
Effect of *Dhupana Karma* (fumigation) with smoke arising from burning coconut leaves on *Sheetapitta* (Urticaria) – A case study**E.R.H.S.S Ediriweera¹**

¹ Senior Professor, Department of Nidana Chikithsa, Institute of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo, Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka.

Abstract

In *Sheetapitta*, *Vata* and *Kapha* are two *Dosha*, which are primarily vitiated. These in turn are associated with *Pitta Dosha* resulting in *Tridosha Prakopa*, leading to elevated patches, swelling, itching and burning sensation in the skin. *Sheetapitta* can be correlated with Urticaria, a disease characterized by sudden eruptions of itchy wheals which may appear on any part of the skin and mucous membranes. *Dhupana Karma* (fumigation) using fumes emitting from burned fresh coconut leaves is practiced by Sri Lankan traditional physicians in treatment of *Sheetapitta* (urticaria). A patient suffering from *Sheetapitta* was treated with fumes arising from burned fresh coconut leaves and itching, burning sensation, redness in the elevated patches and swelling was completely reduced. *Dhupana Karma* using fresh leaves of coconut is beneficial in treatment of *Sheetapitta* (urticaria).

Keywords: Coconut leaves, *Cocos nucifera*, *Dhupana Karma*, *Sheetapitta*, Urticaria.

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Quick Response code***CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:****Dr. E.R.H.S.S Ediriweera**

Senior Professor, Department of Nidana Chikithsa,
Institute of Indigenous Medicine, University of
Colombo, Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka.

E-mail : ayurvedadocsujatha@yahoo.com

Introduction:

Sheetapitta is produced when vitiated *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha* get increased and become associated with *Pitta Dosha*,^[1] Elevated patches that resemble sting of wasp (*VaratiDashtaSamsthanam Shota*), associated with severe itching (*Kandu*), pricking pain (*Toda*), vomiting (*Chardi*), fever (*Jwara*) and burning sensation (*Daha*) are the clinical features of *Sheetapitta*.^[2] It can be correlated with urticaria. Urticaria is characterized by wheals occurring on any site of the body and they are intensely pruritic.^[3] Yogarathnakara prescribes *Abhyanga* with *Katu Taila* (mustard oil), *Sweda* (fomentation) with hot water and *Vamana Karma* in treatment of *Sheetapitta*.^[4] Further, Yogarathnakara advises to clean the gastrointestinal tract (*Koshta Shuddhi*) after *Snehana* and *Swedana*.^[5] Smoke arising from burned fresh leaves of coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L., Family: *Palmae*, Sinhala name: *Pol Kola*, Sanskrit name: *Narikela*) is used to treat *Sheetapitta* (urticaria) by Sri Lankan Traditional practitioners and it is also used as a home remedy. *Dhupana Karma* (fumigation) is also described in Ayurveda authentic texts as a preventive measure and as a therapeutic measure in *Kushta* and many other ailments.^{[6] [7]}

Case Report:

A 55-year-old female, attending the outdoor patient department (OPD) of Ayurveda Teaching Hospital, Borella, Sri Lanka, for treatment of *Sheetapitta* (Urticaria), was selected. She complained that after eating

prawns, smooth, elevated erythematous plaques (wheals) with itching, burning sensation and pain appeared on the face and the body. The patient did not have fever and vomiting. Severity of the symptoms were recorded using a grading scale which was used in previously published research papers.^[8] Grading scale is given below.

I. *Kandu*, *Daha* and *Toda* (itching, burning sensation and piercing pain)

0 = None

1 = Mild, not annoying or troublesome

2 = Moderate, annoying and troublesome, may interfere with normal daily activity and sleep.

3 = Severe, very annoying and troublesome, substantially interfering with daily activities

4 = Very severe, warrants a visit to the physician.

II. *Mandala* (plaques / wheals)

0 = No Mandala

1 = 1-5 Mandala

2 = 6 -10 Mandala

3 = 10 -15 Mandala

4 = >15 Mandala

111 *Varati Dashta Samsthanam Shota* (elevated erythematous plaques / wheals)

0 = No elevation

1 = Elevation less than 1 mm

2 = Elevation 1 to 2 mm

3 = Elevation more than 2 and less than 3 mm

4 = Elevation more than 3 mm

The patient was fumigated with smoke emitting from burning fresh coconut leaves. Coconut leaves held in a bundle and set afire. When burning well, flames were extinguished, and the smoke arising was

directed to the patient's body and face for fumigation (Fig-1 and Fig-2). Fumigation was carried out for about 15 minutes till itching and elevated erythematous plaques were subsided.

Clinical images:**Fig-1: Coconut leaves****Fgg-2: Fumigation in progress****Fig-3: Before Treatment****Fig-4: After Treatment**

Table 1: Percentage of reduction of symptoms

Clinical features	Before Treatment Grade	After Treatment Grade	Percentage of relief (%)
<i>Varati Dashta Samsthanam Shota</i> (elevated erythematous plaques /wheals)	3	0	100%
<i>Kandu</i> (itching)	4	0	100%
<i>Daha</i> (burning sensation)	4	0	100%
<i>Toda</i> (Piercing pain)	4	0	100%

Results:

The patient's clinical features subsided gradually when the smoke was directed towards the body and face. First, itching, burning sensation and redness of the patches gradually reduced within 15 minutes. Then elevated patches disappeared slowly and the face and body returned to normalcy after about one hour (Table-1, Fig- 3 and Fig- 4).

Discussion:

Cocos nucifera L. (*Narikela*) possess *Guru* and *Snigdha Guna*, therefore, it pacifies vitiated *Vata Dosha*. It has the properties of *Madura Rasa*, *Madhura Vipaka* and *Sheeta Veerya*. Hence it pacifies vitiated *Pitta Dosha*.^[9] *C. nucifera* L. is beneficial in diseases occurred vitiation of *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha*. *C. nucifera* is beneficial in treatment of *Sheetapitta* as it is a disease occurring due to vitiated *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha* becoming associated with *Pitta Dosha*. Smoke emitting from burning *C. nucifera* may also have the same properties and may be effective in *Sheetapitta*.

When there is an allergy, mast cells release chemicals including histamines. When these

chemicals are released in small amounts, they cause local itch, irritation and redness of the overlying skin. In larger amounts, they will cause fluid to leak out of blood vessels, resulting in swelling of the skin. When released in massive amounts, it may result in shock (anaphylaxis). *Dhupana Karma* (fumigation) dilates blood vessels and help in oxidation of blood. It leads to adequate tissue perfusion, oxygenation and remove toxins, thus reducing inflammation, itching and elimination of toxins.^[10]

In the present study, the patient was completely relieved. Because of that the patient was not subjected to any further treatment.

Conclusion:

It is concluded that *Dhupana Karma* (fumigation) with smoke arising from burning fresh coconut leaves is effective in treatment of on *Sheetapitta* (urticaria).

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