

A HOLISTIC APPROACH OF VIRECHAN KARMA IN AMAVATA (RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS)

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ABSTRACT

Amavata (RA) is one of the major musculoskeletal joint disease mentioned in Ayurveda. It is the disease of Asthivaha & Rasavaha strotas. It is one of the commonest disorder caused by the impairment of Agni, formation of Ama & vitiation of Vata dosha. Amavata is made of 2 terms – Ama & Vata. When Ama & Vata gets vitiated simultaneously, it occupies Shleshamasthana i.e, gets deposited in the Koshtha, Trik & Sandhi, where it produces Shotha, Shoola & Stabdghata. Due to the impaired Jatharagni, the ahara rasa formed is in the Apakva stage which is known as Ama, & that causes Sarvadoshaprakopa (vitiation of doshas). Virechan is one among the panchakarma through which doshas are expelled from Adhobhaga i.e,

Guda. Ama which is formed as a result of Mandagni being macromolecular in nature gets accumulated in the sukshma strotas & there this Ama causes strotorodha. Thus, Virechan karma is one of the important bio-purificative method indicated for complete elimination of doshas & thus, results in the eradication of disease.

KEYWORDS: Ama, Amavata, Jatharagni, Mandagni, Virechan, Rheumatoid Arthritis.

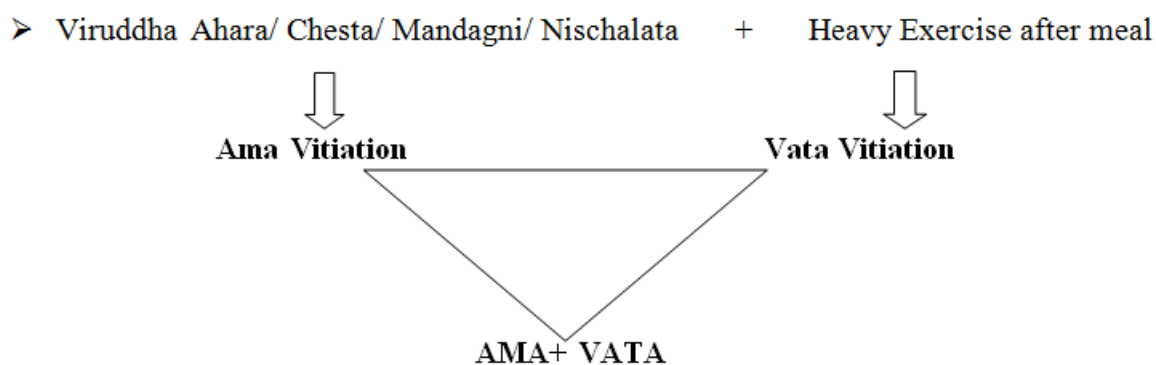
INTRODUCTION

According to Ayurveda, Agnimandya is the root cause of all the diseases. Agni is responsible for Ayu (longevity), Varna (complexion), Bala (power), Swasthya(health), etc. Thus, due to the impaired Agni, the Aahar rasa formed is in the Apakva stage which is known as Ama, & that causes Sarva dosha prakopa (vitiation of doshas).^[1] The another definition of Ama which is given in Classical text is as “The Anna rasa which is produced as a result of Ajirna awastha

i.e, Indigestion, it gets accumulated in the gut known as Ama, in turn causes Ruja (pain) in head and all over the body^[2] & when this gets engaged with the vitiated Vata, it enters the sacral joints and makes the body stiff. This condition is called as Amavata.^[3] Amavata (RA) is a major musculoskeletal joint disorder. It is the disease of Asthivaha & Rasavaha strotas. It is one of the commonest disorder caused by the impairment of Agni, formation of Ama & vitiation of Vata dosha. Amavata is made of 2 terms – Ama & Vata. When Ama & Vata gets vitiated simultaneously, it occupies Shleshamasthana i.e, gets deposited in the Koshtha, Trik & Sandhi, where it produces Shotha, Shoola & Stabdhata. Virechan is one among the panchakarma through which doshas are expelled from Adhobhaga i.e, Guda. Ama which is formed as a result of Mandagni being macromolecular in nature gets accumulated in the sukshma strotas & there this Ama causes strotorodha. Thus, Virechan karma is one of the important bio-purificative method indicated for complete elimination of doshas & thus, results in the eradication of disease.

Pathogenesis

In the Ayurvedic classics, the etiology of Ama Vata is very well described as Viruddha Aahar/cheshta (incompatible diet and habits), Mandagni (impaired Agni), Nischalata (sedentary lifestyle) and heavy exercise after taking fatty meals. All this factors leads to the formation of Ama dosha, which under the influence of vitiated Vata gets manifested at the Shleshma sthana.^[4]



It produces weakness and heaviness in the body and heart, which becomes the seat of the disease. Along with this, it also affects the joints of the body such as Janu, Gulpha, Kati, Ansa, Manya, etc. This dreadful disease is known as Amavata which produces stiffness in the body. Clinical symptoms in which mainly joints are involved along with the chronicity of diseases give a close relation of Amavata with Rheumatoid Arthritis. RA being a chronic

inflammatory disease of unknown aetiology, is marked by a symmetric, peripheral polyarthritis. Often results in joint damage and physical disability.

PREVALENCE

The incidence of RA between 25-55 years of age is common, after which it plateaus until the age of 75 and then decreases. RA affects approximately 0.5% to 1% of the adult population worldwide. Mostly, RA occurs more commonly in females than in males with a 2-3:1 ratio.^[5]

CLINICAL FEATURES

Body ache, lack of taste, thirst, general weakness, feeling of heaviness, fever, morning stiffness of the joints, pain and swelling in the affected part, shifting of pains in joints.

ROLE OF VIRECHAN KARMA

The fundamental concepts of Ayurvedic management is to eliminate the toxic materials i.e, Vitiated Doshas from the body in order to cure a disease. Panchakarma is designed to eliminate the toxins. It is an important component of Ayurvedic management of disease. The most suitable method of internal purification of the body is achieved through Vamana karma, Virechana karma, Basti, Nasya and Raktamokshana. Due to the specific prabhava of the dravyas, the Vamaka and Virechaka Dravya induce emesis and purgation respectively. Ama, being the product of disturbed digestion/ metabolism is carried by Vayu. It obstructs the channels at different sites and causes inflammation of joints.

Ayurvedic classics has described Virechana as the treatment procedure related to Kosta shuddhi in Pittaja vikara, Amajanya roga, Udara roga and Aadhmaan. As Agnimandya is the reason for Ama uttpatti, the treatment of Agnimandya as per Ayurveda includes Langhan, langhan- Paachana and Doshavashechan. Yogaratnakara, in reference to the treatment of Agnimandya describes a preparation that not only vitiates Agni but, also is Pachaka and Rechaka in nature.

Thus, we can understand the role of Virechan in Agnimandya and Agnimandya janya vikara. So, it appears to be the most appropriate therapeutic measure in this condition.

Mechanism of Virechana Karma in Amavata

Doshas attain Niramaavastha after Langhana, Swedana and Tikta, Katu, Deepana dravyas. This requires elimination from the body by Shodhana.^[6] Generally, Vamana precedes Virechana, but in Amavata, the patients should be directly subjected to Virechana therapy

because of the following possible reasons:-

a) The Avarana of Pitta Sthana by Kledaka Kapha leads to the production of Ama, in turn hampering the digestive activity of the Pachaka Pitta. Virechana helps in this condition through two ways:

1. It removes the Avarana produced by Kledaka Kapha.
2. It is the most suited therapy for the Sthanika Dosha Pitta.

b) Symptoms of Amavata like Anaha, Vibandha, Antrakujana, Kukshishula etc. are indicative of Pratiloma Gati of Vata. This is best conquered by Virechana, while Vamana is likely to aggravate these features:

1. Acharya Chakradatta has stated Virechana therapy as one of the measures for combating the disease Amavata.^[7]
2. This karma has a direct effect on the Agnisthana and hampered Agni (Mandagni) is one of the initiating factors in Amavata. This pacifies the vitiated kapha and vata dosha and has the quality of srotovishodhana.
3. According to Acharya Bhela, Virechana should be used in Sannipatika condition of morbidity.^[8]
4. Sandhi sthanas are the specific site of dosha avasthana and Virechana is useful measure for such type of condition i.e. morbid doshas turn and adhere to Bahya and Madhayam Rogamarga with tiryak gamana.
5. Virechana helps to normalize the pratiloma gati of Vata, which produces symptoms like Anaha, Antrakujana, Vibandha, Kukshikathinya, Kukshi shoola etc. in Amavata.

Thus, Virechana should be preferable in the Chikitsa of Amavata.

Pharmacological Properties of Virechan Dravyas

The properties of Virechan dravyas include Vyavayi^[9], Vikasi^[10], Ushna, Tikshna, Sukshma^[11] gunatmaka, consists of Prithvi and Jala Mahabhootas which are heavy in nature and thus help in expulsion of Dosha from Adhobhaga. By virtue of its Veerya, Virechan drug possessing the above properties reaches the Hridaya, then following the Dhamani it pervades the whole body through large and small Strotas. On virtue of ushna guna, its Agneya property causes Vishyandana i.e. liquification of the Doshas & this facilitates the movement of morbid doshas towards kosta. By its Tikshna Guna, it is able to disintegrate the accumulated Dosha. Snehana helps the dosha smear easily without any hurdle and easily come to Amashaya from where Virechana evacuates them.

Mode of Action of Virechan Dravyas

Virechana being the medicated purgation treatment that removes Pitta, toxins from the body which are accumulated in the liver and gallbladder. The Virechan Dravya spreads throughout the body of cellular level due to its pharmacological properties. Now, the mode of action of Virechan dravya on the basis of its pharmacological properties has been described.^[12]

Step 1: Due to Vyavayi Guna, quick absorption of virechan dravya occurs.

Step 2: Now, Vikasi Guna causes softening and loosening of the bond of dhatus (Dhatu bandhana). It creates Dhatu Shaithilyata.

Step 3: Ushna Guna of virechana dravya creates the liquification (Vishyandana) of Dosha Sanghata (compactness)

Step 4: Tikshna Guna causes Chedana of the Doshas or able to disintegrate the Sanghata of the Doshas. Dalhana has stated that, this action is due to the quick excretion (Dosha Sravana-Karatvam). Thus, liquefied Doshas are dragged towards the Koshtha.

Step 5: Due to the Anupravanabhava of Sukshma Guna, virechan dravya opens the micro channels & then disintegrates the endogenic toxins & makes the doshas to move to koshtha.

Step 6: Due to dominance of Prithvi and Jala Mahabhutas in the Virechan drugs and their potent Adhobhagahara Prabhava, the vitiated Doshas are made to pass through anal route and are expelled out of the body.

CONCLUSION

Since RA is auto-immune in nature, therefore, its management in modern parameters includes immuno-suppressants and symptomatic cure through corticosteroids and NSAIDs. Therefore, management of RA (Amavata) is not that trustworthy and safe in modern medical science and the provided management of Rheumatoid arthritis is having some dangerous side effects, therefore we can rely upon Ayurvedic management incorporating Virechan as a bio-purificatory process followed by Samshaman chikitsa which is comparatively much safer and promising therapeutic module. The attempt was made to evaluate the concept regarding mechanism of Virechana Karma in Amavata. In Amavata, Srotorodha is present which is cleared due to the property of Srotovishyandana of Virechana drugs. Virechana also helps in normalizing the Pratiloma Gati of Vata and has direct effect on Agnisthana.

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