



ISSN 2456-3110

Vol 9 · Issue 4

April 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

Ayurvedic management of *Gridhrasi* (sciatica): A Case Report

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ABSTRACT

Sciatica is one of the most common emerging diseases in India which is affecting peoples physically as well as mentally. It can be defined as low back pain radiating to unilateral lower limb or bilateral lower limb along with paraesthesia. Treatment includes internal medication for pain and inflammation, Physical therapy and spinal injections. And lastly surgery is advised for those who do not respond to conservative treatment. But the success rate for this surgery is not so high. A 60 year male patient presenting with complain of back pain radiating to b/l lower limbs since 3 years treated with *Ardhang Snehan Swedan* along with *Erandamoolaadi Basti (Kaal Yoga)* and oral Ayurveda medication. Total duration of the treatment was 16 days however significant pain relief observed from the day three. This case is an evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of Ayurveda treatment in case of *Gridhrasi* (Sciatica) and as a proposition for further research on more number of patients.

Key words: *Gridhrasi, Sciatica, Niruha Basti, Anuvasan Basti, Sarvanga Abhyanga Swedana, Case Report.*

INTRODUCTION

Sciatica is a disease of musculoskeletal system in which pain goes down the leg from the lower back. This pain goes down the back, outside, or front of leg. Most of the times symptoms are only on one side of the body.

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Submission Date: 14/02/2024 Accepted Date: 25/03/2024

Access this article online

Quick Response Code



Website: www.jaims.in

DOI: 10.21760/jaims.9.4.48

Weakness or numbness may occur in various parts of the affected leg and foot. It is caused due to irritation, inflammation and compression of the sciatic nerve,^[1] which branches from your lower back through your buttocks and reaches down each leg. Most of the cases of sciatica are due to spinal disc herniation on pressing one of the lumbar or sacral nerve roots. Spondylolisthesis, spinal stenosis, piriformis syndrome, pelvic tumors and pregnancy are other possible causes of sciatica. Sciatica are most common during peoples 30s and 50s and men are more frequently affected than women.^[2] The disorder seems to apparently non serious but it cripples the patient. Science of Ayurveda had identified this long back, categorized it among *Nanatmaja Vata Vyadhi*^[3] (disease caused by aggravation of *Vata*) and named it *Gridhrasi*. The word itself suggests the gait of the patient which is similar to *Gridha* (vulture) due to pain. *Gridhrasi* is characterized

by *Stambha* (stiffness) *Ruka* (pain) *Toda* (pricking pain) and *Spandana* (tingling sensation).

These symptoms initially effects *Sphika* (buttocks) and lower back and then gradually radiates to posterior aspects of *Uru* (thigh), *Janu* (knee), *Jangha* (calf) and *Pada* (foot)^[4] Interestingly the diagnostic criteria i.e. SLR test is similar to that of *Sakthiutkshepa Nigrah* (unable to lift leg).^[5] The disease might appear as non-serious but it cripples the person completely, this shows the importance of effective treatment from the symptoms of Sciatica.

CASE REPORT

A 60 years-old male patient (O.P.D.No.20230047030) was apparently normal before 7 years. Gradually he started to suffer severe lumbar pain which was radiating from lumbar to left leg along with difficulty and pain while walking and sitting, heaviness in both legs, stiffness in lumbar region. Patient took allopathic treatment but the patient got only temporary relief. One month ago due to the heavy weight lift, the symptoms aggravated and the pain started to radiate to b/l lower limbs with paraesthesia. After seeking advice to orthopaedic surgeon, he was advised for surgery. But patient was not willing for the surgery. So, the patient came to *Kayachikitsa* OPD of Pt. Khushilal Sharma Ayurveda Hospital on date 27/07/2023. Then patient got admitted on 03/08/2023 for further Ayurvedic management.

Physical Examination

- General condition - Moderate, Afebrile
- Pulse rate - 76/min
- B.P. - 120/80 mmHg
- Respiration rate - 18/min
- Straight Leg Raise Test - Right leg - 60 +ve, Left leg - 30 +ve

Investigation

MRI Lumbosacral

- Reduced lordosis
- Changes of spondylosis and desiccation of lumbar disc.

- Soft tissue lumbar canal stenosis from L1 to L5 levels contributed by posterior osteophytes posteriorly protruding lumbar disc, hypertrophied ligaments and facets, this is more prominent at L3 and L4 levels. Encroachment of both L2-3, L3-4 and L4-5 foramina is noted. Compression of descending and exiting nerve roots at multiple levels is likely.

Diagnosis : *Gridhrasi* (Sciatica)

Table 1: Grading of the symptoms

SN	Subjective symptoms	Parameters	Gradation
1.	Pricking pain	Absent	0
		Mild	1
		Moderate	2
		Severe	3
2.	Pulling pain	Absent	0
		Mild	1
		Moderate	2
		Severe	3
3.	Stiffness	Absent	0
		Mid	1
		Moderate	2
		Severe	3
4.	Tenderness of sciatica nerve	Absent	0
		Mild	1
		Moderate	2
		Severe	3
5.	SLR Scoring	0	9
		10	8
		20	7
		30	6
		40	5
		50	4
		60	3
		70	2
		80	1
		90	0

6.	Pressing power	Upto 10 kg	3
		10-20 kg	2
		20-25kg	1
		>25kg	0
7.	Walking speed time taken to cover 60 steps	Upto 20 sec	0
		21-40 sec	1
		41-60 sec	2
		>60 sec	3
8.	Sensory Impairment	Absent	0
		Mild	1
		Moderate	2
		Severe	3
9.	Posture	▪ No complaints	0
		▪ Patient walk without difficulty but experienced difficulty from getting up from squatting posture	2
		▪ Difficulty to squat	3
		▪ Difficulty in climbing up stairs	4
		▪ Limping gait	5
		▪ Can stand on both limbs but with pain	6
		▪ Can stand without touching the effected limb on floor	7
		▪ Can sit on bed without support but with pain and difficulty	8
		▪ Lying on bed with pain affected limb flexed by supportive pillows	9

The Rolland Morris Low Back Ache and Disability questionnaire^[6]

Treatment Module

Patient was given following *Panchakarma* treatment for 16 days

1. *Kaal Basti : Erandmooladi Niruha Basti* - 400ml
2. *Sahchar Tail Anuvasan Basti* - 100ml

3. *Adhrang Abhyang* with *Vatshaamak* oil and *Adhrang Swedana* with *Dashmool Kwath*. Along with the following oral medication:

- a) *Cap Lumbagest* - 2 bd
- b) *Rheumat* - 90 liquid - 10ml bid
- c) *Tab Rasrajeshwara Rasa* - 1 bd along with the physiotherapy.

RESULT

Patient got marked improvement from the disease after 16 days of complete treatment. Following are the BT, AT recordings of the patient.

Table 2: Showing percentage of relief in symptoms

SN	Symptoms	Score BT	Score AT	Percentage of Relief
1.	Pricking pain	3	1	66.67%
2.	Pulling pain	3	0	100%
3.	Stiffness pain	3	0	100%
4.	Tenderness of sciatic nerve	3	0	100%
5.	SLR - Rt. Leg	3	0	100%
	Lt. leg	6	0	100%
6.	Pressing power	3	1	66.67%
7.	Walking speed	3	1	66.67%
8.	Sensory impairment	3	0	100%
9.	Posture	9	4	44%

Table 3: Showing percentage of relief

SN	Scale	Score BT	Score AT	Percentage of Relief
1.	Rolland and Morris low back pain and disability questionnaire (RMQ)	39	7	82.1%

DISCUSSION

In this patient from history and clinical examination it was clear that there is severe aggravation of *Vata*, hence *Vata Hara* treatment with *Vata Hara* drugs is used.

Sarvanga Abhyanga with Vatshamak Taila - *Abhyanga* has been praised as *Vata Shamaka* by Acharya Shushrut. Also, according to Charaka, *Vayu* dominates *Sparshaendriya*, and *Abhyanga* is extremely beneficial for *Vata Vyadhi* as per Charaka.^[7] According to Dalhana, *Sneha* reaches to *Majja Dhatu*, when *Abhyanga* is done for 900 *Matra*. In *Gridhrasi*, *Asthi Majja Vaha Srotas Asthi* get disturbed, *Sneha* strengthens *Srotas* and pacify increased *Vata Dosha* at the site of affliction.

Sarvanga Nadi Swedana with Dashmool Kwatha - *Swedana* is *Vatahara*, cures stiffness, heaviness and is best treatment considered to relieve pain. *Swedana* with *Dashmool Kwath*^[8] which is *Ushna Virya*, *Guru* and *Snigdha* helped in relieving symptoms of *Vata* like pain and stiffness in the patient.

Effect from Anuvasana Basti: *Anuvasana Basti* will retain the oil for a specific period without causing any adverse effect. It protects *Pureeshadhara Kala* by giving *Snehana* effect. *Tila Taila* having *Ushna Veerya* and *Guru*, *Snigdha Guna*^[7] combats *Ruksha* and *Laghu Guna* of *Vata*^[8] which in turn does *Vata Shamana*.

Effect from Niruha Basti - *Madhu* having *Yogavahi* and *Sukshma Marga Anusarita*^[9] property acts as catalyst and penetrates into the *Sukshma Srotas*. *Saindhava Lavana* having *Laghu* and *Tridosha Shamaka Guna*^[10] was added to it. *Sneha Dravya*, *Taila* having *Ushna Veerya*, *Snigdha Guna*^[11] combats *Ruksha* and *Laghu Guna* of *Vata*,^[12] which in turn causes *Vata Shamana*. *Kalka* is the main drug, which gives potency to the whole combination. It helps to disintegrate the *Malas*. *Kwatha* does *Anulomana* and *Nirharana* of *Doshas*. *Erandamula Niruha Basti* is *Vataghna* and is indicated in *Jangha*, *Uru Pada*, *Prushta Shula Hara*.^[13] *Erandamula* being main ingredient, has *Snigdha*, *Sukshma* and *Teekshna* properties does *Srotoshodhana* and thus acts as *Vatahara*, *Balya* and *Vedhanasthapana*.^[14] Hence

considering the properties of all the ingredients, *Erandamooladi Basti* is effective in treating *Gridhrasi*.

CONCLUSION

The present study with *Erandmoolaadi Basti (Kaal Yoga)* along with some supportive oral medication and physiotherapy proved to be effective in reducing *Lakshanas* of *Gridhrasi* and has shown good results in assessment parameters taken into consideration. The study suggests that the above-described treatment can be taken as better choice of treatment in the management of *Gridhrasi* vis-à-vis *Sciatica*. The study can be taken up for further study on large scale.

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How to cite this article: Nidhi Vishwakarma, Rita Singh, Sanjay Srivastava, Sapna Shrivastava. Ayurvedic management of Gridhrasi (sciatica): A Case Report. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2024;4:291-295. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21760/jaims.9.4.48>

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