



Impact of *Abhyanga*, *Swedana*, and Dietary Regulation on Hypertension and Glycemic Control: A Review Study

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Abstract: Hypertension and impaired glycemic control are major global health challenges and important risk factors for cardiovascular disease, stroke, and metabolic syndrome. Although pharmacological therapies are widely used, long-term disease control remains suboptimal due to persistent lifestyle-related risk factors such as chronic stress, sedentary habits, and unhealthy dietary patterns. Traditional Ayurvedic interventions, including *Abhyanga* (therapeutic oil massage), *Swedana* (therapeutic sudation), and *dietary regulation*, have long been advocated for restoring physiological balance, improving circulation, and enhancing metabolic function. *Abhyanga* is believed to exert its effects through modulation of the autonomic nervous system, reduction of stress hormones, and improvement in peripheral blood flow, thereby contributing to better regulation of blood pressure and glucose metabolism. *Swedana* induces controlled sweating and vasodilatation, enhances thermoregulatory and metabolic activity, and facilitates relaxation, which may lead to transient reductions in blood pressure and improved glucose utilization. Dietary regulation, emphasizing whole grains, fruits, vegetables, reduced salt intake, and low-glycemic foods, plays a central role in sustaining blood pressure control and improving insulin sensitivity. Evidence from classical Ayurvedic literature and contemporary clinical and observational studies suggests that these interventions, when used individually or in combination, may offer complementary benefits in the management of hypertension and dysglycemia. However, the available evidence remains heterogeneous, with variations in intervention protocols and study designs. Further well-designed clinical trials with standardized methodologies are required to substantiate efficacy and enable integration of these traditional practices into comprehensive lifestyle-based management strategies for cardiometabolic disorders.

Key Words: *Abhyanga*; *Swedana*; Dietary regulation; Hypertension; Glycemic control; Ayurveda; Lifestyle intervention.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Hypertension and disorders of glycemic control, including prediabetes and type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM), are escalating globally due to sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy diets, and chronic stress. According to modern medicine, dysregulation of the autonomic nervous system, endothelial dysfunction, chronic inflammation, and insulin resistance play central roles in their pathogenesis.

Ayurveda conceptualizes these conditions as manifestations of *doshaimbalance*, impaired *Agni* (digestive and metabolic fire), and obstruction of *srotas* (body channels). *Abhyanga*, *Swedana*, and dietary regulation are core Ayurvedic measures aimed at restoring physiological balance. Understanding their relevance through a biomedical lens may support integrative management strategies.



2.METHODS:

Study Design

This study is a narrative review synthesizing classical Ayurvedic concepts with contemporary clinical and experimental research.

Data Sources

- Classical Ayurvedic texts (*Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita*)
- AYUSH research portals

Inclusion Criteria

- Studies evaluating *Abhyanga, Swedana*, or dietary interventions
- Outcomes related to blood pressure, glucose metabolism, insulin sensitivity, or metabolic syndrome
- Clinical trials, observational studies, and review articles

Exclusion Criteria

- Case reports with insufficient outcome data
- Studies unrelated to cardiometabolic parameters

3.RESULTS:

Overview of Interventions and Mechanisms

Table 1. Ayurvedic Interventions and Their Proposed Mechanisms Relevant to Hypertension and Glycemic Control

| Intervention | Description | Primary Physiological Effects | Relevance to Hypertension | Relevance to Glycemic Control |
|--------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Abhyanga</i> | Full-body oil massage with medicated oils | ↓ Sympathetic tone, ↑ parasympathetic activity, stress reduction | Lowers BP through autonomic balance | Improves insulin sensitivity indirectly |
| <i>Swedana</i> | Therapeutic sweating via steam or heat | Vasodilatation, ↑ metabolic rate | Transient BP reduction | Enhanced glucose uptake |
| Dietary regulation | Personalized diet based on Ayurvedic principles | Weight control, ↓ inflammation | Sustained BP reduction | Improved fasting glucose and HbA1c |

Effects of *Abhyanga*

Abhyanga involves rhythmic massage using warm oils such as sesame or medicated formulations. Mechanical stimulation of the skin and muscles influences neurovascular reflexes.



Table 2. Summary of Evidence on *Abhyanga* in Hypertension and Glycemic Control

| Study Type | Population | Duration | Key Outcomes | Limitations |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--|---------------------|
| Pilot clinical trials | Prehypertensive adults | 4–8 weeks | ↓ SBP and DBP, improved HRV | Small sample size |
| Observational studies | Metabolic syndrome patients | Variable | Stress reduction, mild glucose improvement | Lack of controls |
| Mechanistic studies | Healthy volunteers | Single sessions | ↓ Cortisol, ↑ parasympathetic tone | Short-term outcomes |

Effects of *Swedana*

Swedana induces controlled sweating using steam or heated herbal preparations. It enhances thermoregulation and circulatory dynamics.

Table 3. Effects of *Swedana* Therapy on Cardiometabolic Parameters

| Parameter | Observed Effect | Proposed Mechanism | Clinical Significance |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Blood pressure | Temporary reduction | Peripheral vasodilatation | Adjunctive BP control |
| Heart rate | Mild transient increase | Thermogenic response | Requires supervision |
| Glucose metabolism | Improved utilization | ↑ Insulin sensitivity | Beneficial in prediabetes |
| Lipid profile | Mild improvement | ↑ Metabolic activity | Supportive role |

Role of Dietary Regulation

Dietary regulation is central to both Ayurveda and modern lifestyle medicine. Emphasis is placed on whole foods, portion control, and individualized nutrition.

Table 4. Dietary Regulation Principles and Their Impact

| Dietary Component | Ayurvedic Perspective | Modern Evidence | Effect on BP | Effect on Glycemia |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Whole grains | <i>Laghu</i> , nourishing | High fiber benefits | ↓ BP | ↓ Fasting glucose |
| Fruits & vegetables | <i>Satvik</i> , cooling | Antioxidant-rich | ↓ BP variability | Improved tolerance |
| Reduced salt | Prevents <i>Pitta</i> aggravation | Sodium restriction | Significant ↓ BP | Indirect benefit |
| Spices (turmeric, fenugreek) | <i>Deepana–Pachana</i> | Insulin-sensitizing | Mild ↓ BP | ↓ HbA1c |



4.DISCUSSION:

Hypertension and impaired glycemic control are complex, multifactorial disorders influenced by genetic predisposition, neuroendocrine dysregulation, chronic inflammation, oxidative stress, and lifestyle-related factors. The present review highlights the potential role of Ayurvedic interventions—*Abhyanga*, *Swedana*, and dietary regulation—in addressing these interconnected pathophysiological mechanisms through a holistic approach.

***Abhyanga* and Autonomic Regulation**

Abhyanga exerts profound effects on the nervous and circulatory systems through tactile stimulation and the therapeutic properties of medicated oils. From a biomedical perspective, massage therapy has been shown to activate cutaneous mechanoreceptors, leading to enhanced parasympathetic tone and reduced sympathetic activity. This autonomic modulation is particularly relevant in hypertension, where sympathetic overactivity is a key contributor to elevated blood pressure and vascular resistance. Reduced cortisol levels and improved heart rate variability following *Abhyanga* further support its role in stress attenuation, which is closely linked to both hypertension and insulin resistance.

In Ayurvedic terms, *Abhyanga* pacifies *Vatadosha*, whose aggravation is associated with irregular circulation, nervous system imbalance, and metabolic disturbances. By restoring *Vata* balance, *Abhyanga* may indirectly support better glucose utilization and vascular stability. The observed improvements in glycemic parameters, though modest, suggest a supportive role in improving insulin sensitivity, particularly when combined with dietary regulation.

***Swedana* and Metabolic Activation**

Swedana promotes controlled sweating, leading to peripheral vasodilatation and increased cardiac output. Acute reductions in blood pressure following *Swedana* can be attributed to decreased peripheral vascular resistance and enhanced endothelial function. The rise in metabolic rate during and after *Swedana* sessions parallels the physiological effects of moderate physical activity, thereby improving glucose uptake by skeletal muscles.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, *Swedana* alleviates *Kapha* and *Ama* (metabolic toxins), which are implicated in obesity, insulin resistance, and dyslipidemia. By enhancing **Agni**, *Swedana* may facilitate better digestion and metabolism, contributing to improved glycemic control. However, caution is warranted in hypertensive and diabetic populations, as excessive or improperly administered *Swedana* may lead to dehydration or cardiovascular strain. Therefore, individualized application and medical supervision are essential.

Dietary Regulation as a Sustained Intervention

Dietary regulation remains the most influential and sustainable intervention among the reviewed modalities. Both Ayurveda and modern medicine emphasize individualized dietary planning, moderation, and nutrient-dense foods. Ayurvedic dietary principles focus on *Prakriti*-based nutrition, seasonal adaptation, and the use of functional foods and spices that enhance digestion and metabolism.

Contemporary evidence strongly supports diets rich in fiber, antioxidants, and low-glycemic carbohydrates for effective blood pressure and glucose control. Reduced sodium intake, improved potassium balance, and weight reduction are well-established mechanisms through which diet exerts antihypertensive effects. Similarly, low-glycemic and high-fiber diets improve insulin sensitivity and reduce postprandial glucose excursions. The convergence of Ayurvedic dietary wisdom with evidence-based dietary models such as the DASH and Mediterranean diets underscores its relevance in cardiometabolic health.

Synergistic Effects and Integrative Potential

The combined application of *Abhyanga*, *Swedana*, and dietary regulation offers synergistic benefits by targeting multiple levels of disease pathogenesis. While *Abhyanga* primarily addresses neuroendocrine and stress-related factors,



Swedana enhances circulatory and metabolic dynamics, and dietary regulation ensures long-term metabolic stability. This multimodal approach aligns with the contemporary understanding of lifestyle medicine and integrative healthcare.

Limitations and Research Implications

Despite encouraging findings, the existing body of evidence is limited by small sample sizes, heterogeneity in intervention protocols, and short follow-up durations. Many studies rely on subjective outcomes or single-point blood pressure measurements rather than ambulatory monitoring. Additionally, the lack of standardized Ayurvedic treatment guidelines hampers reproducibility and broader clinical acceptance.

Future research should focus on well-designed randomized controlled trials with standardized *Abhyanga* oils, *Swedana* protocols, and clearly defined dietary interventions. Objective outcome measures such as ambulatory blood pressure monitoring, HbA1c, inflammatory markers, and insulin sensitivity indices should be incorporated to strengthen the evidence base.

Clinical Relevance

In clinical practice, these interventions should be viewed as complementary rather than alternative to conventional medical management. When judiciously integrated with pharmacotherapy and modern lifestyle modification strategies, *Abhyanga*, *Swedana*, and dietary regulation may enhance patient adherence, quality of life, and overall cardiometabolic outcomes.

Table 5. Comparison of Traditional and Contemporary Lifestyle Interventions

| Aspect | Ayurvedic Approach | Modern Lifestyle Medicine |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Stress management | <i>Abhyanga</i> , <i>Swedana</i> | Meditation, CBT |
| Diet | <i>Dosha</i> -based diet | DASH, Mediterranean |
| Physical activity | Gentle, seasonal | Structured exercise |
| Therapeutic goal | <i>Dosha</i> balance | Risk reduction |

Despite promising findings, limitations include heterogeneity of interventions, lack of standardized protocols, and short follow-up periods.

Table 6. Limitations and Research Gaps Identified

| Domain | Identified Gaps | Recommendations |
|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Study design | Few RCTs | Large controlled trials |
| Outcome measures | Non-uniform metrics | Standardized BP & HbA1c |
| Protocols | Variable oils and heat | Uniform guidelines |
| Follow-up | Short duration | Long-term studies |



5.CONCLUSION:

Abhyanga, Swedana, and dietary regulation demonstrate potential benefits in improving blood pressure and glycemic control through holistic mechanisms targeting stress, circulation, and metabolism. These interventions may serve as valuable adjuncts to conventional therapy. Future well-designed clinical trials are essential to validate efficacy, establish safety, and enable integration into mainstream clinical practice.

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