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Clinical Approach to *Vrana Shopha* w.s.r. to Inflammatory Swelling

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ABSTRACT

Inflammation in Ayurveda is known by different names in different contexts namely *Shotha*, *Shopha*, *Svayatu*, *Utsedha* and *Samhata*. Chronic inflammation is a cardinal sign of chronic degenerative disorders. Inflammation and oedema associated with it is duly recognised in Ayurveda as a pathological manifestation. While modern medicine considers inflammation as a symptom or rather as a healing response of the body in wounds. Ayurveda treats the concept of inflammation as symptom of a disease, an independent disease and complication of diseases. Degenerative diseases share a common pathological feature of inflammation. The disturbances in micro channel circulation in inflammation are due to *Srotodushti* (clogging of channels) by *Aama* (toxic waste of metabolism). The proper clinical approach to *Vrana Shopha* with Modern concept is an key role in management and preventing complication of *Vrana Shopha*.

Key words: *Aama*, *Degenerative Diseases*, *Inflammation*, *Shopha*, *Srotodushti*.

INTRODUCTION

Vrana Shopha has been documented in *Brihatrayee* between 1500 BC and 600 AD and in *Madhava Nidana* around 700AD. *Vrana Shopha* is a localised swelling explained by *Acharya Sushruta* which develops in relation with *Twak* and *Mamsa*, ultimately leading to the formation of *Vrana* if not treated in time. Inflammatory swellings of skin and subcutaneous tissues which leads to suppuration can be considered under the term *Vrana Shopha*.

Inflammation has been dealt as a disease, as a

symptom and also as a complication of diseases. From the time, Celsus (30BC - 38AD) characterised Inflammation by Four Cardinal Signs - Rubor (redness), Calor (raised temperature), Tumour (swelling), Dolor (pain), Functio laesa (loss of function) the fifth sign was added by Virchow.^[1] *Shopha* described by *Sushruta* is analogous to inflammatory swelling in many respects. *Shopha* is antecedent phase of *Vrana* (wound) as it is similar to inflammatory process which leads to formation of abscess. It can be clinically noticed as boil, furunculosis, cellulitis, erysipelas etc. *Acharya Madhava* for first time introduced the new entity of *Vrana Shotha* as inflammation as a separate chapter. According to *Charaka* when vitiated *Vata* comes in contact with vitiated *Rakta*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*, it brings them to the periphery then the *Srotas* (channels) get obstructed to develop *Shotha* in and around the skin and the flesh but it is not limited to part of body.^[2]

Classification and clinical presentation of *Shopha*

Acharya Sushruta classified *Shopha* on the basis of clinical observation into six types; *Vatika*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, *Shonitaja*, *Sannipataja*, *Agantuja*.^[3]

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Vataja Shopha

It has following features.

- Varna - Krishna, Aruna.
- Sparsha - Parusha, Mrudu.
- Toda and Anavasthita.



Pittaja Shopha

It has following features

- Varna - Piita, Aruna.
- Sparsha - Mrudu.
- Osha and Sheeghraanusari.



Kaphaja Shopha

It has following features

- Varna - Pandu.
- Sparsha - Kathina, Sheeta, Snigdha.
- Kandu, Vedana and Mandaanusari.



Raktaja Shopha

“Pittavatshonitajoatikrushna”

Similar features as that of Pitta but has

- Varna - Atikrushna



Agantuja Shopha

Has combined features of all above and has Lohitaavabhasa.



Aetiopathogenesis of Shopha

As it is well known that the imbalanced state of *Doshas* lead to pathogenesis of diseases. Aetiopathogenesis of *Shopha* is much resembled to inflammation in modern medical science. *Acharya Sushruta* said that the pathogenesis of *Shopha* has definite sequential pattern, distributed over *Shatkriya Kala*.^[4]

These *Shatkriya Kala* has been mentioned as follows:

- **Sanchaya** - accumulation of physiological active *Doshas*.
- **Prakopa** - excitation of the previously cumulated and imbalanced *Doshas*.
- **Prasara** - excited *Doshas* leave there original space and over flow.

- **Sthaanasamshraya** - localisation of the imbalanced *Doshas* at a particular site (*Khavaigunya*)
- **Vyakti** - manifestation of *Doshas* in the form of disease with signs and symptoms.
- **Bhedaavastha** - definite termination of the pathological lesion, eg - abscess.

Avasthas or Stages of Vrana Shopha

1. *Aamaavstha*
2. *Pachyamaanaavastha*
3. *Pakwaavastha*

Amaavastha - (early stage of inflammation)

In this condition *Kaphadosha* may be predominant due to which swelling is produced, hence it has symptoms as follows;^[5]

- *Sparsha - Manda, Ushma.*
- *Twaksavarnata.*
- *Shitashopha, Alpashopha.*
- *Sthira*
- *Manda Vedana*

Pachyamaanaavastha - (Stage of Inflammation)

If *Amaavastha* is not treated this leads to next stage formation that is *Pachyamaanaavastha*, here *Prakupita Pitta* will act on the *Dushya* to produce disintegration and produces symptoms like;^[6]

- *Suchibhirivanistudyate*
- *Dashyatevapippiilikaabhiva*
- *Chiddyateivashastrena*
- *Bhidyatevashaktibhihi*
- *Taadyateivadandena*
- *Piidyateivapaanina*
- *Ghatyateiva Cha Angulya*
- *Dahyatepachyateva Cha Agnikshaarabyam*
- *Osha Choshaparidahashcha*

- *Twakvaivarnyashophaabhivruddhi*
- *Jwara, Daaha, Pipaasa, Aruchi.*

Pakwaavastha - (stage of suppuration)

If *Pachyamaanaavastha* is not treated it results in progression of next stage, here there is involvement of *Vayudoshas* leading to these symptoms;^[7]

- *Vedanopashanti*
- *Panduta*
- *Alpashophata*
- *Twakpariputana*
- *Bastavivodakasancharana*
- *Muhurmuhutoda And Kandu*
- *Vyadhiupadrava Shanty*

Dosha Sambandha

Dosha Sambandha says about involvement and importance of each *Dosha* in *Vrana Shopha*;^[8]

- *Vata* is responsible for - *Ruja*
- *Pitta* is responsible for - *Paaka*
- *Kapha* is responsible for - *Puya*
- *Rakta* is responsible for - *Varna*

Saadhya Asadhyata of Vrana Shopha

“*Alpomahaanvakriyaayavinaayahasamuchritahapaak amupaitishophaha* |

Vishaalamulovishamavidagdhasakruchratamyaa yavagaadhadoshaha |”^[9]

Management of Vrana Shopha

The *Vrana Shopha* should be managed in early stage to avoid suppuration and more tissue harm as described under *Shatkriya Kala*.

Two types of *Upakramas* have been mentioned for the management of *Vrana Shopha*;

- *Saptopakrama*
- *Ekaadashaupakrama*

Saptopakrama: For the management of *Vrana Shopha* seven *Upakramas* have been said by *Acharya*

Sushruta.^[10] The initial four procedures like *Vimlapana*, *Avasechana*, *Upanaha*, *Patana*, *Patina* helps in the management of *Vranasopha* and other three *upakramas* like *Shodhana*, *Ropana*, *Vaikrutapaha* is used in managing the wound.

Ekaadashaupakrama: *Acharya Sushruta* in *Chikitsasthana* further explains about 11 types of *Chikitsa* for the management of *Vrana Shopha*.^[11] *Apatarpana*, *Aalepa*, *Paisheka*, *Abhyanga*, *Swedana*, *Vimlapana*, *Upanaha*, *Paachana*, *Visravana*, *Vamana*, *Virechana*.

Inflammation and clinical examination of inflammation

History

1. Duration:

Those with shorter duration and pain - acute inflammatory swellings

Those with longer duration and slight pain - chronic inflammatory swellings.

2. Mode of onset:

If appeared just after a trauma or may have developed spontaneously and grown rapidly with severe pain - inflammatory condition.

3. Other symptoms associated: History of pain, fever.

4. Pain: Pain is an important and frequent complaint of inflammatory swellings.

- Nature of pain - Throbbing pain suggests inflammation, leading to suppuration.
- Site - localised to the site of swelling.
- Time of onset - It is important to know whether the pain preceded the swelling or the swelling preceded the pain.
- In case of inflammation - Pain always appears before the Swelling.

5. Progress of swelling: If swelling decreases in size then it is suggestive of inflammatory swelling.

6. Fever: If patient had temperature along with swelling then it is suggestive of inflammatory swelling.

7. Secondary changes: Inflammatory changes.

8. Impairment of function: Enquire about the nature of loss of movement and intensity of it and how much of it is due to swelling.

Physical Examination

1. General Survey: Patient should be as a whole.

Attitude of patient is very important.

Abnormal attitude may be due to irritation at the site of the swelling.

Local Examination

A. Inspection

1. Colour – Colour sometimes gives definite hint to diagnosis. Redness suggestive of inflammatory swelling.
2. Skin over the swelling - Tense, Glossy, Red, oedematous, Dusky indurated - Suggestive of inflammatory swelling.

B. Palpation

1. Temperature - Raised local temperature.
2. Tenderness - Inflammatory swellings are mostly tender.
3. Surface - May be Smooth, lobular with smooth bump, nodular irregular and rough.
4. Margin- acute inflammatory swellings, ill-defined or indistinct margins
Chronic inflammatory swellings - well defined margins.
5. Consistency - It varies from soft to hard. Sometimes the swelling pits on pressure. It means that there is oedematous tissue and most often the swelling is inflammatory one.
6. Fluctuation - Fluctuation test is positive in progressed stage.

By seeing and examining these conditions one can know the progress and can correctly diagnose the stages and give the treatment accordingly.^[14]

DISCUSSION

Concept of *Vrana Shopha* has been explained by different *Acharyas* but *Acharya Sushruta's* concept is approachable in clinical practice. *Agantuja* being one of the causes for *Vranashopha* is substantiated by the fact that trauma is one of the causes for the manifestation of Cellulitis, Erysipeloid disease, Actinomycosis, Madura foot and Necrotising fasciitis. Involvement of *Twak* and *Mamsa* can be substantiated by understanding the etiopathogenesis of Boils, Abscess, Cellulitis, Necrotising fasciitis etc. Though the process of inflammation begins in *Amavastha*, inflammatory signs are clearly evidenced from *Pachyamanaavastha*. Involvement of *Pitta Pradhana Tridosha* during *Paripaakakaala* of *Vrana Shopha* can be substantiated by the presence of cardinal signs of inflammation.

| | | |
|---------------|---|--------------|
| Rubor | - | <i>Rakta</i> |
| Dolor | - | <i>Vata</i> |
| Functio laesa | - | <i>Vata</i> |
| Tumor | - | <i>Kapha</i> |
| Calor | - | <i>Pitta</i> |

Hence consideration of *Vrana Shopha* as inflammatory origin is done based on the presence of above cardinal signs. Treatment modalities like *Apatarpana*, *Abhyanga*, *Aalepa*, *Vimlapana*, *Parisheka* and *Upanaha* are indicated in *Amavastha* which is helpful in arresting the ongoing process by doing *Doshaprashamana* and subsides the symptoms. *Upanaha* and *Pachana* are employed in *Pachyamana Avastha* to bring about *Paaka*. Decision for interventions like *Darana/ Patana* in *Pakwavastha* is done based on patient's *Satvabala*, *Vaya*, *Sthana* and *Pakaavastha* of *Vrana Shopha*. When *Pakwa* and *Apakwaavastha* of *Vrana Shopha* is wrongly interpreted and mismanaged, it leads to the manifestation of other disorders.^[13]

CONCLUSION

All inflammatory swellings do not undergo suppuration, hence only those *Shopha* which undergoes *Paaka*, if untreated turns to *Vrana* can be considered as *Vranashopha*. *Prakupita Doshas* are to be eliminated in initial stage itself, if not they would become more potent, progressing to the *Upadrava Avastha* making the condition a bad prognosis. Therefore *Vaidya* should rightly diagnose the condition and necessary steps should be taken for managing the *Vrana Shopha* at its earlier stage so as to prevent further progression and complications. Appropriate treatment modality has to be chosen in specific *Avasthas* considering the *Dosha* and *Lakshanas* based on *Yukti* of *Vaidya*. Along with the detail history taking, critical analysis of the *Vranashopha* based on *Dosha*, *Dushya* (*Vranavasthu*), *Avastha*, thorough examination and required investigations are the necessary components to rule out the underlying pathology, associated disorders and to arrive at the accurate diagnosis.

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