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Evaluation of Patient Satisfaction with Swedana Therapy at Ayurveda Teaching Hospital, Kirtipur, Nepal

Dakshina Sharma* Dr. Nirmal Bhusal**

* BAMS Final Year Scholar, Ayurveda Campus, IOM, Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

** Assistant Professor & Head, Dept. of Panchakarma, Ayurveda Campus, IOM, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. ORCID: 0009-0002-2632-5172

Abstract

INTRODUCTION

Swedana therapy is a fundamental component of *Ayurveda*, aimed at inducing perspiration through steam-based treatments to detoxify the body and restore balance. It plays a crucial role in *Ayurveda's Panchakarma* regimen and is utilized for various health conditions, including musculoskeletal disorders and stress-related ailments. Despite its historical significance, patient satisfaction with *Swedana* therapy in modern healthcare settings remains understudied. This study aims to evaluate patient satisfaction with *Swedana* therapy at the *Ayurveda Teaching Hospital* in Kirtipur, Nepal, with a focus on identifying areas for improvement.

METHODS

A cross-sectional study design was used, where structured questionnaires were distributed to patients who received *Swedana* therapy at the *Ayurveda Teaching Hospital*. The questionnaire assessed patient perceptions, demographic influences, and factors affecting satisfaction. Data were analyzed to identify patterns and correlations between patient

satisfaction and various service aspects, including waiting times, facilities, and overall organization of the therapy sessions.

RESULTS

The study found that the majority of patients expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of *Swedana* therapy. However, several areas of concern were highlighted, including long waiting times, inadequate facilities, and organizational inefficiencies. While therapeutic results were generally positive, these operational challenges impacted the overall patient experience and satisfaction levels.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that while *Swedana* therapy is effective in achieving its intended therapeutic outcomes, certain aspects of service delivery require attention. Improvements in patient flow, facility upgrades, and better organization of therapy sessions could significantly enhance patient satisfaction and the overall effectiveness of the treatment. Addressing these concerns would not only improve therapeutic outcomes but also contribute to a more positive patient experience at the *Ayurveda* Teaching Hospital.

Keywords: *Swedana* therapy, Patient satisfaction, *Ayurveda*, Therapeutic care, Healthcare quality.

Address for Correspondence:

Dr. Nirmal Bhusal, Assistant Professor and Head, Dept. of Panchakarma, Ayurveda Campus, IOM, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. **Email id:** bhusalnirmal7@gmail.com.

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Introduction

Ayurveda is a traditional system of medicine [1], rooted in Vedic literature [2], offering preventive, diagnostic, and therapeutic health services [3]. Globally, traditional medicines are recognized for their accessibility, affordability, and cultural acceptability [4]. *Swedana* therapy, a key component of *Panchakarma* in *Ayurveda*, uses heat to facilitate detoxification and restore balance in the body. It is a widely practiced procedure in Ayurvedic *Panchakarma* units [5].

Historically, *Swedana* therapy has been significant in the treatment of conditions ranging from musculoskeletal disorders to stress-related ailments [6]. As one of the *Shadavidhopakrama*, it holds an important place in Ayurvedic therapeutic practice [7].

Tribhuvan University *Ayurveda* Teaching Hospital, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, provides outpatient department (OPD), inpatient department (IPD) services, along with specialized *Ayurveda* services such as *Panchakarma* and *Ksharsutra* [8]. The number of patients seeking *Panchakarma* services is increasing, with *Swedana* being one of the most predominantly used services in the *Panchakarma* department. Despite the presence of competent doctors, problems sometimes persist due to hospital policies, work culture, and attitudes displayed by the staff [9].

Patient satisfaction is a key metric of healthcare quality and reflects both the efficacy and acceptability of *Swedana* therapy in hospital settings. Factors such as general satisfaction, technical quality, interpersonal manner, communication, financial aspects, time spent with the doctor, accessibility, and convenience are essential in determining the quality of care and the overall patient satisfaction level in the hospital [10]. Despite its prominence, there is limited research on patient experiences with *Ayurveda*. No studies have been reported on *Swedana* therapy and patient satisfaction in Nepal. This study aims to address this gap by evaluating patient satisfaction specifically regarding *Swedana* therapy at the *Ayurveda* Teaching Hospital.

Methodology

Study Design and Setting: This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive design conducted at the *Ayurveda* Teaching Hospital, a renowned institution for *Ayurvedic* treatments in Kirtipur, Nepal. The hospital's expertise in *Swedana* therapy made it an ideal setting for evaluating patient satisfaction.

Participants: A purposive sample of 20 patients who had undergone *Swedana* therapy were selected. Inclusion criteria required participants to have completed at least two therapy sessions within the past month. Patients with chronic conditions

were excluded to minimize potential confounding factors.

Data Collection: Structured questionnaires with Likert scale-based responses were used to assess demographic characteristics, therapy-related experiences, and satisfaction levels. Pretesting ensured the reliability and clarity of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic data and satisfaction scores. Responses were analyzed using SPSS software to identify trends and correlations.

Demographic Characteristics:

- Gender: Of the 20 respondents, 65% were female, and 35% were male.
- Age: The age range of participants spanned from 15 to 72 years, with a mean age of 44 years.
- Education: Approximately 35% of participants had completed secondary education, followed by 20% with higher secondary and 20% with postgraduate qualifications.
- Occupation: Housewives constituted the largest group (45%), followed by employed individuals (25%).

Therapeutic Satisfaction:

- Effectiveness: 25% of respondents rated the therapy as highly effective, while the majority expressed moderate satisfaction.
- Environment: While 25% of respondents appreciated the cleanliness and ambiance

of the facility, 40% rated the environment as neutral, indicating areas for improvement.

- Humanity of Care: Compassionate care received the highest satisfaction scores, with 35% expressing satisfaction and 10% reporting very high satisfaction.
- Organizational Factors: Scheduling and waiting times drew mixed responses. While 30% were satisfied, 10% expressed dissatisfaction.

Discussion

The study's findings provide valuable insights into patient experiences with *Swedana* therapy, highlighting both areas of success and those in need of improvement. The majority of patients expressed satisfaction with the therapy's effectiveness, particularly its ability to alleviate symptoms and enhance both physical and mental well-being. These findings align with existing literature, which underscores *Swedana* therapy's role in detoxification, circulation enhancement, and stress reduction.

Demographic trends revealed that younger patients and females reported slightly higher satisfaction levels. This may be attributed to differences in health expectations, communication preferences, or the perceived value of *Ayurvedic* therapies. Such patterns are consistent with broader healthcare research, which

emphasizes the importance of tailoring services to demographic characteristics.

The high satisfaction with the humanity of care reflects the skill and compassion of the therapists. This is a testament to the personalized approach inherent in *Ayurveda*, which prioritizes the patient's holistic well-being. However, neutral and dissatisfied responses regarding environmental and organizational factors suggest potential barriers to achieving optimal satisfaction. Cleanliness, comfort, and the overall ambiance of therapy rooms were common concerns.

Studies focusing on patient satisfaction often emphasize teamwork, the use of technical tools, and the role of information and communication technologies in coordinating care [12]. While much research has been conducted on patient satisfaction with medical services, fewer studies have explored satisfaction with traditional medicine-specific services, particularly the *Panchakarma Swedana* procedure. A cross-sectional descriptive study on patient satisfaction at Naradevi *Ayurveda* Hospital in Nepal, involving patients attending the outpatient department, suggested improvements such as the introduction of a health insurance scheme, faster services, and extended OPD hours to improve service quality [13]. Another study

focused on identifying the gaps between the “perceived” and “practiced” standards of *Panchakarma* procedures, underscoring the need for standardized protocols and better patient education [14]. Appropriate questionnaire may become a useful tool to assess quality of health care in *Ayurveda* hospital [15]. Client satisfaction among patients attending a district *Ayush* Hospital in Karnataka, which had different *Ayush* systems, was also done but not focused on *Swedana* only [16]. The impact of service quality on customer satisfaction of foreigners in *Panchakarma* therapies was done [17].

These studies further support the need for addressing environmental and organizational factors to enhance patient satisfaction. Ensuring a clean, comfortable, and efficient service environment is critical for optimizing the therapeutic experience, especially in traditional medicine practices like *Ayurveda*.

Conclusion

Swedana therapy demonstrates significant therapeutic and patient satisfaction potential, as the majority of patients reported a positive experience. However, addressing gaps in environmental quality, organizational efficiency, and staff training could further enhance patient satisfaction. As *Ayurveda* continues to gain global recognition, these insights are invaluable for effectively

integrating traditional therapies into modern healthcare systems.

Recommendations:

1. **Enhance Facilities:** Improve cleanliness and ambiance in therapy rooms to create a more relaxing and comfortable environment. Introduce efficient scheduling systems to minimize waiting times and improve overall patient experience.
2. **Continuous Training:** Provide regular training for staff in effective communication, patient-centric care, and cultural competency to improve the quality of interactions and therapeutic outcomes.
3. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement robust feedback systems to gather patient opinions and concerns in real time, allowing for immediate action and

continuous improvement of services.

4. **Public Awareness:** Increase public awareness of the benefits and limitations of *Swedana* therapy through informational campaigns, helping to set realistic expectations and enhance patient understanding.

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Conflicts of Interest: Nil

Ethical Compliance: The study did not involve any interventions or clinical trials but focused solely on patient feedback. All data was collected and analyzed in accordance with privacy and ethical guidelines. The study adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

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