

A Comprehensive review on: Therapeutic Uses and vast approach of Ayurvedic Dhoompan Chikitsa

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Abstract:

Introduction: Dhoompan Chikitsa is a therapeutic procedure described in Ayurveda for the inhalation of medicated herbal smoke to manage disorders above the clavicle (Urdhwajatrugata vyadhi). It is primarily indicated for respiratory, sensory organ, and head–neck ailments caused by Vata and Kapha vitiation. **Methodology:** This review is based on data from classical Ayurvedic texts including Charaka Samhita, Kashyap Samhita, and Ashtanga Samgraha, along with modern interpretative literature. Sanskrit verses were translated and interpreted. Herbs, procedures, and indications were compiled to present a focused view on the therapeutic application of Dhoompan Chikitsa. **Result:** Classical literature reveals that Dhoompan alleviates headache, rhinitis, migraine, earache, throat obstruction, halitosis, alopecia, and excessive drowsiness. It strengthens sensory organs, improves hair health, and maintains respiratory clarity. **Discussion:** Dhoompan Chikitsa offers localized and systemic benefits by clearing Vata and Kapha from the upper body channels (Urdhwajatrugata srotas). It has significant preventive and curative potential when used in the appropriate dose, duration, and mode of administration as per classical guidelines. **Conclusion:** Dhoompana Chikitsa, as described in ancient Ayurvedic texts, is a holistic and traditional method for health improvement. It not only safeguards physical health but also enhances mental and spiritual well-being through its multi-dimensional benefits.

Keywords: Dhoompan; Herbal Smoke; Urdhwajatrugata.

Introduction:

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, emphasizes preventive and curative health care through natural methods. Among its therapeutic procedures, Dhoompan Chikitsa (inhalation of medicated herbal smoke) holds a significant place. The term "Dhoom" refers to smoke and "Paan" refers to inhalation, together denoting inhalation of medicated smoke for therapeutic benefits. Classical texts describe it as a remedy for Urdhwajatrugata Vyadhis (diseases of the region above the clavicle), especially those caused by vitiation of Vata and Kapha doshas. It has applications in respiratory health, sensory organ protection, head–neck ailments, and systemic immunity enhancement. With increasing incidences of respiratory disorders and a renewed focus on immunity during pandemic times, understanding the vast scope of Dhoompan Chikitsa becomes relevant for modern-day preventive and curative healthcare. [1], [2]

Aim: To comprehensively review the therapeutic applications and broad approach of Ayurvedic Dhoompan Chikitsa as described in Ayurvedic literature with emphasis on its clinical relevance.

Objectives:

- To compile the classical indications and procedures for Dhoompan Chikitsa.
- To list the medicinal substances used and their therapeutic properties.
- To highlight the specific benefits for Urdhwajatrugata disorders.
- To analyze the procedures, types, and modes of administration as per classical guidelines.

Materials and Methodology: This narrative review is based on data from classical Ayurvedic literature, modern published research, and credible online sources relevant to

Dhoompana Chikitsa. Classical references were taken from Charaka Samhita, Kashyap Samhita, and other authoritative texts. Modern interpretations were reviewed to bridge ancient knowledge with current health needs.

Dhoompan Dravyas (Substances Used for Inhalation); Plant Origin (Sthavara): Herbs like Haridra (Turmeric), Neem, Vidanga, Tagar, Tamalpatra, Laksha, Sarshapa, Bhallataka, Vacha, Kustha. These herbs possess significant anti-microbial properties. Animal Origin (Jangama): Substances like horns, hair, nails, and excreta. These contain keratin, a structural protein with sulfur content. Mineral Origin (Khanija): Compounds like Hartal and Manashila (sulfur compounds). [3]

Classical Indications in Ayurveda:

Ashtanga Samgraha of Vagbhata: Highlights that the nose is the gateway for all treatments related to the head. Herbal fumes administered nasally are called Dhoom Nasya, which can positively affect the respiratory and nervous systems. [2]

Charak Samhita of Agnivesha:

Types of Dhoompana:

1. Prayogika – Preventive, daily use for head–neck cleansing and Kapha prevention.
2. Snaihika – Oleation type, indicated in Vātaja disorders (dryness, stiffness, headache).
3. Vairechanika– Eliminative, indicated in Kaphaja disorders (coryza, cough, heaviness, blockage). [4]

It describes an 8-angul-long wick (~15 cm),[4] made by mixing powdered medicinal herbs. After drying, the wick is dipped in oil and inhaled according to disease-specific protocols by burning it in a holder.

Advantages of Dhoompan: It is indicated in complaints of lockjaws in the head, headache, rhinitis, migraine, ear-ache, pain in eyes, cough, hiccup, dyspnea,

obstruction of the throat, weakness of the teeth, discharge from the ear, nose and eyes due to morbid condition, halitosis, odontalgia, anorexia, lock-jaw, torticollis, pruritis, worms, pallor of the face, mucoid discharge from the mouth, impaired voice, galashundi (uvulitis), upajihvika (ranula), alopecia, graying of hair, and falling of hair. Medicated smoke inhalation alleviates sneezing, excessive drowsiness, loss of consciousness, and hypersomnia. It augments the strength of the scalp hair roots, the senses and voice. Moreover, those who resort to smoke inhalation by oral route are not afflicted by Vata and Kapha dosha affecting the upper part of the body or head, howsoever strong the disease may be.[5] Promoting children's proper development, treating infectious pediatric diseases (Balagraha), skin disorders, fever, epilepsy, and wounds.[6]

Procedure for Inhalation:

- If the defect lies in the head, nose, or eyes, inhalation should occur through the nostrils, and the smoke should also be exhaled through the nostrils.
- If the defect lies in the throat, inhalation should be done through the mouth, ensuring smoke does not pass through the nostrils as it can damage the eyes. [6]

Observations and Result:

Review of classical texts shows that Dhoompan:

- Relieves nasal congestion, headache, and migraine.
- Improves voice quality and sensory function.
- Strengthens hair roots, delays greying, and prevents excessive hair fall.
- Reduces drowsiness, improves alertness, and supports mental clarity. [2]

S.no.	Disease	Dravyas used in Dhoompan Chikitsa
01	Skin disease (<i>kustha</i> , skin lesions, diabetic carbuncles etc.) [3]	<i>Vidanga</i> (False black pepper) which is effective in microbial infections and worm
02	Fever (<i>vishama jwara</i>) [3]	<i>Guggulu</i> , neem leaves, acorus, <i>Saussurea lappa</i> , <i>Haritaki</i> , mustard, barley are mixed with ghee, a wick is prepared, burned and used for fumigation.

03	Epilepsy [7]	<i>Palankashadi Yoga</i>, containing ingredients like <i>Guggulu</i>, <i>Vacha</i> (Acorus), <i>Haritaki</i>, Mustard, <i>Jatamansi</i>, Asafoetida, Calotropis, garlic, <i>Shatavari</i>, <i>Vrischikali</i> - <i>Tragia involucrate</i> <i>Golomi</i>, <i>Nakuli</i>, Saussurea lappa is advised as one of many therapies for Epilepsy Mustard, <i>vacha</i>, <i>kustha</i>, marking nut, <i>ajmoda</i>
04	Hemorrhoids	<i>Tumburu</i>-<i>Xanthoxylum alatum</i>, <i>Vidanga</i> <i>Embelia ribes</i>, <i>Devadaru</i> - <i>Cedrus deodara</i> and <i>Aksata</i> (Barley) mixed with ghee is advised. <i>Brihati</i> (<i>Solanum indicum</i>), <i>Ashwagandha</i>, <i>Pippali</i> and <i>Tulsi</i>, mixed with ghee is advised. This helps to relieve pain and to disinfect.
05	Ear disorders	Fumigation with <i>Aragwadhadi gana</i> and <i>Surasadi</i> group of herbs is advised. In case of ear discharge with bad odor, <i>Guggul</i> is used for fumigating ears.
06	Wounds and Ulcer ^[3]	Fumigation with the fume of <i>ghee</i>, bone-marrow and muscle fat softens the ulcerated tissue. Linen cloth, barley, <i>ghee</i>, <i>Sarala Nirayasa</i>
07	Transitional rhinitis	<i>Guggul</i>, <i>Camphor</i>, <i>Bheemsen Kapoor</i>, <i>Ajwain</i>, <i>Shunti</i>, turmeric powder, Mustard oil cake, Poppy seeds, Rose leaves

Table 1. Therapeutic Uses of Ayurvedic Dhoompan Chikitsa in different diseases^{[1] [2]}

Discussion:

Dhoompan acts through both local and systemic mechanisms. Locally, the medicated smoke reaches mucous membranes of the upper respiratory tract, clearing Kapha and stimulating sensory pathways. Systemically, volatile active compounds enter circulation and support dosha balance. Proper method, choice of herbs plays a critical role in determining therapeutic effect; for example, Haridra and Neem offer antimicrobial actions, while Jatamansi and Tagar reduce psychological stress, and adherence to classical guidelines are essential to avoid adverse effects. While modern inhalation therapies often focus on pharmacological agents, Dhoompan integrates multi-herbal synergism with holistic dosha-based assessment, offering a unique therapeutic advantage.

Vast Approach of Dhoompan Chikitsa in the Pandemic Period: The ancient Ayurvedic practice of Dhoompana Chikitsa has gained renewed importance in the context of global pandemics, especially with an increasing focus on holistic health and immunity enhancement. [8]

1. **Boosting Immunity**

- The inhalation of herbal fumes stimulates the respiratory system and immune responses.
- Dhoompan strengthens body channels (strotas) and helps the body combat viral infections by:
 - o Reducing inflammation in the nasal and respiratory pathways.
 - o Preventing secondary infections, which are common in pandemic illnesses.

2. **Psychological Benefits**

- Prolonged pandemics often lead to stress, anxiety, and psychological disturbances.
- Dhoompan herbs like Jatamansi (Spikenard), Tagar, and Vacha possess calming properties, which:
 - o Help reduce anxiety and stress.
 - o Promote restful sleep.
 - o Aid in mental clarity and focus.

3. **Role in Respiratory Health**

- Many pandemics, such as COVID-19, target the respiratory system.
- Dhoompan with herbs like Vacha and Kantakari can:
 - o Clear nasal congestion.
 - o Act as a bronchodilator.
 - o Reduce respiratory infections and allergies.

4. **Cost-Effective and Sustainable**

- Dhoompana is a low-cost, natural method requiring herbs that are easily available.
 - It is sustainable and does not involve harmful chemicals, making it environmentally friendly.
- Key Herbs for Dhoompan:
1. Haridra (Turmeric): Antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory.
 2. Neem: Broad-spectrum antiviral and antibacterial.
 3. Guggulu (Commiphora wightii): Immunity booster.
 4. Jatamansi: Relaxant and stress reliever.
 5. Tagar: Calming and purifying properties.
 6. Vacha (Acorus calamus): Clears respiratory pathways. [3]

Conclusion:

In the pandemic period, Dhoompana Chikitsa offers a natural, multi-faceted approach to health preservation. By enhancing immunity, supporting mental health, and improving respiratory function, it aligns perfectly with modern healthcare needs. Ayurveda's timeless wisdom provides practical

solutions to safeguard humanity, making Dhoompan Chikitsa a valuable tool in pandemic management. Dhoompana Chikitsa, as described in ancient Ayurvedic texts, is a holistic and traditional method for health improvement. It not only safeguards physical health but also enhances mental and spiritual well-being through its multi-dimensional benefits.

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Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this article.

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