

REVIEW OF AGNIKARMA IN CHIKITSA OF ARSHAS**Dr. Anitha A. S.*¹, Dr. Rakesh R. N.² and Dr. Sahana Kamath³**

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Ayurveda, Udupi.**ABSTRACT**

Haemorrhoids are the commonest ano-rectal ailment that afflicts the mankind. Almost 50-85% of people around the globe suffering from it. In India, 1 million new cases are being reporting annually with 47 per 1000 and increases with age, age group of 45-65 years. The method of treatment ranges from Conservative treatment with dietary modification, laxatives, stool softeners to injection therapy, laser therapy to even Surgical management (Haemorrhoidectomy). In Ayurveda, Haemorrhoids are diagnosed as Arshas. The word "Arshas" is self-explanatory that the disease hunts a person like an enemy. As the disease occurs in the ano-rectal region, it is also known as Guda Vikara. Acharya Susrutha explained four-fold treatment for Arshas as

Bheshaja, Kshara, Agni and Sastrakarma. Agnikarma, explained in our classics is indicated as treatment for Arshas. Agnikarma which is regarded superior to all other Surgical as well as Para surgical measures has the capacity to destroy the disease from its root. Acharya Susrutha indicated Agnikarma in Arshas which are Karkasha, Sthula, Pruthu and Katina.

KEYWORDS: Arshas; Bheshaja; Kshara; Agnikarma; Sastrakarma.

INTRODUCTION

Arshas, a disease which occurs in the ano-rectal region, also known to be Guda Vikara. The word "Arshas" itself is self-explanatory that the disease hunts a person like an enemy.^[1] Susrutha Acharya being the authority in Shalya Tantra, considered Arshas as one among the

Astamahagada^[2] and gave detailed explanation about its location, structure, shape, size, colour of the Mamsankura.

Acharya Susrutha describes Gudavali as the main seat of Arshas, that can be compared to ano-rectal canal in modern anatomy. He also detailed about the network of blood vessels which pass through the Gudavali/ anal canal, which is termed as Pradhana Dhamani.^[3] This can be compared to Superior Haemorrhoidal Vein that plays an important cause for the manifestation of Arshas. Moreover, Hereditary also plays a major role in the causation of Arshas, better known to be Sahaja Arshas. Those which are observed since birth, familial polyposis, polypoid adenoma, also comes in this category. Haemorrhoids are usually regarded as surgically curable disease in advanced cases. Acharya Susrutha had thorough practical knowledge and experience in the field of Surgical as well as Para surgical management, laid emphasis on procedures like Kshara, Agni and Sastrakarma while discussing the Chikitsa of Arshas.^[4] Among the four-fold chikitsa of Arshas, by Acharya Susrutha Agnikarma is indicated in those which are Karkasha, Pruthu, Sthula, and Katina.^[4] Agnikarma, the procedure is regarded superior to all other surgical as well as para surgical measures though it has the capacity to destroy the disease completely from its root.^[5]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The word “Arshas” is derived from the root R with suffix “Asun” having Agama “shut”. In the formation of word, meaning a disease having fleshy sprouts or shoots in the pudendum. Derived from Rush+Ach dhatu as per Sabdakalpadruma, it is the disease having fleshy sprouts or shoots in the Guda pradesha. Various definitions are available in classics. As per Acharya Susrutha, Arshas can be defined as a disease which tortures the life like enemy and kills.^[1] Acharya Caraka explained Arshas as an abnormal fleshy growth in the Guda pradesha.^[6]

The deranged Vata, Pitta, Kapha enraged by their specific aggravating causes or by the intake of Viruddha Ahara (incompatible foods and drinks), Utkatasana (long or improper sitting postures), Pristayana (riding on back of animals or vehicles, especially two-wheeler riding), Vega dharana (suppression of natural urges especially of defecation, micturition and of flatulence). All these leads to vitiation of Doshas, suppresses Agni and vitiates blood. Later it spreads and travels down reaching the Guda and produces Mamsa praroha which leads to Arshas. It can also occur independently as well as secondary to other disorder like Atisara, Grahani, Gulma, etc. In fact, Atisara, Arshas, Grahani diseases are the causes of each other.^[7]

“Haemorrhoids” the term is commonly used for pathological varicosities of Haemorrhoidal veins either due to increased pressure, excessive straining during defecation, chronic constipation or diarrhoea, pregnancy etc.^[8]

The classical approach towards the treatment of Arshas is correction of the Pachakagni (digestive fire) and Vata Anulomana can be properly done with Bhesaja chikitsa (medical management) along with lifestyle modifications. The removal of the Vyatka Mamsankura in advanced cases can be done, either by Kshara karma, Agnikarma or Sastrakarma.

The procedure, which is performed with the help of Agni, where a Samyak dagdha vrana is produced, with the help of various dravyas is known to be Agnikarma. It is an important therapeutic measure explained as one among the Anusastras. Almost all Ayurvedic classics have described the use of Agnikarma in curing different diseases, which has got worldwide popularity because of its simple administration and efficacy in variety of disorders. A unique form of therapy performed with the help of Agni, which is having the ability to cure all those ailments which cannot be cured by Bhesaja (medical management), Kshara (caustic alkali application), or even by Sastrakarma (surgery).^[5]

Agni karma is having the effect of Nirjantukarana (sterilization) as it destroys the pathogens because of its heat property. The wounds occurring post Agni karma are rarely infected. There will be vasoconstriction due to heat and it will arrest the haemorrhage. Agni karma is the ultimate measure for the haemostasis among the four Raktasthambana measures such as Sandhana, Skandhana, Pachana and Dahana. The materials used to perform Agni karma are called as Dahanopakaranas.^[9] These are instruments to produce therapeutic burns during Agni karma chikitsa like Pippali, Aja Shakrt, Godantha, Shara, Shalaka, Jambavosta, Dhatu, Kshoudra /Madhu (honey), Madhuchhista (wax), Guda (jaggery) etc. According to site these materials are differently used.

As explained in Arsho chikitsa, those Mamsankura which bears the features like Karkasha, Pruthu, Sthula, and Katina, can be compared to the External Haemorrhoids mostly situated in Twak/skin. Here Agnikarma can be performed. Dahanopakaranas such as Pippali, Aja shakrt, Shara and Shalaka can be used in this context.^[10]

DISCUSSION

Agnikarma is considered as the best modality of treatment for Arshas which are Karkasha, Pruthu, Sthula and Katina in nature which can be correlated to External Haemorrhoids. Moreover, while considering their Dosha condition, Vataja and Kaphaja variety of Arshas will have greater benefits because of their opposite property. Arshas in its Vyaktavastha or advanced stage requires Vyadhi Pratyanka Chikitsa as Chedana. Agnikarma does this Chedana of the Arshas.

As per classics Shalaka of different metals such as Panchaloha Shalaka, Suvarna Shalaka, Tamra Shalaka etc. can be used wherein the Shalaka is heated red hot and can be placed over the Mamsankura for the purpose of Agnikarma. In present era even Diathermy with Thermal Cautery application can also be used for the purpose of Agnikarma. The destruction of tissues with a hot instrument, an electric current or a caustic substance is known as "Cauterization". And the substance used for it is known as Cautery. Heat application cauterizes the tissue as well as coagulates the blood.

The Agni due to its Ushna Guna can subside the Kapha as well as Vata dosha. Thus, it removes the Mamsankura from its root. The Mamsankura which consists of engorged venous plexus, arterial twigs of Superior Haemorrhoidal Vein may have the tendency to bleed on Chedana karma. As Agnikarma is one among the Raktasthambana measure, it does both Chedana of Mamsankura as well as Raktasthambana also.

The wound thus formed after Agnikarma is produced due to Agni and can be called as Agnidagdha Vrana. The vrana formed due to Agni which may lead to vitiation of Pitta and Rakta. This vitiated Pitta and Rakta causes pain and burning sensation at the Dagdha site. Acharya Susruta advised application of Ghrita(ghee) as well as Madhu(honey) ^[11] soon after the procedure of Agnikarma as Paschat karma. So, for the purpose of relief from burning sensation and faster wound healing, Ghrita processed with medicines like Jatyadi or Yastimadhu formulations can also be used. Usual colour of these Vrana will be blackish white necrosed wound tissue soon after the procedure, which may turn into red colour with granulation tissue in its healing stage with slight amount of wound discharge. Later the colour may change into pale red in the process of wound healing and within a few days it will attain normal skin colour.

CONCLUSION

The disease described as Arshas in Ayurvedic literature can be regarded as Haemorrhoids in other system of medicine. A clear-cut description of anatomy and physiology of anorectal region is available.

The causative factors for the manifestation of Haemorrhoids shows significant similarity with Nidanas that are mentioned for Arshas, with little bit of modification like Bike riding and distant travelling in place of Prushtayana. Sitting for long hours especially those people who are IT Professionals, Accountants etc in place of Utkatasana.

Agnikarma happens to be the ultimate treatment modality for the External Haemorrhoids which bears the features as Karkasha, Sthira, Pruthu and Katina can be considered as Vataja and Kaphaja Arshas are indicated Agnikarma. Agnikarma is effective in removing the Mamsankura and its associated complaints with significant change in post-operative pain, post-operative bleeding, faster healing rates compared to any surgical or para surgical methods and most importantly the non-recurrence of the Mamsankura.

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