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# A conceptual review of the disease *Ardhavabhedaka* w.s.r. to Migraine

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## ABSTRACT

Migraine is one of the most common neurovascular disabling disorders encountered in Shalakyta practice. Migraine can be defined as a paroxysmal affection having a sudden onset accompanied by usually unilateral severe headache. In Ayurveda, migraine is described as *Ardhavabhedaka* which is a major health issue among people of age group 30-50 years. According to WHO, migraine is the third most common disease in the world, with an estimated global prevalence of 14.7%. Chronic migraine affects about 2% of world population. Female and male ratio 3:1. It is a widespread chronic and intermittently disabling disorder characterized by recurrent headaches with or without aura.

**Key words:** Migraine, *Ardhavabhedaka*, *Tridosha*, *Ayurvedic Treatment*.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a science of life. The main aim of Ayurveda is to maintain health in healthy persons and cures diseases in diseased persons.<sup>[1]</sup> The main principle of health according to Ayurveda is to maintain equilibrium of *Tridoshas*.<sup>[2]</sup> *Shira* is considered as *Uttamanga*. *Shira* is compared with root of the tree.<sup>[3]</sup> If we nourish the root, the tree become strong. In the same manner if we nourishes the *Shira*, the body will become healthy. *Shira* is the seat of *Pranavata*, *Aalochaka Pitta* and *Tarpak Kapha*. It is important due to the presence of sense organs, central Nervous system and 37 *Marmas*. *Prana Vata* maintains intelligence,<sup>[4]</sup> sense organs, heart, mind and blood vessels. *Aalochaka Pitta* is responsible for

eye sight. *Sadhaka Pitta* is responsible for the achievement of one's aspiration through his *Buddhi*, *Medha*, *Abhimana* etc. It is responsible for *Mana* and its contact with *Indriyas* making them to perceive the sense objects.<sup>[5]</sup> *Tarpak Kapha* nourishes the sense organs and brain.<sup>[6]</sup> Change in life style, irregular food habits, irregular sleep pattern, the seasonal changes, climatic changes, air pollution, contaminated water, stress and strain have an impact on the equilibrium of *Doshas* in the body. Acharya Sushruta described 11 types of *Shiro Rogas*.<sup>[7]</sup> *Ardhavabhedaka* is one among them. But Acharya Vagbhata described it as a *Bheda* of *Vataja Shiroroga*. "*Ardhethu Murdha*: so *Ardhavabhedaka*.<sup>[8]</sup> *Ardhavabhedaka* symptoms manifest in the half of the head. *Ardhavabhedaka* is mentioned in *Shiro Rogas*. Our *Acharyas* mentioned the *Dinacharya*<sup>[9]</sup> (daily regimen) and *Ritucharya*<sup>[10]</sup> (season wise regimen) elaborately. But as time passed, now a days lot of changes taken place, inevitable in life style, social and religious customs and manners has an impact on *Tridoshas*. The diet, present life style, irregular diet habits, fermented, pickled foods, baked items, chocolates, dairy products and changes in sleep pattern like awakening in night times due to night duties and sleeping in day time are predisposing factors of *Ardhavabhedaka*. And other important factors are stress and strain are also

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predisposing factors. The treatment modern system of medicine has complications like drowsiness, insomnia, depression, extra pyramidal activities; constriction of blood vessels are predisposes the cardiac problems.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the present study is to review a conceptual study on the disease *Ardhavabhedaka* w.s.r. to Migraine.

#### Nidana and Samprapti (Etiology and Pathogenesis)

*Ardhavabhedaka* is *Tridoshaja* but vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha* is more. According to *Vagbhata* this is the one type of *Vataja Shira Shoola* manifesting symptoms in one half of the head.

#### Ratrijagarana

The aggravated *Vata* and *Pitta* with decreased *Kapha* causes hormonal imbalance and changes in autonomic nervous system.

#### Guru, Amla and Ruksha Ahara Sevana

Baked food, chocolates, dairy products causes *Ama Utpatti*, processed and fermented foods containing MSG-mono sodium glutamate are the trigger factors of Migraine.

#### Avashyay, Diwaswapna and Sheeta Sevana

Increase *Kapha* and obstructed *Vata* cause *Prathishyaya*. Nasal blockage in sinusitis or common cold triggers migraine attacks.

#### Vega Dharana

Flow of *Vata* is obstructed, so nerve pathways are affected causing disturbance in CNS-neural control of cranial circulation.

#### Adhyasan

It creates *Ama*, digestive disturbances resulting in *Dhathukshaya* and *Vata Prakopa*. It impairs metabolism, immunity system causes allergies and allergic reactions. They can't tolerate bright lights, loud noises, and certain odors or perfumes. These are the *Rasa Dhathu Kshaya Lakshanas*.

#### Ayasa, Vyayam, Maithun

It results in stress, strain and anxiety causing increased excitability of the cerebral cortex and abnormal functioning of neuro-transmitters.

The migraine research foundation considers migraine as the 3<sup>rd</sup> most prevalent illness and 6<sup>th</sup> most disabling health illness in the world. Migraine sufferers have a high chance of having depression, anxiety, sleep disorders and other pain conditions and fatigue. It is leading cause of disability throughout the world. It has a multi factorial background such as genetic, environmental, metabolic, hormonal and pharmacological. These factors trigger the attack of migraine in various patients. However, it presents a common pattern of occurrence with peak incidence in adolescence and peak prevalence in middle age. Migraine is a chronic, widespread and intermittent disorder characterised by recurrent headaches with or without aura usually unilateral with different intensity. The headache affects one half of head and are throbbing and pulsating in nature, and lasts from 2 to 72 hours. Changing hormone levels may also play a role as migraine affects more in boys than girls before puberty and two to three times more in women than men. The pain is generally made worse by physical activity. Upto one third of people have an aura typically a short period of visual disturbance that signals that the headache will soon occur. It is highly prevalent headache disorder over the past decade having considerable impact on the individual and society. It can involve brain, eye and autonomous nervous system. Migraines are believed to be a neurovascular disorder with evidence supporting its mechanism starting within the brain and then spreading to the blood vessels. The neurotransmitter serotonin (5-hydroxytryptamine) and hormone estrogens play vital role in pain sensitivity of migraine. Serotonin selectively constricts cranial blood vessels and also induces a massive activation of peripheral nerve endings which play a key role in triggering migraine headache. Estrogens mainly affects female of reproductive age group.

Migraine headaches can be divided into several types but two are the most common types.

### 1. Migraine with aura (classic migraine)

Aura is a combination of sensations that occur before and sometimes during the pain of migraine. Aura means wind and just like the wind is a sign of approaching storm, an aura serves as a warning of approaching migraine. Auras may include blurry vision, blind spots, bright flashing lights, temporary vision loss, wavy or jagged lines, numbing or tingling of the skin and muscle weakness.

### 2. Migraine without aura (common migraine)

This type of migraine is very common and does not have any warning signs but some people may still feel some symptoms and indicate a migraine is coming. The pain of the migraine attack is still severe and nausea or vomiting might happen.

### Other types of Migraine

1. Migraine without aura
2. Migraine with aura
3. Ophthalmoplegic Migraine
4. Retinal Migraine
5. Childhood periodic syndromes that may be precursors or be associated with Migraine.
6. Migraine with complications including status migrainous and migrainous infarction.

Migraine can be closely related to *Ardhavabhedak* in Ayurveda due to its cardinal feature "half sided headache" which is also explained by commentator *Chakrapani* as *Ardhamastakavedana* and also its paroxysmal nature. *Vata Pitta Vardhakahara*, irregularities in diet, allergic reactions, bright lights, loud noises, odours or perfumes, physical or emotional stress, changes in sleep patterns, smoking or exposure to smoke and alcohol are the triggering factors.

### Treatment of migraine through Ayurveda

In contemporary science, management of migraine is prophylactic only. But in Ayurveda, there are various treatment protocols explained by *Acharyas*. Treatment can be achieved by avoiding triggers and prescribing *Dosha* - specific diet, stress management (meditation, relaxation techniques, breathing

exercises, yoga and mantra), herbal formulations, lifestyle modification, *Panchakarma* and other holistic modalities to create a balanced between body-physiology and body-mind to bring complete relief to migraine patients. In *Ardhavabhedaka* among *Tridoshas*, mainly *Vatadosha* is vitiated. Treatment plan is considered according to *Shiroroga Chikitsa* and *Vatavyadhi Chikitsa*. Only herbal medications or other topical procedures are not enough for the treatment. First of all *Shodhana Karma* is required for purification of vitiated *Doshas* such as *Mridushodhan*, *Nasya*, *Basti*, *Shirobasti*, *Shirolepa*, *Shirodhara*, *Kaval Graha* and other internal medications are planned as per vitiated *Doshas*.

### Samshodhana Therapy

*Virechana* is indicated in *Shiroroga* by all the *Acharyas*. It is the first line of treatment. Probably *Mriduvirechan* is advised due to vitiation of *Vata*. *Acharaya Charak* mentioned *Mridu Virechana* in *Vatavyadhi*.

### Nasya

In Ayurveda *Nasya* therapy is considered as one of the most important promising treatment for all the *Urdhwajatrugata Vikaras*. There are three *Nasyas* - *Virechana*, *Brihana* and *Shaman Nasya* which helps in management of *Ardhavabhedak*. This therapy is administered through the nasal route. Medical oils such as *Shadhbindu Taila* or *Anutaila* are put in the nostrils.

### Basti

*Acharaya Charaka* described *Ardhavabhedaka* in *Trimarmya Siddhi Adhaya*. *Shira Marma* is one of the most important *Marma* amongst all the *Trimarmas*. *Basti* is the best treatment for pacifying *Vata* as well as for *Shiroroga*.

### Shirovasti

*Shirovasti* is another effective Ayurvedic therapy. The medicated oils that pacify *Vata* and *Kaphadoshas* can be used for *Shirovasti*. This therapy helps in curing diseases related to the brain such as migraine, throbbing pain and depression.

### Shiro Lepa

*Shirolepa* is considered to be highly effective in curing migraines caused due to stress. It is a specific technique in which certain herbs are mixed to form pastes which are applied on the head and left for an hour and wiped off with warm water.

### Shiro Dhara

*Shirodhara* is an excellent Ayurvedic therapy that has a profound impact on the nervous system. A thin stream of liquid is poured continuously over the *Shiro Marma* (forehead) the area where our nerves are highly concentrated. The pressure of the oil creates a vibration on the forehead, which allows our mind and nervous system to experience a deep state of mental rest. The feeling is almost similar to that of meditation. This therapy is beneficial for *Pitta* and *Vatadoshas*. In *Pittaj* type cow milk can also be used to perform *Shirodhara* called *Ksheeradhara*. Headache due to obstruction to the *Vata*, buttermilk is used for *Shirodhara* termed as *Takradhara*.

### Diet and lifestyle

According to Ayurveda, maintaining a good diet and lifestyle are essential to restore stability and balance in the body. Depending on the symptoms, frequency and intensity of the attack, a healthy diet can manage migraine headache includes:

- Avoid hot, spicy foods, fermented food, white sugar, white flour products, and sour or citrus fruits because they aggravate the *Pitta* in your body.
- Drink more water and eat more fibre, fruits and vegetables and whole grains.
- Avoid excessive sugar or salt, refined foods, animal products (meats and dairy), caffeine, tea and alcohol as they may lead to aggravation of *Pitta*.
- Avoid direct exposure

### DISCUSSION

Almost all the *Acharayas* have mentioned *Ardhavabhedaka* in *Shiro-roga*. *Acharaya Sushruta* has mentioned 11 types of *Shiro-roga* in *Uttar Tantra*.

Among them, one of them is *Ardhavabhedaka* in which paroxysmal unilateral headache associated with vertigo and pain of varying intensity is seen. *Ardhavabhedaka* can be scientifically correlated with Migraine due to its cardinal feature "half sided headache"

Maximum *Nidanas* show the predominance of *Vatadosha*. *Vata* gets provoked by addiction to dry articles or excess of diet or eating on a loaded stomach. The quantity of food to be taken depends upon the power of digestion. Though even light food article, if taken in excessive quantity can produce *Agnimandhya* resulting in *Amarasa* formation which obstructs the channels and aggravates all the three *Doshas*. The other factor exposure to eastern wind leads to constriction of blood vessels due to *Sheeta Guna* of *Vata* causing headache. Similarly suppression of natural urges obstructs the movements of *Vata*. Excessive sexual indulgence produces degeneration of *Dhatus* in reverse order. Also the various types of pain like *Toda*, *Bheda*, etc. are suggestive of "Vishama" nature of *Vata dosha*.

Maximum *Nidanas* shows the predominance of *Vatadosha*. *Vata* gets provoked by addiction to dry articles or excess of diet or eating on a loaded stomach. The quantity of food to be taken depends upon the power of digestion (Ch.Su.5/3), even light food article, if taken in excessive quantity can produce *Agnimandhya* (Ch.Su.5/7) resulting in *Amarasa* formation which obstructs the channels and aggravates all the three *Doshas*. Suppression of natural urges obstructs the movements of *Vata*. Excessive sexual indulgence produces degeneration of *Dhatus* in reverse order (Ch.Si.8/24-25). Also the various types of pain like *Toda*, *Bheda*, etc. are suggestive of *Vishama* nature of *Vatadosha*.

The various *Nidanas* leads to *Doshadushti* i.e., *Tridoshaja* (Su.), *Vata-Kaphaja* (Ch.) and *Vataja* (Va). The *Dushti* of *Rasa* and *Rakta* is also seen, as mentioned by *Acharya Charaka* – *Shiroruk* in *Shonitajaroga* (Ch.Su.24/13). Simultaneously, *Srotodushti* in *Rasa* – *Raktavahasrotos* also takes place, which can be taken as blood vessels of the head, as migraine involves vascular phenomenon. The

phenomenon *Urdhavagamana* by *Vata* due to its *Chala Guna* or *Kapha* along with *Vata* causing *Urdhavagpravriti* explains the predominance of *Vatadosha* in establishing the pathogenesis.

#### Probable mode of action of drug

**Laghu Sootshekhar Rasa** is a herbo-mineral formulation which contains *Swarnagairika* (Purified Red ochre- Iron oxide), *Shunthi* (*Zingiber officinalis*), *Nagvelli* juice extract (*Piper betel*) which balances *Vata* and *Pitta*. It has *Kashaya*, *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha*, *Visadaguna* and *Sheeta Veerya* and *Madhur Vipaka*. It improves blood circulation and provides strength to the brain.

#### Narikela Lavana

Contains *Narikela* (*Coconus nucifera*) and *Saindhava Lavana* (Rock salt). It is non-crystalline material having alkaline pH and hygroscopic nature. Its activity on hyperacidity is because of the presence of activated charcoal and alkaline nature. It calms *Vata* and *Pitta Dosh*.

#### Godanti Bhasma

(Gypsum) balances all three *Doshas*, especially *Pitta Dosh*. It is *Sheeta* in potency, alleviates *Pitta Dosh*, arrest bleeding, ameliorates hyperacidity and has been used as best drug for headache.

#### Pathyadi Kwath

Is a decoction of *Haritaki*, *Amalaki*, *Vibhitaki*, *Haridra*, *Neem* and *Guduchi* has been described for the treatment of various types of headache. *Triphala* corrects our digestion and assimilation process, it normalizes the gut. *Haridra* and *Neem* both acts as an antibiotic and prevent unwanted production of inflammatory chemical mediators. *Guduchi* acts as an antioxidant and free radical scavengers.

#### CONCLUSION

*Ardhavabhedaka* with special reference to Migraine can be cured or controlled according to individual life

style. Following the ethical regimen migraine can be controlled. Ayurveda presents a striking alternative to the biochemical model of modern medicine. The treatment prescribed by *Acharyas* for *Ardhavabhedaka* in Ayurveda is proved to be effective in prevention and management of *Ardhavabhedaka*.

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