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Role of *Raktamokshana* (Bloodletting therapy) in *Sandhigata Vata* w.s.r. to Lumbar Spondylosis

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ABSTRACT

Low back pain is a commonest clinical presentation in musculoskeletal disorder due to spinal pathology. Change of life style in developing countries has created several disharmonies in biological system. The terms, lumbar osteoarthritis, disc degeneration, degenerative disc disease and spondylosis are being used in literature to describe anatomical changes of lumbar spine including vertebrae and inter-vertebral disc. Basing upon the patho-physiology and symptoms, Sandhigata Vata is equated with lumbar Spondylosis. Sandhigata Vata is a clinical condition develops when the vitiated Vayu becomes localized in Kati Pradesha. During the process of pathogenesis Kaphavrita Vyana Vayu obstructs the circulation of Rasa, Rakta Dhatu and gradually structural changes seen in Kati Pradesha. The symptoms like Shoola, Shopha, Stambha are developed later on. Raktamokshana is an important Para-surgical procedure recommended by Acharyas for treatment of Snayu Sandhigata Vata. It helps to enhance fresh blood supply to the affected lumbar region. It promotes detoxification, purification of nutrition path way by removing Doshas, lodged in inter-vertebral joint spaces. In this way the Raktamokshana process helps to regain the normal function in degenerative joint disorders.

Key words: *Raktamokshana, Bloodletting therapy, Sandhigata Vata, Lumbar Spondylosis.*

INTRODUCTION

Sandhigata Vata is a clinical condition develops when the vitiated Vayu becomes localized in Kati Pradesha. On the basis of symptoms and pathophysiology Sandhigata Vata can be corelated with lumbar Spondylosis. lumbar spondylosis is broadly described as a degenerative condition of lumbar spine. Factors like improper sitting postures, jerking movements in travel, sports activities and bad sitting - sleeping

posture etc. are the chief factors to produce spinal disorders. The most interesting vulnerable musculoskeletal structure is Spine. Especially, the lumbar spine bears the maximum body weight of an individual. That's why disorders are commonly seen in lumbar vertebrae. Life time incidence of low back pain approximately 60-85% in adults and lumbar spondylosis is responsible for about 10% of all back pain.^[1] So this disease is a significant threat to working population. This disease not only inflicts pain but causes difficulty in walking, daily routine activities and cut off the happy life of the patient. In modern medicine, various treatment options are available like conservative treatment, epidural steroid injection, per radicular infiltration and surgical methods. But all these modalities have their own limitations and complications. In Ayurveda several methods of treatment like Snehana, Upanaha, Agni karma, Raktamokshana, Panchakarma, Bhesaja chikitsa etc. have been recommended for management of Vatika disorders.^{[2],[3]} When Vata prakopa due to Kapha and pitta Avarana, Raktamokshana can help to remove the

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Avarana of pitta and Kapha dosha giving way for anuloma gati of vitiated Vata that indirectly cures the vatika symptoms. In general, various probable mechanisms are going to change in body by bloodletting, such as local blood supply is improved, local metabolism is improved, local drainage system is improved, fresh RBCs are produced which are active.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To review the Sandhigata in Ayurvedic classics
2. To study the role of Raktamokshana in Sandhigata Vata.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A detailed review of the available literature on the drug and disease, such as classical text of Ayurveda was done. Data was collected from various books, papers published in the e-journal etc.

RAKTAMOKSHANA

Raktamokshana means to let out the vitiated blood. It is also called as Asravistruti, Shonita-mokshana, Rakta-nirharana, Rakta-sravana, Rakta-harana etc.

Principles of Raktamokshana

In Raktamokshana, Rakta Dhatu along with vitiated Doshas is let out of the body. In classics Rakta is considered as a fourth Dosha because of its more susceptibility towards impurity. Therefore Dushita (vitiating) Rakta should be let out to protect the health or to remove the disease. As basti is half treatment in medicine, Siravedha is also half treatment in surgery.^[4] Since Pitta has samadharmita with Rakta, Rakta-mokshana decreases the quantum of enhanced Pitta also. Thus Pittaja Vyadhis are also cured by this therapy.

Procedure of Raktamokshana – It should be done under the following procedure.

Purva Karma

- Indications of Siravedha: Swastha and Atura.
- Contraindications of Siravedha

- Proper Instrumentations, to make the patient fit for Siravedha.
- Take informed consent.

Pradhana Karma

Vyadhana Vidhi: Bloodletting should be adopted after the patient has been satisfied with a drink of Yavagu (thin gruel).^[5] The patient who has been oleation (external or internal Snehana) and duly fomented (Swedana), given liquid food or Yavagu (thin gruel) which are opposite in qualities of aggravated Doshas; selecting the suitable time, he should be asked to sit nearby (the physician) in erect posture; then he should be tied with either band of cloth, leather, inner bark of trees, creeper or any other material (generally we prefer thick rope than the tourniquet because it is practically seen that when body part is tightening by thick rope, Siras of that part protruding more correctly) without endangering his life; controlled/restrain from movement neither very firmly nor very loosely; then search of the site of puncture with the appropriate instrument.^[6] In Lumbar Spondylosis, Siravedha should be done with flexion of knee joint.^[7] because in this position, the veins are protruding above four Angulas of the Janu Marma. In persons who are strong and have great accumulation of Doshas and who have suitable age (middle age), expert desire maximum one Prastha(640 ml) of blood be allowed to flow out after Siravedha.^[8]

Pashchat Karma

- Proper massage around the site of Siravedha
- Dressing (tight bandaging)
- Pathya Apathya
- Follow up

DISEASE REVIEW

Etymology of Sandhigata Vata^[9]

The term Sandhigata Vata has its origin from a combination of three words. Sandhi, Gata and Vata

Sandhi: According to Vacaspatyam, the word Sandhi is derived from the root “Dha” when prefixed by “sam”

and suffixed by “ki” gives rise to the word Sandhi which means the Joint, the Union.

Gata: The term Gata is derived from the root “Gam” which means gone to, arrived at, situated in, directed to. From above various meaning it can be revealed that the word “Gata” gives two meanings. One is related with Site. Hence in case of Sandhigata Vata, it denotes the site in which provoked Vata is situated.

Vata: The term Vata is originated from to blow, to go, to move, to smell, to strike, to hurt, to enlighten. Thus, Sandhigata Vata means provoked Vata located in sandhi.

Nidana:^{[10],[11]} In classics no specific Nidana has been mentioned for Sandhigata Vata. As Sandhigata Vata is a Vatavyadhi, general Hetu of Vatavyadhi can be taken as Hetu of Sandhigata Vata. Commentator Chakrapani has said that specificity of Nidana produces affinity of Vata towards vitiation of particular sthana. Also Acharya Charaka has stated that provoked Dosha due to specific Nidana, vitiates specific Dushya and generates innumerable varieties of disorders. Common Hetus of Vatavyadhi, which are mentioned by Acharya Charaka are as below.

Aharaja: Atiruksha, AtiShita, Atialpa, Atilaghu, Abhojan

Viharaja: Atiprajagan, Divasvapna, Ativyavaya, Vegasandharan, Plavana, Atiadhva, Ativyayam, Vichesta, Sigrayangamana, Yana Vatansana.

Manas: Atichinta, Atishoka, Atikrodha, Atibhaya.

Others: Langhan, Amad, Vishamad Upacharad, Dhatunam Sankshyad, Doshashruk Sravanad, Rogatkarshanad, Marmaghat.

Purvarupa:^[12] No clear Purvarupa of the disease Sandhigata Vata is mentioned in the classics. Hence Purvarupa of Vatavyadhi can be taken as Purvarupa of Sandhigata Vata. Acharya Charaka has quoted that Avyakta Lakshanas of Vatavyadhi are to be taken as its Purvarupa. Commentator Vijayarakshita explains the term Avyakta as the symptoms which are not manifested clearly. Hence mild of occasional Sandhi

Shula or Shotha prior to the manifestation of disease Sandhigata Vata may be taken as Purvarupa.

Rupa:^[13]

Sandhi Shula: Shula is the chief symptom of Prakupita Vata. It is stated that without Vata Shula does not occur. It is obvious to experience Shula in the diseases which are dominated by Vata. In case of Vata situated in Sandhi gives rise to Sandhi Shula.

- 1. Sandhi Shotha:** Dosha Sanchaya in specific site is the main causative factor for Shotha. In Sandhigata Vata, Prakupita Vata gets enlodged in Sandhi where Srotoriktata already exists. So there is wide scope of Vata to get accumulated there resulting in Shotha. Here Vatapurna Druti Sparsha type of Shotha has been described by Acharya Charaka. Because Shotha is Vatic type, on palpation the swelling is felt like a bag filled with air. (Vatapurna Druti Sparsha) Acharya Madhavakara has given a new name i.e. Atopa.
- 2. Hanti Sandhi Gatah:** First Sushruta explains this symptom followed by Madhavakar while commenting on this word, Dalhana and Gayadas explain it as inability to flexion and extension. However, this symptom may not to be seen in early stages. When the disease aggravates the vitiated Vata may produce inability of movements. In Madhukosha Commentary, Commentator Vijayarakshita has given two meanings of Hanti Sandhigata. One is Sandhivishlesha and the another is Sthambha. Here, Sandhivishlesha occurs due to Prakupita Vata located in Sandhi. Sthambha means immobility as defined by Dalhana. Arundatta explained stambha as less or loss of flexion and other movements. Gati is unique feature of Vata and in SandhigataVata, this Gati is obstructed because of Sanga type of Srotodusti. This gives rise to Sthambha. Vata also increased Shita guna of Vata is responsible for sthambha.
- 3. Akunchan Prasaranayoh Vedana:** Acharya Charaka has shown this symptom. Sandhi are made to perform the function of Akunchana and Prasarana. When Prakupita Vata gets located in

Sandhi, it hampers the normal function of Sandhi which results in vedana during Akunchana and Prasarana.

4. **Sandhisphutana:** This symptom is not mentioned in our classics directly. In allopathy texts, it is mentioned clearly as crepitation – Sandhisphutana. Sandhigata Vata is localised Vatavyadhi in which Prakupita Vata affect Sandhi. This Sthana Sansraya is result of Srotoriktata present at Sandhi. This symptom may occur due to Vatasanga in Sandhi.

Samprapti:^[14] The way in which the Dosha gets Vitiated and the course it follows for the manifestation of disease is called Samprapti. A proper understanding of Samprapti is vital for the treatment since Chikitsa is illustrated in the Ayurvedic text is nothing but ‘Samprapti Vighatana.’ No specific Samprapti has been explained for Sandhigata Vata. So it can be said that Samprapti of Sandhigata Vata is same as that of general Samprapti of Vatavyadhi.^[15] Acharya Charaka has mentioned that Nidana Sevana aggravates Vata and this Prakupita Vata gets accumulated in Rikta Srotas and gives rise to various generalized and localized diseases.

As said earlier, Samprapti of Sandhigata Vata follows either of three ways according to the Nidana of Vata Prakopa.

- 1) Dhatukshyajanya
- 2) Avaranjanya
- 3) Svanidana Sevenajanya.

As Sandhigata Vata is a degenerative disease and mainly occurs in the old age, Dhatukshaya due to Vriddhavastha which is Parihanikala is the most common cause. When aggravated Vata gets localized in Sandhi, it over powers and un-does all qualities of Kapha. The chief task of Kapha is to sustain or Dharana. This chief aim of Kapha is destroyed by the influence of aggravated Vata. When aggravated Vata is localized into a single joint, the disease will be reflected in only one Joint but if Vata is present in many joints, the disease may be presented by multiple joint involvement.

Classification of Sandhigata Vata

No reference is available of classification of Sandhigata Vata. Vata Prakopa can occur either of three causes.

1. Dhatukshyajanya Vata Prakopa
2. Svanidana Sevanajanya Vata Prakopa
3. Avaranjanya Vata Prakopa

As Sandhigata Vata is a Vatavyadhi, it mainly occurs due to Prakopa of Vata and so it can be classified in three types as below.

1. Dhatukshyajanya
2. Vataprakopaka Nidana Sevanajanya
3. Avaranjanya

Sandhigata Vata can be classified according to its Nidana – Nija and Agantuja

1. Nija SandhigataVata
2. Agantuja SandhigataVata.

DISCUSSION

The disease Sandhigata Vata occurs when the patient attains Vatika phase of life, age factor plays an important role in precipitation of disease. On the other hand, the diet regimen which is mainly dominated by Vatika qualities say Vata Vardhaka Ahara Vihara can be envisaged as one of the predisposing factor in Sandhigata Vata. Due to old age i.e. Kalaja Nidana, it causes Ashtivaha Srotodusti and Khavaigunya in Sandhi. Vata Vardhaka Ahara Vihara leads to Vatasanchaya and Agni Vaishamyā. Further Agni Vaishamyā causes Anuloma Dhatukshya which ultimately results in Vataprakopa and vice-versa. Because of Anuloma Dhatukshya the vitiated Vata moves in the body and settles down in joints. Sandhigata Vata cause Shleshaka Kapha Kshaya due to Ruksha and khara Guna. (Dhatun Kshpayat Aatma Tejasa). Here the Ruksha and Khara Guna of Vata are considered as antagonising factors for Shleshaka Kapha which eventually results in diminution of Shleshaka Kapha. Due to this diminution of Shleshaka Kapha by Sandhigata Vata, the symptoms Ankunchana

Prasarnayoh Vedana or Hanti Sandhigatah occurs. Above mentioned Samprapti is of Dhatukshya and Svanidana Sevanajanya Vataprakopa janita Sandhigata Vata.

Probable mode of Action:^[16]

The Main function of Rakta Dhatu is to provide life i.e. Jeevan to living beings. Raktamokshana predominantly indicated in Pitta, Rakta and Kaphaja Vyadhies or when Pitta or Kapha is in Anubandha to Vata dosha. In such conditions of Vata prakopa due to Kapha and pitta Avarana, Raktamokshana can help to remove the Avarana of pitta and Kapha dosha giving way for anuloma gati of vitiated Vata that indirectly cures the vatika symptoms along with symptoms produced by Kapha dosha.^[17] In Datukshayajanya Samprapti local Raktamokshana helps to enhance fresh blood supply to the affected lumbar region. Thus, it acts as local level Shodhana therapy at local level which purifies Pravartaka Mula of Rasa and Rakta Vaha Srotas (blood vessels). It promotes detoxification, purification of nutrition path way by removing Doshas, lodged in inter-vertebral joint spaces. Due to bloodletting release of hormones, sympathetic nerve function etc. are triggered which directly stimulates bone marrow and immune related T-Lymphocytes helping in re-launching of healing mechanisms. In this way the Raktamokshana process helps to regain the normal function in degenerative joint disorders.

CONCLUSION

Raktamokshana is one of the best purification therapy where the disease causing factor i.e. vitiated Doshas are expelled from the body in addition to relief from disease symptomatology as well as without recurrence of the disease. Blood-letting therapy is mentioned as Shodhana therapy by Vagbhattacharya. Different modalities of Raktamokshana can be adopted, but Siravyadha is one of the Shastravacharana. In blood letting, local blood supply is improved, local metabolism is improved, local drainage system is improved, This process might have reduced the inflammatory pathology by flushing out the inflammatory chemical mediators and ultimately

provides relief from pain to the patient of Lumbar Spondylosis.

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