

VATARAKTA: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW FROM AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Vatarakta is a disease caused by the vitiation of *Vata dosha* and *Rakta dhatu*. Clinically, it presents with severe pain, swelling, discolouration, and restricted joint movements predominantly affecting the small joints of the extremities. Modern Lifestyle practises and dietary habits have contributed to the increasing prevalence of *Vatarakta*. Hence a comprehensive review of classical ayurvedic literature is essential.

KEYWORDS: *Vatarakta*, *Vatashonita*, *Adhyaroga*.

INTRODUCTION

Vatarakta predominantly affects the *Hasta*, *Pada* and *Sandhi*, presenting with characteristic pain, inflammation, discoloration and other *Dosha*-specific features, with the pain classically described as '*Akho vishamiva*'.^[1] The present review aims to summarize the classical concept of *Vatarakta*, encompassing its

Nidana, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Samprapti*, *Bheda*, *Sadhya*- *asadhyata* and *Chikitsa*.

PARYAYA^[2]

1. **Adhyaroga** - Disease is more prevalent in rich people.
2. **Khudavata**: Manifestation of disease involves '*Khuda*' meaning *Sandhi* (Joints).
3. **Vatabalasa**: *Vata* gets excessively aggravated (*bala*) because of obstruction by *Rakta dhatu*.

4. Vatashonita: The involved *Dosha* and *Dushya* in the manifestation of *Vatarakta* disease are *Vata dosha* and *Shonita*, respectively.

NIDANA^[3]

Table no 01

<i>Vata kara Nidana</i>	<i>Rakta Dushti kara nidana</i>
<i>Ruksha-Laghu Ahara, Ati Tikta-Kashaya Rasa, Ativyayama, Ativyavaya, Ratri Jagarana, Vegadharana, Vishamashana</i>	<i>Ati Amla-Lavana-Katu Rasa, Kshara dravya. Ushna-Vidahi-Snigdha Ahara, Viruddha Ahara, Madya, Dadhi, Arnala, Kulatha, Masha</i>

PURVARUPA^[4]

The *Purvarupas* mentioned for this condition show similarity to those of *Kuṣṭha* indicating initial involvement of *Rakta*, *Twak* and *Sandhi*. Classical descriptions include *Asweda-Atisweda*, *Kandu*, *Vaivarnya*, *Pidaka*, *Sandhiruk*, *Sandhi-sthailiya*, *Nistoda*, *Spandana*, *Bheda*, *Supti*, *Sparsha-ajñana*, *Alasya*, *Sadana* and *Gurutva*

SAMPRAPTI

In *Vatarakta* two types of pathogenesis are described.

1. *Samanya Samprapti*.^[5]
2. *Vishesha Samprapti*.^[6]

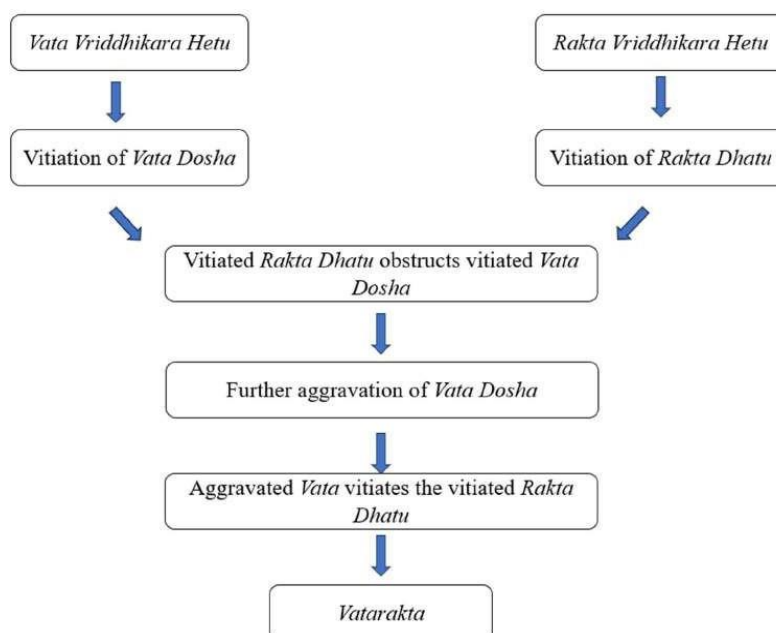


Figure 01: Schematic representation of *Samanya Samprapti* of *Vatarakta*.

Vishesha samprapti^[6]

Vatarakta develops due to the aforementioned *Nidanas*, which lead to the vitiation of the *Vata Dosha* and the *Rakta Dhatu*. This vitiated *Rakta Dhatu* causes obstruction (*Marga-avarana*) in the path of vitiated *Vata*, resulting in further aggravation of *Vata*. This aggravated *Vata*, in turn, exacerbates the vitiation of *Rakta Dhatu*, creating a pathological cycle.

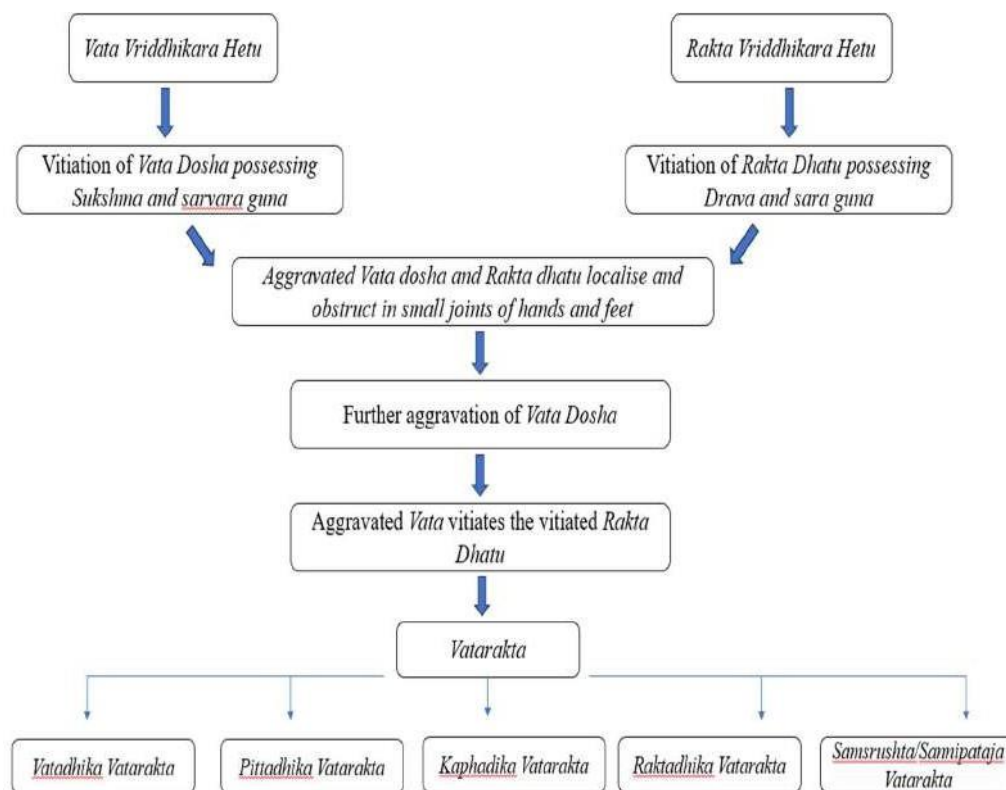


Figure 02 : Schematic representation of Vishesha Samprapti of Vatarakta.

Vata with *Sukshma* and *Sarvasara guna* and *Rakta* with *Drava* and *Sara guna* circulate throughout the body through *Sirayani*. Due to *Vata* and *Rakta Vardhaka Nidana sevana*, aggravated *Vata Dosha* and *Rakta Dhatu* become localised and obstructed in the small joints of the hands and feet, as well as in other joints containing *Kshubda* and *Vakra Sira*, thereby manifesting *Vatarakta*. In the later stage, vitiated *Vata* and *Rakta* in the joints combine with *Pitta* and other *Dosha* to produce different pains.

Samprapti ghatak

Dosha *Vata Dosha Pradhan Tridosha*

Dushya - *Uttana Vatarakta* - *Rakta, Rasa, Mamsa*

Gambheera Vatarakta - *Rakta* Along with *Medadi Dhatus*

Agni - *Jatharagni*, predominantly *Rakta-Dhatvagni Dushti* along with other *Dhatvagni Dushti* based on the *Avastha* of *Vatarakta*.

Ama -Vishamagni Janya Ama

Srotas - Predominantly Raktavaha Srotas along with other Srotas based on the Avastha of Vatarakta

Srotodushti - Sanga, Vimarga-Gamana

Udbhavasthana –Pakvashaya

Sancharasthana – Sira

Vyakthasthana-Twak-Sandhi

Adhishtana – shareera

Rogamarga - Bahya and Madhyama

Swabhava - Ashukari/Chirakari

CLASSIFICATION OF VATARAKTA

Vatarakta has been classified by the Acharyas primarily on the basis of Doshadhikya and Dhatu-Ashraya.

A. According to Dosha predominance^[7]

The principal varieties are.

1. Vataadhika Vatarakta
2. Pittadhika Vatarakta
3. Kaphadhika Vatarakta
4. Raktadhika Vatarakta
5. Samsargaja Vatarakta
6. Sannipataja Vatarakta

B. According to Ashraya^[8]

Three forms are described

- Uttana Vatarakta – involving Twak and Mamsa.
- Gambheera Vatarakta – involving deeper Dhatus, beginning from Medas along with Rakta.
- Ubhayashrita Vatarakta – involving both superficial and deeper tissues and presenting with features of both.

According to Acharya Sushruta, Uttana and Gambheera are not independent types but represent Avasthavishesha. The disease initially manifests superficially and subsequently progresses into deeper dhatus over time.

RUPA^[7]

Samanya Rupa - Ruk, Toda, Bheda, Daha, Shotha, Raga, Vaivarnya, Stambha.

Vatadhika – Ruka, Toda, Bheda, Vepathu, Supti, Stambha.

Pittadhika- Daha, Raga, Paka.

Kaphadhika – Kandu, Gaurava, Staimitya, Shotha.

SADHYA-ASADHYATA^[9]

Sadhya-asadhyata of Vatarakta depends mainly on Dosha involvement, duration, Rogi Bala and presence of Upadrava

Sadhya – Recent onset, Ekadoshaja, Balavanta, Atmavanta, Upakaranavanta, not afflicted by Upadravas

Yapya – Dwidoshaja, Samvatsarottitam, associated with Upadravas, Prana mamsa Kshaya

CHIKITSA

The *Chikitsa* of *Vatarakta* is individualized according to *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Lakshana* and *Avastha*. The classical therapeutic approach encompasses *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Raktamokshana*, *Shodhana*, *Bahiparimarjana* and *Antarparimarjana*. Different *Acharyas* provide detailed approaches according to the predominant *Dosha* and stage of disease.

Raktamokshana^[10]

Acharya Sushruta considers *Raktamokshana* as an important preliminary therapy. It is described for both *Uttana* and *Gambheera* forms and is advised to be performed repeatedly in small quantities to avoid aggravation of *Vata*.

Ashtanga Hridaya describes selection of *Raktamokshana* according to symptoms.

Table 02: Indications of *Raktamokshana*.

Sr no	Lakshana	Type of <i>Raktamokshana</i>
1	<i>Ruk, daha, shoola, toda, raga</i>	<i>jaloukavacharana</i>
2	<i>Supti, kandu, chimchimayana, ruk</i>	<i>Shruna or alabu</i>
3	<i>Desha deshantaram</i>	<i>Siravyadha or pracchana</i>

Shodhana^[11]

Shodhana is selected according to *Dosha* predominance.

- *Vata-pradhana Vatarakta – Basti*
- *Pitta-pradhana Vatarakta – Virechana*
- *Kapha-pradhana Vatarakta – Vamana*

- *Rakta-pradhana Vatarakta – Raktamokshana.*

Bahiparimarjana

External therapies described include: Should be done using *Avidahi Dravya*.

- *Seka*
- *Abhyanga*
- *Pradeha*
- *Lepa*
- *Parisheka*
- *Upnaha*
- *Sneha*

Antarparimarjana

- *Kwatha – Kokilakshayadi Kashaya, Drakshadi Kashaya, Guduchyadi Kashaya etc.*
- *Ghrita – Purana ghrita, Shatavari ghrita, Dhanwantaram ghrita etc.*
- *Taila – Bala taila, Sukumara taila, Shirisha taila etc.*
- *Guggulu Kalpa – Kaishore guggulu, Punarnavadi guggulu, Amritadi guggulu.*
- *Rasoushadhi – Vishweshwara rasa, Vataraktantaka rasa, Guduchyadi loha etc.*

PATHYA-APATHYA^[12-14]

Pathya

- *Purana Yava*
- *Purana Godhuma*
- *Shashtika Shali*
- *Mudga*
- *Patola*
- *Karavella*
- *Draksha*
- *Ksheera*
- *Ghrita*
- *Jangala Mamsa.*

Apathya

- *Ati Amla-Lavana-Katu Rasa*
- *Ushna*

- *Guru*
- *Abhishyandi Ahara*
- *Masha*
- *Kulattha*
- *Nishpava*
- *Dadhi*
- *Ikshu*
- *Moolaka*
- *Madya*
- *Viruddha Ahara*

CONCLUSION

Vatarakta (Vatashonita) is characterised by the vitiation and mutual interaction of *Vata Dosha* and *Rakta Dhatu*, predominantly affecting the extremities. Classical descriptions provide a comprehensive understanding of its *Nidana*, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Samprapti*, *Bheda*, *Sadhya-Asadhyata* and *Chikitsa*. The concept of *Rakta-Marga-Avarana* of *Vata* forms the central basis of its pathogenesis, while variations in *Dosha* predominance and *Dahtu* involvement account for its diverse clinical presentations. Classical management emphasizes *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Raktamokshana*, appropriate *Shodhana*, *Bahiparimarjana*, *Antarparimarjana* and *Pathya-Apathya*, individualized according to the *Dosha* and *Avastha*.

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