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Review on the disease *Vata Rakta* and its management in Ayurvedic literature

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ABSTRACT

The rapid modernization in India, fast food culture, stressful and speedy life, prevalent in urban areas is spreading its wings in remote villages too. Nowadays human beings are vulnerable to many disorders due to their altered life style and food habits. Among such metabolic disorders *Vatarakta* is one of them. *Vatarakta* is more distressing and common metabolic disorder prevalent in present era. It is characterised by severe pain, tenderness, inflammation and burning sensation in the affected joints. It is a *Vatapradhana Tridoshaja Vyadhi*^[1] where *Rakta* is main *Dushya*. *Vatarakta* is an illness where both *Vata* and *Rakta* are afflicted by distinct aetiological factors. Sedentary lifestyle along with mental stress, consumption of non- vegetarian and highly protein diet, excessive alcohol intake are some of the precipitating factors which causes acute exacerbation of *Vatarakta*. The aetiological factors responsible for Gouty arthritis,^[6] pathology and clinical features are quite similar with the *Vatarakta*. Rapid modernization, Junk food culture, stressful life and urbanisation are the markers for prevalence of *Vatarakta*. Due to excruciating pain, inflammation, joint deformity and restricted joint movements with the risk of various complications like Chronic Kidney Disease and Urate Nephrolithiasis,^[7] it is necessary to have an overall review on all aspects of disease for treatment. Because of the morbidity, chronicity, incurability and complications, the management of *Vatarakta* is a difficult task.

Key words: *Vatarakta*, *Adhyavata*, *Vatabalasa*, *Khuddavata*.

INTRODUCTION

The health of an individual depends solely on his/her diet and lifestyle. Nowadays human beings are more vulnerable to metabolic disorders due to their faulty dietary habits and life style. These disorders may be causing functional impairment or crippling disorders like *Vatarakta*. The disorder produced by conjugation of vitiated *Vata* and *Rakta* generate multiple health ailments and most important of them is *Vatarakta*.

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Hence it has been described as a separate disease entity in *Charaka Samhita*. There are many references along with description of this disease in classical texts under the name of *Vatarakta*, *Adhyavata*, *Vatabalasa*^[2] and *Khuddavata*. The rich those who have plenty of resources and are delicate, are mostly affected with the disease so it is also named as *Aadhyavata*. Similarly, "*Khudda*" means joint and small, hence the disease affecting mostly the smaller joints of the body is called as *Khuddavata*. *Vatarakta* is a *Vyadhi* typically affects the extremities along with the systemic involvement. Mutual as well as interrelated obstruction to the circulation of *Rakta Dhātu* as well as *Vata Dosha* within the *Rakta Marga* is the prime pathology in *Vatarakta* It has two stages i.e., *Uthana* and *Gambhira*.^[3] *Gambhira Vatarakta* mainly affects *Asthidhatu* and causes *Ruja* which spreads as *Aakhorvisha* (rat poison). Intense painful condition, initial site of manifestation i.e., involvement of hands and feet, and other clinical features can be compared with gout described in modern medicine. The gout is also known as "disease of kings" and also "king of diseases" in modern

medicine.^[7] Gout is a metabolic disorder and inflammatory response to monosodium urate crystals formed secondary to hyperuricemia. In 21st century, gout remains the most common inflammatory arthritis in men over 40 years old and in post-menopausal women, although more common in men (10:1). The number of cases rise with age, from 2/1000 in males aged 18 - 44 and 34/1000 in males of age 45-65 years. Number of self-reported cases of gout in U.S.A. increased from 2.1 million to 3.0 million over a ten-year period (from 1990-99) making it more prevalent than R.A. Its prevalence is increasing; more over it is a potential signal for unrecognized comorbidities like obesity, metabolic syndrome, diabetes mellitus, hypertension and renal disease etc. Patients of gouty arthritis land up in severe joint destructions.

Etiology

Intake of salty bitter too oily and too hot food in excess. Similarly eating dried meat and longtime preserved meat and meat of aquatic animals. Food prepared in sesame oil and seeds, sour curds. Drinking alcohol staying awake at night. Intake of junk food, eating contradictory food and food with preservatives and chemicals can aggravate both *Vata* and blood and cause this disease especially in person who do not carry out daily exercises and lead very calm and quiet life. Also, along with these causes, if the person suffers from trauma, or travels too much with his feet in dangling position on horse or any other vehicle and goes on hiking or travels on foot continuously then *Vata* aggravation takes place along with vitiation of blood. Increased blood uric acid levels are also responsible for this disease.

Types

It has been divided into two major types: superficial and deep. Similarly, according to *Dosha* predominance it has also been divided into predominant *Rakta* type, predominant *Kapha* type and predominant *Pitta* type, and dual type.

Pathogenesis

Both *Vata* and *Rakta*^[4] gets aggravated due to their own etiological factors. Both these then start

circulating in the body through the blood vessels and after some time the localization takes place in the big toe of the feet or the thumb of the hands.

Prodromal Symptoms

Excessive perspiration or absence of sweating, skin becoming blackish or bluish discolored, loss of sensation of touch, lethargy, heaviness in the body. Formation of postures on various joints of the body. And severe pains at these places are common symptoms.

Symptoms

Usually, the disease starts from the inflammation of the big toe of the foot or thumb of the hand. After this the other big or small joints in the body are affected.

The diseases originate in the circulatory system; get localized into joints and spreads throughout the body. The swollen joints are very painful, tender, inflamed, red, and warm to touch. High degree fever is usually present in acute stage. Many times, skin rashes and allergic symptoms are also present with severe itching or change in the color of the skin. Excessive sweating or no sweating and severe pain in bones and muscles may be present.

Superficial Type (*Utthana*)

Affected skin becomes blackish red, painful, hot to touch and there is intensive itching. The skin becomes black colored.

Deep Type (*Gambhira*)

There is swelling, hardness, severe pain, burning and pulsations in the affected parts. The symptoms are more prominent in the bones, nerves, and muscles. *Charaka* has accepted these two as the types of the disease, while *Sushruta* accepts these two as two stages of the disease.

Vata Predominant Type

Pain is the main factor, with contracture developing in fingers

Pitta Predominant Type

Inflammation of the joint with fever, loose motions, sweating, thirst, and fainting. Also, excessive

sweating, thirst, and tendency to develop gangrene are present. If this is not properly treated, complications like gangrene, formation of ulcers and permanent contractures take place.

Treatment

Selection of the patient for treatment one should take up the patient for treatment who has not complicated with *Prana* and *Mamsa Kshaya*. Thirst, fever, fainting, dyspnoea, cough, stiffness, anorexia, indigestion, necrosis, etc. Should take patient who is strong, self-controlled and has sufficient means. (Su.Chi.5/10). Considered as *Yapya Vyadhi* (Ch.Chi.29/74). General line of treatment in beginning *Snehana* should be done. There after he should be given *Virechana* with *Sneha Dravyas* (if patient is unctuous) or with *Ruksha Virechana*^[5] (if patient is unctuous). *Virechana* should be mild in nature. Then patient should be administered *Niruha* and *Anuvasana Basti* frequently. Then he should be given *Seka* (affusion), *Abhyanga* (massage), *Pradeha* (application of thick ointments), food, and unctuous substance which do not cause burning sensation. The patient should be administered with *Upanaha*, *Parisheka*, *Lepa*, and *Abhyanga*, *Rakta Mokshana*. In beginning itself accept in those having profuse *Vata*, tough and depleted parts, blood vitiated by obstruction in passage should be drained frequently in a smaller quantity, to avoid aggravation of *Vata*. According to *Charaka*, in *Vata Rakta*, in severe condition depletion of *Rakta* due to increased *Vata*. Then it will tend to edema, stiffness, trembling of vessels etc.

Vamana / Virechana after *Rakta Mokshana* if fear of aggravation of *Vata*, *Vamana*, *Virechana* and *Basti* should be administered. For *Krishna - Sneha Virechana* by *Eranda Taila*, For *Sthoola (Kapha Medavrittha) - Ruksha Virechana* by *Trivrit, Triphala, Draksha* etc. should be given. *Basti* as it is told earlier the best line of treatment in reliving *Vata* is *Basti*. *Charaka* has mentioned that - in *Vata Rakta* the obstructed *Mala* i.e., *Doshas* or *Dushyas* etc. should be treated by administering *Basti* prepared out of *Ksheera* (milk) and *Ghritha* (ghee). *Niruha* along with *Anuvasana Basti* is administered in case of pain in urinary

bladder. Pain in thigh, joints, bones etc. Specific line of treatment For *Utthana Vatarakta*, according to *Charaka*, it is treated with *Alepa*, *Abhyanga*, *Parisheka* and *Upanaha*. For *Gambheera Vatarakta*, should be treated with purgation, *Asthapana* and *Snehapana*. For *Vata* predominant *Vata Rakta*, is treated by using with potions containing *Ghritha*, *Taila*, *Vasa*, *Majja*, *Abhyanga*, *Basti* and *Upanaha*. For *Pitta & Rakta* predominant *Vata Rakta*, in this patient should be treated with purgation. Potion containing ghee and milk, then he should be administered with *Parisheka*, *Basti*, and *Sheetala Nirvapana*. For *Kapha* predominant *Vata Rakta*, patient should be given mild emetics. Avoid *Snehana* and *Parisheka*. Advised *Langhana* and *Lepa*.

DISCUSSION

Vatarakta is a unique clinical entity where there is involvement of both *Vata* and *Rakta* leading to manifestation of disorders. The etiological factors lead to the predominant morbidity of *Vata Dosa* and *Rakta Dhātu*. To be more specific, the obstruction of *Rakthamarga*, or the *Rakthavaha Srothas* is the leading pathology. The umbrella of *Vatarakta* parlance with conventional medicine includes many conditions related to extremities and to mention a few are connective tissue disorder and as well peripheral vascular diseases. Dietary habits and life style modalities plays a major role in cause of *Vatarakta*. Also, the morbidity of *Kapha* and *Medas* can cause different other serious diseases in different systems.

CONCLUSION

Modern era is an era of sedentary life style. Due to this altered life style and food habits, human beings are becoming more vulnerable to many disorders. *Vatarakta* is a common presentation. The continuous usage of modern drugs for long duration causes toxicity in the body. So, there is an urgent need of application of Ayurvedic drugs in *Vatarakta* the treatment modalities applied are very effective in patients suffering from *Vatarakta*. Also, the morbidity of *Kapha* and *Medas* can cause different other serious diseases in different systems. The pathology of

Margavarana leads to the establishment of clinical signs and symptoms in *Vatarakta*. Further to add *Shodhana*, *Shamana*, *Bahirparmarjana* and *Rasayana Chikitsa* all are aimed at the rectification of *Margaavarana* in this disease.

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