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Critical review on specific symptomology of *Vataj* and *Vatkaphaj Gridhrasi* (Sciatica) and its *Pathyapathya*

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ABSTRACT

The diseases affecting the locomotor system are increasingly seen in present era. This condition considerably reduces the human activity in terms of social and professional life. As Acharya Charaka says that the person who do not follow code of conducts for healthy life, are more prone to develop disease. Low back pain is a common disorder it affects about 40% of people affected with a set of symptoms including pain caused by irritation or compression of one of the five lumbar spine nerves roots of each of the left or right or both sciatic nerves is termed as Sciatica, sciatic neuralgia. Mild to pricking pain, feeling of pulsation, and stiffness in lumber region radiates to back of thigh and popliteal region, calf muscle till feet are the Cardinal features of disease Gridhrasi. Based on *Dosha* predominance *Gridhrasi* is two types *Vataja Gridhrasi* and *Vata-Kaphaja*. Acharya Charaka mentioned *Ruka* (Pain), *Toda* (Pricking sensation), *Stambha* (Stiffness), and *Muhuspandana* (Twitching) in *Sphik* and radiating towards the *Kati*, *Prushtha*, *Uru*, *Janu*, *Jangha* and *Pada* respectively. These are the cardinal symptoms of *Vataja Gridhrasi*. In *Vata-Kaphaja* type of *Gridhrasi* in addition to the above symptoms, *Tandra* (Drowsiness), *Gaurava* (Heaviness) and *Aruchi* (Anorexia) are also present.

Key words: *Vataja Gridhrasi*, *Vata-Kaphaja Gridhrasi*, *Vatavyadhi*, *Sciatica*.

INTRODUCTION

According to Acharya Charaka *Gridhrasi* has listed *Ruka*, *Toda*, *Stambha* and *Muhuspandana* (mild twitching) as the cardinal symptoms.^[1] 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. Acharya Charaka mentioned *Ruka* (Pain), *Toda* (Pricking sensation), *Stambha* (Stiffness), and

Muhuspandana (Twitching) in *Sphik* and radiating towards the *Kati*, *Prushtha*, *Uru*, *Janu*, *Jangha* and *Pada* respectively in *Vataj Gridhrasi*. In *Vata-Kaphaja* type of *Gridhrasi* in addition to the above symptoms, *Tandra* (Drowsiness), *Gaurava* (Heaviness) and *Aruchi* (Anorexia) are also present. Acharya Sushruta and Acharya Vagbhatta have given 'Sakthyutkshepa Nigrahayati' i.e. restriction in lifting the leg as the cardinal sign of the *Gridhrasi*.^[2]

According to Acharya Madhava deviation of the body (*Dehasya pravakrta*), quavering sensation (*Sphuranam*) and stiffness (*Stabdhatata*) in *Janu*, *Kati* and *Uru Sandhi* also found in *Vataja Gridhrasi* and *Vata-Kaphaja Gridhrasi* may be associated with Impairment of *Jatharagni* (*Agnimandya*), drowsiness (*Tandra*), excessive salivation (*Mukhapraseka*) and aversion for food (*Bhaktadweshha*).^[3] Bhavprakash and Yogaratnakar have described same symptoms.^[4] Vangasen has added pain in *Payu* as one of the symptoms.^[5]

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AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. To review the symptomology of Vataj and Vatkaphaj Gridhrasi (Sciatica)
2. To review the Pathyapathya of Gridhrasi

General symptoms of Gridhrasi

1. **Ruka (pain)^[6]:** Any kind of pain is always associated with Vayu. It is included under Vataprakopaka Lakshanas by Vagbhatta. Arundatta interprets Ruka as continuous pain. Symptoms of vitiated Dosha are manifested by their Guna or Karma. Ruka is the Karmatah manifestation of Vata.^[7] When it is purely Vatika, it is severe and continuous but when associated with Kapha it may be less severe. Ruka is included under Majjapradoshaja Lakshanas by Charaka which clarifies the involvement of Majja Dhatu in the production of the symptom. The pain in Gridhrasi is attributed to the specific area. It starts from Sphika and then radiates through Kati, Prishtha, Uru, Janu, Jangha upto Pada says Chakrapani (hip to foot).^[8]
2. **Toda (pricking sensation)^[9]:** It is caused by vitiated Vayu and is included under Vataprakopaja Vyadhies by Madhava. Vagbhatta have also mentioned it in Vataprakopaja Lakshanas. It is also the Karmatmaka manifestation of vitiated Vayu. In Gridhrasi, Toda is present along the path of sciatic nerve.
3. **Stambha (tightness and stiffness)^[10]:** Arundatta defines it as inability of the limbs to flex. While Hemadri interpretes it as loss of movement. It is amongst the eighty Nanatmaja Vatavyadhies. Especially the Sheeta and Ruksha Guna of Vata affects the muscles of the leg, the movements of leg are restricted. They are also restricted due to pain, especially flexion at the hip joint and extension at the knee joint. Vitiated Doshas when affect Snayu, Sira and Kandara, Stambha, Sphurana and Supti are produced. This process when takes place in lower limb, Gridhrasi is produced. The feeling of tightness results because of improper circulation of Rakta (blood) in the

affected part. Because of vitiated Vyana Vayu, the Samvahana of Rakta is partially affected. This results in establishment of Stambhata as the muscles of the lower limb suffer from improper nourishment. Regarding the originating site of Stambhatva Chakrapani commented that it starts from the hip region first and gradually is established in the lumbar region, back etc. Sushruta and Vagbhatta have not given the term Stambha but they have described it by the term 'Sakthikshepanigraha'.

4. **Spandana (pulsating or trembling sensation):** Chakrapani signifies Kampana while Dalhana explains it as Chalan i.e. certain kind of movement is felt. It is also due to vitiated Vayu^[11] particularly Vyana Vayu. Chala Guna of Vayu is responsible for Spandana. Spandana is a kind of rapid involuntary movement in the leg, also called as muscular twitching which is experienced by the patient on and off in the leg. Bhavamishra uses the word Sphurana for Spandana. According to him Sphurana occurs in all the joints like Janu (knee), Uru (tigh), Jangha (calf), etc.
5. **Sakthikshepa Nigraha:** Sushruta has mentioned this term first. It signifies restricted movement of the affected limb. The patient is unable to extend the leg i.e. Prasarana of the leg is difficult. Dalhana explained that because of the ill effect on Parshnikandara the movement of the leg is forbidden. Vagbhatta modified the term Kshepa as Utkshepa which means upward movement or elevation or raising. Arundatta clearly defined this by 'Pada Uddharane Ashakti' meaning the disability to lift the leg.^[12] If we analyse the symptoms in the light of modern medicine, it appears very similar to the restricted SLR (straight leg raising) test which is done to assess the degree of limitation of the limb (hip) flexion, when knee is extended.
6. **Kati-Uru Janu Madhye Bahurvedana:** It is a distinct feature of Gridhrasi mentioned by Acharya Harita. This refers to the severe pain experienced at Kati (low back), Uru (thigh) and

Janu (knee) region. Static or non-radiating pain is also characteristic of Gridhrasi.

Table 1: Lakshanas of Gridhrasi

Symptoms	C h.	S u.	A. H.	A. S.	B. P.	M. N.	Y. R.	S. S.	H. S.
General symptoms									
<i>Sphika Purva Kati Pristha, Uru, Janu, Jangha, Pada Kramat Vedana</i>	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
<i>Ruka</i>	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
<i>Toda</i>	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
<i>Stambha</i>	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
<i>Muhuspandana</i>	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-
<i>Sakthikshepani graha</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sakthiutkshepa nigraha</i>	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Janu Madhya Vedana</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Uru Madhya Vedana</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Kati Madhya Vedana</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Vataja symptoms									
Symptoms	C h.	S u.	A. H.	A. S.	B. P.	M. N.	Y. R.	S. S.	H. S.
<i>Dehasypravak rata</i>	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
<i>Janusandhisph ura</i>	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
<i>Urusandhisphur ana</i>	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Katisandhisphu rana</i>	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
<i>Janghasphuran a</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
<i>Suptata</i>	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-

Vata-kaphaja symptoms									
Symptoms	C h.	S u.	A. H.	A. S.	B. P.	M. N.	Y. R.	S. S.	H. S.
<i>Tandra</i>	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
<i>Gaurav</i>	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
<i>Arochak</i>	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
<i>Vahni Mardav</i>	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
<i>Mukhapraseka</i>	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
<i>Bhaktadweshya</i>	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
<i>Staimitya</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+

Table 2: General Pathyapathya of Vatavyadhi Ahara (diet)^[13]

<i>Anna Varga</i>	<i>Kulathi, Masha (black gram), Godhuma (wheat), Raktashali (old rice), Navina Tila, Purana Shalyodana.</i>
<i>Phala Varga</i>	<i>Amla, Rasayukta Phala, Dadima, Draksha, Jambira, Badara.</i>
<i>Shaka Varga</i>	<i>Patola, Shigru, Rasona.</i>
<i>Dugdha Varga</i>	<i>Kshira (milk), Ghrita (ghee), Navneeta.</i>
<i>Drava Varga</i>	<i>Mamsa Rasa (meat soup), Mudga Yusha (green gram soup), Dhanyamla</i>
<i>Taila Varga</i>	<i>Tila Taila (sesame oil), Sasharpa Taila (mustard oil), Eranda Taila (castor oil)</i>
<i>Anya Varga</i>	<i>Tambula, Ela (cardamom), Kustha.</i>

DISCUSSION

Specific symptoms of Vataja Gridhrasi: The specific symptoms of Vataja and Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi are described below;

- Dehasypravakrata^[14]:** This sign is mentioned in *Laghutrayi* but not in *Brihatrayi*. Because of extreme pain felt in the limb, the patient assumes a typical posture. He keeps his leg slightly flexed at the hip and knee hence his body appears to be in tilted position mostly to the affected side. Because of extreme pain, *Stambha* (stiffness) and

Toda (pricking pain) etc. the patient assumes a typical limping posture. The above symptoms appear whenever the Vata is provoked in extreme degree. This is described as sciatic tilt in modern medicine.

2. **Suptata:** This symptom is described only by Bhavaprakash and Yogaratnakar. Chakrapani explains it as loss of movement of the leg and also loss of sensation. Supti (numbness) is produced by Sheeta Guna. As Vata and Kapha both possess the property of Sheeta Guna, both are responsible for producing Supti. These are the paraesthesias in the affected limb.
3. **Sphuranam:**¹⁵ The symptom of fasciculation in Kati, Uru, Janu and Jangha are similar to the Spandana or Muhuspandana is characteristic of Vataja Gridhrasi.

Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi

4. **Tandra (drowsiness):** Tandra is due to Tamo Guna, Vata and Kapha Doshas. The inability of the sense organs to grasp their subject, heaviness of the body or manifests as a feeling of drowsiness, fatigue without any work etc. are the Lakshanas of Tandra.¹⁶
5. **Gaurava (heaviness):** Gaurava means feeling of heaviness. It is due to Kapha especially Guru Guna. Patient feels heaviness all over the body especially in the leg. This makes the movement of the leg further difficult.
6. **Arochaka (Anorexia):** Here the patient has proper appetite but still he can't enjoy the food due to loss of taste.¹⁷ Here mainly Bodhaka Kapha Dushti is found. Also, it is produced due to Rasadushti.
7. **Mukhapraseka (salivation):** It is described in Laghutrayi. It is also known Lalapraseka. It is a symptom of Kaphadushti specially Bodhakakapha. But also occurs due to presence of Ama in body.
8. **Bhaktadweshha (dislike for food):**¹⁸ It is the dislike for food. When Kapha is vitiated along with Vata in Gridhrasi, the power of Agni is depressed.

This leads to Ama formation which causes feeling of heaviness in the stomach. Hence the patient develops dislike for food.

9. **Staimitya (timidness):** It is one of the twenty Shleshmavikara. Patient feels that some wet cloth is wrapped around his leg. Hemadri interprets it as Alasya.¹⁹
10. **Agnimandya (low digestion):** Because of vitiated Kapha as Anubandhi, Dosha, the properties of Agni especially Jatharagni will diminish, as a result Agnimandya takes place. This again leads to production of Ama which aggravates the Vyadhi.

Pathya-Apathya (Do's and Don'ts)

Pathya: Those Aharadi Dravyas, which are beneficial to Srotasa and have no adverse effect on body and mind, are termed as Pathya. Pathya is a major pillar supporting the line of treatment of any disease; separately Pathya and Apathya of Gridhrasi are not described. Hence Pathya and Apathya of Vata Vyadhi in general can be applied for patients of Gridhrasi.

Viharaj (lifestyle):²⁰ Sukhoshna Pariseka, Nirvata Sthana, Samvahana, Avagahana, Abhyanga, Brahmacharya, Ushna Pravara, Agni AatapaS evana, Snigdha- Ushna Lepa.

Apathya:²¹ Those Ahara and Vihara which have adverse effects on body and are non-homologatory to body are called Apathya.

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

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

CONCLUSION

Gridhrasi being Nanatmaja Vatavyadhi involvement of Kapha Dosha is also mentioned. In Gridhrasi pain starts initially at Sphika (hip) and later on, it radiates to Kati (waist), Pristha (back), Uru (thigh), Janu (knee), Jangha (calf) and Pada (foot) respectively. Pain or

pulsating or trumbling sensation due to stretching of sciatic nerve. It is due to *Anavasthitatva* of vitiated *Vata* particularly *Vyana Vata*. In comparison to the role of *Vata Dosha*, involvement of *Kapha Dosha* has much concerned with the manifestation of *Arochaka*, because the seat of *Bodhaka Kapha* is *Jihwa* which does *Rasa Bodhana*.

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