

Unravelling Sciatica: Insights into Gridhrasi from Ayurvedic Classics

Kumar S^{1*}, Kumar Y², Kumar A³

DOI:10.21760/jaims.10.2.13


^{1*} Santosh Kumar, MD in Panchakarma, Suryamukhi Dinesh Ayurved Medical College and Hospital, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India and Medical Officer, Sahebpur Kamal, Begusarai, Bihar, India.

² Yogesh Kumar, Assistant Professor, Dept of Panchakarma, Dr Prakash Chandra Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Patna, Bihar, India.

³ Amitabh Kumar, HOD, Dept of Panchakarma, Suryamukhi Dinesh Ayurved Medical College and Hospital, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India.

Gridhrasi, commonly equated with Sciatica in modern medical terminology, is a debilitating condition characterized by radiating pain along the course of the sciatic nerve. Ayurveda describes Gridhrasi as a disorder predominantly caused by vitiation of Vata Dosha, often accompanied by Kapha, resulting in pain, stiffness, and restricted mobility. The condition derives its name from the characteristic limping gait of affected individuals, resembling a vulture (Gridhra). Modern medical science attributes Sciatica to nerve root compression or irritation, frequently due to herniated discs, spinal stenosis, or degenerative changes in the lumbar spine. Though technological advancements have improved diagnostics and treatment modalities, the chronic and recurrent nature of Sciatica necessitates a holistic management approach. Ayurveda offers a unique perspective through Panchakarma therapies, Shamana Chikitsa (palliative care), and lifestyle modifications. The integration of Ayurvedic practices with contemporary medical interventions has demonstrated promising results, warranting further exploration of their combined efficacy. This review article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of Gridhrasi, examining its etiology, pathophysiology, and therapeutic approaches from both Ayurvedic and modern perspectives. By analyzing classical references alongside current evidence, this work endeavors to underscore the relevance and effectiveness of traditional practices in addressing this persistent clinical challenge. The study specifically focuses on the Ayurvedic classification, underlying pathophysiology, and etiological factors of Gridhrasi, contributing to a deeper understanding of its holistic management.

Keywords: Gridhrasi, Sciatica, Radiating Pain, Nerve Root Compression, Herniated Discs, Panchakarma Therapy, Holistic Approach

Corresponding Author	How to Cite this Article	To Browse
Santosh Kumar, MD in Panchakarma, Suryamukhi Dinesh Ayurved Medical College and Hospital, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India and Medical Officer, Sahebpur Kamal, Begusarai, Bihar, India. Email: drsantoshkumar0843@gmail.com	Kumar S, Kumar Y, Kumar A, Unravelling Sciatica: Insights into Gridhrasi from Ayurvedic Classics . J Ayu Int Med Sci. 2025;10(2):91-100. Available From https://jaims.in/jaims/article/view/4307/	

Manuscript Received
2025-01-15

Review Round 1
2025-01-25

Review Round 2
2025-02-05

Review Round 3
2025-02-15

Accepted
2025-02-26

Conflict of Interest
None

Funding
Nil

Ethical Approval
Not required

Plagiarism X-checker
13.34

Note



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Introduction

Gridhrasi, commonly equated with Sciatica in modern medical terminology, is a prevalent condition characterized by radiating pain along the course of the sciatic nerve. This ailment, mentioned extensively in Ayurvedic classics, derives its name from the gait of affected individuals, reminiscent of a vulture (*Gridhra*). The condition is primarily associated with a vitiation of *Vata Dosha*, often accompanied by *Kapha*, resulting in debilitating pain, stiffness, and restricted mobility. In contemporary medical science, Sciatica is understood as a manifestation of nerve root compression or irritation, often caused by herniated discs, spinal stenosis, or degenerative changes in the lumbar spine.

While advancements in modern diagnostics and interventions have enhanced the understanding and management of this condition, its chronic and recurrent nature calls for a holistic approach. Ayurveda offers a unique perspective on the management of *Gridhrasi*, emphasizing the role of Panchakarma therapies, *Shamana Chikitsa* (palliative care), and lifestyle modifications. The integration of traditional Ayurvedic methods with modern medical interventions has shown promising results, necessitating further exploration of this synergy. This review article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of *Gridhrasi*, delving into its etiology, pathophysiology, and therapeutic approaches from both Ayurvedic and modern perspectives. By examining classical references alongside contemporary evidence, this work endeavors to highlight the relevance and efficacy of traditional practices in addressing this enduring clinical challenge.

Objectives of the study

To explore the Ayurvedic understanding of *Gridhrasi*, including its etiological factors, pathophysiology, and classification as described in classical texts.

Review of Literature

Nirukti of *Gridhrasi*

Gridhrasi is an illness predominantly affecting the ambulatory function of the patient and the same is stressed in the derivation of the word *Gridhrasi*.

Following derivations taken from the different text books in Sanskrit literature substantiates same.[1,2]

- ***Gridhramapisyati*, 'Syati'- as - 'Kshepana'.**
- ***Urusandhau Vatarogah*" (Ch.Chi.28/101)**
- ***Gridhraamiva Syaati Gachhati*.**

Here the word *Gridhrasi* is suggestive of the typical character of pain and also the gait of the patient. Further as in this disease the patient walks like the bird *Gridhra* and his legs become tense and slightly curved so due to the resemblance with the gait of a vulture, *Gridhrasi* term might have been given to this disease. *Gridhram Api Syati So Antakarmani Atonupasargakah, Chanchva Gridhra Iva Syati Peedayati, Gridhra Syati Bhakshati Gridhra* is a bird called as vulture in English.

This bird is fond of meat and it eats flesh of an animal in such a fashion that it deeply pierce its beak in the flesh then draws it out forcefully, exactly such type of pain occurs in *Gridhrasi* and hence the name "*Gridhramapisyati*", '*Syati*'-as-"*Kshepana*".

Table 1: *Vata Prakopa Samanaya Nidana*.

Aharaja Nidana (causative factor related to diet)

The Factors	Ch.	Su.	A.H.	M.N.	S.S.	B.P.	H.S.	C.D.
Dhatukshayakaraka (substances causing Dhātu depletion):								
Ruksha Anna (dry food)	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Sheeta Anna (cold food)	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
Alpa/Parimit Anna (diet below the requirement)	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
Laghu Anna (light diet)	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
Langhana (fasting)	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
Abhojana/Anashan (complete fasting)	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	-
Katu, Kashaya, Tikta Rasa (diet with pungent, astringent, bitter tastes)	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
Shushka Shaka (dry vege -tables)	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mudga, Nishpav, Masura (lentils)	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-
Shushka Mansa (dry meat)	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Margavarajanaka (substances causing obstruction of Dhātu):								
Vishamashana (untimely diet)	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adhyashana (overeating)	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
Bhuktam Jeernataram (eating immediately after meals)	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
Viruddha Bhojan (incompatible food)	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
Kalaya, Chana, Masura (some type of lentils)	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-
Kashaya Rasa (astringent taste)	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	+

Nidana Panchaka

Nidana of Gridhrasi

Gridhrasi is considered as a *Nanatmaja* type *Vatavyadhi*. The provoking factors of *Vata* can also be taken as a cause of *Gridhrasi*.

All the etiological factors given either of *Vata Vyadhi* or *Vata Prakopaka* in the Ayurvedic classics can be classified into four groups.

1. *Aharaj*
2. *Viharaj*
3. *Agantuka*
4. *Anya Hetu*

The *Vata Prakopaka Hetus* found in different *Samhitas* (Ch. Chī. 28/15-18, Su. Su. 21/19-20, Su. Ni. 1/67-69, AS. Ni.15/31, 34, 35, AH. Ni. 1/14, 15, AH. Ni. 15/29, 32, 33, 47, B.P. U. 24/102) are listed in the table-

2. Viharaja Nidana (lifestyle habits)

The Factors	Ch.	Su.	A.H.	M.N.	S.S.	B.P.	H.S.	C.D.
Dhatukshayakarak (factors leading to depletion of dhatu):								
Ativyavaya (excess in sexual activity)	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
Atiprajagara (staying awake at night)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Visham Upachara (contradictory treatment)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ati Plavana / Bahubhyam Taranam (excess off swimming)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ati Pradhaavan (excessive running)	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-
Ati Vyayam (excessive exercise)	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
Ati Vicheshta (hyperactivity)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Dukkha Shayya / Asana (uncomfortable posture while sleeping)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Abhighata (trauma)	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-
Bharaharan (carrying weight)	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-
Vega Udirana (excess of natural urges)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Uchaye Bhashyanam (loud talking)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+
Padaticharya (excessive walking)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Margavarjanak (factors leading to obstruction of Dhatu)								
Vegavarodha (suppression of natural urges)	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
Sheeta Jal Taran / Ati Sevan (excessive intake of cold water)	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-

Vata gets vitiated by two ways viz. *Dhatukshaya* & *Margavarana*. So, various *Vata Prakopaka Hetus* are divided likewise. The *Hetus* are reorganized under main headings as *Aharatah*, *Viharatah*, *Kalatah*, *Manasika* & Miscellaneous.[3,4,5]

3. Manasika Nidana (mental causative factors):

The Factors	Ch.	Su.	A.H.	M.N.	S.S.	B.P.	H.S.	C.D.
Chinta (stress)	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Shoka (grief)	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+
Krodha (anger)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bhaya (fear)	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+
Atyanta Kama Udaya (excessive desire for sex)	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
Atyanta Tamoguna (excess of tama)	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
Bhutabhishanga	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-

4. Anya Hetu:

The Factors	Ch.	Su.	A.H.	M.N.	S.S.	B.P.	H.S.	C.D.
Ati Dosha Sravana (excessive flow of Doshas)	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
Vaman Virechana Atiyoga	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Ati Asrik Sravana (excessive bloodletting)	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-
Rogatikarshana (overtreatment)	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
Ama	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Poorvarupa

Gridhrasi being a *Vata Vyadhi*, the *Samanya Poorvarupa* of *Vata Vyadhi* are the *Poorvarupa* of *Gridhrasi*. Charaka has mentioned that *Avyakta Lakshana* are the *Poorvarupa* of *Vata Vyadhi*. While clarifying the word, "*Avyakta*" Chakrapani states that few mild symptoms can be considered as *Poorvarupa*. [6]

Thus, the symptoms of *Gridhrasi* such as *Ruka* (pain), *Toda* (pricking pain), *Spandana* (twitching), *Stabdhata* (numbness), *Tandra* (drowsiness), *Arochaka* (loss of taste) etc. when manifested slightly can be called as *Poorvarupa* of *Gridhrasi*.

Roopa

Complete manifestation of the disease is called as *Roopa*. In the fifth *Kriyakala* i.e., *Vyakti Avastha*, the characteristic symptoms and signs of a disease appear clearly and the disease can be recognized without any doubt. While describing *Gridhrasi*, Acharya Charaka has listed *Ruka*, *Toda*, *Stambha* and *Muhuspandana* (mild twitching) as the cardinal symptoms. [7] To be more precise about the track of pain, Chakrapani says that the pain starts at hip and then radiates to lumbar region, back, thigh, knee, calf and feet in order. Also, *Sakthikshepanigraha* (impossibility to lift the lower extremities) is added to the list of cardinal signs by Acharya Sushruta [8] and Vagbhata. [9]

Tandra (drowsiness), *Gaurav* (heaviness), *Aruchi* (loss of appetite), *Bhaktadwesa* (rejection of food), *Mukhapraseka* (excessive salivation) etc. are the *Lakshanas* of *Vatakapaja Gridhrasi*.

Table 2: Lakshanas of Gridhrasi

Symptoms	Ch.	Su.	A.H.	A.S.	B.P. [10]	M.N. [11]	Y.R. [12]	S.S.	H.S.
Sphika Purva Kati Pristha, Uru, Janu, Jangha, Pada Kramat Vedana	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
Ruka	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
Toda	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
Stambha	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
Muhuspandana	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-
Sakthikshepanigraha	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sakthiutkshepanigraha	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
Janu Madhya Vedana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Uru Madhya Vedana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Kati Madhya Vedana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Dehasyapavakrata	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
Janusandhisphura	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
Urusandhisphurana	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
Katisandhisphurana	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
Janghasphurana	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
Suptata	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
Tandra	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
Gaurav	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
Arochak	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
Vahni Mardav	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
Mukhapraseka	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
Bhaktadwesa	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
Staimitya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+

Upashaya and Anupashaya

Upashaya are the medicines, diets and regimens which brings about happiness either by acting directly against the cause of the disease or it may produce such effect on the disease indirectly. *Upashaya* is rightly called as exploratory therapy. It is essential to know the *Sadhyaasadyata* of a disease before the treatment. Charaka says, "A physician who can distinguish between curable and incurable diseases and initiate treatment in time with the full knowledge about the various aspects of the therapeutics can certainly accomplish his object of curing the disease" (Ch.Su.10/7). When identical symptoms having two or more disease are meet hostilely (or encountered) in such conditions, disease could be best differentiated by adopting *Upashaya*. *Upashaya* for *Gridhrasi* has not been mentioned particularly.

But, if there is uncertainty as whether the disease is *Urustambha* or *Gridhrasi*, to differentiate these two we can adopt *Upashaya*. If symptoms aggravate on the application of oil, then we can consider it to be *Urustambha* and if the symptoms alleviate, we can consider it as *Gridhrasi*. The *Nidana* mentioned for *Vatavyadhi* are considered as *Anupashaya* for *Gridhrasi*.

Sapeksha Nidana

Diagnosis is successfully made by thoroughly observing the patient to explore the clinical manifestations and analyzing the symptoms to determine the vitiation of *Dosha*, involvement of *Dhatu*, affliction of *Srotas*, as well as other events of *Samprapti*. Diagnosis of *Gridhrasi* can be made easily by typical clinical presentation of radicular pain with restricted leg raising reveals the vitiation of *Vata* and occasionally in association with *Kapha Dosha*, afflicting the *Asthi* as *Dhatu* and *Snayu* and *Kandara* as *Upadhatu* involving the *Asthivaha Srotas*. Though *Gridhrasi* is characterized by a distinct course of radiating pain but sometimes it may be a difficult task to differentiate the similar conditions like *Urustambha*, *Khalli*, *Khanjta* and *Panguta*. Even then the differentiation may be made easy by analyzing the course of pain, character of pain, severity, associated phenomena and functional disability in patients of *Gridhrasi*. *Sapeksha Nidana* of *Gridhrasi*, in this context with other diseases having alike symptoms is described as below –

1. In *Gridhrasi*, a distinct radiating pain which emerging from buttock and goes towards the feet along the course of sciatic nerve is found which is absent in other disease like *Urustambha*, *Khalli* etc.
2. In *Gridhrasi*, *Sakthikshepa* is being restricted, whereas in *Urustambha* patients feel heaviness in their thigh and difficulty in walking.
3. *Urustambha* is associated with *Jwara*, *Chhardi*, *Aruchi*, *Agnimandya* which are not usually found in *Gridhrasi*.
4. In *Khalli*, the severity of pain is more than that of *Gridhrasi* and is generally proximal in nature.
5. In *Khanja* and *Pangu*, first and foremost symptom is paralysis which may be present in Sciatica only as a late complication, and no history of pain may be present in *Khanja* and *Pangu*.
6. In *Gudagata Vata*, in addition to pain in foot, symptoms like *Shosha*, retention of faeces, urine and flatus, colic flatulence and formation of stone may also be present (Ch. Chi. 20/25).

In *Gridhrasi*, pain in *Sphika*, *Kati*, *Uru* emerges in respective order, however in *Gudagata Vata* there is no such respective order.

Samprapti

For the disease *Gridhrasi*, the detailed *Samprapti* has not been mentioned in Ayurvedic classics. Since *Gridhrasi* is a *Vatavyadhi*, the general *Samprapti* of *Vatavyadhi* along with specific description available are considered here for the explanation of *Samprapti*. There are two main reasons by which *Vata* get vitiated. They are '*Dhatukshaya* and *Margavarodha*'. [13]

Because of the *Samprapti Vishesh*, the same *Nidanas* produce different *Vata Vyadhies*. This is because the presentation of the disease changes according to the *Sthana* where *Dosha-Dushya Sammurchhana* takes place. [14]

Khavaigunya plays an important role in the disease process. In *Gridhrasi*, exposure to mild but continuous trauma to *Kati*, *Sphika* region because of improper posture, travelling in jerky vehicles, carrying heavy loads, digging etc.

Or sometimes spinal cord injury, improperly treated pelvic diseases are responsible for producing *Sthanavaigunya* at *Kati*, *Sphika*, *Prishtha* etc.

They may not be able to produce the disease at the instance, but after acquiring some *Vyanjaka Hetu* (exciting cause), the disease may be produced. Here, the *Samprapti* takes place either by *Apatarpana* or *Santarpana* or *Agantuja*. In the state of *Apatarpana*, all the dhatus viz. *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mansa* etc. are subjected to *Kshaya*. This *Dhatukshaya* results into the aggravation of *Vata* and this vitiated *Vata* fills up the empty *Srotasas* ultimately causing *Vatavyadhi*. [15]

The second type of *Samprapti* takes place by *Santarpana* causing *Margavarodha*. Here *Kapha* is found as *Anubandhi Dosha* along with *Vata*. *Atibhojan*, *Diwaswapa* etc.

Are the factors responsible for this kind of *Samprapti*. Deranged *Jatharagni* leads to formation of *Ama*. *Ama* produces obstruction to the normal *Gati* of *Vata*. To overcome the resistance *Vata* attempts to function hyperdynamically. This leads to *Vataprakopa*. Also when *Ama Samshrista Vayu* resides at *Kati*, *Prishtha* etc. *Gridhrasi* may be produced. [16]

Lakshanas like *Tandra*, *Gaurav*, *Agnimandya* etc. are observed due to involvement of *Kapha* and *Ama*. Impaired *Dhatwagni* may lead to the production of *Adhyasthi*, *Arbuda*, *Granthi* etc. i.e., *Apachita Dhatus*. If they cause *Avarodha* in the *Vatavahanadi* of the lower limb, *Gridhrasi* may be produced.

Samprapti Ghataka

Dosha - *Vata* - Especially *Vyana* and *Kapha*

Dushya - *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, *Sira*, *Kandara*, *Snayu*

Srotasa - *Rasavaha*, *Raktavaha*, *Mamsavaha*, *Medovaha*, *Asthivaha*, *Majjavaha*

Srotodushti Prakara - *Sanga*, *Margavarodha*

Agni - *Jatharagni* and *Dhatwagni*

Ama - *Jatharagnijanya* and *Dhatwagnijanya*

Udbhavasthana - *Pakwashaya*

Sanchara Sthana - *Rasayanis* of *Apanakshetra*

Adhisthana - *Kandaras* of *Parsani* and *Pratyanguli* and *Sphika*, *Kati*, *Uru*, *Janu*, *Jangham*, *Pada*

Vyakta Rupa - *Ruka*, *Toda*, *Stambha* in *Adhosakthi*, *Uru*, *Janu*, *Jangha* and *Pada*, *Arochaka*, *Tandra*, *Gaurava*.

Vishishta Chikitsa for Gridhrasi

The effective treatment of *Gridhrasi* cannot be unified, as the pathology involves multiple varying factors. Vitiated *Vata* and association of *Kapha Dosha* stemming out from the *Pakwashaya*, afflicting the *Asthi Dhatu* vitiating *Snayu* and *Kandara* affecting in the *Asthi* produces the illness. Therefore, the procedures mainly aimed at the rectification of the imbalances of *Vata Dosha* as well as *Kapha Dosha* if associated forms the sheet anchor of treatment of *Gridhrasi*. Thus, the unique pathogenesis eases the planning of the treatment in case of *Vataja Gridhrasi*. But in case of *Vatakaphaja Gridhrasi*, the final treatment planned should pacify the *Vata* as well as *Kapha Dosha* effectively. With the due consideration of this, following principles of treatment are advocated in the Ayurvedic classics-

Treatment	CH.	SU.	A.H.	B.P.	Y.R.	H.S.	B.S.	C.D.
Snehana	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+
Swedana	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+
Vamana	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
Virechana	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
Niruha Basti	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Anuvasana Basti	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+
Siravyedha	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	+
Raktamokshana	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
Agnikarma	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+
Shastrakarma	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+

The details of these procedures are given in the following paragraphs -

1. Snehana: *Snehana* or oleation therapy is used externally and internally in case of *Gridhrasi*. Externally *Snehana* may be performed in the form *Abhyanga*, *Pizchichhil*, *Avagaha*, *Parisheka*. One should remember that if the *Kapha Dosha* is involved in the pathogenesis as in case of *Vatakapahaja Gridhrasi*, *Snehana Chikitsa* should be restricted as this treatment tends to worsen the imbalance of *Kapha Dosha*. [17]

2. Swedana: *Shula* and *Stambha* in the lower extremities are the cardinal symptoms of *Gridhrasi* and is best treated by the *Swedana Chikitsa*. *Swedana* also helps in the liquefaction of the *Dosha* there by assisting clearing the *Srotas*, or else rectifying the *Margaavarana*. Among the different forms of *Swedana* procedures, *Avagaha Sweda*, *Pizchichhil*, *Nadi Sweda*, *Patrapinda Sweda*, *Pinda Sweda* and *Upanaha Sweda* may be efficiently performed in patients of *Gridhrasi* (C.Ch.28/78). But in *Vatakapahaja Gridhrasi*, *Baluka Sweda* is a better option for evident reasons. [18]

3. Vamana: After the *Snehana* and *Swedana*, *Shodhana* is indicated in *Gridhrasi*. The authors like *Chakrapani* and *Bhavamishra* opine that without *Shodhana* of body, *Basti Chikitsa* will not give desired effect in patients of *Gridhrasi* (C.K.VataVya.Ch.). *Shodhana* in the form of *Vamana* is advised in patients suffering *Gridhrasi* and is specially preferred in *Vatakapahaja Gridhrasi* for evident reasons.

4. Virechana: *Virechana* has an important role in *Gridhrasi*. The action of *Virechana* is not only limited to particular site, it has effects on the whole body. In *Vatavyadhi* most of the authors mentioned *Mridu Virechana* (Ch.Chi.28/83). [19]

Oral administration of '*Eranda Sneha*' along with milk is ideal for the *Virechana* purpose (A.S.Ch.23). This will help in both *Vata Anulomana* as well as smooth excretion of *Mala*. The *Sneha Virechana* clears obstruction in the *Srotas* and relieves *Vata* vitiation very quickly (A.S.Ch.23). Thus, *Sneha Virechana* of *Mridu* nature helps in controlling *Shula* in *Gridhrasi*.

5. Basti: *Pakwashaya* is the primary location of *Vata Dosha*. It is true that *Vyana Vata* is vitiated in *Gridhrasi*.

So, *Basti* is very helpful in pacifying *Vata*, further it is glorified that *Basti Chikitsa* as '*Ardha Chikitsa*' or '*Purna Chikitsa*' of *Vata*. By these facts, *Basti* is most important among the *Panchakarma* in the treatment of *Gridhrasi*.

No other *Chikitsa* has the capacity to pacify and regulate the force of *Vata* apart from *Basti*. Any type of *Basti* can be adopted but, initially one should purify the body by *Shodhana Karma* to get the desired effect. [20,21]

Niruha Basti: *Niruha Basti* like *Erandamuladi Niruha* and *Dashamuladi Niruha* are the best choices. **Anuvasana Basti:** *Anuvasana Basti* using *Vatahara Tailas* like *Bala Taila*, *Mulaka Taila*, *Ksheerabala Taila*, *Prasarani Taila* etc. are beneficial.

6. Siravyedha: Charaka explained *Siravyedha* at the site of *Antara-Kandara Gulpha* (Ch. Chi. 28/101). Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhatta indicated *Siravyedha* four *Angula* above and four *Angula* below at the site of knee joint. [22]

7. Raktamokshana: It is a general rule that, when the regular treatment with *Shadvidhopakrama* fails to give any relief in any disease, one should consider the involvement of *Rakta Dhatu* in the pathogenesis and is best treated by *Raktamokshana*. This rule is also applicable in *Gridhrasi Roga* (A.H.Su.27/4-5). As the disease *Gridhrasi* is characterized by affliction of *Rakta* along with *Vata*, several authors have advised *Raktamokshana*. [23]

8. Agnikarma: Various Acharya mentioned *Agnikarma* in the management of *Gridhrasi*. According to *Sushruta* and *Vagbhatta*, in the management of *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi* and *Sandhigata Vyadhi*, *Agnikarma* is indicated and *Gridhrasi* is one of the diseases of these *Samprapti*. [24,25,26]

For treatment of *Gridhrasi*, different site for *Agnikarma* are as mentioned below:

Charaka: *Antara Kandara Gulpha*

Charkradatta: *Pada Kanistika Anguli* (little toe of the affected leg).

Harita: Four *Angula* above the *Gulpha* in *Tiryak Gati*.

9. Shastra-Karma: *Chakradatta* has given the treatment of *Gridhrasi* in details.

He has mentioned a small operation with prior *Snehana* and *Swedana* to remove *Granthi* in *Gridhrasi* and also *Siravedha* four *Angula* below *Indrabasti Marma*.

Shamana Chikitsa:

Following *Chikitsa* can be included under *Shamana Chikitsa*

1. *Vedanashamaka Chikitsa* - To pacify the severity of pain.
2. *Vatahara Chikitsa* - Elimination of vitiated *Vata Dosha*.
3. *Kaphahara Chikitsa* - Pacification of vitiated *Kapha Dosha*.
4. *Deepana & Pachana Chikitsa* - To balance *Agni*

Vedanashamaka Chikitsa: Though no treatises are describing such a classification but if we scan the recent texts, many *Vedanashamaka* combinations are prescribed in *Gridhrasi* that probably contain *Kupilu*, or *Guggulu*. As pain is one of the cardinal symptoms in *Gridhrasi*, these medications may be effectively prescribed.

Vatahara Chikitsa: As mentioned earlier, *Vatahara Chikitsa* is the primary line of treatment in *Gridhrasi*. It includes both *Shamana* and *Shodhana* procedures. This is the unique principle of treatment in *Vataja Gridhrasi*.

Kaphahara Chikitsa: When the *Gridhrasi* is caused due to vitiated *Vata Dosha* in association with *Kapha Dosha*, addition of *Kaphahara Chikitsa* forms the complete treatment. Planning of both *Vatahara* and *Kaphahara Chikitsa* simultaneously may not be easy as the individual treatment of *Vata Dosha* and *Kapha Dosha* is mutually contradictory. Combinations containing *Guggulu* and *Su. Kupeelu* are the best in such conditions as it acts both on *Vata* and *Kapha*.

Deepana and Pachana Chikitsa: In *Shamana Chikitsa*, *Deepana* and *Pachana Chikitsa* is most useful to destroy the *Ama* and to maintain the equilibrium of the *Agni*, thus achieving the physical harmony. *Acharya Chakradatta* have described in the context of *Amavata Rogadhikara*, *Ajamodadi Vati* in the case of *Ugra Gridhrasi*.

Pathya Apathya

Pathya Ahara:[27]

- **Anna Varga :** *Kulathi, Masha, Godhuma, Raktashali, Navina Tila, Purana Shalyodana.*

- **Phala Varga :** *Amla, Rasayukta Phala, Dadima, Draksha, Jambira, Badara.*
- **Shaka Varga :** *Patola, Shigru, Rasona.*
- **Dugdha Varga :** *Kshira, Ghrita, Navneeta.*
- **Dravya Varga :** *Mamsa Rasa, Mudga Yusha, Dhanyamla.*
- **Taila Varga :** *Tila Taila, Sasharpa Taila, Eranda Taila.*
- **Any Varga :** *Tambula, Ela, Kustha.*

Pathya Vihara : *Sukhoshna Pariseka, Nirvata Sthana, Samvahana, Avagahana, Abhyanga, Brahmacharya, Ushna Pravarana, Agni Aatapa Sevana, Snigdha- Ushna Lepa.*

Apathya Ahara: *Kalaya, Chanaka, Kanguni, Kodrava, Shyamaka, Nivara, Nishpava Beeja, Rajmasha, Karira, Jambu, Trinaka, Tinduka, Shushka Mamsa, Dushita Jala.*

Apathya Vihara: *Vegadharana, Vyavaya, Vyayama, Vamana, Raktamokshana, Prajagarana, Diwaswapna, Adhava, Ati-Gaja-Ashwa-Ushtra-Yana Sevana.*

Discussion

Due to modernization, the life style of the people has become more sedentary and younger and older populations are falling prey to many *Vatika* disorder affecting the loco motor system. "*Gridhrasi*" which is enumerated among the "*Nanatmaja Vyadhi* of *Vata*" in the classics, it is high on list. This disorder as such is not life threatening or dreadful, but the excruciating pain that the patient goes through is very agonizing.

Moreover, it also afflicts the most productive groups of the society. The word *Gridhrasi* refers to a disease with awful pain experienced by the patient and is similar to the pain experienced by a prey of vulture while being eaten up.

These similarities itself suggest its gravity of distress. Onset of *Ruk*, *Toda* and *Stambha* initially in *Sphika* and establishing distally to *Kati-Prishtha*, *Janu*, and *Jangha* till *Pada* is the unique feature of this illness. The word '*Sphika Purva*' is suggestive of the lumbo-sacral involvement initially and eventually causing pain in the course of sciatic nerve or at the sites mentioned above. For the same reason elevation of thigh will be restricted in patients suffering from *Gridhrasi*.

It may be worth mentioning here that Acharya Charaka listed the symptoms of the illness and Acharya Sushruta was particular about the signs of disease there by completing the total clinical presentation of *Gridhrasi*. Along with the cardinal symptoms, the presence of other morbid *Doshas* may also add to the clinical manifestations.

Though in *Samprapti* of *Gridhrasi* vitiation of *Vata Dosh* especially *Apana* and *Vyana Vayu* produces symptoms like *Ruk*, *Toda*, *Stambha*, *Muhuspandana* etc. secondary involvement of *Kapha Dosh* produces symptoms like *Gaurava*, *Bhaktadwesa*, *Tandra*, *Arochaka* etc.

The *Samprapti* of *Gridhrasi* takes place either by *Dhatukshaya* or *Margavarana* or due to *Agantuja* causes like *Abhighata*. In *Dhatukshayajanya Samprapti* due to improper nourishment *Rasadi Dhatus* land into *Kshaya Avastha*.

Dhatukshaya further vitiates *Vata* which causes disease like *Gridhrasi*. This type of *Samprapti* can be correlated to the *Sciatica* caused by degenerative changes like osteoporosis, Spondylosis etc.

When *Vayu* is obstructed by *Kapha* or *Ama* it gets vitiated leading to *Margavarana* *Samprapti* of *Gridhrasi*. *Agantuja* factors are mentioned as an important cause of *Gridhrasi* in both systems of medicine. All these vitiated *Doshas* affect the *Kandra* of the legs on which movement of the affected leg depends.

A similar condition in modern parlance is Sciatic-syndrome or Sciatica. Distribution of pain along the course of the sciatic nerve or its component nerve roots is characteristic of this disorder. This illness is complex in nature as far as symptoms and etiological factors are concerned. Pain emanating from lumbo-sacral region radiating downwards from buttocks, posterior-lateral aspect of the thigh and the calf to the outer aspect (or border) of the foot is the cardinal symptom of sciatic-syndrome.

Radiating deep seated cramping pain in buttocks followed with numbness and paraesthesia in lower extremities favours the diagnosis. Restricted SLR Test and Laseque's sign consolidates the diagnosis clinically and even the illness can be confirmed by imaging techniques. Prolapse of inter vertebral disc, external mechanical pressure and degenerative changes of the lumbar spine are the commonest causes for sciatica.

History of trauma may add up in the process of diagnosis. Modern medical treatment has its own limitation in managing this type of disease. It can provide either conservative or surgical treatment and is highly symptomatic and with troublesome side effects, whereas such type of conditions can be better treated by the management and procedures mentioned in Ayurvedic classics. Therefore, Ayurveda holds greater responsibility and role in the treatment and prophylactic care for such type of conditions.

Snehana, *Swedana* and *Mrudu Shodhana* are the line of treatment in all *Vatavyadhis*. Even though, *Snayu* and *Rakta* are involved as *Dushya*, *Agnikarma* and *Siravyadha* are also the chief lines of treatment. The chief purpose of treatment is to disintegrate the union of *Dosha* and *Dushya*. These therapeutic measures disintegrate the union of *Dosha* and *Dushya*. *Basti* therapy is therefore preferred as line of treatment as it eradicates the root cause of the disease. Any medication which soothes the magnitude of pain, improves the functional ability along with *Samprapti Vighatana* is the best in patients of *Gridhrasi*.

Conclusion

Gridhrasi is a prevalent condition in society, presenting as a significant health concern. The manifestation of this disease is closely linked to *Vyana Vayu*, a fundamental factor in its pathogenesis. Characterized by intense pain, *Gridhrasi* lacks a universally established treatment protocol. Ayurvedic texts primarily recommend *Vatavyadhi Chikitsa* for managing this disorder. However, direct references regarding its *Nidana* (etiology) and *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) remain scarce. In modern medical science, *Gridhrasi* is often correlated with Sciatica. Among the various *Panchakarma* therapies, *Basti Chikitsa* is considered the foremost treatment modality, offering not only curative benefits but also preventive and promotive effects. Recognized as the most effective remedy for morbid *Vata*, *Basti* is also beneficial in conditions involving *Kaphaja* and *Pittaja* imbalances.

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