Concept of Mahagad in Ayurveda w.s.r. to Bhagandara (Fistula-In-Ano)

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ABSTRACT

In Samhitas many concepts are explained as Leshokta (incompletely explained) or they have Linartha i.e. concept is not elaborated or proper meaning is difficult to understand. So there is a need to explore such concept to understand the vision of Ayurveda. The term ‘Mahagada’ is used as ‘Visheshana (attribute)’ for few diseases in various Ayurvedic Samhitas. Original Samhitas shows very little information regarding the term ‘Mahagada’. The concept of ‘Mahagada’ is useful to decide prognosis of diseases. Mahagada is a group of diseases having incurability, primarily due to development of complications. The conceptual study shows belief of ancient Ayurvedic Acharyas regarding concept of Mahagada and clinical survey was done to support the concept. On the basis of collected data, efforts were made to throw light on the concept of Mahagada.

Key words: Mahagada, Bhagandara, Fistula-In-Ano

INTRODUCTION

Mahagada is one of the fundamental concept of Ayurveda, which need simplification and proper study to adopt the meaning. The word Mahagada in Ayurveda is used to signify the eight diseases which are Asadhyya in nature.[1]

Acharya Charaka did not mentioned Mahagada term for commonly known 8 diseases which are Asadhyya (incurable) in nature.[2] But Acharya Charaka use term Mahagada for a few diseases like Atatwabhinivesh,

In Astanga Sangraha and Astanga Hridaya, eight disease are described as Maharoga. Which are Yapya (difficult to treat) in nature.[3]

After gross review of Samhita it is clear that concept of Mahagada is described as Leshokta (incompletely explained) and Avyakta (hidden meaning) i.e. explained in concise form.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The available authentic books related commentaries and material available on internet were studied to explore the concept of Mahagada. The compilations regarding Mahagada w.s.r. to Bhagandara were analyzed.

Clinical Survey Study

Clinical survey study was conducted at Subhadeep Ayurveda Medical College, Indore on 100 volunteers suffering from Bhagandara. A special proforma was prepared which include Mahagada Lakshana and other points like Sadhya, Asadhya, complications, recurrence etc. On the basis of collected data, efforts...
were made to throw light on the concept of Mahagada.

**Literary review of Mahagada**

Mahagada is group of diseases having incurability primarily due to development of complications. The conceptual study shows belief of ancient Ayurvedic Acharyas regarding concept of Mahagada.

**Meaning of the word Mahagada**

According to Dalhanacharya, commentator of Sushruta Samhita and other Acharyas, Mahagada means deadly and Incurable imperative diseases. As per Chakrapanis view in Bhanumat commentary Mahavyadhi means deep rooted disease. Maha means imperative/ gigantic/ sturdy in terms of deadly and Incurable.

**Synonyms of Mahagada**

On the basis of above references it can be realized, that the terms Maharoga, Mahavyadhi, Nindita Vyadhi, MahomulaVyadhi, Dirgharoga and Achikitysa Vyadhi, are used as synonyms for Mahagada by various Acharyas.

- **Mahagada** - This term is used by Acharya Sushruta and Acharya Charaka
- **Maharoga** - This term is used by Acharya Vagbhata and Aadhamalla
- **Mahavyadhi** - This term is used by Acharya Dalhana
- **Nindita Vyadhi** - This term is used by Acharya Indy
- **Achikitysa Vyadhi** - This term is used by Acharya Charaka
- **Mahomula Vyadhi** - This term is used by Acharya Chakrapani
- **Dirgha Roga** - This term is used by Acharya Bhela

**Diseases which are termed as Mahagada**

It is evident from various references that the term Mahagada is applied in two ways in Samhitas. These two different approaches are:

1. For group of eight diseases having incurable nature e.g. Ashtau Mahagada
2. This term is also used for single disease having deadly and Incurable imperative nature e.g. Raktapitta.

Following references shows group of eight diseases which are termed as Mahagada e.g. Astaumahagada.

**Table 1: Showing Ashtau Mahagad as per different Ayurvedic Samhitas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sushruta Samhita</th>
<th>Astanga Hruday</th>
<th>Astanga Sangrah</th>
<th>Charaka Samhita</th>
<th>Acharya Gangadhar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vata vyadhi</td>
<td>Vata vyadhi</td>
<td>Vata vyadhi</td>
<td>Vata vyadhi</td>
<td>Vata vyadhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kustha</td>
<td>Kustha</td>
<td>Kustha</td>
<td>Kustha</td>
<td>Kustha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prameha</td>
<td>Prameha</td>
<td>Prameha</td>
<td>Madhu meha</td>
<td>Madhu meha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udara</td>
<td>Udara</td>
<td>Udara</td>
<td>Udara</td>
<td>Udara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arsha</td>
<td>Arsha</td>
<td>Arsha</td>
<td>Raja yakshma</td>
<td>Raja yakshma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashamari</td>
<td>Ashamari</td>
<td>Ashamari</td>
<td>Apasmar</td>
<td>Apasmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhaganda -r</td>
<td>Bhagand-dar</td>
<td>Bhagand-dar</td>
<td>Gulma</td>
<td>Gulma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mudha garbha</td>
<td>Grahan</td>
<td>Grahan</td>
<td>Sopha</td>
<td>Raktapitta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From above table it is clear that all the different Acharyas and different Ayurvedic Samhitas don’t have similar opinion regarding listing of eight Mahagada / Maharoga / Achikitsya Vyadhi. But among eight diseases four diseases are matching in the list of all the different Acharyas and different Ayurvedic Samhitas. These four diseases are Vatvyadhi, Kushtha, Prameha and Udara Roga.

Acharya Sushruta and Acharya Vagbhata has analogous view regarding Astau Mahagada / Astau Maharoga diseases except one disease. Charaka Samhita, Astanga Sangraha Sharirasthana reference
and Acharya Gangadhara has similar opinion regarding Astaumahagada / Astaumaharoga.

Harita Samhita has similar opinion that of Sushruta Samhita. In Bhela Samhita instead of eight diseases, list of seven diseases is given. Vatavyadhi is missing in the list. Hence according to Bhela Samhita number of Mahagada / Dirgharoga diseases are seven. Seven diseases are same as mentioned by Charaka Samhita.

Following references shows single disease which is termed as Mahagada - Raktapitta, Apasmara, Shotha and Atatvabhinivesha, these four diseases are termed as Mahagada in separate chapters.

**Causes of Mahagada**

According to Acharya Sushruta, because of Prakriti i.e. Swabhava (nature) Vatavyadhi etc. eight diseases are hardly curable and termed as Mahagada. He also explained that development of Upadrava i.e. complications in above said diseases lead to Mahagada.

As per Charakacharya, decline in Bala (strength) and Mamsa Dhatu (Muscle), as well as development of Arishta symptoms in above said eight diseases lead to Mahagada.

Astanga Sangraha quotes that advancement of above mentioned eight diseases in very weak patient leads to incurability and treatment of such patients should be avoided.

Harita Samhita added one more contributory factor for creation of Mahagada diseases i.e. Papakarma (sin).

Chakrapani Acharya explains that sudden relief in disease is Arishta Lakshana and is thus termed as Mahamoola Vyadhi i.e. Mahavyadhi.

**Table 2: Showing causes of Mahagada / Maharoga / Mahavyadhi as per different opinion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samhita</th>
<th>Opinion regarding causes of Mahagada / Maharoga / Mahavyadhi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sushruta</td>
<td>Swabhava (nature), development of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charaka Samhita</td>
<td>Prakriti (nature), development of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhela Samhita</td>
<td>Prakriti (nature), development of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harita Samhita</td>
<td>Prakriti (nature), development of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astanga Sangraha</td>
<td>Prakriti (nature), development of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harita Samhita</td>
<td>Prakriti (nature), development of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakrapani</td>
<td>Prakriti (nature), development of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Diseases which are termed as Mahagada**

If all the diseases which are termed as Mahagada / Maharoga / Achikitsya Vyadhi taken into account then total number of Mahagada diseases are 15 in number.

1. Vatavyadhi
2. Kushta
3. Prameha
4. Kshaya
5. Arsha
6. Ashmari
7. Bhagandara
8. Mudhagarbha
9. Udara
10. Apasmara
11. Gulma
12. Raktapitta
13. Grahani
14. Shopha
15. Atatvabhinivesha

**Basis for conversion of disease to Mahagada Avastha**

**A) Upadrava:**

Acharya Sushruta and Harita Samhita explains different complications of eight diseases due to which these eight diseases becomes incurable and termed as Mahagada.
Upadravaih - Upadrava is defined as disorder which associate afterwards with the disease originated earlier and having the same root cause.

The diseases which, associated with Upadrava / complications, become incurable, except on the use of Rasayana.[27]

If Vatavyadhi etc. eight diseases associated with complications like wasting of vitality and musculature, consumption, thirst, vomiting, fever, diarrhoea, fainting, hiccup and dyspnoea, then patient suffering from these diseases believed to be non curable.[28]

B) Arishta:

The patients with the symptoms of Sharirika and Manasika Bala Kshaya, Mamsa Kshaya and disease is progressive, die within 45 days.[29]

Observations

After analysis of observations collected through survey study, following key points emerge out, which supports the view of Ancient Acharyas regarding Bhagandara as Mahagada.

100 patients were found Guda as organ involved. As stated above, Bhagandara is one of the diseases found in Guda Pradesha, which ultimately hampers various body functions (Prana Vikruti, Purishavaha Srotas Vikruti, Karmendriya Karyahani, Vata Vikruti etc. and may lead to death.

Out of 100 patients, 86 patients reported weight loss. Weight loss can be taken as one of the sign of Mamsa and Balakshaya.

Out of 100 patients, 84 patients reported Balakshaya. Balakshaya is stated as key factor for diseases incurability. Mahagada diseases shows Balamamsakshaya (diminished strength and musculature).

Mamsakshaya - Out of 100 patients, 85 patients reported Mamsakshya. Mamsakshya is stated as key factor for diseases incurability.

Shamana and Shastra Chikitsa - Out of 100 patients, 90 patients gave history of I&D while 10 patients gives history of C&D. Surgical intervention is the characteristic of Kastasadhya nature of disease. This supports Bhagandara as difficult to treat.

28 patients were hospitalized for 0-1 week, 20 patients were hospitalized for 1.1-2week, 4 patients were hospitalized for >2week. This shows long term care required after surgery.

Duration of disease - Out of 100 patients, 24 Patients were suffering from disease from 0-1yr, 68 Patients were suffering from disease from 1.1-3yr, 8 Patients were suffering from disease from >3yr. This remark confirms chronic nature of disease.

Palliative treatment result - Out of 86 patients, 68 were having no positive result after palliative treatment, 18 having positive result after palliative treatment.

Operation done - out of 100 patients, 43 were having previous operations for fistula, 57 were not operated for fistula. This proves recurrence of the disease which make it hard to cure.

Manobhava vikruti - Out of 100 patients, 38 reported Avasada, 62 reported with Attitanava. This finding shows psychological impact of disease which affects his daily routine.

Agni - Out of 100 patients, 58 patients were having Mandagni, 1 patient was having Tikshnagni, and 61 patients were having Vishamagni. This shows vitiation of Agni as prime factor in Bhagandara.

Post operation result - Out of 43 patients, 23 (53.48%) were having positive results, 20 (46.5%) were having negative results. This shows that surgery has not given 100% cure.

Discussion

Mahagada is one of the distinctive thought present in Ayurveda Samhitas which signify disorders having poor prognosis or difficult to treat resulting in morbidity and mortality. Even though Acharyas have mentioned Mahagada, still the references regarding this particular topic are very much scattered and less informative. At the time of Astaumahagada listing, Sushruta Samhita gives emphasis on diseases which
are incurable/hardly curable in Shalyatantra view. While Charaka Samhita listed diseases which are incurable/hardly curable in Kayachikitsa point of view. In Sharirsthana of Astanga Sangraha and Astanga Hrudaya, author follows view of Charaka Samhita and at Nidansthana of Astanga Sangraha and Astanga Hrudaya; author follows view of Sushruta Samhita. These differences may be due to the reason that some diseases were more severe than the others at different periods of time with respect to incidence and management.

Foremost characteristics of Mahagada are -

a) Chronicity
b) Syndrome (set of diseases)
c) Balamamsakshaya (diminished strength and musculature)
d) Upadrava (complications)
e) Recurrence nature or fixed (permanent/set) nature
f) Sannipataja Vyadhi
g) Affect on Marmas
h) Hereditary disease or congenital disorder
i) Required surgical intervention
j) Dominance of Vata Dosha
k) Excessive diminution of Agni
l) Rapid fatality after their origin
m) Vyadhi Udbhava Sthana or Vyakti Sthana is Jeevithadhama

A survey on Mahagada in Ayurvedic classics yields few references and it is not very clear about which diseases are to be considered as Asta-Mahagada (Eight dreadful diseases). In Charakra Samhita, at two different contexts, different enumeration of Mahagada is evident. While explaining the types and number of diseases in Ashtodareeya chapter of Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana, Acharya has mentioned Atatwabhinivesha as the Mahagada. In Maharoga chapter, Acharya does not mention about Mahagada. However in Indriyasthana, Acharyas have explained Astamahagada instead of Eka Mahagada. Avaraniya chapter of Susruta Samhita Sutrasthana is dedicated to Mahagadas explaining its importance. Varana means treatment and the disease where treatments are not fruitful is known as Avaraniya. Vatavyadhi, Prameha, Kushta, Arsha, Bhagandara, Ashmari, Mudagarbha and Udara are the Mahagadas stated in this chapter. Acharya Susrutha in Nidana Sthana has explained eight Mahagadas in the first eight chapters in the following order as Vatavyadhi, Arsa, Asmari, Bhagandara, Kushta, Prameha, Udara, Mudagarbha. Unlike Astanga Hrudaya, Susrutha does not enumerated Grahan, instead has mentioned Mudagarbha. Sushruta has explained Grahani in the Atisara chapter and complications of Atisara in Avaraniya chapter. It may be because Mudagarbha is a surgically managed disease. In Astanga Hrudaya, Mahagadas are mentioned in the last part of Atisara Grahan Nidana chapter.

Disease in Guda Pradesha affects various body functions. Bhagandara is one of the diseases found in Guda Pradesha, which ultimately hampers various body functions and may lead to death. As Guda is Pranayatanah, Sadyopranahara Marma, Mulasthana of Purishvaha Strotas, Karmendriya and chief location of Vata Dosh, Bhagandara (disease found in Guda Pradesha) by affecting Guda leads to Pranayatana injury during surgery which may lead to mortality, various complication related to Purishvaha Strotas, Karmahani Lakshana, Vataprakopa and various Vatavyadhis.

CONCLUSION

After scrutinizing the compiled data related to Mahagada and observational data obtained from the survey study following significant points emerge out – Mahagada means deadly, Incurable imperative, deep rooted diseases having either complications or Arishta Lakshana. The terms Maharoga, Mahavayadhi, Nindit Vyadhi, Mahamula Vyadhi, Dirgharoopa and Achikitysa Vyadhi are used as synonyms for Mahagada. In maximum patients weight loss, Mamsa and Balakshaya, history of surgical intervention, long termed care after surgery, bad effect on daily routine,
chronic nature of disease, bacterial infection (Krimi Utpatti), no cure after palliative treatment, Recurrence of disease, psychological impact of disease, multiple Strotas (Multiple systems / organ) involvement, vitiation of Agni were observed after suffering from Bhagandara, which shows hardly curable nature of Bhagandara. After analysis of observations collected through survey study, it can be concluded that observations of survey supports the view of Ancient Acharyas regarding Bhagandar as Mahagada.

REFERENCES


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