



A CASE STUDY ON THE HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT OF AUTISM THROUGH *BALPANCHAKARMA* AND *VIDDHAKARMA* THERAPIES

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Abstract: **Introduction** - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurological and developmental condition that affects brain function, leading to challenges in communication, social interaction, and imaginative play. Autism often impacts parents and those around the child more than the child themselves, due to unusual behaviors. In *Ayurveda*, '*Mano-upghaat*' refers to a range of neuropsychological disorders that disrupt the normal functioning of cognitive and behavioral aspects, including *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Sangya*, *Smriti*, *Bhakti*, *Sheela*, *Cheshta*, and *Achara*.

Aims and Objectives – To assess the effectiveness of *Ayurvedic* treatments and therapies—such as *Panchakarma* and *Viddhakarma*—along with lifestyle modifications, in the holistic management of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Material and Method – A 2-year-5-month-old male patient was selected for the study, presented with complaints of speech impairment, poor eye contact, unable to walk without support, reduced attention and concentration, unable to follow commands or instructions, and scared of people around him.

Result- The child showed noticeable improvement: better eye contact, responsiveness to instructions, reduced fear of strangers, and independent walking with 5–6 steps.

Conclusion - Factors like digital exposure, limited parent-child communication, sedentary lifestyle, and reduced social interaction contribute to stress and mental health issues. *Ayurvedic* therapies like *Panchakarma* strengthen both body and mind, while *Viddha Karma* helps clear vascular obstructions and stimulate nerve endings. Combined with oral medications, they show effective results in managing Autism.

Key words - *Mano-upghaat*, *Panchakarma*, *Viddhakarma*, *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Smriti*.

Introduction- Despite proper care during antenatal, natal, and postnatal periods, Autism prevalence is rising—1 in 68 in 2021, with a 3:1 male-to-female ratio ^[1]. Contributing factors include digital overexposure, reduced social interaction, sedentary lifestyle, and limited parent-child communication. Etiology involves neurotransmitter and metabolic abnormalities, genetics, immune, and environmental factors. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition marked by difficulties in social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviors. It significantly affects daily functioning and poses challenges for both children and their families.

In Ayurveda, Autism is not explicitly described as a distinct disease and cannot be directly correlated with any single condition. But descriptions of abnormal behaviour are found in different texts. As per Acharya Charaka and Sushruta, mentioned in Nidan Sthana, Symptoms like *Anavasthita Chitta*, *Mano Vibhrama*, *Smriti Vibhrama*, *Sheela Vibhrama*, *Chesta Vibhrama*, *Achara Vibhrama*, and *Buddhi Vibhrama* ^[2,3]. As mentioned in Madhava Nidana, *DheeVibhrama*, *Bhraant Gyanatvam*, *Satva Pariplava*, *Manashch Chanchalatva*, *Adheer Karatvam*, *Abaddha Vakratvam*, *Asambaddh Vachanatva* ^[4] - these symptoms can be correlated with Autism. Though not named directly, symptoms similar to Autism are described individually under ***Doshaja Unmada Vyadhi*** in Ayurveda. Probable *Nidana* of Autism includes *Asatmendriyarth Samyoga*, *Pragyapradha*, *Parinaam* (improper regime during *Ritukala*, age factor of parents, etc), *Beejdushti*, *Aharaj nidana* enhancing *Tridoshas*, and *Viharaj nidana* enhancing *Manasik doshas*.

Patient information - A 2-year-5 months old male patient from BHEL, Haridwar, visited the Kaumarbhritya Outpatient Department (OPD) on 22 Jan 2025 (O.P.D registration no. – B 268/ 2306) with chief complaints of speech impairment, poor eye contact, unable to walk without support, reduced attention and concentration, unable to follow commands or instructions and scared of people around him. According to his mother, he had a history of delayed developmental milestones. For these complaints patient had previously visited a government hospital in Dehradun, and after thorough examination and Psychological assessment, he was diagnosed with Global Developmental Delay (GDD) with features of Autism. So, with the above complaints patient came to Rishikul Ayurveda College & Hospital, Haridwar, for further management.

Family History- His elder sibling (brother) had a history of Autism.

Birth History – The mother, aged 36, had a normal prenatal course with proper antenatal care. The child was born full-term via cesarean, with a birth weight of 2.6 kg, a normal cry, and pink color. No notable postnatal issues, trauma, or seizures were reported.

Developmental history - Developmental delays noted: head control at 9 months, sitting at 18 months, walking with support after 2 years. Babbling began at 9–10 months, but no clear words yet. Dependent in adaptive behaviors; delayed social smile and eye contact. Partially oriented to person, not to color, time, or place.

Baseline Findings – The patient's general condition was average, with 14 kg of weight, 95 cm of height, 15.5 kg/m² of body mass index, and mid-upper arm circumference of both arms 14 cm. The patient's vitals were 98.2°F of temperature, 86 beats/min of pulse rate, 24 breaths/min of respiratory rate, and 100/64 mmHg of blood pressure.

On systemic examination, the Patient was conscious, but not well-oriented to person, place, and time. Heart sounds S1 and S2 were heard. Chest clear, equal air entry bilaterally. Abdomen soft, non-tender, normal bowel sounds.

CLINICAL FINDINGS-

Physical examination – The patient was examined according to *Ayurvedic Pariksha*, and findings were summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Physical examination according to *Ayurvedic Pariksha*:

Ashtavidhapariksha(eight-fold examination)	Dashavidha pariksha (ten-fold examination)
<i>Nadi: Vata Pradhan Pitta Anubandhi</i>	<i>Prakriti : Kapha – Pittaja</i>
<i>Mutra: Samanya Pravriti, Peetabh Varn</i>	<i>Vikriti: Vata-Kapha Pradhana</i>
<i>Mala: Niram</i>	<i>Sara: Rasa sara</i>
<i>Jivha: Lipta</i>	<i>Pramana: Madhyam</i>
<i>Shabda: Aspatha</i>	<i>Satmya: Madhyam</i>
<i>Sparsha: Ruksha, Samsheetoshana</i>	<i>Satva: Avara</i>
<i>Drikka: Samanya</i>	<i>Ahara Shakti: Madhyam</i>
<i>Aakriti: Samanya</i>	<i>Vyayama Shakti: Avara</i>
	<i>Vaya: Balyavastha</i>

Clinical assessment – The child presents with issues with communication, intolerance to sounds, and no eye following, aversion to touching, hyperactivity, inappropriate laughing or crying, and delayed speech development.

Diagnostic assessment –

- **Investigation:**
 - a. **Psychological assessment** (03/09/2024) – Findings are as follows:
 - DST (DQ) – 21, Indicative of severe levels of deficits in childhood development
 - VSMS (DQ) - 35, Indicative of a severe level of deficits in Adaptive functioning
 - M-CHAT-R -5, Suggestive of medium risk of Autism
 - b. **BERA test** (05/09/2024) – Suggests B/L normal hearing.
- **Ayurveda diagnosis:** *Doshaj Unmada Vyadhi*
- **Conventional diagnosis:** Autism

Therapeutic intervention –

- **Treatment Protocol:** Following a detailed assessment and history from the mother, the child was planned for treatment with internal and external medications, along with *Panchakarma* and *Viddhakarma* therapies as part of the intervention.[Table no. 2]
- **Treatment duration** – 2.5 months

Table 2

Therapeutic Intervention

OPD visit	Oral Medication	Therapies		Duration
		<i>Panchkarma</i>	<i>Viddhkarma</i>	
First visit (22/01/25)	<i>Dadimashtak churna</i> -450 mg bid <i>Chitrakadi Vati</i> – 1 tab bid	-	-	For 3 days
Second visit (26/01/25)	<i>Shishubharan rasa</i> – 65 mg <i>Giloy satva</i> - 65 mg <i>Brahmi vati</i> – 35 mg <i>Ashwagandha churna</i> – 250 mg <i>Praval bhasma</i> – 65 mg <i>Amalaki rasayana</i> – 125 mg	<i>Abhyanga</i> with <i>Ksheerbala taila</i> <i>Shali shashtika</i> <i>pind sweda</i>	<i>Viddhkarma</i> in <i>Shankh</i> and <i>Sthapni</i> .	For 15 days

	1 * 2 doses with honey <i>Kalyanaka ghrita</i> – ½ tsp oil with milk	<i>Shiropichu</i> with <i>Brahmi Taila</i>		
Third visit (12/02/25)	Same Treatment	-	-	For 7 days
Fourth visit (19/02/25)	<i>Brahmi vati(suvarn)</i> - 35 mg <i>Brihat vata chintamani rasa</i> – 35 mg <i>Giloy satva</i> – 125 mg <i>Ashwagandhachurna</i> -500 mg <u><i>Madhuyashti churna</i></u> –250 mg 1* 2 doses with honey and sauf arka <i>Samvardhana ghrita</i> – ½ tsp oil with milk (empty stomach)	<i>Abhyanga</i> with <i>Ksheerbala taila</i> <i>Shali shashtika pind sweda</i> <i>Shiropichu</i> with <i>Brahmi Taila</i>	<i>Viddhkarma</i> in <i>Shankh</i> and <i>Sthapni</i> .	For 15 days
Fifth visit (02/03/25)	Same treatment	-	-	For 7 days
Sixth visit (10/03/25)	<i>Brahmi vati(Suvarna)</i> – 65 mg <i>Giloy satva</i> – 65 mg <i>Aswagandha churna</i> – 500 mg <i>Amalaki rasayana</i> – 125 mg <i>Praval bhasma</i> – 65 mg <u><i>Vacha churna</i></u> – 35 mg 1* 2 doses with honey <i>Kalyanaka ghrita</i> – ½ tsp oil with milk	<i>Abhyanga</i> with <i>Ksheerbala taila</i> <i>Shali shashtika pind sweda</i> <i>Shiropichu</i> with <i>Brahmi Taila</i>	<i>Viddhkarma</i> in <i>Shankh</i> and <i>Sthapni</i> .	For 15 days
Seventh visit (27/03/25)	Same Treatment	-	-	For 15 days

Follow-up and outcomes –

Symptoms	Before treatment	After treatment
Social interaction	Less eye contact	Started looking and reacting to others
	Fewer facial expressions	Started smiling at strangers
	Aversion to touch	Hold hands with his brother.
Communication	No/ few talks	No significant improvement
	Inappropriate Jargon	Started asking for things with one or two words
Behaviour	Lack of awareness	No significant improvement
	Hyperactive	Children become calm, and hyperactivity subsides a bit
	Purposeless movements	Mild relief in repetitive behaviour of a child, like constantly tapping the table
	Walk with support	Started walking 5-6 steps without support

Discussion and Conclusion –

Mode of action of drugs-

Dadimashtak Churna and *Chitrakadi Vati* have ingredients that have *Deepana* and *Pachana* properties. *Brahmi* and *Amalaki* have *Medhya* properties that enhance learning and academic performance, improve mental alertness, sharpen short-term and long-term memory, rectify speech disorders, increase concentration, and intellectual ability in children. *Ashwagandha* and *Kalyanak ghrita* have been used for millennia as a *Rasayana* and act as *Balya* and *Medhya*, both for children; therefore affects positively in the physical and mental health of children. *Giloy* acts as an immunomodulator. *Vacha* acts as ‘*Vachan Shakti Vardhak*’ due to its *Kaphvatahara* properties; it helps stimulate nerves in the oral cavity, and also works as a *rasayana*. *Samvardhan ghrita*, mentioned by *Acharya Kashyap*, is beneficial for the rapid growth of a healthy child and the treatment of children with *Panguta*, *Mukatva*, *Ashruti*, and *Jadartva* conditions. Most of the drugs have *Kashaya*, *Madhura*, and *Lavana rasa*, *Guru Guna*, *sheet virya*, and *Madhur Vipaka*, which are opposite to the properties of *Vata*.

Mode of action of Panchkarma therapies –

The word *Abhyanga* stands for the administration of oil through the process of rubbing, and oil has been considered the best for pacifying the *Vata Dosha*. The advantage of *Abhyanga*, in the disorders caused by *Vata* vitiation, is also due to its application on the prime location of *Vata*, i.e. Skin. Additionally, it acts as *Vatahara*, *Pushtikara*, *Ayushya*, *Swapnakara*, *Klesha-sahatva*, *Abhighata-sahatva*, and *Kapha-Vatanirodhana*.

Shashtika Shali Pinda Sweda is a nourishing therapy that strengthens the neuromuscular system. The main properties of *Shashtika* are *Snigdha*, *Guru*, *Sthira*, *Sheeta*, and *Tridoshaghna*. It improves muscle tone, flexibility, and motor function while calming aggravated *Vata dosha*. It acts as *Swedana*, *Snehana*, and *Brimhana* simultaneously.

Shiropichu delivers medicinal oil through the *Twacha* and *Srotas* (microchannels), promoting systemic effects. It enhances cerebral circulation, calms the nervous system, and helps manage stress and psychological symptoms linked to vascular and neurological imbalances. *Shiropichu* works on *Tarpak Kapha*, *Sadhak Pitta*, and *Pran Vayu*. At the same time, the *Bhrimhana*, *Balya*, *Vaatashamana*, and *Medhya* properties of *Taila* amend all *Maanasvikaras*.



Fig a – Balpanch karma procedure – *Abhyanga*, *Shastika Shali Pinda Sweda* and *Shiropichu*

Probable mode of action of Viddhakarma- *Viddha Karma*, described by *Acharya Sushruta* as part of the *Ashtavidha Shastra*, involves inserting a fine needle at specific points based on the disorder. The area is disinfected, and the needle is gently inserted to half a rice grain’s depth (*Ardh brihi*) for 15–30 seconds, and slowly removed. It balances *Vata* and *Kapha* by promoting lightness and *Vatanulomana*, while *Rakta Srava* clears *Srotas*, boosts circulation, and aids detoxification.

For the management of *Unmada and Apasmara Vyadhi* following references are found in the Samhitas:- The sites mentioned for *Viddhakarma* in *Unmada* are – *Shankh keshant, Urah, Apanga, and Lalaat* (Su.Sha 8/17)^[5] and for *Viddhakarma* in *Apasmara* are – *Hanusandhi and Bhrumadhya*. (Va. Su. 27/13)^[6].

The sites were selected based on the patient's condition and with the informed consent of the mother – *Shankha (Bhruvor antyo upari)*, at the lower border of the zygomatic arch in the depression anterior to the condylar of the mandible, and mouth closed, and *Bhrumadhya (Bhrumadhye sthapni)*, at the Glabella midpoint of eyebrows, just above the nose.



Fig a- 26 no. needle, cotton and spirit



Fig b- Demonstration of Viddhakarma points in Autism



Fig c- Viddhakarma in Sthapni (Bhrumadhya)



Fig d - Viddhakarma in Shankha (Bhruvor antyo upari)



Conclusion -ASD is a chronic condition causing varying levels of functional impairment into adulthood. With no clear cause or cure, it remains a significant challenge. According to *Ayurveda*, autism may result from *Beeja Dosha* (genetic factors), *Ahara Dosha* (poor diet), *Agni Dushti* (impaired digestion), *Medha* (cognitive) issues, and *Vata Dushti*. *Ayurvedic* treatment offers a safe, long-term approach, with gradual improvements seen after each course of management. Additionally, *Panchakarma* and *Viddhakarma* therapies hold significant potential in treating autism and warrant further research and clinical exploration.

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