



## “Successful Management of Fibromyalgia Through Ayurveda - A Case Report”

Dr. Seethadevi. P<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Raksha .S .D<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Aishwarya Joshi<sup>3</sup>

1. Reader, Department of Panchakarma, JSS Ayurveda Medical College, Mysore

2. PG Scholar, Department of Panchakarma, JSS Ayurveda Medical College, Mysore

3. Final year PG Scholar, Department of Panchakarma, JSS Ayurveda Medical College, Mysore

*(Received: 16 July 2025*

*Revised: 20 August 2025*

*Accepted: 12 September 2025)*

### KEYWORDS

Avarana,  
Fibromyalgia,  
Kaphavruta Vata,  
Revised  
Fibromyalgia  
Impact  
Questionnaire,  
Vatahara chikitsa,  
Case Report

### ABSTRACT:

**Background:** Fibromyalgia (FM) is a chronic condition characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, cognitive disturbances, and various somatic and psychiatric symptoms. The pathophysiology of FM remains unclear, and it is considered idiopathic. Despite the presence of soft tissue pain, there is no evidence of tissue inflammation. In India, the prevalence of FM is estimated to be around 2% in the general population. Ayurvedically, it is correlated with Kaphavruta Vata, presenting with symptoms such as sandhi Ruja (joint pain), gati Sanga (impaired gait), and body stiffness.

**Objective:** To evaluate the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatment in a chronic case of fibromyalgia using the Revised Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire (FIQR) as an outcome measure.

**Clinical Findings:** A 76-year-old male patient with a 6-year history of fibromyalgia presented with generalized joint pain, body stiffness, and gait disturbance. Based on Ayurvedic diagnosis, the condition was identified as Kaphavruta Vata. Treatment was initiated with procedures aimed at removing Avarana (obstruction), followed by Vatahara Chikitsa.

**Outcome:** The patient underwent Ayurvedic therapies targeting both Avarana and Vata. Significant improvement in clinical symptoms was observed, with marked relief in pain, stiffness, and gait. Post-treatment assessment using the FIQR demonstrated a considerable reduction in the impact score, indicating clinical efficacy.

**Conclusion:** This case report highlights the potential of Ayurvedic management, particularly Avarana Removal followed by Vatahara Chikitsa, in providing symptomatic relief in fibromyalgia. The improvement in FIQR scores post-treatment underscores the effectiveness of a classical Ayurvedic approach in managing this chronic condition.

### INTRODUCTION

A common disorder characterized by chronic widespread musculoskeletal pain, aching, stiffness, paraesthesia, disturbed sleep, easy fatigability, and multiple tender points. More common in women than in men[1]. This condition is triggered or aggravated by multiple physical and/or emotional stressors, which include infections as well as emotional or physical trauma, and there is no evidence of any single event causing this condition[2]. Fibromyalgia is often classed under central sensitization

and is considered a disorder of pain regulation[3]. Patients with fibromyalgia seem to have deficiencies in their endogenous analgesic systems. Using functional neuroimaging techniques, the differences in the activation of areas of the brain that are pain-sensitive have been demonstrated. Clinical diagnosis is made when examination, laboratory, or radiographic evaluation reveals soft tissue tender spots but no objective joint abnormalities. Fibromyalgia is typically diagnosed by a rheumatologist when a patient



has a history of pain that has spread to all four quadrants of the body for at least 3 months, and also when pain is caused by digital pressure in at least 11 out of 18 allogenic points, called tender points. These include - Suboccipital muscle insertion bilaterally, Anterior aspect of C5 to C7 intertransverse spaces bilaterally, Mid-upper border of trapezius bilaterally, Origin of supraspinatus muscle bilaterally, Second costochondral junctions bilaterally, 2cm distal to the lateral epicondyles bilaterally, Upper outer quadrants of buttocks bilaterally, Greater trochanteric prominence bilaterally, Medial fat pad of the knees bilaterally. Studies on FM with *Ayurvedic* management were lacking. This creates an immense paradox while approaching a case of FM in *Ayurvedic* clinical practice. Fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) is interpreted as “*Vata Vyadhi*”(Disorders of Vata) [4] with *Kaphavruta Vata Samprapti*(pathogenesis), with features like joint pain and stiffness, with reduced mobility, and it was treated with the Avarana line of treatment. Once the *Kapha* was reduced, *Vatahara Chikitsa* was done. Here, there will be involvement of *Mamsavaha, Asthivaha, and Majjavaha Srotas* as well.

**Case report**

A 76-year-old male patient, Known case of Diabetes mellitus for 7 years and Hypertension for 35 years (under medication), visited the Panchakarma Outpatient Department of JSS Ayurveda Hospital, Mysore, with complaints of low back pain, bilateral thighs, and knee joint pain for 3 months, aggravated for a week. The patient had the same complaints 6 years back in severe form, for which he was hospitalized for a month, was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia, and was under medication. He gradually improved with medication and treatment. He has no history of trauma. But since 3 months, on discontinuation of medicines, he again started developing low back pain, bilateral thigh pain, and knee joint pain. He has difficulty walking and disturbed sleep cycles due to severe pain. Thus, he now visited our Outpatient department for better management of the same and was admitted to our hospital, where he was prescribed *Ayurvedic* medicines and therapies for 10 days.

**Musculoskeletal Examination**

**On Examination of Lumbar Spine -**

- Inspection- No scars, swelling, or redness

Palpation-

- Temperature – Afebrile
- Tenderness – Present
- SLR Test – Negative

Range of movements	Before treatment	After treatment
Flexion	25 degrees	50 degrees
Extension	10 degrees	20 degrees
Lateral bending	10 degrees	20 degrees

**On Examination of Bilateral Knee Joint –**

- Inspection - No scars, swelling, or redness
- Palpation -
  - Temperature – Afebrile bilaterally
  - Tenderness – Present bilaterally
  - Crepitus : ++ bilaterally

Range of movements	Before treatment	After treatment
Flexion	110 degrees	125 degrees
Extension	10 degrees	5 degrees

**Motor Examination –** Right                      Left

- Muscle Bulk –                      Normal                      Normal
- Muscle Tone –                      Normal                      Normal
- Muscle Power –                      4/5                      4/5
- Knee Joint Reflex :                      +3                      +3
- Ankle Joint Reflex :                      +2                      +2
- Babinski Sign                      :                      Negative

Table 1: Therapeutic Intervention

Panchakarma intervention		
09/11/24 to 13/11/24	to	<i>Sarvanga Dhanyamla Seka</i> for 5 days
09/11/24 to 13/11/24	to	<i>Arka Patra Upanaha</i> to the bilateral knee joint for 5 days.



09/11/24 to 13/11/24	<i>Ekanga Churna Pinda Sweda</i> to the lower back with <i>Kolakulattadi Churna + Triphala Churna</i> for 5 days.
14/11/24 to 18/11/24	<i>Janu Basti</i> to the bilateral knee joint with <i>Kottamchukkadi Taila</i> for 5 days.
14/11/24 to 18/11/24	<i>Kati Pichu</i> with <i>Kottamchukkadi Taila</i> for 5 days.
14/11/24 to 18/11/24	<i>Sarvanaga Shashtika Shali Pinda Sweda</i> with application of <i>Ksheerabala Taila</i> for 5 days.
14/11/24 to 18/11/24	<i>Matra Basti</i> with <i>Prabhanjana Vimardana Taila</i> - 50ml for 5 days
09/11/24 to 18/11/24	<i>Talam</i> with <i>Rasnadi Churna + Lemon</i> for 10 days.
Internal medicines	
09/11/24 to 13/11/24	<i>Gandharvahastadi Eranda Taila</i> (0-10ml) before food with warm milk.
09/11/24 to 18/11/24	Tab <i>Rasa Raja Rasa</i> (1-0-1) after food with lukewarm water.
09/11/24 to 18/11/24	Tab <i>Vishatinduka Vati</i> (2-0-2) after food with lukewarm water
09/11/24 to 18/11/24	<i>Bala Saireyakadi Kashaya</i> (10ml-0-10ml) after food with warm water.
09/11/24 to 18/11/24	Take Tab <i>Sucrestat</i> (0-0-2) before food with warm water.
Advice on discharge	
19/11/24 to 3/12/24	Tab <i>Rasa Raja Rasa</i> (1-0-1) after food with lukewarm water.
19/11/24 to 3/12/24	Tab <i>Vishatinduka Vati</i> (2-0-2) after food with lukewarm water
19/11/24 to 3/12/24	<i>Bala Saireyakadi Kashaya</i> (10ml-0-10ml) after food with warm water.
19/11/24 to 3/12/24	Tab <i>Sucrestat</i> (0-0-2) before food with warm water.

## Assessment

Table 2: Showing Revised Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire scores before treatment, after treatment, and at follow-up. Here, higher values indicate the severity except for Domain 3 (Points no. 2, 4, and 6)

	BT(9/11/24)	AT(18/11/24)	FU(3/12/24)
<b>DOMAIN 1</b>			
1. Brush or comb your hair	0	0	0
2. Walk continuously for 20 mins	8	6	3
3. Prepare a homemade meal	2	1	0
4. Vacuum, scrub, or sweep floors	6	5	4
5. Lift and carry a bag full of groceries	6	5	5
6. Climb one flight of stairs	8	6	5
7. Change bed sheets	3	2	1
8. Sit in a chair for 45 minutes	6	5	4
9. Go shopping for groceries	7	5	4
<b>DOMAIN 2</b>			



1. Fibromyalgia prevented me from accomplishing goals for the week	8	6	4
2. I was completely overwhelmed by my fibromyalgia symptoms	0	0	0
<b>DOMAIN 3</b>			
1. Please rate your level of pain	7	5	4
2. Please rate your level of energy	8	6	4
3. Please rate your level of stiffness	7	5	3
4. Please rate the quality of your sleep	7	6	5
5. Please rate your level of depression	4	3	2
6. Please rate your level of memory problems	0	0	0
7. Please rate your level of anxiety	0	0	0

8. Please rate your level of tenderness to touch	6	4	3
9. Please rate your level of balance problems	8	6	4
10. Please rate your level of sensitivity to loud noises, bright lights, odours, and cold	2	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>25.1</b>

(BT: Before treatment, AT: After Treatment, FU: Follow-up)

To assess the efficacy of therapy patient was assessed on the FIQR (Revised Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire). Table no 2. Shows the assessment carried out before starting treatment (09/11/2024), after completion of 10 days of treatment (18/11/2024), and at follow-up after 15 days (03/12/2024). There was a 22% relief seen on FIQR with 10 days of treatment and 15 days of oral medication. There was a reduction in pain and the non-occurrence of symptoms observed at follow-up.

Table 3: The Revised Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire

Domain 1 directions: For each of the following nine questions, check the <u>one</u> box that best indicates how much your fibromyalgia made it difficult to do each of the following activities over the past 7 days:	
1. Brush or comb your hair	No difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>



	Very difficult
2. Walk continuously for 20 mins	No difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very difficult
3. Prepare a homemade meal	No difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very difficult
4. Vacuum, scrub, or sweep floors	No difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very difficult
5. Lift and carry a bag full of groceries	No difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very difficult
6. Climb one flight of stairs	No difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very difficult
7. Change bed sheets	No difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very difficult
8. Sit in a chair for 45 minutes	No difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	Very difficult
9. Go shopping for groceries	No difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very difficult
Domain 2 directions: For each of the following two questions, check the <u>one</u> box that best describes the overall impact of your fibromyalgia over the past 7 days:	
1. Fibromyalgia prevented me from accomplishing goals for the week	Never <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Always
2. I was completely overwhelmed by my fibromyalgia symptoms	Never <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Always
Domain 3 directions: For each of the following 10 questions, check the <u>one</u> box that best indicates the intensity of your fibromyalgia symptoms over the past 7 days:	
1. Please rate your level of pain	No pain <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Unbearable pain
2. Please rate your level of energy	Lots of energy <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> No energy
3. Please rate your level of stiffness	No stiffness <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Severe stiffness
4. Please rate the quality of your sleep	Awoke rested <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>



	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Awoke very tired
5. Please rate your level of depression	No depression <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very depressed
6. Please rate your level of memory problems	Good memory <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very poor memory
7. Please rate your level of anxiety	Not anxious <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very anxious
8. Please rate your level of tenderness to touch	No tenderness <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Very tender
9. Please rate your level of balance problems	No imbalance <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Severe imbalance
10. Please rate your level of sensitivity to loud noises, bright lights, odours, and cold	No sensitivity <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme sensitivity

**DISCUSSION**

Fibromyalgia is a chronic, challenging, and often disabling disorder with symptoms ranging from mild to very severe. It can be treated under *Vata Vyadhi Chikitsa*

in *Ayurveda*, with the patient presenting features of *Kaphavruta Vata* [5] wherein there was *Avarana*[6] of *Vata* by *Kapha Dosha* leading to Pain and Stiffness in the low back, knee joints, thighs, and calf muscles. Hence, *Rukshana's* line of treatment was adopted with therapies like *Dhanyamla Dhara*, *Churna Pinda Sweda*, and *Arkapatra Upanaha*, which helped in removing the *Avarana* of *Kapha*, thus reducing pain and stiffness.

*Dhanyamla Dhara*: It has *Ushna Veerya*, *Ruksha* in nature, it effectively combats the vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*, thereby helping in relieving pain and stiffness in muscles and joints.

*Churna Pinda Sweda*: *Churna Pinda Sweda* was done with *Kolakulattadi* and *Triphala Churna*, which has anti-inflammatory action and thus helped in symptomatic improvement.

*Arkapatra Upanaha*: *Upanaha Swedas* are very much beneficial in the treatment of *Vata-Kaphaja* disorders. *Arkapatra Upanaha* with *Nagaradi Churna* helped in reducing stiffness and improving the mobility of joints.

Once the *Kapha Avarana* was removed, the patient was treated with *Snigdha Vatahara* therapies like *Shastika Shali Pinda Sweda*, *Kati Pichu*, and *Janu Basti*, which helped in reducing symptoms and also provided nourishment to the body. As *Basti* is the main treatment indicated in *Vata Vyadhi*, the patient was also administered *Matra Basti*, which helped in alleviating *Vata*.

*Shastika Shali Pinda Sweda*: It is a form of *Snigdha Sankara Sweda*, which does *Vata Shamana* and *Bruhmana* in nature. *Shastika Shali Pinda Sweda* helped in reducing pain and strengthening muscles & joints.

*Kati Pichu*: *Kati Pichu*, with *Kottamchukkadi Taila*, helped in relieving pain and stiffness. *Kottamchukkadi Taila*, having ingredients like *Kushta*, *Vacha*, *Shunti*, etc., is *Vata-Kaphahara* in nature and helps in the reduction of muscular spasms.

*Janu Basti*: *Janu Basti* is the most widely practiced modality of treatment for knee joint disorders. *Janu Basti* with *Kottamchukkadi Taila* helped in relieving pain and stiffness, also imparting nourishment to the joints, aiding in improved mobility and gait.

*Basti Karma*: *Basti Chikitsa* is like a nectar in the treatment of *Vataja* disorders. *Matra Basti* with



*Prabhanjana Vimardhana Taila*[7], which is mentioned in *Asheeti Vatavyadhi*, helped in relieving pain and stiffness in joints and improving gait.

Patient was orally administered with *Gandharvahastadi Eranda Taila* 10 ml at night with *Ksheera* as *Anupana* for *Koshta Shodhanartha* before *Basti*.

*Rasa Raja Ras*[8] with potent ingredients like *Rasa sindhur*, *Abraka Bhasma*, *Swarna Bhasma*, *Lauha*, and *Rajata Bhasma*, provided significant results in the treatment of Fibromyositis.

*Vishatinduka Vati* [9] contains *Shuddha Kupilu*, *Maricha*, and *Pughaphala*, indicated in *Jeerna Vata Roga*, is a potent analgesic and nervine stimulant that helps in reducing pain and stiffness effectively.

*Bala Saireyakadi Kashaya* has *Vacha*, *Shatavari*, *Devadaru*, *Ela*, *Vidanga*, *Yastimadhu*, etc, which help in nourishment and imparting strength to the body, thereby helping in the improvement of mobility and gait in patients affected with Fibromyalgia.

## CONCLUSION

*Ayurvedic* line of treatment offers a holistic approach in managing Fibromyalgia, which includes *Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa* and *Matra Basti*. These treatments help to reduce the symptoms and improve the Quality of Life.

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