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To study the *Ayurvedic* perspective of Multiple Sclerosis with special reference to *Dhatukshyajanya Vaatvyadhi*

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient holistic science of life that has put forth etiology of various diseases along with principles for its treatment. The advancement and research in the field of *Ayurveda* has led to acceptance of *Ayurvedic* principles and concepts in the understanding and treatment of newly evolving diseases, which are not mentioned in classical texts. Of which Multiple Sclerosis is the one. Multiple Sclerosis, is an autoimmune disease, characterised by chronic inflammation and demyelination with remissions and exacerbations of clinical signs and symptoms. We do not get any direct narration of Multiple Sclerosis in the *Ayurvedic* text. But on the basis of similarities with the *Lakshana* and involvement of *Dosh*, *Dushya* and *Srotas* in the etiology of the disease, it can be correlated with *Dhatukshyajanya Vaatvyadhi*. *Vatavyadhi* is a broad term, which implies the vitiation of other *Dosha* and *Dushya* in a special way by *Vayu* to produce diseases in the entire body or in a specific part of the body. Thus, the present paper will be a sincere effort to study Multiple Sclerosis under the umbrella of *Dhatukshyajanya Vaatvyadhi*, which may be useful in identification and treatment of Multiple Sclerosis with the *Ayurvedic* aspect.

Key words: Multiple Sclerosis, *Dhatukshyajanya Vaatvyadhi*, demyelination.

INTRODUCTION

Multiple Sclerosis is the most common immune mediated disorder affecting the central nervous system and an important cause of chronic disability in adults.^[1] It is characterised by chronic inflammation and selective destruction of myelin. While the cause is unclear, proposed causes for this include genetics and environmental factors.^[2] This damage disrupts the ability of the parts of the nervous system to transmit signals, resulting in a range of signs and symptoms,

including physical, mental and sometimes psychiatric problems.

The signs and symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis depends on the anatomical site of demyelination or multifocal scarred lesions, termed as plaques.^[3] Some common presentations includes – optic neuritis, relapsing and remitting sensory symptoms, subacute loss of function of limbs, subacute painless spinal cord lesions etc.^[4] Multiple sclerosis appears in several forms, it is sometimes with new symptoms either occurring in relapsing form or progressive form.

Multiple Sclerosis is usually diagnosed based on presenting signs and symptoms. As there is no known care for Multiple Sclerosis, treatment includes attempts to improve function on attack and prevent new attacks. Thus, there is an urge to study and understand the disease with the *Ayurvedic* perspective.

Looking at the nature of the disorder, Multiple Sclerosis is studied under the umbrella of *Dhatukshyajanya Vaatvyadhi*. *Vaatvyadhi* refers to groups of diseases caused by vitiation of *Vata*. In *Charak Samhita*, we get

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the detailed description of the disease or the group of disease occurring with the manifestation of various signs and symptoms, depending upon the site of vitiation of *Vata*.

AIM:

To study the *Ayurvedic* perspective of Multiple Sclerosis with special reference to *Dhatukshayajanya Vaatvyadhi*.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis and *Lakshana of Vatavyadhi*.
2. To study the *Samprapti* of *Dhatukshayajanya Vaatvyadhi* with special reference to Multiple Sclerosis.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data related to Association of Multiple Sclerosis and *Dhatukshayajanya Vatavyadhi* is compiled from various classical texts of *Ayurveda*. Also, some contemporary books and research articles available on Multiple Sclerosis have been studied.

Literature review on *Vatavyadhi*

In many *Ayurvedic* Classics, *Vaata*, is narrated as the sustainers of the body i.e., the prime driving force behind all body activities. When *Vaata* is imbalanced, it disrupts all of the events in a body causing a variety of damage and disease.^[5]

The term "*Vatavyadhi*" is a broad term which covers the wide range of diseases caused by the vitiation of '*Vaayu*'. This '*Vayu*' gets aggravated in two different ways ^[6] – viz a) *Dhatukshaya* i.e by diminution or destruction of tissue elements. b) *Margasyaavaranen* i.e by occlusion of its channel of circulation. And thus, depending upon the kind of aggravation and site of vitiation, various kind of disease are produced.eg. aggravation of *Vayu* in stomach produces- pain in cardiac region, umbilicus, sides of the chest and abdomen. While aggravated *Vayu* in colon produces – rumbling sound in the intestine, colic pain, pain in lumbar region etc.^[7]

Signs and symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis and *Lakshana of Vatavyadhi*

Multiple sclerosis can cause a variety of symptoms. The motor features include – predominantly upper motor neuron weakness of muscles and wasting of muscles of hands and spasticity in advanced cases. While sensory features include tingling and numbness, objective sensory loss.^[8]

Depending upon the location of plaque, the signs and symptoms are as follows^[9] -

- Central - fatigue, cognitive impairment, depression, anxiety
- Visual - nystagmus, optic neuritis, diplopia
- Speech - dysarthria
- Throat - dysphagia
- Musculoskeletal - weakness, Spasms and ataxia
- Sensations - pain, hypesthesia, paresthesia
- Bowel - incontinence, diarrhoea or constipation
- Urinary - incontinence, frequency or retention

The aggravated *Vayu* gives rise to the following signs and symptoms^[10]

1. Contractions, stiffness of joints and pain in the bones as well as joints
2. Delirium
3. Spasticity of hands of hands, neck as well as head
4. Lameness of hands and feet
5. Splitting pain, pricking pain, excruciating pain
6. *Sira Hundana* - cracking of scalp, pain in temporal region^[11]
7. *Nasa Hundana* - implies loss of olfactory sensation^[12]
8. *Akshi Hundana* - weakness of the eye^[13]
9. *Jatru Hundana* - stiffness of the chest^[14]
10. *Griva Hundana* - stiffness of neck^[15]

Samprapti of Dhatukshayajanya Vaatvyadhi with special reference to Multiple Sclerosis

The *Majja Dhatu* on depletion due to *Nij* (genetic or autoimmune) or *Agantuj Hetu* (environmental factors or viruses) leads to aggravation of *Vaayu*.^[16] The aggravated *Vaayu* this settles in the *Khavaigunayayukta Majja Vaha Srotas* scattered into the different parts of the body and *Mastishka, Sushumna Kanda*. And thus, the site or the part of the body where the aggravated *Vaayu* settles, manifests symptoms or group of symptoms, leading to etiopathogenesis of *Dhatukshayajanya Vaatvyadhi*.^[17]

In the above pathophysiology, similarity can be seen in the pathogenesis of both the disease. The manifestations of symptoms depending upon the site of vitiation of *Vaat* and site of plaques in *Dhatukshayajanya Vatavyadhi* and Multiple sclerosis respectively.

Samprapti Chakra

Hetusevan



Majja Dhatu Kshaya



Aggravation of *Vaayu*



Aggravated *Vayu* gets *Sthan Sanshraya* in the *Rikta Srotas* i.e., *Majjavaha Srotas* and *Mastishka, Sushumna Kand*



Lakshanotpatti



Dhatu Shayajanya Vatavyadhi

Samprapti Ghatak

- *Dosha - Vata*
- *Dushya - Majja Dhatu*
- *Srotas - Majjavaha Srotas*
- *Adhishthan - Mastishka, Sushumna kand*

- *Sroto Dushti Prakar - Dhatu Kshaya Janya*
- *Swabhav - Chirkari*

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Multiple Sclerosis is a potentially disabling disease of the brain and spinal cord. All over the world, various institutes are conducting research for the cure of this dreaded disease. Thus, understanding the pathogenesis of Multiple sclerosis with the *Ayurvedic* view under the heading of *Dhatu Shayajanya Vatavyadhi* gives satisfactory explanation of the etiopathogenesis of the disease thereby offering the ways to treat the patients with the *Ayurvedic* principles for the betterment of the lives of the patient.

CONCLUSION

In *Vatavyadhi*, due to "*Hetu-Sthana-Vishesha*" i.e., because of specific cause and specific seats / location of affliction or manifestation, the aggravated *Vaayu* produces specific signs and symptoms. Similarly, in Multiple Sclerosis the presentation of the disease depends upon the site of demyelination or plaque formation. On the other hand, the site of manifestation that is the brain and spinal cord are found to be similar with the similarity in appearance of the signs and symptoms. Thus, it may be concluded that Multiple Sclerosis is comparable to *Dhatukshayajanya Vatavyadhi*

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