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A review article on the managements of *Arshas* (haemorrhoids)

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ABSTRACT

A haemorrhoid is the most common affecting up to one quarter of all adults according to some estimates. Numerous interventions exist for their management, ranging from topical and medical therapies to outpatient treatments and surgical interventions that aim to fix or excise. The word *Arsha* is self-explanatory, indicating that the disease troubles a person like an enemy. *Arshas* can be correlated to haemorrhoids in modern science. *Arshas* is clinically an engorged condition of haemorrhoidal venous plexus characterized by prolapsed mass per anum, bleeding per anum mainly. In contemporary science there are treatments for haemorrhoids like sclerotherapy, banding, laser ablation, lifestyle modifications, surgical procedures like haemorrhoidectomy and other invasive technique. In *Ayurvedic* texts *Chaturvidha Chikitsa* is said, such as *Bheshaja* (medicinal), *Kshara Karma* (caustic treatment), *Agni Karma* (thermal hear burn) and *Shastra Karma* (surgery). In this review article, treatments from modern as well as *Ayurvedic* texts are documented so that proctologists around the world get a better understanding about the disease and its exact treatment modalities in both the sciences.

Key words: *Arshas, Haemorrhoids, Kshara Karma, Agni Karma, Shastra Karma*

INTRODUCTION

In today's world full of stress and unhealthy food habits along with unhealthy lifestyles make people prone to ano-rectal diseases such as fissure-in-ano, haemorrhoids, fistulas-in-ano. In *Ayurveda Arsha* is explained as *Mahagada*. *Shalya Tantra* has a wealth of information related to modern surgical theory. The father of surgery, *Acharya Sushruta*, thoroughly

described the *Arsharoga* in his treatise, which was thought to be one of the *Mahagada* and was cured indefinitely. *Arsha* is a troublesome disease that can affect anyone, anywhere, at any time. Haemorrhoids are a common issue in the present world and almost everyone has experienced them at some point in their lives. *Arsha* is described as a fleshy growth that obstructs the anal canal and eliminates the existence like enemy.^[1] The primary causes of *Arshas* are binge eating and a sedentary lifestyle, which decreases the activity of digestive enzymes and causes constipation, itching, burning, and pain near the *Guda*, which eventually results in bleeding.^[2] The estimated worldwide prevalence ranges from 2.9% to 27.9%, of which more than 4% are symptomatic.^[3,4] Age distribution demonstrates a Gaussian distribution with a peak incidence between 45 and 65 years with subsequent decline after 65 years.^[5,6] Different treatment modalities have been said for *Arshas* in *Ayurveda*. In early stage with less signs - symptoms *Arsha* can be treated with *Bheshaja* (internal

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medicine), *Ksharakarma* (herbal caustic paste locally) or *Agnikarma* (thermal heat burn) and if not cured with all above treatment, it should be treated by *Shastrakarma* (Surgery).^[7] These treatments are said in a particular order which suggests which should be prioritised first. In this article we will look into various *Ayurvedic* and modern measures in treatment of *Arshas*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

All sorts of references have been collected from our ancient *Ayurvedic* texts viz., *Sushruta Samhita*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*. Modern books like Bailey and Loves's, Short Practice of Surgery, Surgery of the Anus Rectum and Colon, Atlas of General Surgery Jaypee Brothers medical publishers are used as literary source.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To study in detail on *Arshas* in both *Ayurvedic* and modern texts, and collect information referred to *Arshas* and find the possible treatment of *Arshas*.

Nidana of Arshas:^[8,9]

The *Nidana* of *Arshas* are mentioned by *Acharya Charaka Sushruta* and *Vagbhata*.

1. Based on food habits, excessive intake of incompatible diets like *Guru*, *Sheeta*, *Abhishyandi*, etc.
2. Based on *Vihara*: excessive sexual intercourse, excessive staining, suppressing of natural urges.
3. Based on therapeutic abuses, excessive *Snehana therapy*, inappropriate *Vastikarma* administration, etc.
4. Based on other factors such as improper seating on hard surfaces for long time or harsh chairs, long rides on vehicles.
5. Some other factors can be pregnancy in females

Sahaja Arshas is accountable for the ancestral past actions and behaviour. *Sushruta Acharya* also mentions the role of foolish *Ahara* and *Vihara* in the origin of *Arshas*.

Samprapti of Arshas

The pathogenesis of *Arshas*, according to *Sushruta*, is caused by *Nidanas*, which lead to the vitiation of *Doshas* in one, two, or more combinations, along with *Rakta*. *Doshas* then move downward through the *Mahadhamani*, affecting the *Gudavalitraya* and causing *Arshas* in people who have *Mandagni* and other local causes.^[10] According to *Charaka*, *Arshoroga* is created when all the *Doshas* get vitiated, followed by *Bahya* and *Abhyantara rogamarga*, and has an impact on *Gudavalitraya*.^[11] *Vagbhata* asserts that vitiation of the *Doshas* results in the formation of *Mandagni*, vitiation of the *Apanavayu* causes the stagnation of *Mala* in *Gudavali*, and prolonged contact with *Mala* results in the emergence of *Arshas*.^[12]

Classification of *Arshas*

There are different opinions of *Acharya* regarding the *Arshas* classification:

- a) On the basis of the origin 1. *Sahaja* 2. *Kalaja*
- b) On the basis of the character of bleeding *Ardra (Sravi)* - Bleeding piles due to vitiation of *Rakta* and *Pitta Dosh*. *Shushka* - Non bleeding piles due to vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosh*.
- c) On the basis of the predominance of *Dosha*:
1. *Vataja* 2. *Pittaja* 3. *Kaphaja* 4. *Raktaj* 5. *Sannipataj* 6. *Sahaj*.
- d) On the basis of prognosis
1. *Sadhya* (Curable)
2. *Yapya* (Palliative)
3. *Asadhya* (Incurable)

Sadhya: If *Arsha* is of single *Doshika* involvement and not very chronic.

Yapya: *Arsha* caused by the simultaneous vitiation of any two *Doshas* and the location of *Arsha* in the second *Vali*, the chronicity of the disease is not more than one year.

Asadhya: *Sahaja Arsha* and if caused by the vitiation of three *Doshas* and if the *Arsha* is situated in the *Pravahini Vali*, then it is incurable. In addition to this if

the patient develops oedema in hands, legs, face, umbilical region, anal region, testicles or if he suffers from pain in the cardiac region, it is also considered as incurable.

e) According to contemporary medicine based on the position

1. Internal
2. External

Internal haemorrhoids

Internal haemorrhoids are those which occur inside the rectum. These are the varicosities of the veins in the rectal region. As this area does not have pain receptors, internal haemorrhoids are usually not painful and most people do not know they have them. These may bleed when irritated mostly due to constipation.

External haemorrhoids

External haemorrhoids are those which occur outside the anal verge. They are varicosities of the inferior rectal arteries which are branches of the pudendal arteries. They are painful sometimes, and can be accompanied by irritation and swelling. They are prone to thrombosis, if the vein ruptures and a blood clot develops, then it becomes a thrombosed haemorrhoid.

f) On the basis of symptoms

1. Grade I: No Prolapses. Just prominent blood vessels.
2. Grade II: Prolapses upon bearing down but spontaneously reduce.
3. Grade III: Prolapses upon bearing down and require manual reduction.
4. Grade IV: Prolapsed and cannot be manually reduced.

Chikitsa

In *Ayurveda* the fundamental rule to cure a disease is to eliminate the root cause of the disease and prevent the contributing etiological factors. Four therapeutic modalities for *Arsha* have been documented by *Acharya Sushruta*,^[13] and these treatments are to be used based on the degree of dosha involvement in *Arshas*.

1. *Bheshaja Karma* (medical treatment)
2. *Shastra Karma* (surgical management)
3. *Kshara Karma* (chemical cauterization)
4. *Agni Karma* (cauterization)

Bheshaja Chikitsa

Bheshaja Chikitsa (Medical management) is described as very first line of treatment of *Arsha*. It is statistically good effective in 1st to 2nd degree of *Ushna* disease prognosis.^[14] The ingredients having *Veerya*, *Katu Vipaka*, *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Vatanulomaka*, *Srotosodhana*, *Sronitsanghata Bhinnakara Guna* are capable to *Samprapti Vighatana* and cure the disease^[15] and based on that various preparations are mentioned for management of *Arsha*. *Arshas* which are newly arisen, with *Alpa Doshas Linga* and *Upadrava* can be treated with *Bheshaja*.

Local measures - There are many preparations which can be applied locally. These preparations are helpful in eliminating the painful manifestation of *Arshas*.

Shastra Karma

When conservative measures prove ineffective, *Arsha* is managed surgically using a variety of procedures. Haemorrhoidectomy is one of these that is typically advised in patients with prolapsed haemorrhoids, internal haemorrhoids, and significant degrees of disease presentation. *Shastra Karmas* can occasionally be linked to complications such as bleeding, infection, incontinence, anal strictures, and urine retention. When comparing haemorrhoidectomy to other anorectal operations, problems related to bleeding are more frequent. Those *Arshas* which are *Tanumoola*, *Uchritani* and *Kledavanta* are to be treated with *Shastra*.

Kshara Karma

Kshara is a caustic, alkaline substance that is manufactured from the ashes of therapeutic herbs. It is a less intrusive treatment than *Agni karma* and *Shastra Karma*. It is known as one of the *Anu Shastras* or *Upayantras*. It is the best among sharp and secondary instruments since it performs *Tridosahara* property along with *Chedana*, *Bhedana*, and *Lekhana*

Karma. Because *Kshara Karma* can be used to treat places that are difficult to reach with traditional procedures, it is versatile. Beyond this, *Ksharakarma* is more effective than other forms of treatment because it may be used externally as well as inside. *Kshara Karmas* can be applied to patients who are afraid of surgery, making them useful substitutes for surgical instruments.

Piles caused by *Vata* and *Kapha* should be treated with cauterization and application of *Kshara*. Those caused by *Pitta* and *Rakta* should be treated with use of *Mrudu Kshara*. Those *Arshas* which are *Mriudu*, *Prasrutha*, *Avagadha* and *Uchritha* are treated by using *Kshara*.

Agni Karma

Agni Karma is an important para surgical procedure. *Agni Karma* can help treat illnesses that are incurable even with the use of pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and *Kshara*. It is greater than *Kshara Karma* because ailments do not recur. It is often modified for use in surgical techniques like freezing and electric heat cautery. Those *Arshas* which are *Karkasha*, *Sthira*, *Pruthu* and *Katina* are treated using *Agnikarma*.

Management of Haemorrhoids

Haemorrhoidal treatment varies from therapeutic treatment, lifestyle modifications to surgeries depending on the degree and severity of the disease.

Non-Operative Treatment

1. Rubber band ligation

Rubber band ligation is a fast simple and effective measure in treating first and second degree haemorrhoids and few cases of third degree prolapse to some extent can also be treated. The ligation of haemorrhoidal tissue with the help rubber band causes ischemic necrosis and scarring, leading to fixation of the connective tissue to the rectal wall.

2. Sclerotherapy

This is currently recommended as a treatment option for first- and second-degree haemorrhoids. The rationale of injecting chemical agents is to create a fixation of mucosa to the underlying muscle by fibrosis. The solutions used are 5% phenol in oil, vegetable oil,

quinine, and urea hydrochloride or hypertonic salt solution.

3. Infrared coagulation

The infrared coagulator produces infrared radiation which coagulates tissue and vaporizes water in the cell, causing shrinkage of the haemorrhoid mass.

4. Cryotherapy

Cryotherapy ablates the hemorrhoidal tissue with a freezing cryoprobe. It has been claimed to cause less pain because sensory nerve endings are destroyed at very low temperature.

5. Laser ablation

Laser ablation also known as laser haemorrhoidectomy or laser haemorrhoidoplasty, is a minimally invasive surgical procedure used to treat haemorrhoids. In this procedure a specialized laser is used to precisely target and shrink the haemorrhoidal tissue. The laser energy is delivered to the haemorrhoid, causing it to shrink and eventually scar. This reduces the blood flow to the haemorrhoid/ leading to its gradual resolution

Operative treatment- operation is preferred when all the non-operative measures have failed to show result in treating the haemorrhoids, also when haemorrhoids are of third, fourth degree where surgery is the only option left.

Haemorrhoidectomy

Excisional haemorrhoidectomy is the most effective treatment for haemorrhoids with the lowest rate of recurrence compared to other modalities. It can be performed using scissors, diathermy, or vascular sealing device such as Ligature and Harmonic scalpel. Excisional haemorrhoidectomy can be performed safely under perianal anaesthetic infiltration as an ambulatory surgery. Indications for haemorrhoidectomy include failure of non-operative management, acute complicated haemorrhoids such as strangulation or thrombosis, patient preference, and concomitant anorectal conditions such as anal fissure or fistula-in-ano which require surgery. In clinical practice, the third-degree or fourth-degree internal haemorrhoids are the main indication for haemorrhoidectomy.^[14]

A major drawback of haemorrhoidectomy is postoperative pain. There has been evidence that Ligasure haemorrhoidectomy results in less postoperative pain, shorter hospitalization, faster wound healing and convalescence compared to scissors or diathermy haemorrhoidectomy.

Apathya in Arshas

Fried food, maida rich foods, non-veg, chillies, constipating foods, ideal sitting without any work to body, excessive pressure while defecation, food which are deep fried. These foods can cause *Arshas*.

Pathya in Arshas

Cow milk, buttermilk, pure ghee, wheat, rice, green gram, fibre rich foods, boiled vegetables, sufficient sleep, exercise regularly, good and regular diet habits, *Vega Dharana* should be avoided specially the urge to pass stools.

DISCUSSION

This article provides a detailed exploration of treatments from both *Ayurvedic* and modern medical perspectives. It aims to bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and contemporary scientific practices in addressing the common ailment of haemorrhoids, known as *Arshas* in *Ayurveda*.

CONCLUSION

Arsha is a condition associated with age, occupation, way of life, and food. *Ayurvedic classics* describe an ideal pattern of living that one can follow to live a long and healthy life. Some significant factors mentioned in *Ayurvedic classics* for the manifestation of *Arsha* (piles) include eating low-fiber food, bad eating habits, abnormal body posture, complicated delivery, repeated abortion, psychological imbalances, and physical harm to the anal region. *Nidana Parivarjana* plays an important role in the prevention of *Arshas*. As a result, *Ayurveda* has a great deal of potential to successfully and trouble-free handle all stages of *Arsha*.

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