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An overview of Shitada vis-à-vis Gingivitis

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ABSTRACT

The structures which hold the tooth in proper position are called as "Periodontium" comprising of gingiva, periodontal ligament, cementum and alveolar bone. It is like the stem of the tree or bony skeleton of a human; because it bears the responsibilities of giving full support to the tooth. The disease conditions like Shitada-Gingivitis will lead to tooth mortality by altering the contour and position of it. The general prevalence of Gingivitis (Inflammation of Gingiva) is 50% and incidence in Indian population is 45%. Shitada is an early stage of periodontal disease. It is caused by vitiated Kapha and Rakta which produces spontaneous bleeding from dark, slimy and soft gums with offensive odour and gum recession. In this study an effort is made to understand the concept of Shitada mentioned in Ayurveda with special reference to Gingivitis.

Key words: Gingivitis, Periodontium, Shitada.

INTRODUCTION

In developing countries, the diseases related with Periodontium (Dantamula) are a major oral health problem as well as major cause for tooth mortality. It occurs widely in most populations including both children and adults. The high general prevalence of gingivitis is 50% and this may be due to deficient oral health care, awareness at home and at school and various habits and injuries to the gums.

Periodontal diseases are mentioned in Ayurveda and that Shitada appears to correspond to the condition known today as gingivitis. The disease "Shitada" is the primary or early stage or disease condition of

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Dantamulagata Roga which affects the Dantavestha (Gums). Ayurveda discuss about healthy gums as well as diseases that affect the gums. Acharya Kashyapa described qualities of has healthy gums (Dantabandhana Sampata) such as, Sampata (Evenness); Raktata (Coral Pink); Snigdhata (Smooth); Ghanamulata (Dense); Bruhanmulata (Strong) and Sthiramulata (Steady).^[1]

The disease Shitada and Gingivitis both affect on Gingiva (Dantavestha). Their early diagnoses with proper management give better prognosis. While considering the symptomatology of Shitada like Akasmat Rakta Srava (Sudden bleeding from gums), Mukhadaurgandhyata (Halitosis), Mriduta (Sponginess), Krishnata (Discoloration), Prakledata (Moistness) and Shiryamanata (Gingival recession) can be correlated with Gingivitis. So the problem has been selected.

ETYMOLOGY

The word "Shitada" is composed of two words "Shit" and Aad". The word "Sheeta" means cold and "Aad" means to eat. Shitada means eaten by cold or bitten by cold. The disease in which Kapha and Rakta gets vitiated and specially etiology is of Kaphaprakopa then disease is coined to be Shitada.^[2]

REVIEW ARTICLE Sept-Oct 2020

Shitada is a disease caused by vitiated *Kapha* and *Rakta*, produces spontaneous bleeding from the gums, in which foul smelling, black, soft and sodden gums along with gum wasting.^[3]

"Gingiva" means gums, "itis" means inflammation. So, Gum inflammation is known as "Gingivitis". Symptoms like *Mriduta* (Sponginess), *Krishnata* (Discoloration) occur due to inflammatory process.

NIDANA (ETIOLOGY)

The exact aetiology of Shitada is not mentioned in the classics, but general causative factors of the Mukharogas can be taken as the causative factors of Shitada.^[4] In addition to this the general causes of inflammation can be considered as the aetiological factors of Shitada.^[5] One of the important symptom of Shitada i.e. "Shiryamanata" (Gum Recession) of Dantaveshta (Gingiva) is mentioned as one of the complication of poisonous Datuna (Natural Tooth Brush),^[6] and also improper administration of Vamana (Emesis Therapy), Virecana (Purgation Therapy), Dhumapana (Medicated smoke), Siravedha (Blood Letting) etc. are considered as iatrogenic causes of Kapha and Raktaprakopa. Shotha (Oedema) can also occur when a person does not take care of personal oral hygiene. So, inadequate oral hygiene can be considered as a prime cause in Shitada. As Samanya Nidana (general cuses) like Matsya (fish), Mamsa (meat), Guru (Heavy), Madhura (sweet), Shita (cold), Ruksha (rough) food intake, Atishitambu (very cold water) intake etc. will lead to vitiation of Kaphadosha and similarly produce "Ama" (Undigested Food). This Ama formation precipitates to form Dantamala (Bacterial Plaque). And consumption of Atikatu (Pungent), Amla (Sour), Lavana (Saline), Kshara (alkaline) intake leads to vitiate the Pitta Dosha ultimately leads to cause Raktadushti (vitiation of blood). As Shitada is Kapha Rakta Pradhanavyadhi through Rasa and Raktadhatu Ama circulates through all over the body and mean time because of Avakshaiya (sleeping with head low position), Avritamukhashayana (sleeping with head covered by pillow), Dantadhavanadvesha (avoiding tooth brushing) as well as intake of sticky and more sugar

containing foods will leads to accumulate food debris in interdental areas and finally produces bacterial plaques and calculus with poor oral hygiene able to produce obstruction of channels helps to produce the disease like *Shitada*.

Further *Vagbhata* has explained that vitiated *Kapha* and *Rakta* is responsible for producing all *Dantamulagata Rogas*.^[7] On the basis of above description *Kapha, Pitta* vitiating factors can be considered as the aetiological factors for *Dantamulagata Rogas*. In the above view the aetiological factors can be classified as *Aharaja* (Dietary), *Viharaja* (Lifestyle) and *Manasika* (Mental).

The common etiological factors of *Dantamulagata Roga* listed in classics are.^[8,9]

Aharaja	Viharaja	Manasika
<i>Matsya Sevana</i> (Intake of fish)	Avakshaiya (sleeping with head low position)	Krodha, Bhaya, Shoka (feelings like temper, scared, sorrow)
Ati Mamsa Sevana (Excessive intake of meat)	Ati Parshwa Shayana (excessive sleeping on lateral position)	Dantadhavanadv esha (avoiding tooth brushing)
Ati Katu, Amla, Lavana, Kshara sevana, Ikshu, Sukta, Phanitasevana (excessive intake of pungent, acidic, saline, alkaline taste foods)	Anuchita Dhuma (unsuitable foam),Chardhan a (vomiting), Siravedha (bloodletting)	Vegavidharana (retention of vega)
Balamulaka, Masha, Dadhi, Kshira Sevana	Avrita Mukha Shayana (sleeping with head covered by pillow)	
Ati Shitambu Sevana (use of very		

REVIEW ARTICLE Sept-Oct 2020

cold water)	
Ati Tikshna, Ushna, Vidahi, Ahara Sevana	
Guru, Madhura, Shita, Ruksha Ahara Sevana, Mandagni (poor appetite)	

According to the modern concept the main cause of gingivitis is bacterial plaque accumulation on the tooth surface. Plaque is a sticky gelatinous mass composed of bacteria and their byproducts in an extra cellular matrix, and also containing substances from the saliva, diet and serum. Its accumulation can be favored by a variety of local factors such as improper oral hygiene, calculus, food impaction, over hanging margins of restoration, overcrowding of teeth, decrease in dietary fiber content, increase in sugar consumption, more consumption of carbohydrate rich sticky foods and abnormal biting habits etc. which are causing physical injury to gums.^[10]

SAMPRAPTI (PATHOGENESIS)

Though the Samprapti of Shitada has not been explained directly in Ayurvedic classics, keeping in mind all the etiological factors explained under common etiology of Mukharoga. An attempt has been made here to formulate and explain the pathogenesis of Shitada. Even though factors responsible for vitiation of Kapha and Rakta are the main factors in the manifestation of Shitada, the etiological factors responsible for the vitiation of Rasavaha (Plasma), Raktavaha (Blood), Mamsavaha (Muscular tissues) Srotas (channels) and Pitta Dosha play a definite role directly or indirectly in the pathogenesis of Shitada. Hence these factors should not be neglected.

Samprapti Ghataka of Shitada

- Dosha Kapha, Raktapradhana
- Dushya Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa
- Srotas Rasa Vaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha

- Srotodushti Sanga, Atipravrti
- Agni Jatharagnimandhya, Dhatwagnimandhya
- Rogamarga Bahya
- Udbhavasthana Amashaya
- Adhishtana Dantaveshta
- Pratyatma Lakshana Akasmat Raktasrava
- Sadhyasadhyata Sadhya.

Kapha and Pitta vitiation is the main culprit to initiate the pathology of *Shitada* (Gingivitis). Vitiation of these Doshas can take place due to the Aharaja (dietic) and Viharaja (lifestyle and environmental) factors. Ashravidhatus of Kapha and Pitta i.e. Rasa, Mamsa and Rakta will also get disturbed quantitatively and qualitatively due to instability of Ashraya Doshas. Vitiated Rasa and Rakta will cause the local manifestations like swelling (Shopha), black discoloration (Krishnata), sponginess (Mriduta) and moistness of gingiva (Kledata). Vitiated Mamsa and Raktadhatu will cause the instability of gingiva which will manifest as spontaneous bleeding (Akasmatraktasrava), gum recession (Shiryamanata) and moistness of gingiva (Prakledata).

Everyday a clear sticky film called plaque builds upon the surface of the tooth in the non-self-cleaning area of the teeth, particularly below the cervical convexity of the crown and in the cervical area. Many varieties of oral micro-organisms grow as a bio-film or plaque.

This is the first manifestation of gingival inflammation where vascular changes consisting essentially of dilatation of capillaries and increased blood flow. In most cases, a thorough professional cleaning and more attention to oral hygiene can reverse the inflammation and symptoms associated with gingivitis.

Toxins and enzymes liberated by bacteria contained in plaque food debris or calculus seen into the crevicular epithelium and underlying connective tissue and cause an irritation, break down of tissue constituents and inflammation. The soft tissue lesion in gingivitis characterized by three main types of reactions such as

N.S. Abegunasekara et al. An overview of Shitada vis-à-vis Gingivitis

ISSN: 2456-3110

REVIEW ARTICLE Sept-Oct 2020

vascular response, cellular response and immune response.^[11]

Due to vascular response, vessels become enlarged and proliferated and produce inflamed gingiva, further it enhanced by continuous migration of leukocytes in cellular phase and cells accumulates in the sulcular epithelium.

In immune response phase predominates with lymphocytes and plasma cells which generates mediators like cytokines and further enhanced inflammation and tissue damage.

Purvarupa of Shitada

No specific *Purvarupa* has been mentioned in *Shitada*. Hence, here slight appearance of manifestation can be taken as *Purvarupa* of *Shitada*, which includes excessive salivation, halitosis, altered taste sensation etc.

Rupa (Symptomatology)

The main symptoms of gingival inflammation are gingival bleeding, gingival inflammation associated with swelling, discoloration, moistness, sponginess, gingival recession and halitosis. Gingival bleeding is the main and earliest visual sign of gingivitis and it varies in severity and duration. Bleeding can be present suddenly, when probing or without any cause. It is provoked by mechanical trauma or by biting solid foods, tooth brushing, tooth picks and food impaction. Due to increased friability of the capillary walls it arises.

Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhata both have described the following Lakshanas (Features) of Shitada.^[12,13]

Akasmat Raktasrava

Due to certain Nidana Sevanas like Atilavana, Kshara, Amla, Katu rasa, Ushna, Tikshna, Vidahi Ahara, Kulattha, Masha, mental factors like indulge greatly in anger, sorrow, fear, excitement etc. vitiates the Rasa (Plasma) and in turn aggravate the Pitta, when this Pitta is further vitiated by indulgence in Tikta (Bitter), Ushna (Hot) etc. food items it further vitiates the blood.^[14] Therefore, quality of Dravata (Liquidity) in *Pitta* and *Rakta* will affect more and later *Rakta* will become more *Tanu*.^[15]

Simultaneously, due to association of certain general causes of *Mukharoga Kaphadosha* also become vitiated, and accompanied with the vitiated *Pitta-Rakta* and it attains specific affinity towards *Urdhvajatru* to localize and manifest the disease.^[16]

Further, Acharya Sushruta has also mentioned that when *Rakta* get vitiated due to *Pitta*, the quality of *Skandana* (clotting property) in *Rakta* will be disturbed.^[17] Due to above reasons later spontaneous bleeding can occur.

Prakledata

Pitta is the only *Dosha* which is responsible for the feature of *Kledata* in *Dhatus*.^[18] On the principles of *Ashrayashryi Bhavas Pitta* can vitiate *Rakta* and directly produces *Kledata* in *Rakta*.^[19] It is evident that when vitiated *Pitta* gets localized in *Mamsa* (Muscular Tissue), the ultimate result is *Mamsa Kledata*^[20] i.e. *Kledatva* of *Mamsa*. Review of forty types of *Nanatmaja Viyadhis* of *Pitta*, shows *Shonita Kledata* and *Mamsa Kledata*. So the manifestation of *Kledata* in *Shitada* is due to the action of *Pitta dosha* in *Rakta* and *Mamsa Dhatus*.

Shiryamanata

According to *Kashyapa Samhita*, embryologically the gingiva is originated from *Rakta Dhatu*. *Kapha Dosha* is the responsible factor for maintaining the stability of all body tissues.^[21] So it is evident that normal *Rakta* and *Kapha* will maintain the normal color and contour of the gingiva.

It is clearly mentioned in classics that all the *Mukharogas* especially *Dantamulagata Rogas* are produced by the vitiated *Kapha* and *Rakta*. Instability of *Sthiraguna* (Immobility) will cause the *Shithilata* of *Sandhibandana* especially the gingival sulcus and interdental papillae will lead to the *shiryamanata* i.e. gum recession. It is specially found in chronic gingivitis.

Daurgandhyata

Pitta Dosha is responsible for the production of smell in the body. Naturally *Pitta* is having *Visragandha* i.e.

REVIEW ARTICLE Sept-Oct 2020

Daurgandhyata (Foul odour) which is compensated by the amount of other *Doshas* to maintain the natural body odour. It is evident further prominently as bad smell in *Pitta Prakriti* persons where *Pitta* is dominating than other *Doshas*.

In *Shitada* vitiated *Amayukta Pitta* along with vitiated *Rakta*will play the role of production of *Daurgandhyata. Vagbhata* also mentioned that *Amayukta Pitta* is responsible for bad odour.^[22] The production of feature like *Nishwasa Vaigandhyata* in *Pittajajwara* can also be explained due to the involvement of *Ama* and *Pitta* in the pathology. Further, *Acharya Charaka* has also quoted that *Asyagandhyata* (Halitosis) is produced due to vitiated *Rakta*.^[23]

Mriduta and Krishnata

Maintenance of Dehamardava or softness of body tissues is the function of *Pitta*.^[24] During the analysis of Shophasamprapti (Pathogenesis of Inflammation) the main factors involved in the pathology are Rasa, Rakta Dhatus along with Kapha Pitta Doshas. Further the Nidanas mentioned for Mukharogas like Amlasevana. Guru Ahara. Dadhi. avoiding Dehashuddhi specially Raktamokshana etc. are also responsible for the production of Shopha (Inflammation) especially Pittajashopha. Due to the specified Nidanas this Shopha will manifest in gingiva and make the gingiva very soft, which is the characteristic feature of *Pittajashopha*.^[25] The other features of Pittajashopha also will manifest in the gingiva like Raktabhasa (severe redness), Kledata, Sitakamita (Desire of taking cold food items), bad smell (halitosis), Sparshasahtwa (intolerance to touch) and Krishnata.

Gingivitis is an inflammation of the gingival tissues, which is the most prominent soft tissue part of the tooth supporting structures. It may occur in an acute, sub-acute or chronic form. The severity of the gingivitis depends upon the symptomatology, duration and frequency of the local irritations and the resistance of the oral tissues. Chronic gingivitis is extremely common and in older dentulous patients is nearly universal in occurrence.^[26]

Periodontal disease begins as gingivitis, an inflammation of marginal gingiva, starts primarily with gingival bleeding, alteration of nature and color of gingiva followed by inflammatory signs such as discoloration, sponginess, moistness etc. This condition usually progresses, if untreated or treated improperly; it converts into destructive chronic periodontitis or advance gum disease which affects (cementum, the other supporting structures periodontal ligament and alveolar bone) of the tooth. Ultimately they lead to loss of teeth and consequent crippling of oral cavity, causing oral and general health problems.

Gingival inflammation produces changes in its color, contour, consistency, position and surface texture due to vascular and cellular responses. Due to immune response tissue damage may occur and produces gingival recession.

MANAGEMENT OF SHITADA

As general, Dantaveshta i.e. gums is an associated tissue of muscles, hence, in diseases like Shitada; Ahara, Vihara, Dantyarasayana (Dental tonic) and Aushada which acts on muscular tissue are useful i.e. Patola (Trichosanthus cucumerina). Nimba (Azadirachta indica), Triphala (Terminalia chebula, Terminalia bellerica, Phyllanthus emblica), Musta (Cyperus rotondus), Kutaja (Holarrhena antidysenterica), etc. should be given orally in the form of decoction or in medicated ghee form. Apart from this Dantya Rasayana i.e. dental tonics which includes Bakula (Mimusops elengi) fruits, Kakoli, Haritaki (Terminalia chebula), Black sesame seeds (Sesamum indicum), Nyagrodha (Ficus bengalensis), Arjuna (Terminalia arjuna) etc. should be administered to increase the strength and stability of the tooth supporting structures as curative measure in disease condition like Shitada. Its management can be broadly classified into local and systemic measures.

The local measures^[27] of *Shitada* are *Raktamokshana*, *Pratisarana*, *Pralepa*, *Gandusha* and *Nasya*. Here it begins with *Raktamokshana* to relieve *Raktadushti*. It can be done with *Jalauka*, *Alabu* and *Shringa*. The main idea behind *Raktamokshana* is to remove

REVIEW ARTICLE Sept-Oct 2020

impure blood from the affected area, followed by local application of drugs by rubbing or *Pratisarana* of certain drugs like *Musta*, *Arjunatwak*, *Triphala* with honey or drugs like *Kasisa*, *Lodhra* (*Symplocos recemosa*), *Manahshila*, *Priyangu* etc. used in the form of paste or *Lepa*.

To reduce the Shotha, Gandusha and Kavala are beneficial such as Babbula Twak Kwatha, Musta, Arjunatwak, Triphala, Priyangu, Rasanjana, and Shunti (Zingiber officinale) Kwatha etc. In Shitada drugs like Triphala, Yashtimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra), Utpala etc. are useful in the form of Ghrita or Taila for Nasya for Sirashudhi because it is Kapha dominant disease therefore, to open the channels for better absorption of drugs.

As systemic measures, *Nidana Parivarjana* or avoidance of aetiological factors is very important for that avoiding the *Atisheeta*, *Atiushna*, *Atisnigdha Ahara* and *Vihara* like improper cleaning of the oral cavity, improper brushing methods which cause trauma to the oral cavity are also to be avoided and applying common line of treatment according to *Bala*, *Dosha*, and *Kala* can be taken as the common measures to treat *Shitada*. *Deepana* and *Pachana* should be the first line of treatment. If vitiated *Doshas* are excessive then *Vamana* and *Virechana* should be done.

In dentistry main emphasis in Gingivitis is control of inflammation, infection and local irritants like plaque and calculus. Scaling and polishing is a procedure can performed to remove local irritants, other than that oral irrigation also useful. As additional measure antiinflammatory medicaments as systemic or local measures can be applicable.^[28] But Ayurveda considers involve *Doshas*, status of *Agni, Srotas* and *Prakriti* of the patients etc. so that the root cause of disease is corrected.

CONCLUSION

So in nutshell, by considering the previous research works the local therapeutic *Yogas* like *Pratisarana* i.e. *Bhadramustadi Choorna, Dashana Samskara Choorna, Lodradi Choorna* etc. are much more effective for complete cure of the disease Shitada - Gingivitis. By virtue of the Katu, Kashaya, Tikta Rasa and Ushna properties these recipes are useful to decrease the level of aggravated Kapha and Pitta in the gum tissues not only that but also all the drugs of above Yogas are proved by research for their anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and anti-microbial properties. As Gandusha like Nagaradi Kwatha, Triphala + Sphatika Jala, Irimedadi Taila, Sahacharadi Taila etc. are already proven formulations for the preservation of periodontal health. Because of the ingredients of Gandusha are Mukhadaurgandyahara, Shothahara hence by virtue of cleansing action and antiinflammatory property. So it may act on microorganisms and might be helpful in alleviating the disease Shitada - Gingivitis. Although Gandusha increases the efficacy of Pratisarana and help to disintegrates the pathology of Shitada. From above descriptions and evidences it can be concluded that "Shitada-Gingivitis" is main disease problem effect on oral health. But due to lack of awareness among patients it is not showing as burning problem. However, Ayurevedic management is able to provide a holistic approach to this disease in all the aspects i.e. preventive and curative.

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N.S. Abegunasekara et al. An overview of Shitada vis-à-vis Gingivitis

ISSN: 2456-3110

REVIEW ARTICLE Sept-Oct 2020

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REVIEW ARTICLE Sept-Oct 2020

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