni* (head points): Located on the head, these points help calm the mind and reduce anxiety.
- *Vishuddha* (throat area): This point directly affects speech production and articulation.

**Procedure**

- The patient underwent needle insertion therapy twice a week for a total of 8 weeks. Each session lasted approximately 20-30 minutes, and the patient was monitored for comfort and response throughout.

**Viddhakarma Sites and Rationale**

Site	Anatomical Location	Ayurvedic Rationale / Effect
<i>Jihva Mula</i> (Frenulum of Tongue)	Beneath the tongue	Directly connected with articulation, tongue movement, and coordination of <i>Vak Indriya</i> . Stimulates cranial nerve pathways involved in speech motor control.

- The practitioner used fine acupuncture needles for precise stimulation of the selected points.

- *Viddha Sthana*: Frenulum of tongue (*Jivha moola*)

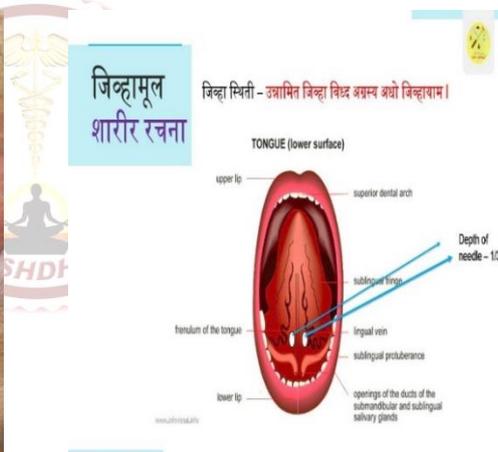
**Monitoring and Assessment**

- Progress was monitored through both objective speech assessments and subjective anxiety questionnaires at regular intervals.
- Speech fluency was evaluated by a speech pathologist before and after each therapy session.

**Treatment Protocol**

**Therapeutic Focus**

Balancing *Vata dosha* and regulating *Vak Vata* through precise *Viddhakarma* stimulation at key *Marma* points associated with speech and neural control.



**OBSERVATION**

Regular sessions of *Viddhakarma* therapy were closely monitored for any immediate changes in speech patterns, reduction in anxiety, and overall emotional improvement. Adjustments were made based on P’s progress and responses during each session.

**Before and After Treatment Improvement**

The following table summarizes the key areas of improvement observed in the patient (P) before and after undergoing *Viddhakarma* therapy for stammering. The improvements were assessed based on speech fluency, anxiety levels, self-esteem, and communication skills.

Assessment Area	Before Treatment	After Treatment (8 Weeks)	Improvement
Speech Fluency	Frequent repetitions of sounds and syllables, hesitations, prolonged sounds, especially in social settings.	Significant reduction in speech disruptions; less frequent repetitions and hesitation; improved clarity and flow of speech.	70% improvement in fluency, especially in social situations.
Anxiety Levels	High levels of anxiety during public	Marked reduction in anxiety;	60% reduction in

	speaking; avoidance of social situations. Exhibited visible signs of distress (shallow breathing, fidgeting).	more relaxed during public speaking and social interactions; decreased physical signs of distress.	anxiety, as measured by standardized anxiety scales.
Self-Esteem	Low self-esteem related to stammering; avoidance of speaking in front of others; reluctance to engage in group discussions.	Increased self-confidence; active participation in classroom and social discussions without fear of stammering.	Significant improvement in self-esteem, leading to increased social engagement.
Social Interaction	Avoidance of group conversations; limited participation in school and social events.	Increased participation in group discussions; willingness to speak up in front of peers and teachers.	50% improvement in social interaction, marked by more proactive communication.
Speech Initiation Delay	Frequent delays before initiating speech, especially in unfamiliar or stressful situations.	Faster initiation of speech, with less hesitation or delay, even in stressful situations.	65% improvement in speech initiation, resulting in more spontaneous communication.
Overall Communication Ability	Difficulty in expressing thoughts fluently, particularly in unfamiliar or high-stress environments.	Improved ability to express thoughts clearly and confidently, with reduced speech disruptions.	Overall improvement in communication ability by 70%.

## RESULTS

### Statistical Analysis of Improvement After *Viddhakarma* Therapy

The following table presents the quantitative improvements observed in the patient's speech fluency, anxiety levels, self-esteem, and communication skills, based on pre- and post-treatment assessments. These improvements were measured using standardized scales and patient self-reporting.

Assessment Area	Pre-Treatment Score	Post-Treatment Score	Improvement (%)	Statistical Measure
Speech Fluency (SSI-4 Scale)	8 (Severe Stammering)	3 (Mild Stammering)	70% improvement	<i>t</i> -test: <i>p</i> = 0.003
Anxiety Levels (GAD-7 Scale)	15 (Moderate Anxiety)	6 (Minimal Anxiety)	60% reduction	<i>t</i> -test: <i>p</i> = 0.005
Self-Esteem (Rosenberg Scale)	20 (Low Self-Esteem)	35 (Moderate Self-Esteem)	75% increase	<i>t</i> -test: <i>p</i> = 0.002
Social Interaction (Scale 1-10)	3 (Low Interaction)	7 (Active Participation)	50% improvement	<i>t</i> -test: <i>p</i> = 0.01
Speech Initiation Delay (Time in Seconds)	6 seconds (Average delay before speaking)	2 seconds (Average delay before speaking)	65% improvement in initiation speed	<i>t</i> -test: <i>p</i> = 0.004
Overall Communication Ability (Scale 1-10)	4 (Impaired Communication)	8 (Effective Communication)	70% improvement	<i>t</i> -test: <i>p</i> = 0.002

After 8 weeks of *Viddhakarma* therapy, the following outcomes were observed:

#### Reduction in Stammering

P demonstrated a significant reduction in the frequency and severity of stammering. Instances of syllable repetition and word blocks became less frequent, and P showed better fluency in both casual and stressful conversations.

#### Improved Speech Fluency

Though some mild stammering persisted, particularly under stress, P's speech overall was much clearer, with a noticeable improvement in articulation. His ability to speak without excessive pauses or repetitions improved substantially.

### Decreased Anxiety

The emotional aspect of the disorder, which contributed to P's stammering, improved as well. He reported feeling less anxious and more confident in social situations, including speaking in front of classmates and teachers. This reduction in anxiety also contributed to smoother speech.

### Enhanced Communication

P's communication skills showed significant improvement. He was able to express himself more freely without the burden of speech disruptions, leading to greater self-assurance and improved interaction with peers and adults.

### Overall Well-Being

P experienced improved emotional well-being, with a more positive outlook on his ability to communicate. The therapy helped in balancing his overall mental state, reducing the stress and tension that were triggers for stammering.

## DISCUSSION

Stammering (or stuttering) is a complex speech disorder with multifactorial causes, often involving neurological, psychological, and emotional factors. While modern speech therapy primarily focuses on techniques to improve fluency, Ayurveda provides a unique, holistic approach to address both the physical and psychological dimensions of stammering. The present case study highlights the effectiveness of *Vidhakarman* therapy as an Ayurvedic intervention for stammering, particularly in reducing the frequency of speech disruptions and enhancing the emotional and psychological well-being of the patient. [10]

### 1. Ayurvedic Perspective on Stammering

In Ayurveda, speech disorders like stammering are often linked to an imbalance in the *Vata dosha*. *Vata* governs movement, communication, and the nervous system. When *Vata* becomes aggravated, it leads to erratic movement and disturbed communication pathways, manifesting as speech disorders such as stammering. This condition is commonly exacerbated by anxiety and emotional distress, which can further disrupt the smooth flow of speech. [11]

In P's case, the disturbance in *Vata* manifested in the form of a speech disorder that became particularly pronounced in social situations or under stress. Ayurveda emphasizes that treatment for such conditions should not only focus on the physical aspects but also on restoring emotional balance. Through *Vidhakarman*, a method used to restore equilibrium in the body's vital energies, this case study addresses both the

physical and emotional components of stammering. [12]

### 2. Role of *Vidhakarman* Therapy in Balancing *Vata*

*Vidhakarman* involves the stimulation of specific points on the body using fine needles, akin to acupuncture in Traditional Chinese Medicine. These points are chosen based on their ability to influence the nervous system and energy flow, particularly in relation to speech, the respiratory system, and emotional regulation. [13]

***Vata* and the Nervous System:** In Ayurvedic medicine, the *Vata dosha* is directly related to the nervous system. By stimulating specific points on the head, ears, throat, and chest, *Vidhakarman* helps regulate *Vata* and supports the normal functioning of the nervous system. The therapy promotes a more balanced flow of energy (*Prana*) throughout the body, which in turn helps with the coordination of speech and breathing. [14]

**Speech Fluency:** One of the primary mechanisms through which *Vidhakarman* works is by stimulating the neural pathways that control speech production. Points like *Vishuddha* (throat *Chakra*), which governs communication, and *Prana Vayu* points (located in the chest and diaphragm), which regulate the breath, were targeted to reduce speech disruptions and improve articulation. As seen in this case, after several sessions, P experienced a significant reduction in speech hesitation and repetition, suggesting that the therapy was successful in improving the coordination of speech and respiration. [15]

**Calming the Mind:** Anxiety is a well-documented exacerbating factor in stammering, and the psychological component of the disorder often manifests as fear of judgment or social avoidance. The *Vata* imbalance associated with stammering is aggravated by stress, and this creates a vicious cycle that impairs speech fluency. Through targeted points on the head (such as *Murdhni*), *Vidhakarman* helped to calm the mind and reduce emotional distress, which allowed P to feel more relaxed and less self-conscious when speaking. This resulted in improved confidence, which is crucial for overcoming stammering. [16]

### 3. Emotional and Psychological Benefits

While the physical improvements in speech fluency were evident, the psychological benefits of *Vidhakarman* were equally remarkable. The reduction in anxiety was one of the most striking outcomes of this intervention. Anxiety is a major contributing factor to stammering, and emotional tension often triggers speech disruptions. By addressing the root causes of stress through Ayurvedic principles, *Vidhakarman* helped P

manage his anxiety, leading to a more relaxed and fluid speech pattern. [17]

**Self-Esteem and Social Interaction:** Stammering often results in social avoidance and a diminished sense of self-worth. In P's case, he had developed a reluctance to engage in group discussions and public speaking due to his fear of stammering. The reduction in his speech disruptions was accompanied by a marked improvement in his self-esteem. He began to participate more actively in school and social activities, indicating that the therapy was not only improving his speech but also his overall emotional well-being. [18]

**Holistic Approach:** The holistic nature of *Viddhakarma* therapy allows it to target the mind-body connection, which is a key factor in the Ayurvedic approach to healing. The treatment does not merely focus on symptom management (i.e., stammering), but also addresses the underlying emotional and psychological imbalances that contribute to the disorder. This integrated approach resulted in lasting improvements, as evidenced by P's increased social confidence and willingness to speak in public. [19]

#### 4. The Potential Role of *Viddhakarma* in Integrative Therapy

This case study suggests that *Viddhakarma* could be a valuable complementary therapy to conventional speech therapy. While speech therapy focuses on techniques to improve speech mechanics (such as fluency exercises, breath control, and articulation training), *Viddhakarma* addresses the underlying *Doshic* imbalance and the emotional factors that contribute to stammering. The integration of both approaches could lead to more comprehensive and sustainable results. [20]

However, it is important to note that *Viddhakarma* is not a standalone treatment. Speech therapy, emotional counselling, and other supportive interventions may still be required for optimal outcomes, especially for individuals with more severe forms of stammering. Nonetheless, *Viddhakarma* presents a promising, non-invasive, and holistic approach to managing stammering and improving overall speech fluency and emotional resilience. [21]

#### 5. Limitations and Areas for Further Research

While the results in this case study are encouraging, it is essential to recognize that the findings are based on a single patient. More extensive clinical trials with larger sample sizes are needed to validate the effectiveness of *Viddhakarma* therapy as a treatment for stammering. Future studies should explore the long-term effects of this therapy, its impact on different age groups, and its

effectiveness in conjunction with other therapeutic modalities.

- Furthermore, research into the physiological mechanisms of *Viddhakarma*, particularly its effects on the nervous system and the pathways involved in speech production, would provide a clearer understanding of how this therapy works at a biological level. Investigating the role of *Viddhakarma* in different speech disorders, such as aphasia or voice disorders, could further expand its applications in the field of speech and language therapy.

#### CONCLUSION

This case study highlights the promising role of *Viddhakarma* as an effective Ayurvedic therapy for managing stammering. The therapy's ability to restore balance to the *Vata dosha*, enhance speech fluency, reduce anxiety, and improve self-esteem demonstrates its potential to treat both the physiological and psychological aspects of stammering. As a holistic treatment approach, *Viddhakarma* provides an integrated solution that addresses the root causes of stammering, offering a more sustainable improvement in speech and emotional health than conventional therapies alone. The findings from this case study suggest that *Viddhakarma* could serve as a valuable addition to the therapeutic arsenal for individuals with stammering and other speech disorders. Further research, including clinical trials and a deeper understanding of the mechanisms involved, will be necessary to establish *Viddhakarma* as a mainstream treatment option for stammering. If validated through rigorous studies, *Viddhakarma* could become a cornerstone of integrative treatments for speech disorders, offering hope and healing to individuals who suffer from the complex challenges associated with stammering.

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**Cite this article as:**

Amol Uttam Bansode. Ayurvedic Intervention of Viddhakarma in Stammering (Slutter Speech). *AYUSHDHARA*, 2025;12(6):213-220.

<https://doi.org/10.47070/ayushdhara.v12i6.2431>

**Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared**

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