Case Report

Ankylosing Spondylitis

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Holistic Management of Ankylosing Spondylitis through Ayurveda: A Case Study

Yadav N^{1*}, Panja S², Kharjule S³, Bhaduri T⁴

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- ^{1*} Neha Yadav, Second Year Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Kayachikitsa, Institute of Post Graduate Ayurvedic Education and Research at Shyamadas Vaidya Shastra Pith (SVSP), Kolkata, West Bengal, India.
- ² Soumya Panja, Second Year Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Kayachikitsa, Institute of Post Graduate Ayurvedic Education and Research at Shyamadas Vaidya Shastra Pith (SVSP), Kolkata, West Bengal, India.
- ³ Shwetangi Kharjule, Second Year Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Kayachikitsa, Institute of Post Graduate Ayurvedic Education and Research at Shyamadas Vaidya Shastra Pith (SVSP), Kolkata, West Bengal, India.
- ⁴ Tapas Bhaduri, Reader and Head, Department of Kayachikitsa, Institute of Post Graduate Ayurvedic Education and Research at Shyamadas Vaidya Shastra Pith (SVSP), Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

Ankylosing Spondylitis is a group of spondylarthrosis, chronic autoimmune inflammatory disorder. Primarily it affects axial skeleton and gradually it affects peripheral joint and extra articular structure. Presence of sacroiliitis and structural changes is seen in this disorder. The usual presentation of Ankylosing Spondylitis is morning stiffness which is relieved after exercise or activity. The term "Ankylosing Spondylitis" is not mentioned in our ancient classics but the signs and symptoms can be clinically correlated to Kati Prishta Trik Graha in Ayurveda. Here major symptoms are Stambha and Shula in Kati Pradesh with Vata Kapha Dosha predominance. This was a single case study conducted at I.P.G.A.E&R at SVSP Kolkata. A 45 yrs old female patient, came to the Out Patient Department. complaining of pain and stiffness in Kati Prishta Trik Pradesh. She was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis and bilateral Sacroiliitis 7 years ago. Management was done according to the principle of Kati Prishta Trik Graha. Treatment plan included Classical Virechana, Erandamuladi Niruha Basti in Kala Yoga followed by Samana Aushadhi. The disease activity was further analysed using BASDAI and ASDAS- CRP score and we got promising results by the treatment without any adverse effects.

Keywords: Ankylosing Spondylitis, Kati Prishta Trik Graha, Erandamuladi Niruha Basti, Ayurveda

Corresponding Author	How to Cite this Article	To Browse
Neha Yadav, Second Year Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Kayachikitsa, Institute of Post Graduate Ayurvedic Education and Research at Shyamadas Vaidya Shastra Pith (SVSP), Kolkata, West Bengal, India. Email: nehayv8@gmail.com	Yadav N, Panja S, Kharjule S, Bhaduri T, Holistic Management of Ankylosing Spondylitis through Ayurveda: A Case Study. J Ayu Int Med Sci. 2025;10(4):344-351. Available From https://jaims.in/jaims/article/view/4263/	

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Introduction

Ankylosing Spondylitis comes from Greek Word (Ankylos + Spondylitis) Ankylosis means Stiffness or fixation of a joint as a result of a disease process with fibrous or bony union across the joint i.e. fusion and Spondylitis is inflammation of one or more vertebrae. It is defined by the presence of Sacroiliitis and other structural changes which may eventually progress to bony fusion of the spine. There is syndesmophyte formation along the corners of vertebral body with bridging, giving rise to bamboo spine appearance. It usually manifests in 2nd or 3rd decade with male: female ratio of about 3:1 and 0.1 to 1.4 % of global population.[1]

The prevalence of AS in a population is directly related to the frequency of HLA-B27 antigen. Spondylitis evolves slowly, Ankylosing with fluctuating symptoms of spinal inflammation. Secondary osteoporosis of the vertebral bodies frequently occurs, leading to increased risk of vertebral fractures. Spinal fusion varies in its extent and in most cases ankylosis develops in many patients over a period of many years. In India the prevalence of Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) is estimated to be between 0.7 and 1.0 per 1000 people, with a higher prevalence in men than women. NSAID and Steroids are the drug of choice in conventional methods but fails to provide complete cure. There is no direct reference to this disease in Ayurveda but we can clinically correlate its sign and symptoms to Kati Prishta Trika Graha in contemporary science, as there is marked presence of Shoola (pain), Graha (stiffness) in Kati (pelvis) Prishta (posterior region of trunk from neck to pelvis) and Trika Pradesh (around shoulder girdle). We also get description regarding such disorders under the concept Vata vyadhi as Prishta Graha and Trika Graha which has been mentioned under 80 types of Vataja nanatmaja vyadhi and avarana of Vata with other dosa are also mentioned.

Case Study

A female patient named Mrs. XYZ, 43 yrs of age came to Kayachikitsa OPD of I.P.G.A. E& R at SVSP Kolkata on, OPD Reg.No-AYUR/RG240001xxxx.

Chief complaints with duration

1. Kati Sula (Low back pain) & Stambha (stiffness) for past 4 yrs, not relieved by rest.

2. Griva Graha (Restricted movement of neck) & *Prishta Graha* (restricted movement of hip joint) for last 4 yrs.

3. Satata Ruja with *Panguta* (Pain with difficulty in forward bending) for last 3 yrs.

4. Stambha at Griva and Amsa Sandhi (Restricted movement of neck and shoulder joint) for last 2 yrs.
5. Pada Sotha (Swelling) in both feet for last 3 months.

History of present illness

Low back pain radiating to both lower limbs along with stiffness which usually lasts for one hour and after waking up from bed it gradually reduces after some movement or exercise. Patient was unable to sit without support. Even she can't turn backwards. Restricted joint movement specially at neck, shoulder and hip joint.

Disease gets aggravated by cold exposure and long standing (>15 minutes).

- Time of onset 7 yrs ago
- Mode of onset Chronic
- Progress Gradual.
- Severity Severe
- Past Medical History Hypothyroidism (On Modern Medication)
- Past Surgical History Lower Uterine Segment Caesarean Section.
- Occupation House wife
- Marital Status Married
- Family History Her paternal aunt (elder sister of her father) had same disease.

Vitals

- Pulse: 78 b/min
- BP: 126/82 mm of Hg
- Respiratory rate: 14/min
- Temp: 98.4°

General Examination

Patient was Alert, Cooperative & Conscious.

- Pallor: Present
- Icterus: Absent
- Cyanosis: Absent
- Clubbing: Absent

- Oedema: B/L pitting oedema in feet
- Gait: Antalgic gait
- Lymphadenopathy: Absent
- Posture: Altered (cervical lordosis is lost)

Personal History

- Appetite: Diminished
- Digestion: Proper
- Bowel: Constipated
- Bladder: Regular
- Sleep: Disturbed due to pain.
- Diet: Non vegetarian.

Ashta Vidha Pariksha

- Nadi: Vata-Kaphaja, Manda Gati
- Mala: Baddha
- Mutra: Shweta
- Jihva: Upalipta
- Shabda: Prakrit
- Sparsha : Adra
- Drik: Sthira
- Akriti: Madhyam

Musculoskeletal System

Inspection:

Loss of cervical lordosis.

Palpation

- Pain (squeezing in nature) & tenderness in lumbosacral and cervical joint.
- Chest expansion 3cm (Inspiration 37 cm & Expiration - 34cm)
- Restricted movement of hip and knee joint, difficulty in flexion and abduction, with shorter step length.
- Schober's test[2]- positive (< 5cm)
- Straight Leg Rising Test (SLRT)[3] Positive
- Right leg 15°
- Left Leg 20°

Below table shows Range of Movement in Cervical Spine, Lumbar spine and Shoulder joint just before the treatment.

SN		Motion	Degree	
1.	Cervical Spine	Flexion	46°	
		Hyperextension	70°	
		Lateralflexion	10°	
		Rotation	Restricted	
2.	Lumbar Spine	Flexion	Restricted (B/L)	
		Extension	15° (Right leg), 20° (Left Leg)	
		Lateralbending	Restricted (B/L)	
		Rotation	Restricted (B/L)	
3.	Shoulder Joint	Abduction	90° (Right), 110° (Left)	
		Adduction	20° (Right), 30°(Left)	
		InternalRotation	30° (Right), 45° (Left)	

Investigations

16.02.20

HLA-B27 POSITIVE;

04.06.24

- CRP 7.8, Hb 10.8%, ESR 101
- Digital X RAY pelvis with both hip jointsubarticular sclerosis of both SI Joints suggestive of B/L Sacroiliitis.
- Digital X RAY cervical Spine: Cervical lordosis is lost. Calcification noted on anterior spinal ligaments.







Diagnosis.

She is a pre-diagnosed case of Ankylosing Spondylitis.

On the basis of *Dosha* & *Lakshan* we diagnosed this case as *Kati Prishta Trik Graha*.[4]

Treatment

Shodhana Chikitsa followed by *Shamana Aushadhi* was planned accordingly.

Date	Procedure	Drugs	Dose
06.06.24 to	Dipana and Pachana	Powder Pancha Kola	5gm twice daily before food with
10.06.24			one cup of Leuk warm water
11.06.24 to	Abhyantar Snehana	Mahatikta Ghrita[5]	30 ml once daily morning empty
15.06.24	(internal oleation)		stomach with Leuk warm water
16.06.24 to	Abhyanga (External	Prasarani Taila [6]	
19.06.24	oleation)	Kati Basti[7] with Mahanarayan Taila[8] for 30 days	
	Nadi Sweda (Sudation)	Dashmoola Kwath	
19.06.24	Virechana (Purgation)	Trivritta Avaleha (50gm) + Abhyadi Modak (2 pills) + Triphala Kwath (50ml) after	Total Virechana Vega – 15 (Diet -
		Samyak Snehana and Swedan	Mudga Juice in Lunch and Dinner)
20.06.24 to	Samsarjana Karma		Lunch and Dinner
22.06.24			Day 1 - Semisolid Khichdi
			Day 2 - Veg boiled
			Day 3 - Non-veg boiled.
			Day 4 onwards Normal Diet.
23.06.24 to	Cupping Therapy[9]	-	-
28.06.24			
29.07.24 to	Kala Basti for 15 days	Eranda Muladi Niruha Basti[10,11] (350ml),	-
13.08.24	after Bahya Snehana	Saindhavadi Taila [12] Anuvasana Basti (60 ml)	
	8.	Ingredients for Patra Pinda -Leaves of Nirgundi, Eranda, Chincha, Dhatura, Shigru,	
	Sarvang Swedan (Patra	Lemon, Garlic, Grated Coconut, Rasnadi Churna, Haridra, Methika, Saindhav lavana	
	Pinda Sweda)[13]		
16.08.24	Patient was given	Samana Aushadhi mentioned below	Pathya & Apathya was instructed.
	discharge		



Figure 1: Kati Basti



Figure 2: Patra Pinda Swedan



Figure 3: Cupping Therapy



Figure 4: Erandamuladi Niruha Basti in preparation.

Shamana Aushadhi	administered	mentioned h	pelow.
Shamana Aushaam	uunninstereu	mentioned t	JC10 W.

Drugs (Shamana	Dosage	Anupan	Therapeutic Indication
Aushadhi for one			
month)			
Trayadasang	500 mg twice	Sukhos	Katigraha, Gridhrasi,
Guggulu [14,15,16]	daily after food	najala	Bahuprishtahangraha,
			Majjagatavata, Snayugata etc.
Rasnasaptak Kwath	15ml twice	Sukhos	Janghasula, Urusula,
[17]	daily before	najala	Pristhasula, Triksula,
	food		Parsvasula
Vaiswanar Churna	5gm twice	Sukhos	Sula, Vibandha, Vataja vikar
[18]	daily after food	najala	
Eranda Taila [19]	10ml at	Sukhos	Gridhrasi, Urugraha, Katisula
	bedtime	najala	

Progress of the treatment

Patient was admitted with severe back pain & stiffness. She was unable to sit properly in squat position associated with difficulty in forward & backward bending.

SN	Therapeutic Procedure	Results
1.	Dipana & Pachana with Powder Pancha	Lightness of the body and
	kola (06.06.24 to 10.06.24)	improved digestion.
2.	Abhyantar (Internal) Snehana with	Pain increased.
	Mahatikta Ghrita (11.06.24 to	Pain subsided.
	16.06.24).Bahya (External) Snehana	
	with Prasarani Taila (16.06.24 to	
	19.06.24) + Kati Basti with Mahanarayan	
	Taila + Nadi Sweda.	
3.	After Virechana Karma (19.06.24)	She got symptomatic relief.
4.	Samsarjana Karma (20.06.24 to	Again, she complained of
	22.06.24)	pain.
5.	Cupping therapy (30 minute) at upper	She got relief from stiffness.
	back (23.06.24 to 28.06.24)	
6.	Basti Karma	Moderate pain during Niruha
	(29.07.24 to 13.08.24)	Basti which was relieved
		following Anuvasana Basti.
7.	Patra Pinda Sweda for 15 days	She got mild relief.
	(29.07.24 to 13.08.24)	

Results

This Ayurveda approach tackles the root cause of the disease, exemplifying fundamental principles of Ayurveda. The combined treatment protocol showed encouraging results. Significant improvement was recorded in ASDAS - CRP Score[20] and BASDAI Score,[21] thus making quality of life better than before.

ASDAS - CRP Score Before and After Treatment

ASDAS-CRP Score	Before	After Treatment (15th
	Treatment	Day After Discharge)
Back Pain (0-10)	8	3
Duration of morning stiffness	5	1
(0-10)		
Patient Global Assessment of	6	3
Disease Activity (0-10)		
Peripheral pain and Swelling	6	2
(0-10)		
CRP	7.8 mg/l	5.2
Calculated ASDAS -CRP Score	3.136	1.953
Disease Activity	Very High	Moderate Disease Activity
	Disease Activity	

BASDAI Score	Before Treatment	After Treatment
Fatigue	8	3
Spinal pain	4	2
Arthralgia (joint pain) or swelling	6	2
Enthesitis	4	2
Morning stiffness (duration)	5	1
Morning stiffness (severity)	3	1
Disease Activity	5.7	2.0
	Very High Disease	Moderate Disease
	Activity	Activity

BASDAI Score Before and After Treatment

SN		Motion (With	Degree of	Degree of
		Degree of	Movement (Before	Movement (After
		Movement)	Treatment)	Treatment)
1.	Cervical	Flexion (40-50°)	46°	48°
	Spine	Hyperextension	70°	76°
		(50 - 80°)	10°	12°
		Lateralflexion (30-	Restricted	Restricted
		45°)		
		Rotation (70-80°)		
2.	Lumbar	Flexion (70-80°)	Restricted(B/L)	Restricted(B/L)
	Spine	Extension (20-30°)	15° (Right Leg)	18° Right Leg)
		Lateralbending	20° (Left Leg)	26° (Left Leg)
		(20-30°)	Restricted(B/L)	Restricted (B/L)
		Rotation (10-15°)	Restricted/L)	Restricted/L)
3.	Shoulder	Abduction (70-	90° (Right), 110°	98° (Right), 120°
	Joint	180°)	(Left)	(Left)
		Adduction (30-	20° (Right), 30°	26° (Right),34°
		45°)	(Left)	(Left)
		Internal Rotation	30° (Right), 45°	40° (Right), 60°
		(90-110°)	(Left)	(Left)

ASDAS CRP-Score



Before After

Above are the changes observed in ASDAS - CRP and BASDAI Score Before and After treatment in Graphical Representation.

Below Table Shows Changes in Range of Motion Before and After Treatment.

Discussion

Ankylosing Spondylitis is a chronic inflammatory disease. Shodhana Karma followed by Shamana Chikitsa showed promising results in the management of the disease. The present study showed multimodal Ayurveda treatment with encouraging results in the management of the disease. Vata and Kapha are the two main pathological factors in the disease Kati Prishta Trik Graha. Vitiated Vata along with Kapha Dosha gets lodged in Kati Prishta Trik Pradesh causing Sroto Sanga and thereby hamper in the production of Dhatu's like Asthi. The patient complained of like Gourava (heaviness), symptoms Alasya (lethargy), Aruchi (aversion), Apakti (indigestion), Malasanga (constipation) which are the key features of Sama Dosha. Ama Dosha is the key factor in the pathogenesis of every disease, so powder Pancha Kola was given which enhances digestion and improves Dhatwagni. Sarvanga Snehana with Prasarani Taila followed by Nadi Swedan relieves aggravated Vata-Kapha Dosha thereby it reduces pain and swelling. Patra Pinda Swedan being Ruksha in nature relieves stiffness in the body. Patra applied for Patra Pinda Swedan were Nirgundi (Vitex Eranda (Ricinus communis), negundo), Arka (Calotropis gigantea), Shigru (Moringa oleifera). The leaves were heated and fried together with other ingredients and tied into a bolus which was then massaged all over the body. As the body began to sweat due to the Swedan treatment resulting in reduction of swelling, muscle pain and stiffness. It is also having anti-inflammatory and analgesic effect. Kati Basti with Mahanarayan Taila is found to be very effective in various Vata Vyadhi. On its application it relieves pain and improves Bala (strength) and *Varna* (complexion). Cupping therapy at upper back increases localised blood circulation thus reducing inflammation and hence alleviates muscle pain and stiffness. Basti is the best line of treatment for aggravated Vata Dosa. Erandamula is said to be best Vatahara Dravya. It relieves the pain located at Janga-Uru-Paada-Trika-Prishta Shoola (thigh, foot, sacral region,

And back) region and is also *Lekhaneeya* in action (scrapes out *Ama* and vitiated *Dosha* from the body). It also performs *Srotosodhan* (removing blockage in the channels of circulation) thus performing *Samprapti Vighattan*. It has a wide spectrum of action and effectively used in various diseases.

Role of Internal Medication

Trayadasang Guggulu has potent Vata Kapha Shamak property and proved anti-inflammatory, analgesic, muscle relaxant and antioxidant action. It is indicated in Katigraha, Snayu Gatavata and other various Vatik disorders. Rasna Saptak Kwath with chief ingredients like Rasna (Pluchea lanceolata), Gokshura (Tribulus terrestris), Guduchi (Tinosporia cordifolia), Punarnava (Boerhavia diffusa), Eranda (Ricinus communis), Devdaru (Cedrus deodara) Aragvadh (Cassia fistula), Sunthi (Zingiber officinale) has excellent Vatahara property. They possess potent anti-inflammatory, analgesic, immunomodulatory and antioxidant properties. It is specially indicated in Jangauropristhatrikaparsa Shula (pain in thigh, back, sacral region, etc). Vaiswanar Churna stimulates digestive fire (Dipta Agni), reduces swelling (Shotha Prasamana) and has potent anti-inflammatory action. Eranda Taila is the drug of choice in Vata Vyadhi, not only it eliminates Ama and other toxins from the body but also it alleviates aggravated Vata Dosha thus reducing pain, stiffness and improves the mobility of the joints.

Conclusion

This study has showed that Ayurvedic treatment modalities is highly effective in the management of Ankylosing Spondylitis, as evidenced by marked reduction in BASDAI & ASDAS score, assessed on the basis of improvement in both signs & symptoms. Thus, the presented paper provided an opportunity for standardisation of Ayurvedic assessments and treatment procedures which are therapeutically safe and effective. This approach may be taken into consideration for further efficient management of Ankylosing spondylitis.

Declaration of patient consent

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. The patient has been informed that his initials will not be published and due efforts will be made to conceal the identity.

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