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REVIEW ARTICLE

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# Pain management in Vatarakta

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# ABSTRACT

The health of an individual depends solely on his diet and life style. But the rapid modernization of living in India makes fast food culture, which is spreading its wings in remote villages too. The consumption of baked food, half fried vegetables etc. cause incomplete digestion and metabolism of their protein structure. These disorders may be life threatening like stroke or may be causing functional impairment like joint disorders. Out of these Vatarakta is a common presentation. "Vata Dustam Raktam Yatra Roga Vishesha", Vatarakta is the disease which is caused by vitiation of Vata as well as Rakta. Aggravated Vata is blocked by vitiated Rakta, in turn leading to further aggravation of Vata. Thus aggravated Vata vitiates whole Rakta leading to the condition Vatarakta. Nidana like Katu, Amla, Ushna, Vidahi Ahara, Gaja Ustra Yaana etc. is mentioned. With the march of time, most of dietary habits, social structure, life style and environment have been changing. Occurrence of Vatarakta is also one of the out comes of these modification. Ayurvedic management of pain in Vatarakta includes both internal administration and external application of drugs. The Shodhana processes - Raktamokshana, Vasti and Virechana are considered as most effective line of treatment. The Shamana method of treatment also has major role in the management of Vatarakta. The simultaneous vitiation of Vata and Rakta at Sandhi produces a slow pathology which involves Vata Hara and Rakta Prasadaka remedies as Chikitsa.

Key words: Vatarakta, Pain management, Raktamokshana, Vasti, Virechana.

# INTRODUCTION

Shankuspotanavath Tasya Yasmat Teevrascha Vedanaha |

Shoolasakhtasya Lakshyante Tasmat Shoola Mihochyate || Su.Sa. 42/81

The severe pain which is similar to the pricking pain of *Trishoola* is called as *Shoola*. *Vatarakta* is one such *Vyadhi* where predominant feature is pain. The

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disorder is produced with the conjugation of *Vata* and *Rakta*. It has been explained as a separate *Vyadhi* according to *Acharya Charaka* due to distinct *Nidana* while *Acharya Sushruta* explains it under *Vatavyadhi*. The disease is also called as *Khudavata*, *Adyavata*, *Vatasruk* and *Vatabalasa*. *Kandu*, *Daha* and *Sandhi Shoola* are the cardinal symptoms of *Vatarakta*. The specific type of pain manifested in *Vatarakta* spreads in the body like rat poison. The severity of the disease leads to *Khanja* and *Pangu* due to which mobility is affected.

'Na Arte Anilat Ruk' - Pain cannot manifest without the involvement of Vata.

Sangnavahanam Nadeenam Pratanoudwejanodh Bhavaha |

Sarve Api Shoolasthenahuhu Shoolanam Anilaha Prabhuhu | |

When the sensory nerves are stimulated the pain is manifested. Hence for all kinds of pain *Vata* is called as *Prabhu*.

Srotonirodavetau Vrunashothasthata Kshatam |

Aghataha Karya Vaishamyam Dourbalyam Shoolamubhayaha | |

The other reasons for *Shoola* are *Vrunashotha, Kshata, Aghata, Karyavaishamya* and *Dourbalya*.

*Vatarakta* is one such *Vyadhi* where pain is predominantly seen in the metatarsophalengial joints

especially in the greater toe. It manifests in both hands, feet and all the joints.

#### **Definitions of Vatarakta**

Vata Dushtam Raktam Yatra Roga Visheshaha |

The disease characterized by the abnormality of *Rakta Dhatu* due to morbidity of *Vata Dosha* is called as *Vatarakta*.

Vataraktabhyam Janito Vyadhi Vataraktam | Ch.Ch.29/1

The illness caused due to *Vata Dosha* and *Rakta Dhatu* is called as *Vatarakta*.

Vatarakta Eva Avasthantara Prapte Vataraktam | Ch.Ch.29

The factors *Vata* and *Rakta* in a diseased state is called as *Vatarakta*.

Vataraktam Hi Dushtena Vatena Dushtena Raktena Cha Vishishta Sampraptikam Vikarantarameva | Ma.Ni.

The disease characterized by unique pathology of Vikruta Vata Dosha and Rakta Dhatu is called as Vatarakta.

Asrujo Ruddho Vayuhu Vatashonitam | As.Hr.Ni.16/3

The illness produced due to the obstruction of *Vata Dosha* by *Rakta Dhatu* is known as *Vatarakta*.

Vayuhu Vivruddho Vriddhena Raktena Avarita Pathi |

Kritsnam Sandushayeth Raktam Tatgneyam Vatashonitam | | Ch.Ch.29/10,11

Vikruta Vata Dosha when obstructed by vitiated Rakta Dhatu further becomes virulent and once again adds to the abnormality of Rakta Dhatu, this illness is called as Vatashonita.

Kruddho Atyartam Margarodhath Sa Vayuhu Atyudriktam Dushayeth Raktamashu |

That Sampruktau Vayuna Dushitena That Prabalyath Uchyate Vataraktam || Su.Sa.Ni.1/43,44

Initially there occurs distinct vitiation of *Vata Dosha* and *Rakta Dhatu*. The *Dushita Rakta Dhatu* in turn obstruct the passage of vitiated *Vata Dosha*. Obstruction to the passage of *Vata Dosha* causes worsening of the *Vikruti* of *Vata Dosha*. Continuing the pathology the severly vitiated *Vata Dosha* also further disturbs the *Dusta Rakta Dhatu*. This illness is known as *Vatarakta*.

#### **Types of Vatarakta**

According to *Charaka Vatarakta* is classified according to *Avastha* they are;

- 1. Uttana Vatarakta
- 2. Gambhira Vatarakta.

Uttana Vatarakta is the one, which involves the Uttana Dhatu such as Rasa (tvak), Rakta and Mamsa.

Gambhira Vatarakta is the one which involves the Gambhira Dhatu such as Meda, Asthi, Majja.

Again Charaka explains about Ubhayashrita Vata Rakta in which signs and symptoms of both these types are present. As for the opinion of Susruta, the Uttana and Gambhira type of Vatarakta are the two stages of Vatarakta. The Uttana condition is manifested at the earlier stages and it develops into the Gambhera condition with the progress in time. The Gambhira Vatarakta involves the deeper Dhatu.

Vagbhata, as for the Uttana and Gambhira Vatarakta, opines that, 'Uttana' is the initial stage affecting the Twak and Mamsa. This stage advances to become Gambhira, affecting the deeper Dhatu.

# Uttana Vatarakta Lakshana

Kandu, Daha, Vedana, Sphurana, Angasankochana and Twacha becomes Shyava, Raktavarna and Tamravarna.

# Gambheera Vatarakta Lakshana

Shotha, Sthabdata, Kathina, Twacha becomes Tamra Varna with Daha, Toda, Sphurana and it will attain Paka.

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# Spreading of Vatarakta

*Vatarakta* first affects both hands or feet and makes its *Sthana* and then spreads all over the body like rat poison.

#### Nidana

By considering *Nidana* by different views, the whole *Nidana* can be divided into *Vatakara Nidana* and *Rakta Pradushaka Nidana* (*Pittakara Nidana*).

# Rakta Pradushaka Nidana<sup>[1]</sup>

- Excessive intake of foods that are Lavana, Amla, Katu and Kshaara leads to Rakta Dusti.
- Excessive intake of Snigdha, Ushna Ahara vitiates Rakta.
- Klinna Mamsa, Shushka Mamsa, Ambuja Mamsa, Anupa Mamsa, leads to Vidagdhata (Dushana) of Rakta.
- Excessive intake of Pinyaka (Tila Kalka), Moolaka, Kulattha (Horse Gram), Masha (Black Gram), Nishpava (Flat Bean) leads to Pitta and Rakta Prakopa.
- Excessive intake of fermented foods like Dadhi (curd), Aranala, Souvira, Shukta, Takra, Sura, Asava etc. causes Raktadusti.
- Viruddahaara Sevana, Adyashana, Krodha, Divasvapna and Prajagara leads to Tridosha Kopa and also Rakta Dushti.
- Abhighata (trouma) also causes Rakta Dushti.
- If one not undergoing Shodhana for cleansing the body lead to vitiation of Rakta.
- According to Astanga Hridaya, Vidahi ahara, Guru Ahara etc. are also cause for Rakta Dusti.

# Vata Dustikara Nidana [2]

- Excessive intake of Kashaya, Katu and Tikta Rasa leads to Vata Prakopa.
- Taking Alpa Ahara and Rooksha Ahara or indulging in fasting aggravates Vata Dosha.
- Riding on horse, camel, donkey etc. are also cause of Vata Dusti.

- Swimming and other water sports, jumping, walking long distances in the hot sun leads to aggravation of Vata Dosha.
- Indulging in excessive sexual activities, withholding the Vega, the Vata gets aggravated.

According to Astanga Hridaya, Sheetala Ahara and Vihara, Vidhiheena Maithuna, Vidhiheena Svapna, Prajagara also leads to Vata Kopa.

# Purva Rupa

Charaka Samhita mentions the following Purvarupa.

Atisveda or Asveda, Karshnya, Sparshaajnatva, Kshate Atriuk, Sandhi Shaithilya, Alasya, Sadana, Pidakodgama (in Janu, Jangha, Uru, Kati, Amsa, Hasta, Paada Sandhis), Nistoda, Sphurana, Bheda, Guruta, Supti, Kandu, Ruk, Daha, Vaivarnya and Mandalotpatti.<sup>[3]</sup>

Susruta, mentions the following *Purvarupa,* Shithilatha, Svinnata and Sheetata or the opposite i.e. Kathinatha, Asvinnata and Ushnata; Vaivarnya, Toda, Supti, Guruta, Osha.<sup>[4]</sup>

Vagbhata states the following Purvarupa, Sada, Shlathangatha, and in the Janu, Jangha, Uru, Kati, Hasta, Pada Sandhi - Kandu, Sphurana, Nistoda, Bheda, Gourava, Supti occuring at interval.<sup>[5]</sup>

# Rupa

# Uttana Vatarakta

Uttana Vatarakta is that, which affect the Uttana Dhatu that is the Dhatu which are superficial. This includes Rasa (Twak), Rakta and Mamsa.

According to *Charaka*, the *Uttana Vatarakta* is characterised by *Kandu*, *Daha*, *Ruk*, *Ayama*, *Toda*, *Sphurana*, *Akunchana*, *Shyavarakta* or *Tamrata* of *Tvak*.<sup>[6]</sup>

#### Gambhira Vatarakta

In Gambhira Vatarakta the disease spreads into the deeper Dhatu, that is, the Dhatu which are deep seated. These include Meda, Asthi, Majja and Shukra. The involvement of these Dhatu exhibits the Lakshana that are peculiar to the Gambhira Vatarakta. Because

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of chronicity and involvement of above mentioned *Dhatu* the *Lakshana* are severe and prominent.

According to Charaka the Gambhira Vatarakta presents with: Shotha, Stabdhata, Kathinatha, Bhrushaarti - severe pain felt internally, Vaivarnya of Shyava or Tamra Varna, Daha, Toda, Sphurana, Paka, Ruk and Vidaha. The Vayu travelling all over enters Sandhi, Asthi and Majja to produce Kanja and Pangu.<sup>[7]</sup>

#### Chikitsa

The management of *Vatarakta* involves the methods of treatment that are directed at treating the *Dosha* and breaking the samprapti.

#### **General line of treatment**

# According to Charaka

"Nahi Vasti samam kinchit Vatarakta chikitsitam" [8] i.e. in the treatment of Vatarakta, Vasti is considered as supreme. Basti treats the vitiated Vata, Pitta, Kapha as well as Rakta by its Karmukata. Especially Ksheera Basti prepared out of Tikta Dravyas is more effective in treating Vatarakta.

# Specific line of treatment<sup>[9]</sup>

According to *Charaka* as the disease *Vatarakta* has two types; accordingly treatment should be adopted i.e.

- In Uttana Vatarakta Alepa, Abyanga, Parisheka, Upanaha.
- In Gambhira Vatarakta Virechana, Vasti, Snehapana.

#### Management according to Dosha Pradhanyata

# Vatadhika Vatarakta

- Ghrita, Taila, Vasa, Majja Prayoga as Pana, Abhyanga and Vasti.
- Sukhoshna Upanaha.<sup>[10]</sup>

# According to Sushruta<sup>[11]</sup>

- Snehapana by Purana Ghritha.
- Ajaksheera with Ardra Taila.

- Ajaksheera + Ardra Taila + Prushni Parni + Madhu or these are cooked with Shyama, Rasna etc.
- Administration of Taila prepared out of Kakolyadi Gana Kalka.
- Shatha Paka Bala Taila.
- Usage of Ghritha, Taila, Vasa, Majja in the form of Pana, Abhyanga and Vasti.
- Sneha prepared out of Vataghna Oushadhi mixed with Tila and Sarshapa were used for Upanaha.
- Application of Yastimadhu Siddha Lepas.

#### Pittadhika Vatarakta

Virechana, Ghrita and Ksheera Pana, Parisheka,
 Vasti, Sheeta Nirvapa, Raktamokshana.<sup>[12]</sup>

# According to Sushruta[13]

- 1. Kashayas prepared of,
  - Draksha, Aragvadha
  - Shatavari, Yasti, Patola etc.
  - Guduchi Kwatha.
  - Chandanadi Gana Dravyas.
- 2. Parisheka,
  - Bisa, Mrunala, Padmaka, Sharkara with milk and used.
  - Dugdha Ikshurasa, Madhu, Sharkara with Kanji.
- 3. Abhyanga,
  - Jeevaniya Ghritha.
  - Kakolyadi Ghritha.
- 4. Lepa,
  - Shali, Shasti, Lavana pasted with Dhanyamla mixed with Takra and Kanji and applied.
- 5. Vata Raktahara Oushadhi Siddha Kwatha Parisheka.
- 6. Sheetala Dravya Pralepa.

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#### Raktadhika Vatarakta

Virechana, Ghrita and Ksheera Pana, Parisheka, Vasti, Sheeta Nirvapa Raktamokshana.<sup>[14]</sup>

# Kaphadhika Vatarakta

- Mrudu Vamana and Rookshana Langhana.
- Sheeta-Pradeha not to be used.<sup>[15]</sup>

# According to Sushruta[16]

- Kwathas Amalaki and Haridra with Madhu or Triphala Kwatha.
- Guda Haritaki Prayoga.
- Parisheka with Taila, Gomutra, Sura, Sukta and Kaphagna Oushadhi Siddha Kwatha.
- Abhyanga Mastu, Mutra, Sura, Sariva, Padmaka Siddha Gritha.
- Pradeha- Tila, Sarshapa, Atasi Yava Churna mixed with Sleshmantaka; Kapittha, Madhu, Sheegru with Ksharodhaka and Gomutra; Swetha Sarshapa Kalka; Tilashwagandha Kalka; Madhu, Sheegru, Punarnava Kalka with Ksharodaka.
- Lepa Shalaparni, Prushni Parni, Bruhati with Ksheera.

# Kaphamedolbana Vatarakta<sup>[17]</sup>

Snehana and Bruhmana is contraindicated in the beginning.

The provoked *Kapha* and *Medas* are treated by *Vyayama; Shodhana, Arista Pana, Gomutra Pana, Virechana, Takrapana, Haritaki Prayoga* and also in take of *Bodhi Vriksha Kashaya* with *Honey*.<sup>[18]</sup>

For *Kapha-Vata* predominant *Vatarakta, Sheeta Upanaha* should be avoided.

#### Antarparimarjana Chikitsa

Antahparimarjana Chikitsa is the option in patients suffering from Gambhira Vatarakta.

# Rakta Mokshana<sup>[19]</sup>

Raktamargavarana is the predominant pathology of Vatarakta and this leads to the accumulation of Dushita Rakta. Raktamokshana helps in relieving the

obstruction in the path of *Vayu* also. Hence *Raktamokshana* is considered as first line of treatment of *Vatarakta*.

Raktamokshana may be achieved by any of the Sringavacarana, Jalokavacharana, Alabuavacarana, Pracchana and Siramoksa methods.

- Raktamokshana by the Jalaukavacarana method is preferred if the affected site exhibits symptoms like Ruk, Daha Toda and Shula.
- Shringavacharana is the better choice if the patient of Vatarakta has symptoms like Supti, Kandu, Chimachimayana etc.
- If the illness progress with spreading, Raktamokshana by Pracchana method is the better option.
- Though the Raktamokshana is the primary treatment of Vatarakta excessive bleeding may further vitiate the Vata Dosha of Vatarakta hence frequent employment of Raktamokshana in small amounts is always justified. Improper or excessive employment of Raktmoksana may lead to development sever complications like Vatavyadhi. Therefore one must be very cautious while planning the Raktamokshana in patients suffering from Vatarakta.

# Snehapana<sup>[20]</sup>

Both *Shodhananga Sneha* as well as *Shamananga Sneha* is indicated in *Vatarakta*.

- As preparation of patient prior to Virechana or Vamana patient is subjected to Shodhananga Sneha.
- As Shamana also different Ghrita Yoga and Taila Yoga are explained.
- Snehapana is not ideal if the patient of Vatarakta exhibits excessive Sneha in his body. Also in case of Margavarana due to accumulation of Kapha and Medas, Snehapana is contraindicated.

# Virechana<sup>[21]</sup>

According to condition both *Snigdha Virechana* as well as *Ruksa Virechana* is indicated in *Vatarakta*.

- If the patient's body exhibits Snigdhata, Ruksa Virechana is ideal.
- Contrary to this if the patient's body exhibits Rukshata in the body it is better to plan Snigdha Virechana.
- As Tikshna Virechana worsens the Vata Kopa, Mrudu Virechana is always indicated in patients suffering from Vatarakta.
- In case Pittanuga and Raktanuga Vatarakta
   Virechana is considered as better.
- Ruksha Virechana is also ideal in patients suffering from Margavarana due to Kupita Kapha and Medas.

# Vamana<sup>[22]</sup>

Vamana is indicated as a Shodhana procedure in Vatarakta.

- In Kaphanuga Vatarakta Shodhana is best achieved by Vamana Karma.
- Further employment of Snehapana before the Shodhana depends upon the state of Sneha in the patient's body.
- In Snigdha person Vamana is carried out with minimal or no prior Snehapana.
- In patients with Rukshata in the body, administration Vamana Karma with prior Snehapana is ideal.
- One should remember that, as the Vatarakta is the disorder with predominant vitiation of Vata Dosha, only Mrudu Vamana is justified as Tikshna Vamana tend to increase the of Vata Dosha.

# Vasti<sup>[23]</sup>

In patients suffering from *Vatarakta, Vasti Karma* is regarded as best treatment

- Vasti Karma includes both Asthapana Vasti as well as Anuvasana Vasti.
- Vatanuga Vatarakta is better treated by Vasti Chikitsa.
- The symptoms like Vasti Shula, Vanksanashula, Parshvashula and Udarashula when present Vasti is the treatment of choice.

- Administration of Ksheera Vasti is emphasized in all variety of Vatarakta.
- Further if the Margavarana is due to accumulation of Kapha and Medas Lekhana Vasti is indicated as this Vasti is capable of clearing the Margavarana along with negating the detrimental effect Kupita Vata Dosha.

# Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa

Addition of *Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa* is essential in patients suffering from *Uttana*<sup>[24]</sup> or *Ubhayasrita Vatarakta*. More details of *Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa* are given in the following lines:

# Parisheka

Depending upon the requirement either *Ushna Parisheka* or *Sita Parisheka* is carried out on the affected part in patients suffering from *Vatarakta*.

- Dominance of Vata Dosha when present characterized by severe pain in the affected part, then Ushna Parisheka should be prescribed.
- Contrary to this if Daha is the symptom due to predominance of Pitta Dosha and Rakta Dhatu, Sheeta Parisheka is ideal to relieve the discomfort.

# **Abhyanga**

Treatment with *Abhyanga* over the affected part is planned according to the presence of symptoms or the dominance of affected *Dosha*.

- Warm oil processed with Vatahara Dravya is used for Abhyanga if the patient complains of severe pain due to vitiation of Vata Dosha.
- Cold application of the *Ghrita* processed with *Pittahara Dravya* is ideal if the patient complains of burning sensation due to aggravation of *Pitta Dosha* or *Rakta Dhatu*.
- If Kandu is the leading symptom due to Kapha Dosha, Taila processed with Kaphahara Dravya is used in the form of Abhyanga.

# Pradeha

Pradeha Chikitsa is planned according to the relative dominance of Dosha involved. As a general rule

pradeha should not cause *Vidaha* following application.

- Warm application of Kalka (paste) is preferred if the patient suffering from severe pain due to Dushita Vata Dosha.
- Medicinal paste prepared by adding Ghrita applied cool on the affected part if the patient has burning sensation due to Pitta Dosha.
- Medicinal paste prepared with herbs having Ushna quality is preferred if relative dominance of Kapha Dosha or Vata-Kapha Dosha is identified.

# Upanaha

Specific herbal powder made into a paste by the addition of *Kanji* or such other liquids is applied when warm as *Upanaha*, and is very useful in relieving pain due to *Vata Dosha*.

Sarsapa Kalka, Tila Kalka, Eranda Beeja Kalka, Shatahva Kalka Vesavara + Sneha + Jeevaneeya Gana Dravya.

#### Kashaya

Mustadi Kashaya, Haritaki Kashaya, Panchamoola Kashaya, Variyadi Kashaya, Navakarshika Kashaya, Guduchyadi Kashaya, Kashmaryadi Kashaya, Patoladi Kashaya, Laghu Manjistadi Kashaya, Brihat Manjistadi Kashaya.

# Guggulu

Kaishora Guggulu, Amrita Guggulu, Chandra Prabha Gutika, Punarnava Guggulu, Samasharkara Guggulu, Triphala Guggulu, Simhanada Guggulu, Langalee Gutika etc.

# **Ghrita**

Shatavaryadi Ghrita, Shravanyadi Ghrita, Bala Ghrita, Amritadi Ghrita, Parushaka Ghrita, Mahatiktaghrita Jeevaneeya Ghrita, Sthiradi Ghrita, Padmakadi Ghrita, Draksha Ghrita etc.

#### Taila

Madhuyastyadi Taila, Sthiradi Taila, Sarivadi Taila, Sukumarak Taila, Padmakadi Taila, Nagabala Taila, Shatahvadi Taila, Mahapadma Taila, Khuddaka Padmaka Taila, Shatapaka Madhuka Taila, Guduchyadi Taila, Drakshadi Taila, Madhukadi Taila, Shatapaka Sahasrapaka Bala Taila, Pinda Taila, Eranda Taila, Laghu Marichyadya Taila, Brihan Marichyadya Taila, Jeevakadi Mahasneha Taila etc.

#### Ksheera

Guduchi Ksheera, Dashamooladi Ksheera, Drakshadi Ksheera, Baladi Ksheera, Jeevaneeya Gana Siddha Ksheera.

# Lepa

Madhukadilepa, Jeevaneeya Gana Lepa, Tiladi Lepa, Madhuchista Pralepa, Prapoundarikadi Lepa, Sarshapadi Lepa, Shigru Lepa, Kapithadi Lepa, Griha Dhoomadi Lepa, Tagaradi Lepa, Sitopaladi Lepa, Madhushigru Lepa, Erandadi Lepa, Shatahvadi Lepa, Shatadhouta Ghrita Lepa etc.

#### **Others**

Shilajitu Yoga, Panchamrita Rasa, Amritadya Avaleha, Guduchi Yoga.

# **CONCLUSION**

Vatarakta is a Vyadhi that manifests in the joints, with involvement of Utthana and Gambheera Dhatus. Both Vata and Rakta are vitiated resulting in painful conditions of the joints. The pain management in Vatarakta can be done by both Bahirparimarjana and Antarparimarjana Chikitsa. Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa can alleviate pain in both Utthana and Ubhayashrita Vatarakta, while Gambheera Vatarakta can be managed by Antarparimarjana Chikitsa.

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