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An Ayurvedic management of Annular Tear of Lumbar Intervertebral Disc - A Case Study

Sheetal Tokle,¹ Sweety Ruparel,² Akanksha Sharma,³ Hetal Ramani⁴

^{1,3,4}Post Graduate Scholar, ²H.O.D and Professor, Department of Panchakarma, Govt. Akhandanand Ayurved College, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

ABSTRACT

Intervertebral discs are fibro cartilaginous structures. They give shape to the vertebral column. The discs act as a remarkable series of shock absorbers. Surrounding each intervertebral disc, a tough, shock absorbing layer known as annulus, protect the disc's vulnerable interior. An annular tear occurs when this outer hard layer cracks. Causes of annular tear are aging process of spine, injury, trauma etc. Medicines like Non-steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), Narcotic drugs, injections and surgery which have their limitations and having some adverse effects too. In present era, awareness and popularity of Ayurveda is increasing day by day and people prefer to be treated by Ayurveda. So, Ayurveda is more favoured by people. According to Ayurveda annular tear can be understood as *Abhighata Janya Katigatavata*. In this single case study an effort has been made to manage annular tear in lumbar intervertebral disc, through *Ayurveda*. A 48 year old female, suffering from annular tear of lumbar intervertebral disc desiccation and herniation, was treated with *Tikta Kshira Basti* for 15 consecutive days. Simultaneously *Kati Basti* and internal medicines were also given. Noticeable relief was found in all symptoms of the patients, so here a single case study is presented.

Key words: Annular Tear, *Abhighata Janya Katigatavata*, *Tikta Kshira Basti*, *Kati Basti*.

INTRODUCTION

The neck and back bear majority of a person's weight and are highly vulnerable to degeneration.^[1] Intervertebral discs are fibro cartilaginous structures which give shape to the vertebral column. The discs act as a remarkable series of shock absorbers. Surrounding each intervertebral disc, a tough, shock absorbing layer known as annulus, protect the disc's vulnerable interior. An annular tear is a common incidence of the age related natural deterioration of

the spine. As time goes on and the spine undergoes pressure from weight gain and stress, the discs may become pressed and squeezed between the vertebrae. A healthy disc holds the proper position under pressure by allowing the elastic outer layer to push in the inner disc fluid and hold it in place. However, after years of pressure and stretching, the elasticity in the outer layer may dissolve, allowing the inner disc fluid to form small rips and tears in the outer layer. This is called an annular tear.

Main causative factors of an annular tear are lifting heavy objects, conditions that strain the spinal column, such as obesity etc., sudden injury, trauma or accident, usually from manual labour or high impact sports like football.

According to Ayurveda annular tear can be correlated with *Abhighata Janya Katigatavata*. In this condition *Abighata* (injury) may lead to *Dusti* of *Sthanstha Rasa Raktadi Dathus* and *Vata Dosha* which lead to *Vikruti* in *Asthi*, *Snayu*, *Kandara* and symptoms like pain, swelling, tingling sensation etc. occur. *Basti* is one of

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Sheetal Tokle

Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Panchakarma, Govt. Akhandanand Ayurved College, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

E-mail: s.tokle1411@gmail.com

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the best treatments for vitiated *Vata Dosha*.^[2] *Tikta Kshira Basti*^[3] is indicated in *Ashthipradoshaja Vyadhi*.

Current treatment option

NSAIDs, Narcotic drugs, Selective Nerve Root Block Injections (SNRB), Epidural Injections, Physical Therapy Program, Low Impact Exercise and Surgery. However, these medications give immediately relief from pain but they can cause some serious side effects. So Ayurveda is more favoured by people.

An Ayurvedic Approach: A cost effective option

In this case study an effort has been made to manage annular tear, desiccation and herniation of L4-L5 based on treatment of *Abhighata Janya Katigatavata*. The treatment protocol comprises of *Tikta Kshira Basti*, *Kati Basti* along with internal medication.

CASE PRESENTATION

A 48 years old female patient, housewife, living at Sanand, Gujarat; came with complaints of back pain (lumbar region) and left leg pain, tingling sensations, swelling on left leg, difficulty in walking, loss of appetite at Government Akhandand hospital Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Case History

Before two year ago, Patient had back pain after fall down on floor at home and got mild relief in pain with NSAIDs. But her routine life style was disturbed and could not walk more than 10 min. Then she consulted orthopaedic doctor and MRI was suggested. MRI findings showed that she had postero-central annular tear in L4-L5 intervertebral disc desiccation and herniation which causing mild compression over traversing and exiting nerve roots. Patient had taken NSAIDs and analgesics medicines off and on. Five months ago again she fall down on floor at home and got severe back pain at lumbar region, symptoms as mention above which was not relieved by routine medicines so she came to OPD of Akhandanad Ayurveda hospital, Ahmedabad.

On Examination

- *Prakruti* - *Vata-kaphaja*
- Weight - 70 kg.
- Height - 5'3"
- B.P - 130/80 mmHg
- Pulse - 76/min
- Mild tenderness and swelling over left leg.
- SLR in right leg 45° and in left leg 25°

Treatment Protocol

Treatment was planned considering *Abhighata Janya Katigata Vata*, *Grudhrasi*, *Vata Dushti* and *Ashthidhatu Dushti*. She was given *Tikta Kshira Basti* for fifteen consecutive days along with *Kati Basti* with *Murivenna Taila*^[4] and *Shamana* treatment for twenty five days. During the treatment *Pathya Ahara-vihara* was advised to the patient.

Panchkarma treatment schedule

SN	Therapy	Dose	Kala	Duration
1.	<i>Tikta Kshira Basti</i>	360 ml	Once in the Morning	15 days
2.	<i>Kati Basti with Murivenna Taila</i>	As required (about 60-70 ml)	Once in the Morning	25 days

Tikta Kshira Basti ingredients

- *Makshika* - 60 ml
- *Saindhava Lavana* - 5gm
- *Goghruta* - 100ml
- *Kalka* - 30gm (*Aswagandha Churna*, *Shatavari Churna*, *Asthishrunkhala Churna* - each 10gm)
- *Dugdha* - 200 ml (*Basti* made and given as per classical method)

Shamana treatment schedule

SN	Drug	Dose	Kala	Anupana	Duration	Reason for selection of drug
1.	<i>Dashmoola Kwatha</i> ^[5]	40 ml Bd.	Early Morning and evening, empty stomach	-	25 days	<i>Tridoshha Shamaka, Shotahara</i>
2.	<i>Trikatu Churna</i> ^[6]	3 g. Bd	Before lunch and dinner	Luke warm water	25 days	<i>Dipana, increase bio-availability</i>
3.	<i>Navajivanarasa</i> ^[7]	2 tab Tds. (each of 250mg)	Morning, Noon and Evening	Luke warm water	25 days	<i>Dipana, Pachana, Shulahara, Balya, Raktapaustika, Nadibalprada</i>
4.	<i>Punarnava Guggulu</i> ^[8]	2 tab Tds (each of 500 mg)	Morning, Noon and Evening	Luke Warm water	25 days	<i>Shulahara</i>

RESULTS

Sign and Symptoms	BT	After Tikta Kshira Basti course (15 days)	After 25 days
Pain	+++	++	+
Tingling sensation	++	+	+
Swelling on left leg	++	+	-

Difficulty in walking	++	+	-
SLR test	Right leg 45°, left leg 25°		Right leg 50°, left leg 45°

DISCUSSION

Acharya Charaka has mentioned *Tikta Kshira Basti* in *Ashtipradoshjanya Vikara*. However, Acharya hasn't mentioned any specific ingredient. So, medicines like *Ashwagandha*^[9] and *Shatavari*^[10] which possess *Tikta Rasa, Shophahara, Rasayana* properties have been selected as *Kalka Dravya*. Besides this *Shatavari* has *Vata Pitta Astra (Rakta) Shotha Shamaka* property and contains naturally formed phytoestrogen which increases bone minerals density. *Ashthishrunkhala*^[11] is *Vata-Kapha Dosha Shamka* and helps to bone healing process. Research studies of these medicines show that all these medicines have bone healing properties along with sedative, anti-inflammatory, anti-aging properties.

Murivenna Taila is well known for reducing pain and helps in faster healing. So *Katibasti* with *Murivenna Taila* becomes very useful in this type of injury. Besides this *Shamana* treatment is also necessary to break down *Samprapti*. For this purpose patient was given *Shamana* drugs available in the hospital. *Dashmoola Kwatha* is effective in reducing pain and it is *Tridoshha Shamaka*. *Trikatu Churna* has *Agni Dipana* (carmitive) property, it enhances the bio availability of the co-herbs. Researches on *Trikatu Churna* shows that, it has anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidative, analgesic properties. *Navjivanarasa* is used as *Dipana, Pachana, Shulahara, Balya, Raktapaustik, Nadibalprada* (Neuro tonic) and in *Vataja Roga*. *Punarnava Guggulu* useful in *Grudhasi, Uru* (thigh) *Trik* (lumbo-secal region) *Gata Vata*. Thus combination of *Tikta Kshira Basti, Kati Basti* along with *Shamana* provided good result in pain and other symptoms. Patient can do her daily activities without pain and can walk more than 25min, However, There is no major changes seen in MRI (BT and AT), but symptomatically markedly improvement was observed

in pain and other symptoms. Patient is still on *Shamana* treatment and follows up every fifteen days.

CONCLUSION

Tikta Kshira Basti, Kati Basti and *Shamana* treatment is effective to relieve pain occurring due to annular tear, intervertebral disc herniation and compressing nerve roots. If these medication will be continued for prolong period reversible changes in MRI may be found.

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