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# Understanding the *Asthyashraya Vyadhi* - in the view of *Asthishula Chikitsa*

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## ABSTRACT

Understanding the *Asthyashraya Vyadhi* is mandatory when a physician wants to treat the diseases related to *Asthi*. *Hetu Gnana* is obligatory in planning the *Chikitsa*. *Ashraya-Ashrayee Sambandha of Dhatu & Dosha* also acts as a prime factor in employing the appropriate treatment for the specific *Vyadhi*. In the process of treatment of *Asthi Shula* such as *Katishula* and *Janu Sandhi Shula*, the specific treatment/ therapy is required so that the treatment given at the root would give complete relief for the patient. Understanding the disease at the level of *Dhatu Pradosha* would become the right path in planning the specific treatment. Approaching *Asthi Shula* through the *Dhatu Pradoshaja Vikaras* would be more appropriate. The *Chikitsa* of *Dhatu Pradoshaja Vikara* corrects the *Mula Dhatu Asthi*, thereby the treatment of *Asthi Shula* would become complete.

**Key words:** *Asthyashraya Vyadhi, Asthishula, Katishula, Janushula, Dhatu Pradoshaja Vikara.*

## INTRODUCTION

There are many ways of understanding the diseases and planning the treatments for them. Understanding *Vyadhis* based on the classification is one method. *Vyadhis* are divided considering the factors such as *Mruduta - Darunata*; *Guruta - Laghuta*; *Utthana - Gambhirata*; *Bala - Sthana* etc. of the *Vyadhis*. Ultimately, all the *Vyadhis* involve *Doshas*. *Dosha Samyata* is the destruction of the *Vyadhi* i.e. *Arogata*. *Dosha Vaishamyata* involves either *Dosha Vridhhi* or *Dosha Kshaya*. *Doshas* take shelter in *Dhatu*, in turn vitiate *Dhatu*s. The vitiated *Dhatu*s produce numerous diseases. Instead of treating the

diseases individually, if the main *Dhatu* related to the disease is treated, the treatment would win over all the diseases related to the respective *Dhatu*. In the present article, in view of treating the *Katishula* and *Janushula* i.e. forms of *Asthishula*, an attempt is made to understand the related *Dhatu Vikara* i.e. *Asthyashraya Vyadhi*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ayurveda classical texts, particularly *Brihatrayee*.

*Shareera* is made up of *Dosha, Dhatu* and *Mala*. Among these three, *Dhatu* beholds strength & energy and gives sustenance to *Shareera* (*Dharanat dhaatavaha*). *Dhatu*s become *Ashraya* for *Doshas* which carry out their respective functions for the maintenance of life in *Shareera*. Thus *Dhatu*s become '*Ashraya*' and *Dosha*s become '*Ashrayee*'. The *Dosha*, i.e. *Ashrayee* and *Dhatu*, i.e. *Ashraya* are inter related closely in such a way that, if *Ashrayee* is increased, *Ashraya* gets enhanced and if *Ashrayee* is decreased, *Ashraya* gets depleted. This is the general rule. *Vayu, the Ashraya Dosha* takes shelter in *Asthi Dhatu*, i.e. *Ashrayee*; There is exception for the *Vata Dosha & Asthi Dhatu*.<sup>[1]</sup> If *Vata Dosha* increases, *Asthi*

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gets depleted and if *Vata Dosha* decreases, *Asthi* is nourished.

*Asthyashrayavyadhis* are those diseases which take shelter in the skeletal system, alter the natural structure & functioning of the bones leading to several disorders. The *Nidana Panchakas* i.e. *Nidana*, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Upashayaanupashaya* and *Samprapti* of *Asthyashraya Vyadhi* need to be understood before planning the treatment.

### Nidana

Main causative factors for the occurrence of *Asthyashrayavyadhis*<sup>[2]</sup> are:

- 1. Ati Vyayama:** *Ati Vyayama* is that activity which is carried out beyond one's capacity. Doing *Vyayama* even after sweating on forehead by a person is considered as '*Ati Vyayama*'.
- 2. Ati Sankshobha:** Excessive movement of *Asthi* / *Asthi Sandhis* is understood as *Ati Sankshobha*.
- 3. Ati Vighattana of Asthi:** Unusual or additional movements of *Asthi* / *Asthisandhi* is *Ati Vighattana* of *Asthi*.
- 4. Vaatala Ahara and Vihara:** Food and activities which increase *Vata Dosha* are termed as *Vatala Ahara* and *Vihara*.

The overall *Nidanas* are classified and tabulated as below,

**Table 1: Showing overall Nidanas of Asthyashraya Vyadhi.**

Aharaja Nidana	Viharaja Nidana	Manasika Nidana	Anya Nidana (Viprakrishta Nidana)
Katu Rasa	Ati Vyayama	Chinta	Dhatu Kshaya
Tikta Rasa	Langhana	Shoka	Margaavarana
Kashaya Rasa	Plavana	Krodha	Ati Mamsa Kshaya
Rooksha	Atyadhwa	Bhaya	Asrik Kshaya
Laghu	Pradhavana		Rogaatimarshana

Sheeta	Pratarana		Kshudhitambupana
Alpabhajana	Atyuccha Bhashana		
Abhajana	Balavadvighraha		
Vallora (dry meat)	Abhighata		
Shushka Shaka	Marmaghata		
Uddhalaka	Bharaharana		
Neevara	Dukha Shayya		
Mudga	Sheegrayana		
Chanaka	Prapedana		
Masura	Atyadhyayana		
Harenu	Ati Vyavaya		
Kalaya	Ati/ Ratri Jagarana		
Trunadhanya	Vega Dharana / Udeerana		
Virudaka Dhanya	Vishamopachara		
	Sahasa Karma		
	Upavasa		
	Purovata Sevana		
	Divaswapna		

### Poorvarupa

- There is no specific *Purvarupa* for *Asthyashraya Vyadhi*.
- Purvarupa* of *Vatavyadhis* are not expressed; they are *Avyakta*. *Chakrapani* comments that, "*Avyaktam*" means '*Laghuta*' of disease.<sup>[3]</sup>

- *Vijayarakshita* states in *Madhava Nidana*, “*Na Ati Abhivyakta*” - the symptoms which are not manifested completely or not exhibited completely are the *Purvarupa*.

Thus mild recurrent backache, slight stiffness of joints with mild joint pain, sudden pain of bones on lifting weight or bending down etc. may come under premonitory symptoms of *Asthyashraya Vyadhi*.

### Rupa

*Rupa* mentioned in prominent *Brihat Samhitas* are tabulated as below:

*Asthi Kshaya* and *Vikruta Asthivridhi Lakshanas* are considered under *Asthyashraya Vyadhis* by most of the *Samhitas*.

**Table 2: Showing Rupa of Asthyashraya Vyadhi according to different Acharyas.<sup>[4-7]</sup>**

Rupa	C.S	S.S	A.H	A.S
<i>Adhyasthi</i>	+	+	-	-
<i>Adhidanta</i>	+	+	-	-
<i>Asthibheda</i>	+	+	-	-
<i>Asthishula</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>Asthitoda</i>	-	-	+	-
<i>Kesha, Loma, Smashru, Nakha Vikara</i>	+	+	-	-
<i>Sandhishula</i>	-	-	+	+
<i>Sakthi Shula</i>	-	-	+	+
<i>Teevra Balakshaya</i>	-	-	+	+
<i>Deha Rukshata</i>	-	+	-	-
<i>Danta, Nakha Bhanga</i>	-	+	-	-
<i>Danta, Kesha, Nakha Shadana</i>	-	-	+	-

### Upashaya- Anupashaya

#### Upashaya (Pacifying factors)

- *Vatadosha* is the *Ashrayee* that resides in *Asthi Dhatu*, ‘*Vata Prakopana Viparyaya*’ *Ahara* & *Viharas* pacify the *Doshas* in *Asthi Dhatu*. Thus,

*Vata Prashamana Ahara* and *Vihara* act as *Upashaya* for *Asthyashraya Vyadhi*.

- *Ahara* should be predominantly consisting of *Madhura, Amla* and *Lavana Rasa* along with *Snigdha*guna.
- Residing in a *Nivata Sthana, Pravarana, Veshtana, Bandhana, Abhyanga, Avagaha* etc.<sup>[8]</sup>

#### Anupashaya (Aggravating factors)

All the factors responsible for *Vatadosha Vriddhi* aggravate the *Asthyashraya Vyadhis*.

- *Vatala Ahara: Ruksha, Sheeta, Laghu, Katu-Tikta-Kashaya Rasa Pradhana Ahara Dravya Sevana* etc.
- *Vatala Vihara: Ati Vyayama, Ati Vyavaya, Ati Jagarana, Chinta, Shoka, Krodha, Vega Dharana* etc.

#### Samprapti Ghatakas

- *Nidana: Vata Prakopaka Nidana*
- *Dosha: Vata*
- *Dushya: Asthi Dhatu; Upadhatu* and *Malas* of *Asthidhatu*.
- *Srotas: Asthivaha*.
- *Srotodushti: Sanga, Vimarga gamana, Atipravritti*.
- *Agni: Jataragni* and *Dhatvagni Mandyata*
- *Doshagati: Marma Asthi Sandhi*<sup>[9]</sup>
- *Rogamarga: Madhyama*<sup>[10]</sup>
- *Udbhavasthana: Pakvashaya*
- *Adhithana: Asthi/ Sandhi/ Kesha/ Danta/ Nakha*

#### Vyavacchedaka Nidana

The *Prakupitavata* produces various types of diseases depending on the *Hetu* i.e. ‘causes’ and the *Sthana* i.e. ‘place of manifestation’ of the diseases.

**Table 3: Showing Vata Prakopa in Inter-related Dhatus.<sup>[11]</sup>**

Factors	Medodhatu Gata Vata	Asthidhatu Gata Vata	Majjadhatu Gata Vata
Shula Swarupa	Dandamushatihata m i.e.Pain of the whole body as if hit by big stick or fist	Asthiparva Bheda i.e.breaking type of pain in the joints  Santata Ruk i.e.continuous pain of joints.	Asthiparva Bheda i.e.breaking type of pain in the joints  Santata Ruk i.e. continuous pain of joints
Shula Sthana	Not particular to joints; pain all over the body present.	Sandhi Shula i.e.pain of joints especially weight bearing joints.	Sandhi Shula i.e. pain of joints especially involving long bones.
Nidra	Not disturbed	Aswapna i.e. sleeplessness	Aswapna i.e. sleeplessness
Other Lakshanas	Shrama i.e. tiredness.  Anga Gourava i.e.heaviness of body.  Anga Toda i.e.pricking sensation of the body	Mamsa Bala Kshaya i.e. weakness of muscles.	Mamsa Bala Kshaya i.e. weakness of muscles.

**Table 4: Showing Vata Prakopa in Inter-related Deha-Avayavas.<sup>[12]</sup>**

Factors	Snayu Gata Vata	Siragata Vata	Sandhigata Vata
Shula	-	Mandaruk i.e. mild bodyache	Prasaranaakunchana Savedana Pravritti i.e. pain during flexion & extension of joints

Shotha	-	Shophya i.e. slight swelling of the body	Vatapoornadruti Sparsha Shotha i.e. swelling of joints as if filled by the air.
Roga Anubandha	Manifestation of diseases such as, Bahyaayaama , Abhyantaraayaama, Khalli, Kubjatwa, Sarvanga Vata, Ekanga Vata	Shoshana i.e. emaciated body Spandana, Supti of Sira i.e. pulsatile & numbness of veins	-

Considering the above points of Vyavacchedaka Nidana, it can be concluded that, the Prakopita Vata taken shelter in Asthidhatu produces the specific Lakshanas such as continuous pain in bones & joints i.e Asthishula; breaking pain in bones i.e. Asthibheda; severe tiredness i.e. Balakshaya and Sleeplessness i.e. Anidrata.

**Upadrava<sup>[13]</sup>**

Sandhichyuti, Kunchana, Kubjatha, Angasamshosha, Pangutwa are the possible Upadravas which show poor prognosis.

**DISCUSSION**

The science of Ayurveda views the diseases from their basic root of origin. Ultimately, all the diseases should be categorized under the 7 basic components that are responsible for the creation of the body, known as Sapta Dhatus. Asthi is the deep seated Dhatu proved to be the supporting pillar of the body. Asthyashraya Vyadhi is the disease affecting the Asthi Dhatu. All those diseases which take Ashraya in Asthi come under the heading of Asthyashraya Vyadhi. Before treating, Asthyashraya Vyadhi has to be studied conceptually, so that the Chikitsa Siddhanta can be understood and applied with perfection.

Ahararasa is the Moola for Sapta Dhatu Nirmana. Asthi is formed on 20<sup>th</sup> day after the intake of Ahara. In the process of 'Dhatu Sneha Parampara'<sup>[14]</sup> i.e. the

chronological formative heritage of *Dhatu*s one after the other, 'Medas' the softer preceding *Dhatu* gives rise to 'Asthi' the hardest of all *Dhatu*s. *Kharatwa* of *Asthi Dhatu* is brought about by the action of *Asthidhatwagni*. By the *Sanghata* of *Prithwi*, *Agni* and *Vayu Mahabhutas*, 'Shoshana' Karma takes place i.e. drying out the *Dravatva / Kledata* of *Medas* to get modified as harder *Asthi*.<sup>[15]</sup> The *Dharana Karma* of *Asthi* is mainly supported by the *Jaghana* or the entire hip region, which balances the upper and lower parts of the body. *Jaghana* gets affected when *Asthivaha Srotodushti* occurs. During old age, when degeneration of *Asthi Dhatu* occurs, primary site of affection is the entire Hip region / *Jaghana*. It is evident that the neck of femur, the prominent bone of *Jaghana Pradesha* is most frequently fractured in old age. Even the *Basti Chikitsa* given is nearer to the *Jaghana Pradesha*, and it is the specific *Chikitsa* in treating *Asthi* related diseases. Therefore, *Jaghana* is righteously considered as *Moola* of *Asthivaha Srotas*.<sup>[16]</sup>

*Prakupita Doshas* get collected in the *Asthivaha Srotas* by means of *Srotodushti Prakaras* such as *Sanga*, *Atipravritti* or *Vimargamana*. Due to *Nidanas* like *Ativyayama*, *Atisankshobha*, *Asthi Vighattana* and due to *Vatakara Ahara & Viharas*, *Asthivaha Srotodushti* takes place which is characterized by either *Vridhhi* or *Kshaya* of *Asthi Dhatu*.

*Doshas* lodged in *Asthi Dhatu* are not so easily removed because of following reasons.

- Since *Asthi* is the *Gambheera Dhatu*.
- Among the three *Rogamargas*, *Asthi* is included under *Madhyama Rogamarga* which is difficult to treat.
- *Doshas* that have taken shelter in *Asthi* need well planned specific treatment for their removal. This is the reason behind *Charakacharya's* unique design of *Tikta Ksheerabasti* in *Asthyashraya Vyadhi*.<sup>[17]</sup>

#### **Rupa of Asthyashraya Vyadhi**

##### **Adhyasthi**

*Adhyasthi* can be understood as the unhealthy growth or remodeling of the Bone called as

*Osteophytes*, when *Asthi* undergoes stress as seen in *Ativyayama*, *Atisankshobha* or injury (*Asthi Vighattana*). Usually, these *Osteophytes / Bony spurs* are formed marginally in the joints of Bones. Bone spurs cause pain when rubbed or pressed against the surrounding tissues.

##### **Asthibheda**

Breaks or cracks observed in Bones are another form of expression of *Asthyashraya Vyadhi*. Increased *Rukshata* and *Shushkata* due to *Vatavridhhi* causes breaks/cracks in Bones or Teeth.

##### **Asthishula**

Pain in the affected Bone is the *Pratyatma Lakshana* often observed in *Asthyashraya Vyadhi*. *Asthishula* is the result of *Vatadosha* being lodged in *Asthi* or it may be due to degenerated *Asthi*. When the activities such as walking, climbing, squatting, stretching, lifting weights etc. are carried out in excess, disproportional to the nourishment of *Asthi Dhatu*, it results in the depletion of *Asthi*. Hence, *Asthishula* is often expressed in *Kati*, *Janu*, *Prishta*, *Greeva*, *Amsa* etc. most commonly used *Asthi Sandhis* in such activities.

##### **Asthitoda**

*Asthitoda*, the pricking pain in *Asthi* is also one of the *Rupa* of *Asthyashraya Vyadhi*, as told exclusively in *Ashtanga Hridaya Samhita*. Severity of the *Vyadhi* may present this *Rupa*.

##### **Adhidanta**

The extra unusual growth of Teeth is also one of the *Rupa* of *Asthyashraya Vyadhi*. *Danta* is the *Upadhatu* of *Asthi Dhatu*, therefore abnormal growth is also seen in Denture.

##### **Dantashula & Dantabheda**

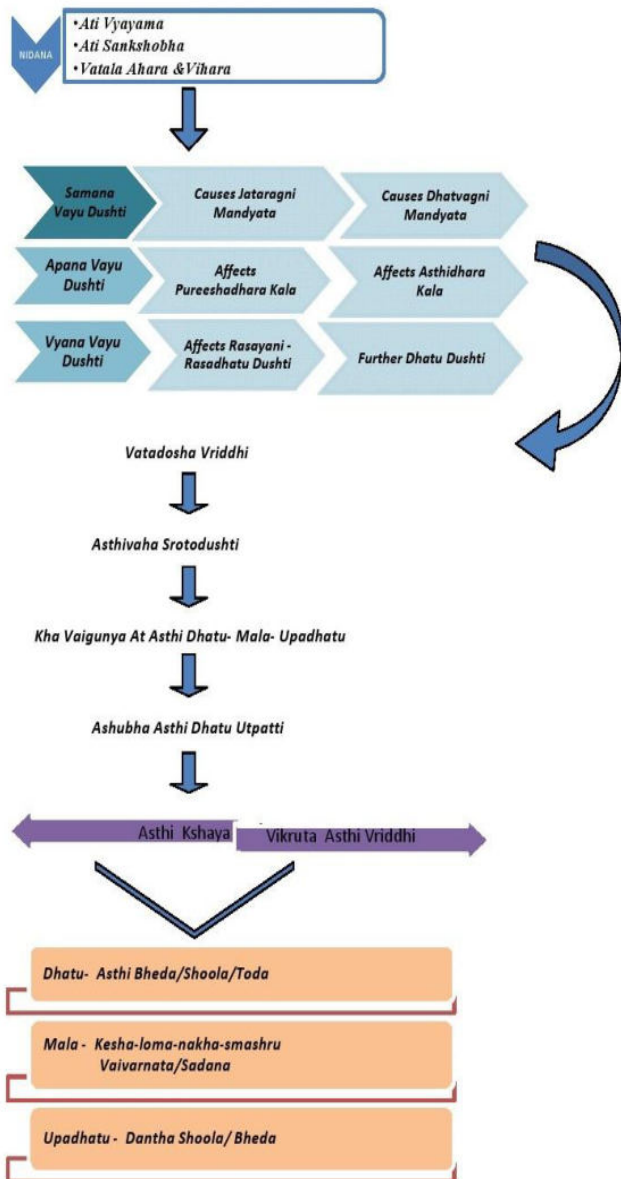
Because of the under nourished *Asthi Dhatu*, its *Upadhatu Danta* also undergoes degeneration.

##### **Vivarnata & Sadana of Keshha, Loama, Nakha, Smashru**

Discoloration of Nails/ Hairs and fall of Hairs on Scalp/ body, of Nails, of Moustache are other *Rupa* of

Asthyashraya Vyadhi . Kesha, Loama, Nakha & Smashru are the Asthi Malas which also exhibit the Rupa of Asthyashraya Vyadhi .

**Illustration 1: Showing Samprapti of Asthyashraya Vyadhi**



**Upashaya**

Control over Vata Ahara and Vihara are the factors of comfort.

**Anupashaya**

The activities involving excess movements of Asthi, giving stress to Asthi, usage of Vata Ahara & Vihara are the triggering factors.

**CONCLUSION**

Asthi is the deeper Dhatu which has its Utpatti mula as Medas and Jaghana. Subsequent formation of Sapta Dhatus depends on each person’s Kayagni and hence enhancement of the Kayagni is required for the proper formation of Asthi Dhatu. Asthyashraya Vyadhi is characterized by Asthi Dhatu Vikruti based on ‘Ashrayashrayee Sambandha’ mainly depending on increased Vata Dosha either by Ahara or Vihara. Contribution of Viharaja Nidanas such as Ativyayama, Ati Sankshobha and Vata Viharas are more in Asthyashraya Vyadhi. Asthishula is one of the Pratyatma Lakshanas of Asthyashraya Vyadhi expressed very commonly in Kati and Janu due to repeated stress imposed on them. As Asthi is the Gambheera Dhatu, Asthyashraya Vyadhi Chikitsa involves Panchakarmas especially Basti. Kharatva / Hardness of Asthi requires the combination of both ‘Snigdha and Shoshaka’ Dravyas.

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