



AN OUTLOOK OF GOUT IN CONTEXT OF VATARAKTA ROGA IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

WHO defines Health as “A state of complete physical, mental & social well-being and merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Health of an individual solely depends on his diet and lifestyle. Ayurveda more than a medical science it is a culture or lifestyle, one should adopt its applied aspects for one’s well-being. But with the march of time, in the rapid modernization most of dietary habits, social structure, lifestyle & environment have been changing. The consumption of baked food, half fried vegetables etc. Cause incomplete digestion. This modern living in India makes fast food culture, which is spreading its wings in remote villages too. Nowadays human beings are vulnerable to many disorders due to their altered lifestyle and food habits. Vatarakta, a common metabolic disorder is a grievous medical condition present in the society. Vatarakta as the name suggest is the vitiation of Vata Dosha and Rakta Dhatu (blood). In this condition the normal flow of Vata is obstructed by Rakta leading to symptoms starting from Paada (foot) and Hasta (hands). It is a Vatapradhana (Vata predominant) Tridoshaja Vyadhi. Vatarakta is a major Vatavyadhi caused due to Avarana (occlusion) pathology. The symptomatology of Gout has striking similarities with those explained in Vatarakta. Gout is a common type of arthritis due to uric acid disturbance where excess uric-acid in blood stream forms crystals in the joint that causes intense pain, swelling and stiffness, it usually affects the joint in the big toe. Numerous studies have established the impact of gout on patient’s morbidity and mortality. Despite major advances in treatment of gout, many patients with gout are not properly controlled and continuing with recurrent flares of gouty arthritis. Therefore, here an attempt is made, to understand Vatarakta (gout) from both modern and Ayurvedic concepts and to discuss the management of the condition from Ayurvedic point of view.

KEY WORDS: Vatarakta, Vatashonita, Khudd-vata, Vatabalasa, Adhyavata.

INTRODUCTION

Description of Vatarakta disease is explained in almost all Ayurvedic Samhitas (Ayurvedic treatise). Vatarakta is known by different names like Vatashonita, Khuddavata, Vatabalasa, Adhyavata, Vataasrika etc. In Vatarakta there is a vitiation of Vata and Rakta where vitiated Vata Dosha leads to the vitiation of Rakta Dhatu and Rasavaha Srotas and Raktavaha Srotas (microvessels carrying blood) are mainly involved in this disease. Joint pain is one of the main feature of this disease. Vatarakta usually starts from the big toe or from hands and gradually involves other joints or tissues. Acharya Charaka explained it in a separate chapter and mentioned two types of Vatarakta as Uttana (superficial form) and Gambheera (joints involved). In Gambheera Vatarakta, the joint involvement is mainly seen therefore can be compared with Gout. Gout is a type of arthritis where disturbed metabolism leads to increase in the level of uric acid in blood, and after some time it forms urate crystals which gets accumulated in joints and leads to sudden onset of pain, inflammation, stiffness, etc. In the joint. Usually it occurs in a single joint but severe gout

can sometimes affect many joints at once, this is known as polyarticular gout. If left untreated, it can cause irreversible damage in the joints, tophi formation, kidney disorders etc.

Description of Vatarakta

1.Vedic period (5000 b.c. - 800 b.c.): There is no description of Vatarakta in any of the four Vedas. In Atharvaveda, only few scattered references of Sakthi (hip joint), Shroni (sacroiliac joint) and Janu (knee joint) are narrated.⁵ In Atharvaveda, Sandhi vikriti term used for joint disorder, which is caused by shleshma vikriti and can be treated by prayers only, but there is no explanation of any disease related to joints like Vatarakta.^{6]}

Puranic period (4000 B.C.- 1000 B.C.)- With the exception of Garuda and Agni Purana, a lot of information is available in the literatures of Purana kala.

Garuda purana- The description of Vatarakta as a rakta-pradhana vyadhi is worth mentioning in the chapter “VATARAKTA NIDAN”, Use of Vardhamana Pippali along with pathya like Guda, Patola, Triphala and Katuki

have been prescribed to alleviate the burning sensation in Vatarakta.^[7]

Agni purana- A precise description of Vatarakta is quoted in Agni Puran and various food items like Raktashali, Godhuma (wheat), Yava (barley), Mudga (green gram) and Madhu (honey) have been advised as pathya for patients suffering from Vatarakta.^[8]

2- Samhita period (2000 B.C. -800 A.D.)-The main classical text of this era is Brihatrayi. Entire aspect of the illness vatarakta from etiology to treatment is described at full length in the books of samhita kaal as follows:

Charaka samhita: (2000 B.C.)- Vatarakta explained in 29th chapter of Chikitsa sthana "Vatashonita chikitsam Vyakasyam". The information of the disease included Nidana, Samprapti, Bheda, Upadrava, Sadhyaasadyatva, Pathya-apathya, Chikitsa sutra & Chikitsa as Bahya & Abhyantara like Shodhana, Shamana as well as Rasayana. The treatment of Vatarakta included Shilajatu, Eranda, Sneha, Lepas, Ghrita, Kashaya, Guggulu, Tailas etc. Other than medicinal treatment, few surgical procedures like Rakta-visravana (blood-letting) by Siravedh, Shring, Jalauka, Suchior Alabu Yantra are also mentioned.

Sushruta samhita: (1000-1500 B.C.)- Sushruta samhita's understanding of Vatarakta is different regarding its types. It states that the Uttana and Avagadha Vatarakta are not the types of this illness rather they are its avasthavisesh. In Sushruta Samhita, the disease has been described in 2 chapters, under Vatavyadhi Nidan sthana 1st Chapter and Mahavatavyadhi Chikitsa sthana 5th chapter where all aspects of disease are described in detail.

Bhela samhita (1000 B. C.)- In Bhela Samhita Chikitsa sthan, brief description of vatarakta is found in chapter 15 i.e. Visarpa Vatashonita adhyaya and in chapter 24 i.e. Vatavyadhi chikitsit adhyaya.

Harita samhita (1000 B.C.)- The disease is mentioned in Harit Samhita, Tiritiya sthana chapter 23, after 'Gridhrsi chikitsa Adhyaya', where the etiology and symptoms have been described briefly along with the use of internal as well as external medication.

Ashtanga samgraha (400 A.D) / Ashtanga hridaya (500 A.D)- In Ashtanga Samgraha (Vatashonita nidana adyaya" & Vatashonita Chikitsama, 16th & 24th chapter) & Ashtanga Hridaya ("Vatashonita Nidana Adyaya" & "Vatashonita chikitsa Adyaya" 16th & 22nd chapter respectively) elaborate description about Nidana, Samprapti, Bheda, Upadrava, Sadhya-asadyatva, Pathya-Apathya, Chikitsa sutra & Chikitsa is available in these texts. Ashtanga Hridaya has also added the management of sama and nirama stage of Vatarakta.

Etiology (causative factors)

The etiology of Vatarakta can be broadly understood under Aharaja Nidana (food related causes) like excess intake of Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter), Amla (sour) Rasa, Sheeta (cool), Ushna (hot), Guru (heavy to digest) Ahara, Alpabhojana (less amount of food), Ajeerna Bhojana (undigested food) etc., Viharaja Nidana^[1]

(lifestyle related causes) like anger, day time sleeping, doing more activities like swimming, trauma or injury etc., other factors like delicate, lazy, obese, more intake of Madhura Rasa (glucose or carbohydrates) and people who have sedentary lifestyle are more prone to get Vatarakta.^[2] The causative factors for Vatarakta can further be understood by the factors vitiating Vata, factors vitiating Rakta. General prevalence of gout is 1-4% of the general population. In western countries, it occurs in 3-6% in men and 1-2% in women. In some countries, prevalence may increase up to 10%. Prevalence rises up to 10% in men and 6% in women more than 80 years old. Annual incidence of gout is 2.68 per 1000 persons. It occurs in men 2-6 folds more than women. Worldwide incidence of gout increases gradually due to poor dietary habits such as fast foods, lack of exercises, increased incidence of obesity and metabolic syndrome.^[3] There are a number of factors that can increase the likelihood of hyperuricemia or gout, like genetic predisposition, lifestyle, eating high protein diet, certain medications can increase levels of uric acid in body such as some diuretics and salicylate containing drugs, being overweight increases risk of gout as there is more turnover of body tissue and more production of uric acid as a metabolic waste, trauma and other health problems like renal problems can reduce the body's ability to efficiently remove waste products, leading to elevated uric acid levels.

Purvarupa (premonitory symptoms)

Purvarupa are those signs which appear earlier to the actual commencement of disease. These symptoms and signs of the disease are not fully evolved and these are few in number. Among the five diagnostic tools, Purvarupa are very helpful in predicting the prognosis of forthcoming disease. Rooting out i.e. termination of the disease at this stage may prevent patient from increased morbidity.

RUPA

Rupa (sign and symptoms) are described on the basis of classification of Vatarakta.

1. According to the site of origin. 2. According to the predominance of Dosha.

According to the site of origin In Charaka Samhita, Vatarakta has been classified on the basis of Dhātu in two forms: (Ch.Chi. 29/12)

1. Uttana Vatarakta 2. Gambhira Vatarakta

Acharya Sushruta has different explanation, according to Acharya Sushruta these are not the types but different stages similar to Kushtha. Initially, it affects the superficial structures like Twaka and Mamsa and later on, it becomes Gambhira i.e. deep seated and affects the deep structure. (Su.Chi. 5/3)

1. Uttana Vatarakta (Ch.Chi.29/20) Kandu - Itching • Daha - Burning sensation • Ruja - Pain • Sira Ayama - Dilatation of the vessels • Toda - Pricking pain • Sphuranam - Throbbing sensation • Kunchana - Contraction • Shyava Twaka - Cyanosis of the skin • Rakta Twaka - Reddish coloration of skin • Bheda -

Splitting type of pain• Gourava - Heaviness• Suptata - Numbness•

2. Gambhira Vatarakta (Ch.Chi.29/21) Swayathu Stabdta - Swelling, which is fixed• Swayathu Kathinya - Swelling with indurations• Arti - Deep pain• Shyavata - Black discoloration• Tamra Twaka - Coppery discoloration of skin• Daha - Burning sensation• Toda - Pricking sensation• Sphurana - Throbbing sensation• Paakavaan - Suppuration•

3. Ubhayashrita Vatarakta (Ch.Chi.29/23) When there is presence of symptoms of both Uttana as well as Gambhira Vatarakta, it is called as Ubhayashrita Vatarakta. Ruja – Pain• Vidaha – Burning sensation• Sandhi-Asthi-Majja Chinndni – Cutting like pain in•

Sandhi-Asthi-Majja Angasya Vakrikarana – Disfigurement of the joints• Khanjatwa – Lameness• Pangutwa – Paraplegia• Vatasya Sarva Shareera Charana –Vitiated Vata• moves all over the body.

According to the predominance of Dosha On the basis of Dosha variation, Vatarakta can be classified as follows-

- ✓ Vataja Vatarakta
- ✓ Pittaja Vatarakta
- ✓ Kaphaja Vatarakta
- ✓ Raktaja Vatarakta
- ✓ Dwandaj Vatarakta
- ✓ Sannipataja Vatarakta

Table 1: Lakshana of different types of Vatarakta.

Sr. Nu.	Vataja Vatarakta	Pittaja Vatarakta	Kaphaja Vatarakta	Raktaja Vatarakta	Dvandavaja Vatarakta
1.	Ayama (mainly in Sira)	Vidaha (Burning sensation)	Staimitya	Shwayathu	Vata-Pittaja
2.	Shoola (Pain)	Vedana (Pain)	Gauravama	Atiruka	Pitta-Kaphaja
3.	Sphurana (Throbbing pain)	Murcha	Sneha Snigdha	Toda	Vata- Kaphaja
4.	Toda (Pricking pain)	Sweda Adhikya (Excessive sweating)	Supti	Tamra Varna	-
5.	Shotha	Shyavata (Bluish color)	Manda Vedana	Chimchimayata	-
6	Change in color of Shotha and Vriddhi or Hani	Mada (Narcosis)	Shitalta Ruksha Sama Abhava	Snigdha	-
7.	Ruksha	Bhrama (Giddiness)	Kandu	Kandu	-

Table 2: Showing Sadhya – Asadhyata Of Vatarakta.

S. No	Sadhya– Asadhyata ¹⁻⁴	C.S.	S.S.	A.S.	A.H.	M.N.	BP.	YR
1.	Sadhya(Curable)							
A)	Nirupdrava	+	+	-	-	+	+	+
B)	Ekadoshaja	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
C)	Nava	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
2.	Yapya							
A)	Dvidoshaja	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
B)	Akritisnoupdraava	+	-	-	-	+	+	+
C)	Samvatsarothitta	-	+	-	-	+	-	-
3.	Asadhya(Incurable)							
A)	Tridoshaja	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
B)	Upadravayukta	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
C)	Sravi	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
D)	Vaivarnya	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
E)	Stabdhatta	+	-	+	+	-	+	-
F)	Arbuda	+	-	+	+	+	+	-
G)	Samkocha	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
H)	IndriyaSantapa	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
I)	AjanuSphutitama	-	+	-	-	+	+	-
J)	Prabhinna	-	+	-	-	+	+	-
K)	Prana- Kshaya	-	+	-	-	+	-	-
L)	Mamsa- Kshaya	-	+	-	-	+	-	-
M)	Moha	-	+	-	-	+	-	-

(Ref.: Ch. Chi. 29/30 – 34, Su. Ni. 1/49, Su. Chi. 5/6, A.H. Ni. 16/17, A.S. Ni. 16/19, M.N. V/R/N 23/14-18, Bh.P. M/K VRA 29/17-19, Y.R. Purvardha V/R N 29)

CHIKITSA: Charaka has described two types of principle of management for Vatarakta:^[5]

- A) Samanya Chikitsa
- B) Vishishta Chikitsa

A) SAMANYA CHIKITSA: -Various procedures explained under samanya chikitsa are as follows:-

1) Rakta Mokshana- Almost all the classical texts have advocated raktamokshana for management of vatarakta. Acc. to Vagabhatta, snehan should be given to the patient before raktamokshana.^[6] Then the procedure should be performed but the state of vatadosha must be assessed carefully while Acharya Charak has advocated use of raktamokshan in the treatment of vatarakta by means of shringi, jalouka, suchi, Alabu, prachchhanorsiravedha according to the degree of vitiation of doshas and strength of disease.^[7]

Specific Indication- Procedure is applied according to the predominance of doshas. If prevalent features are pain, burning sensation, cutting and pricking type of pain then jalukashould be applied. Shring or Tumbi should be applied if predominant features are numbness, pruritus and tingling sensation.^[8-9] According to severity of pain where it moves from one place to another, Acharya Charaka has indicated siravedha/prachchhan.^[10]

2) Shodhana Karma- In management of Vatarakta, Shodhana Chikitsa is of utmost importance:

1-Snehana: Snehana or oleation therapy is advocated to patients of Vatarakta before administration of Virechana.

2-Virechana: After oleation, virechana should be administered to the patient. Snigdha virechana dravyasshould be advised to the patient with ruksha sharir. Similarly ruksha mridu virechana dravyas should be advised to the patients having snigdha sharir. There is specific indication for mridu virechana as tikshna virechana may cause aggravation of Vata.^[11]

3-Basti Chikitsa: According to Charaka, Basti is par excellence in management of Vatarakta.^[12] It has been advised to administer Basti after giving virechana. Anuvasana and Niruha Basti should be given frequently.^[13]

3] Shamana Karma- Principle of Shamana Chikitsa is to establish the state of homeostasis of doshas by pacifying the vridha doshas & bringing the vitiated doshas to the normal level.

4] Lepa: Bahiparimarjan Chikitsa or Lepa Chikitsa is used specifically in patients suffering from uttana or ubhaya shrta vatarakta. Decoction of drugs capable of alleviating daha (burning sensation) should be used. Other than alepa; parisheka and abhyanga has also been described in charak samhita.^[14]

B] VISHISHTA CHIKITSA- Acharya Charaka has given specific line of treatment for all types of Vatarakta

keeping in view the doshic predominance and the site of the disease.

1) Uttana Vatarakta:In Uttana Vatarakta when doshas remain confined to twaka and mamsa, external local applications are the choice. Drugs can be applied in the form of lepa, abhyanga, parisheka and upanaha.^[15] Ushnalepa application has contraindicated in Rakta Pradhan Vatarakta, similarly in Kapha and Vatapradhan Vata-Rakta, sheetala lepa has contraindicated as sheetala lepa in these situations brings about stambhana of doshas.^[16]

2) Gambhir Vatarakta:When doshas are deep seated i.e. seated in the sandhi's, treatment of choice is shodhana chikitsa involving Snehana, Virechana and Basti.^[17]

3) Vata Pradhan Vatarakta: In Vata pradhan Ghrita, Tail, Vasa and Majja should be administered in the form of snehapana and abhyang. The same should be used for Basti. Lukewarm fomentation should be applied.^[18]

4) Rakta and Pitta Pradhan Vatarakta: In such a setting Ghrita pana, Dugdha pana and Mridu Virechana should be administered. Parisheka with decoction of Vata shamaka dravyas and Anuvasan Basti should be used. Sheetala pralepa are also advocated by Acharya Charaka in this condition.^[19]

5) Kapha Pradhan Vatarakta: In this type of Vatarakta, Mridu Vamana is ideal treatment. Snehana, swedana and langhana should be used judiciously. Lukewarm pralepa may be helpful. Too cold or too hot pralepas must not be applied.^[20]

CONCLUSION

The pervasiveness of lifestyle disorders is growing rapidly and Vatarakta is one among them. prevent the causative factors of disease is the chief measure that can be taken. Healthy diet and lifestyle can be followed by adopting the regime and practices mentioned in Ayurvedic classics like Dinacharya, Ritucharya the proper method of eating food etc. With improvement in patient of gout as both an acutely debilitating and chronic disease, further developments in medicines and in research is going on into the disease biology which help in producing adequate control and prevention of acute gout flare.

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