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## Standard operating procedure on steam inhalant (Veadhu) in Siddha System of Medicine

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### Abstract

Siddha is the first and foremost system of medicine laid by our great Siddhars. It comprises of 32 internal and 32 external medications. Among the 32 external therapies, steam inhalation (*Veadhu*) is placed under 5<sup>th</sup> category. Veadhu is defined as the method of stimulation of sweat using medicated steam. It is otherwise called as sweat therapy. This paper gives a standard operating procedure on veadhu and method of its application.

**Keywords:** Siddha, steam inhalation, operating procedure.

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### Introduction

Siddha system of medicine is totally associated only with the southern peninsula of in India. It is patronized extensively, more particularly in Tamil speaking countries like Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius and some parts of Indonesia. Through similar basic principles, treatment methodologies and philosophy are shared Ayurveda, certain variations in dosage forms, formulations, diseases classification are unique to Siddha. *Vaedhu* includes both steam inhalation and steam application to either localized regions or the whole localized regions or the whole body below the neck region. Steam therapy is used both in localized and systematic diseases. Steam bath or warm decoction shower is done by adding fresh, aromatic substances or raw drug powders to boiling water. Immersion of red-hot iron rod or even hot brick to boiling water augments steam generation<sup>(1)</sup>.

### Materials and Methods

#### (A) Materials

For crushing the crude drugs stone mortar and pestle, and for crushing steel mortar and rod, stove or oven, knife, wood and steel spoons, matchbox, tray, oil lamp or candle are used for the preparation of drugs. For administration a screen for privacy, a set of clothes, wet cloth, a tray with cloves, gauze, cotton role, spirit, castor oil, gingelly oil, tissue paper and separate rooms for men and women.

#### (B) Method

By adding fresh herbs, aromatic substances or raw drug powders to boiling water.

#### (C) Therapeutic sources

Plant drug boiled in water, heated stones, and woods.

**(D) Eligible criteria**

Steam inhalation with toxic substances is not advised in newborns, infants, pregnant and lactating women`s.

**(F) Procedure**

For preparation purify (Suthi Murai) the required drugs. Crush them into small pieces. Boil with water in a closed chamber or steamer or pour the highly heated rock stone, brick stone, metal or wood piece into the chamber. For administration, assemble all the articles at therapeutic room bedside. Ensure the steam generator and sitting chamber fully shockproof and properly earthed and the patient is asked to pass urine before beginning the procedure. Confirm the patient about his visit two hours after a meal before going in to the steam bath or have only a light snack like a piece of fruit. Remove any metal jewelry, hearing aid, contact lenses and eye glasses. The patient is asked to drink 500-750 ml of water before starting treatment. Assure the vitals are normal (Temperature, pulse rate, respiratory rate, Blood pressure, Blood sugar etc.). Explain the procedure to the patient. For local or part sweating, wash the site, dry well, apply some medicated oil or leave normal and uncover the area for steaming local perspiration or for whole body sweating, ask the patient to remove the clothings and cover the genital area by a brief or a cloth. The Patient may be applied with medicated oil or without oil and performed either in sitting position covered fully except head or in supine lying position covered below the neck in the separate steam chamber for whole body perspiration. Cover the scalp with cap or cotton cloth and close the chamber. Screen the patient for privacy for privacy and stand near him adjacent to the chamber. Ensure the tap water on and put the thermostat wire into the sitting chamber to maintain

the constant temperature. Start the steam process at 35-40 Degree Celcius. Talk the patient relevant to this procedure to this procedure is to assure his conscious and wait for 10-15 minutes. Stop the steam process and unplug the steam generator chamber and off the tap water. Wait for 5 minutes and open the chamber. Ask the patient to wipe the sweat using a dry towel. Ask the patient to sit in the restroom and wait for 15 minutes. Allow the patient to take cool bath. Wait the patient in the ventilated room and then ask the patient to dress without tight and wait for 15 minutes for relaxation.

**(G) End of the proper therapy**

The patient should feel light in head, chest and throat region. The sputum is properly expelled and no congestion is felt.

**(H) Indications**

Arthritis, hiccough, headache, cough, sinusitis.

**(I) Precautions**

Individuals who have heart diseases, high blood pressure and other cardiovascular problems should consult their healthcare practitioner before using a steam room. Steam rooms and baths unavoidably elevate body temperature and therefore steam bath should not be done after rigorous exercise until the body cools to its natural temperature. Maximum time in a steam room shouldn` t exceed 20 minutes<sup>(2)</sup>.

**(J) Contraindications**

Dryness of skin, Hypertension

**Table 1. Traditional medicines used as steam inhalants<sup>(3)</sup>**

S.No	Diseases	Steam inhalant (Veadhu)
1	Body pain	Ajwon + common salt + long pepper
2	Sinusitis	Leaves of <i>Vitex negundo</i>
3	Sprains	Tubes of bamboo or <i>calotropis</i>
4	Arthritis	Leaves of <i>calotropis gigantia</i> and <i>Vitex negundo</i>
5	Psychiatric disorders	Cow`s urine is boiled and the vapour is inhaled

## Discussion

The process during this therapy cleans the surface impurities from microbes, relaxes chest muscle and relieves a cough, it deeply cleanses the skin without causing dehydration.

## Conclusion

The specialty of steam inhalation is therapeutic in nature. Primarily this therapy stimulates the immune and circulatory system and it is an excellent method of body detoxification.

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