



ISSN 2456-3110

Vol 9 · Issue 2

February 2024

Journal of
**Ayurveda and Integrated
Medical Sciences**

www.jaims.in

JAIMS

An International Journal for Researches in Ayurveda and Allied Sciences



Maharshi Charaka
Ayurveda

Indexed

A conceptual review on the efficacy of *Agnitundi Vati* in the management of *Gridhrasi* w.s.r. to Sciatica

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Gridhrasi* is *Shoolapradhan Nanatmaj Vata Vyadhi* mainly caused due to vitiation of *Vata Dosha*. The cardinal signs and symptoms of *Gridhrasi* are *Ruk*, *Toda*, *Mhuspandan*, *Stambha*. *Gridhrasi* can be correlated with sciatica due to resemblance of symptoms. The prevalence of sciatica varies considerably ranging from 1.6% in the general population to 43% in selected working population. Sciatica is characterised by constant aching pain in the lumbar region radiating to the buttock, calf and foot caused by irritation to the sciatic nerve. Being a nervine disorder, it can be treated by a drug having *Vatashamak* & *Shoolaghna* properties. *Agnitundi Vati* is a unique formulation having *Shoolaghna* & *Vatahara* properties. *Kuchala* is the major content of *Agnitundi Vati* which is more effective in nervine disorder. *Kuchala* being a potent spinal poison contains two major alkaloids named strychnine and brucine and it is subjected to be used after proper *Shodhan* process of *Kuchala*. Present study aimed to compile all the available literature regarding the pharmacological action of *Agnitundi Vati*. **Aim & Objectives:** To study the literary review of *Agnitundi Vati* & its mode of action in *Gridhrasi*. **Materials & Methods:** Various *Samhita Granthas*, textbooks and articles related to *Agnitundi Vati* & sciatica were studied. **Result & Discussion:** *Agnitundi Vati* is the formulation having *Vatashamak* & *Shoolahar* properties due to its *Ushna Virya*. Hence it proved to be a potent formulation for management of pain in *Gridhrasi*.

Key words: *Gridhrasi*, *Sciatica*, *Agnitundi Vati*, *Kuchala*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, one of the ancient science of life describes *Gridhrasi* as one amongst the eighty types of *Nanatmaj Vata vyadhi*^[1] *Gridhrasi* is the commonly occurring disease in both geriatric and middle aged person. The general etiological factors for *Gridhrasi* are improper sitting posture, over exertion, jerky movements while travelling, injury to lumbosacral spine, etc. The cardinal signs and symptoms of *Gridhrasi* are *Ruk* (pain), *Toda* (pricking sensation), *Mhuspandan* (tingling sensation), *Stambha* (stiffness) in the *Sphik*, *Kati*, *Uru*,

Janu, *Jangha* and *Pada*.^[2]

Vata Dosha plays a major role in the etiopathogenesis of the disease but when *Vata Dosha* is associated with *Kapha Dosha*, it shows symptoms of *Tandra* (drowsiness), *Gaurav* (feeling of heaviness), *Arochak* (anorexia). *Gridhrasi* can be correlated with sciatica due to resemblance of etiopathogenesis and symptoms. The prevalence of sciatica varies considerably ranging from 1.6% in the general population to 43% in selected working population.^[3] Pain in sciatica is very severe, sharp and shooting pain which leads to difficulty in sitting and walking, eventually hampering the daily routine of the individual.^[4] Sciatica, being a nervine disorder, it can be treated by a drug having *Vatashamak* & *Shoolaghna* properties. *Agadtantra* is one of the recognized branch of *Ashtang Ayurved* which deals with poisons, their toxic effects and usage of poisons as a medicine after standardized purification process of poisons. *Agnitundi Vati* is a unique formulation which is made up of using *Dravyas* with different origins majorly including *Kuchala* as the main ingredient. *Kuchala* is the major content and active ingredient of *Agnitundi Vati* which

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Submission Date: 08/12/2023 Accepted Date: 17/01/2024

Access this article online

Quick Response Code



Website: www.jaims.in

DOI: 10.21760/jaims.9.2.17

is more effective in nervine disorder. *Kuchala* being a potent spinal poison contains two major alkaloids named strychnine and brucine and it is subjected to be used after proper *Shodhan* process of *Kuchala*. Present study aimed to compile all the available literature regarding the pharmacological action of *Agnitundi Vati*.

AIM

To study the efficacy of *Agnitundi Vati* in the management of *Gridhrasi* w.s.r. to *Sciatica*

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the literary review of *Agnitundi Vati*
2. To study the mode of action of *Agnitundi Vati* in the management of *Gridhrasi*.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gridhrasi

In *Ayurveda*, the disease named *Gridhrasi* suggestive of typical character of pain and gait of the patient. Due to severe pain, the patient has a typical gait slightly tilted towards the affected side and affected leg in flexed position and another leg extended. The meaning of *Gridha* is vulture, this gait resembles with that of vulture. In this disease, the patient walks like a bird *Gridha*, due to this *Gridhrasi* term might have been given to this disease.^[5] The clinical features of *Gridhrasi* are *Ruk* (pain), *Toda* (pricking sensation), *Muhuspandan* (tingling sensation), *Stambha* (stiffness) in the *Sphik*, *Kati*, *Uru*, *Janu*, *Jangha* and *Pada*.

Sciatica

Sciatica is a neurological disease, characterized by constant aching pain in the lumbar region radiating to the buttock, calf and foot caused due to irritation to the sciatic nerve.^[6]

Sciatic nerve is the largest nerve in the body. Sciatic nerve carries impulses between nerve roots in the lower back and nerve of the buttocks, thighs and lower legs.^[7] Any irritation or compression to the nerve roots often occurs as a result of damage to the discs between the vertebrae. Pain associated with *sciatica* is very

sharp and severe and often accompanied with tingling, numbness and sensitive to touch.

Agnitundi Vati^[8]

Acharya Sharangdhar has mentioned *Agnitundi Vati* in *Sharangdhar Samhita Madhyam Khanda*. *Agnitundi Vati* is a unique herbomineral formulation which is a combination of drugs having poison origin, mineral origin, *Kshara* origin, *Lavana* and plant origin. As the name *Agnitundi Vati* suggests *Agni* means fire, helps in improving and strengthening the *Jathragni*. Hence this formulation is mainly used in *Agnimandya*. Due to the properties and *Doshagnata* of ingredients i.e., *Vatakaphaghna*, it is also useful in *Vatapradhan* and *Kaphapradhan* diseases. *Gridhrasi* being a *Shoolapradhan Nanatmaj Vatavyadhi*, it can be treated by a formulation having *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Vaatahara* and *Shoolaghna* properties.

Table 1: Showing the contents and properties of Agnitundi Vati

S N	Ingredients	Latin Name	Rasa	Virya	Vipak a	Doshagnata
Visha Dravya (Poison Origin Drugs)						
1	<i>Shuddha Kuchala</i> ^[9]	<i>Strychnos nuxvomica</i>	<i>Tikta, Katu</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Vatakaphahara</i>
2	<i>Shuddha Vatsanabhi</i> ^[10]	<i>Aconitum ferox</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vatakaphahara</i>
Mineral Origin Drugs						
3	<i>Shuddha Parad</i> ^[11]	Hydrargyrum	<i>Shadaras</i>			<i>Tridoshahara</i>
4	<i>Shuddha Gandhak</i> ^[12]	Sulphur	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridoshahara</i>
Kshara Origin Drugs						
5	<i>Sajjikshari</i> ^[13]	<i>Fagonia arabica</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushna</i>		<i>Vatahara</i>
6	<i>Yavakshari</i> ^[4]	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>				<i>Vatahara</i>

Lavana Dravya						
7	Saindhav Lavana ^[15]	Sodium Chloride	Lavana	Sheeta		Tridoshah ara
8	Sauvarchal Lavana ^[16]	Unaqua Sodium chloride	Lavana			Vatahara
9	Samudra Lavana ^[17]	Sodii muras	Lavana			Vatahara
Plant Origin Drugs						
10	Ajamoda ^[18]	Carum roxburg hianm	Katu, Tikta	Ushna	Katu	Vatakaph ahara
11	Chitrak ^[19]	Plumbago zeylanica	Katu	Ushna	Katu	Vatakaph ahara
12	Jiraka ^[20]	Cuminum	Katu	Ushna	Katu	Vatakaph ahara
13	Vidanga ^[21]	Embelia ribes	Katu, Kashaya	Ushna	Katu	Vatakaph ahara
14	Amalaki ^[22]	Emblica officinalis	Lavanrahit Panchrasa, Amlapradhan	Sheeta	Madhura	Tridoshah ara
15	Bibhitaki ^[23]	Terminalia belerica	Kashaya	Ushna	Madhura	Tridoshah ara
16	Haritaki ^[24]	Terminalia chebula	Lavanrahit Panchrasa, Kashaya pradhan	Ushna	Madhura	Tridoshah ara
17	Suntha ^[25]	Zingiber officinale	Katu	Ushna	Madhura	Kaphavat ahara
18	Maricha ^[26]	Piper nigrum	Katu	Ushna	Katu	Vatakaph ahara
19	Pippali ^[27]	Piper longum	Katu	Anushnasheeta	Madhura	Kaphavat ahara

Bhavana Dravya						
20	Jambir Nimbu ^[28]	Citrus medica	Amla	Ushna	Amla	Kaphavat ahara

Probable Mode of Action

The major and potent ingredient of *Agnitundi Vati* is *Kuchala* (*Strychnous nux vomica*). *Kuchala* being a potent spinal poison contains two major alkaloids named Brucine (1.7%) and strychnine (1.25-1.5%).^[29] Brucine considers the most potent and active alkaloid in *Nux Vomica*.

When external trauma or any infection occurs, there is release of macrophages in the body in response to inflammatory stimuli. This leads to the secretion of TNF alfa and it consecutively responsible for the induction of IL1, COX2, and PGE2 and ultimately results in inflammation and pain. TNF alfa and IL1 both are pro-inflammatory markers which releases in the process of acute inflammation and PGE2 is hyperalgesic causes pain. Brucine inhibits TNF alfa (a pro-inflammatory factor) and prostaglandin synthesis (PGE2), hence performing as an anti-inflammatory and analgesic action.^[30]

DISCUSSION

Due to the compression or irritation to the sciatic nerve or nerve root leads into sciatica and results in typical symptom of severe pain and difficulty in walking ultimately hampering the quality of life. In modern medicine, there is no satisfactory treatment and conservative treatment includes analgesics, NSAIDs, physiotherapy and bed rest. *Gridhrasi* (Sciatica) is mentioned as a type of *Vata* disease. Treatment protocol for management of *Gridhrasi* involves *Vedana Sthapan* (pain relieving) and *Shothahar* (anti-inflammatory) *Chikitsa*. After assessing the properties of *Agnitundi Vati*, most of the drugs in this formulation posses *Ushna Virya*, *Katu Vipaka* and *Vata-Kaphahara* properties. Thus, it can relieve the symptoms of *Gridhrasi* by balancing the *Vata* and *Kapha Dosh*.

CONCLUSION

In present era, due to the disturbed pattern of daily regimen and sedentary lifestyle, the incidences of pain related diseases are increasing day by day. *Gridhrasi* is

a disease occurs due to vitiation and dominance of *Vata Dosha* along with irritation of sciatic nerve, leads to severe pain in the lumbar region radiating towards the calf and leg. Treatment protocol of the *Gridhrasi* includes *Vata Dosha* balancing and pain-relieving treatment. Hence *Agnitundi Vati* proved to be a potent formulation for the management of pain which is the cardinal symptom of *Gridhrasi*.

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How to cite this article: Diksha P. Nandurkar, Kalpana R. Chavhan. A conceptual review on the efficacy of Agnitundi Vati in the management of Gridhrasi w.s.r. to Sciatica. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2024;2:113-116. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21760/jaims.9.2.17>

Source of Support: Nil, **Conflict of Interest:** None declared.
