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A Review on *Vatarakta* with special reference to *Pathya-Apathya* in *Vatarakta*

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ABSTRACT

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The health of an individual solely depends on one's diet and life style. Nowadays human beings are more vulnerable to many disorders due to their faulty dietary habits and altered life style. These disorders may be causing functional impairment or crippling disorders like *Vatarakta*. *Vatarakta* is more distressing and common metabolic disorder in this era due to sedentary life style along with mental stress and other precipitating factors. Apart from being a part of regime of healthy living, Acharyas had also extended the concept of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya* (unwholesome) as a part of the treatment of the diseases. It is very much necessary for the patients to have the food which will keep their *Dhatu* in healthy state and will not let them get vitiated more from *Doshas*, so the patients must follow the healthy way of consumption of food i.e. *Pathya*.

Key words: *Vatarakta*, *Pathya*, *Apathya*.

INTRODUCTION

There are a variety of disorders produced by conjugation of excessively aggravated *Vata* and vitiated *Rakta* and one of the most important is *Vatarakta*. Hence, it has been described as a separate disease entity in *Charak Samhita*.^[1] While in *Sushrut Samhita* this condition described under *Vatavyadhi*.^[2] *Vatarakta* is the disease where *Vatadosha* and *Rakta Dhatu* both are vitiated simultaneously.^[3] The vitiated *Rakta Dhatu* obstructs *Vata* and results in *Vatashonita*.^[4]

Its seat is hands, feet, fingers and all joints. At first it

confirms its root in hands and feet and then spreads over the body. Due to subtle (*Sookshma*) and pervasive (*Sarvsara*) nature of *Vata*, and liquidity and flowingness of the *Rakta*, it spreads to the all over the body. Being obstructed in joints due to zigzag way it gets located there with agitation and in combination with *Pitta* etc., causes respected afflictions. Hence it produces pain mostly in those joints as such patient suffers from respective pain very difficult to tolerate.^[5] Therefore, in general, the disease gives rise to severe pain, tenderness, hot, red and swollen with shiny overlying skin in all the affected joints, and Hence, *Vatarakta* can be correlated with Gout described in modern science.^[6]

Acharya Charaka had stated that wholesome food is one of the causes for the growth and wellbeing of humans while unwholesome food is the root of all diseases.^[7] Acharya Sushrut had further supported the fact by stating that food is the cause of vitality, strength, complexion and Oja.^[8] The disease which is new and caused by one *Dosha* is curable, that caused by two *Doshas* is maintainable, and the one caused by three *Doshas* as well as with complications is incurable.^[9]

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OBJECTIVES

To study the *Pathya-Apathya* in *Vatarakta*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The disease *Vatarakta*, is described in *Brihatrayi*, and other successive texts. Various information regarding *Pathya Apathya* in *Vatarakta* has been collected from different classical texts, journals and internet sources. Discussion and conclusion are drawn on the basis of compiled information.

DISCUSSION

Aushadha (drugs), *Ahara* (diet) and *Vihara* (conducts) are the three main pillars of Ayurveda. Along with various medicinal preparations, Acharyas also described *Pathya* and *Apathya* for the diseases.

The food or regime which do not adversely affects the body and are pleasant to one's mind and soul are called - *Pathya*.

Opposite to it the food or regime which adversely affects the body and are not pleasant to mind and soul are called - *Apathya*.

Vatarakta is a complex disease and involves *Dushti* of various *Srotamshi*, so an effort is made here to understand the *Pathya-Apathya* w.s.r. *Vatarakta*.

Hetu of Vatarakta

Vata and *Rakta* are *Dosha* and *Dushya* of *Vatarakta*. The *Viprakrista Nidana* of *Vatarakta* can be classified into;

1. Factors responsible for vitiation of *Vata*.
2. Factors responsible for vitiation of *Rakta*.

Factors responsible for vitiation of Vata**a) Ahara**

- Intake of foods rich in *Kashaya* (astringent), *Katu* (pungent), *Tikta* (bitter) *Rasa's* and *Ruksha Guna*.
- *Alpahara Sevana* - intake of food often smaller than a regular meal.
- *Abhojana* - fasting.
- Faulty use of *Sneha* etc.

- People of delicate nature and those who indulge in faulty diet and activities.

b) Vihara

- Excessive riding on elephants, horses, camels etc.
- Excessive swimming, suppression of natural urges, excessive intercourse.
- Increased physical activity, violent exercise.
- Keeping awake at night, trauma, not resting to purifactory therapies.

Factors responsible for vitiation of Rakta**a) Ahara**

- Excessive consumption of *Lavana* (salts), *Amla* (sour), *Katu* (pungent) *Rasa's* and *Snigdha* (too oily), *Kshara* (alkaline), *Ushna* (hot) *Guna* rich foods.
- *Ajeerna Bhojana* - consumption of food in presence of indigestion.
- *Viruddhasana* - intake of mutually contraindicated foods.
- *Adhyasana* - intake of food before the previous meal is digested.
- Ingestion of *Klinna* (moist) and *Shushka* (dry) foods
- Excessive intake of *Anoopamamsa*, *Kulattha*, *Masha*, *Nishpava Sura*, *Asava* etc.
- Intake of irritant, hot, sour, alkaline substance etc.

b) Vihara

- Due to *Abhighata*, *Ashuddhi*, *Krodha*, *Achankramana*.
- *Divaswapna* and *Ratrijagran*.
- More exposure to heat, cold etc.

Pathya for Vatarakta

For the patients suffering from *Vatarakta*, Acharya described many foods as described here;

- Cereals like old barley, wheat, nivara (a type of wild rice), *Shali* as well as *Shastika* type of rice should be included in diet.

- *Mamsarasa* of *Vishikara* (gallinaceous) and *Pratuda* (peckers) birds.
- *Harit Shak* (green leafy vegetables) like *Kakamachi* (*Solanum nigrum*), *Masura* (*Lens esculanta*), *Mudga* (*Psoralea radiatus*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus recimosus*) sizzled with *Ghrita* and *Mamsarasa*.
- Milk of cow, buffalo and goat is *Pathya* for *Vatarakta* patients.

Apathya for Vatarakta

Vatarakta patients should avoid;

- Meats, sea food, alcohol intake.
- Sleep during day time, exposure to heat or sunlight
- Exercise, coitus.
- Intake of *Katu* (pungent), *Ushna* (hot) and *Abhisyandi* foods.
- Excessive intake of *Amla* and *Lavana Rasa Pradhan* food.

CONCLUSION

Pathya (wholesome) and *Apathya* (unwholesome) food are responsible for happiness and misery respectively. The person who always avoid the intake of unwholesome food are held in high esteems by saints. Wholesome food is said to be one of the major causes for the growth of living beings and the unwholesome food for the growth of diseases. The practice of *Pathya Apathya* as per season will improve overall health.

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