

GRIDHRASI (SCIATICA) – A LITERARY REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a simple, practical science of life whose principles anyone can apply to lead a happy, healthy existence. *Ayurveda* addresses a wide range of topics related to human life and provides guidance to those seeking greater tranquility, harmony, and longevity—a counsel that has been tried, tested, and refined over many years. *Gridhrasi* is considered a *Mahagada* by *Acharya Charaka*, and it is included in both *Vataja* and *Nanatmaja Vyadhi*. Although *Nidana* is included in *Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi* along with generic *Vata Prakopaka Hetus*, which should be taken into consideration, it is not particularly stated in any *Ayurvedic* text. There are several biochemical imbalances as a result of the evolving lifestyle of the modern person. Low back pain and sciatica are greatly influenced by a number of factors, including the growth of a busy, professional, and social life, bad sitting posture in factories and workplaces, frequent, excessive activity, jerky movements when traveling and participating in sports, and other

reasons. We looked into *Gridhrasi* (sciatica) from both an *Ayurvedic* and a modern standpoint in our review essay.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Gridhrasi*, *Mahagada*, Sciatica.

INTRODUCTION

These days, people's lifestyles are steadily moving away from healthy ones, which leads to an increase in the prevalence of numerous ailments. Stress, poor posture, abrupt movements all day long, extended travel, and sedentary lifestyles place the most strain on the bottom part of the pelvis and spine. Among senior adults, low back pain (LBP) is the most commonly

reported musculoskeletal issue.

Gridhrasi, according to the *Samhitas*, is a *vatvyadhi*. The disease known as *Gridhrasi* is caused by an exacerbated *vata* that invades the *kandras* of the ankles and toes and causes *ksepa* (pain and inability to extend) in the thighs.

The prevalence of *Gridhrasi*, varies widely and can range from 10% to 40% over a lifetime. Annual incidence varies from 1% to 5%. In Working population it is 3.8% while it is 7.9% in non-working population.

DEFINITION OF GRIDHRASI

Gridhrasi is a *Vata Vyadhi* characterized by *Stambha* (stiffness), *Toda* (pricking pain), *Ruk* (pain) and *Spandana* (frequents tingling). These above mentioned *Lakshana*'s initially affect *Sphik* (buttock) as well as posterior aspect of *Kati* (waist) and then gradually radiates to posterior aspects of *Uru* (thigh), *Janu* (knee), *Jangha* (calf) and *Pada* (foot).^[1]

SCIATICA

Sciatica is characterized by Pain radiating from the back into the buttock & into the lower extremities along its posterior or lateral aspect & most commonly caused by prolapsed Inter Vertebral Disc, the term is also used to refer, pain anywhere along the course of Sciatic Nerve.^[4]

PARYAYA OF GRIDHRASI

The synonyms of *gridhrasi* are as follows

1. **Ringhini** - This word is used by **Vachaspati misra** to denote *Gridhrasi*. The implication of which is *Skhalana* according to the *sabdakalpadruma*; which means displacement of particularly a *phichila* substance.^[3]
2. **Randhrinee - Dalhana** represents a weak point or rupture of a material which quotes *Gridhrasi*.^[4]
3. **Radhina**- The word is used by **Kasirama and Aadamalla** in their *Gudhartha Deepika* and *Deepika* commentary on *Sharangadhar Samhita*^[5] which means pressing, compressing or destroying. In this context, compression of sciatic nerve root leading to ridiculer pain may be most appropriate.

NIDANA OF GRIDHRASI^[6]

In *Gridhrasi* specific *Nidana* has not been mentioned. The general causes of *Vata Vyadhi* are considered as the causes of *Gridhrasi* because it is considered in 80 *Nanatmaja Vata Vyadhi*.

All the etiological factors of *Vata Vyadhi* as well as *Vata Prakopa* are taken as *Nidana* of *Gridhrasi* -

A) Aharaja Nidana

Ruksha, Sheeta, Laghu Anna, Alpa Anna, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya Rasa, Langhana, Abhojana.

B) Viharaja Nidana

Ativyayama, Ativyavaya, Atiprajagara, Vishama Upachara, Plavana, Atiadhava, Diwaswapna, Vegadharana etc.

C) Manasika Nidana

Chinta, Shoka, Krodha & Bhaya.

D) Anya Hetuja

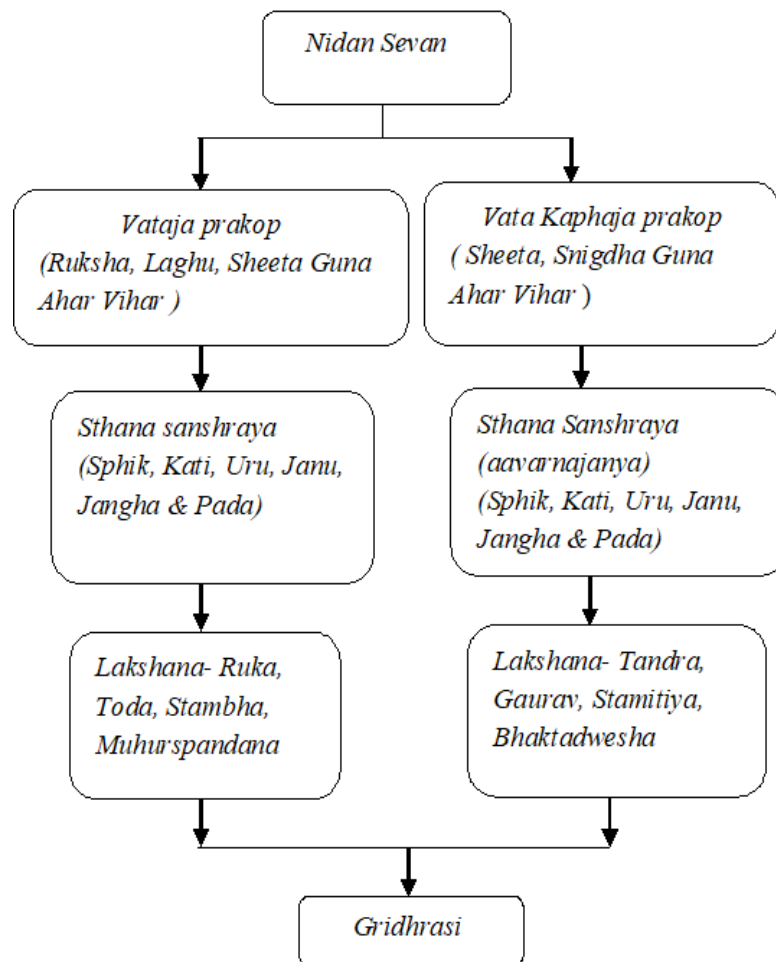
Ati Asruk Sravana, Dhatukshaya, Varshartu, Marmabhighata, Margavarana, Rogatikanarshana etc.

PURVAROOP

In classics the description regarding the *Purvarupa* of *Gridhrasi* is not available. Acharya's has mentioned that *Avyakta Lakshana* are the *Poorvaroop* of *Vata Vyadhi*. *Chakrapanidatta* commenting on the word *Avyakta* mentions that few mild symptoms are to be taken as the *Poorvaroop*.^[7] So, symptoms of *Gridhrasi* like *Ruk, Toda, Stambha & Spandhana* are seen in mild form.

TYPES OF GRIDHRASI

- 1) *Vataja Gridhrasi*
- 2) *Vatakaphaja Gridhrasi.*

SAMPRAPTI OF GRIDHRASI**RUPA OF VATAJA GRIDHRASI**

- **Ruka (Pain)**- As one of the primary symptoms of *Gridhrasi*, *Charaka* emphasises pain. *Chakrapani* offers his opinion on this, saying that this discomfort initially affects the hip (*Sphika*), moving on to the waist (*Kati*), back (*Pristha*), thigh (*Uru*), knee (*Janu*), calf (*Jangha*), and foot (*Pad*), in that order. This discomfort is undoubtedly present along the sciatic nerve's distribution path.
- **Toda (Pricking sensation)**- This symptom has been noted by *Madhava and Charaka*. The pain is prickling in nature and may run the length of the sciatic nerve distribution. The indications and symptoms of sciatica caused by a lesion in the fifth lumbar root are mentioned in modern medicine, along with the possibility of sensory impairment in the foot.

- **Stambha (Stiffness)**- According to *Charaka*, a *Gridhrasi* sufferer experiences stambha in the area that is affected. *Stambha* is a sensation of rigidity or tightness throughout the entire leg. The person attempts to move as little as possible because of the pain. As a result, this kind of *Stambha* is felt and the muscles in the leg become tight. Even though the patient is able to walk, he may still be limited in his ability to fully move the affected limb as a result of this symptom. That happens as a result of *Vata's Sheeta Guna*.
- **Muhurspandana (Twitching)**- *Muhurspandana* is the experience of anything throbbing or pulsing. This also happens along the *Gridhrasi Nadi* (sciatica nerve) distribution, which runs from the hip to the *Jangha* (calf).
- **Sakthanaha Kshepanam Nigrhaniyat (SLR - Test)**- In response to this symptom being stated by *Sushruta*, *Kapha* is another name for *prasarana* (extension). The patient must maintain their legs even though the agony is getting worse.
- **Deha Pravakrat (Sciatic scoliosis)**- These *Gridhrasi* symptoms, which include lateral or forward body bending, were mentioned by *Madhava*. Due to pain, the patient tries to maintain a flexed limb, bears weight on the healthy leg, and adopts a standard posture.^[8,9,10]

RUPA OF VATKAPHJA GRIDHRASI^[11]

- **Tandra:** *Tandra* is one of the symptoms of the *Gridhrasi* caused by *Vata* and *Kapha*. *Acharyas* opine that *Tandra* is the outcome of the vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha*. In the case of *Gridhrasi* also it can be said that domination of *Vata* and *kapha* causes *Tandra*. *Charaka* gives the causative factor of *Tandra* like food substances having the qualities like *Madhura*, *Snigdha*, *Guru* etc. and some mental factors are *Chinta*, *Shoka* etc. it can be observed that the ultimate result of the above is the vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha*.
- **Gaurava:** *Gaurava* is the feeling of heaviness of the body. Heaviness is the quality of *Kapha*. So when the *Kapha* is vitiated in the *Vata Kaphaja* type of *Gridhrasi*, *Gaurava* occurs. Only *Charaka* has mentioned this symptom and others have not included it.
- **Arochaka:** *Charaka*, *Madhava* and *Bhavaprakasha* have mentioned *Arochaka* as a symptom of *Gridhrasi*. It is a subjective symptom where patient loses the taste but appetites remains intact. Comparing to *Vata* it seems that *Kapha* has the more roles in

manifestation of *Arochaka* because the seat of *Bodhaka Kapha* is *Jiwha* (Tongue). So it is clear that this symptom is due to the vitiation of *Kapha* especially *Bodhaka Kapha*.

- **Agnimandhya:** *Agni* is usually referred to as the state of *Pachaka Pitta* of the body. When affected by the vitiated *Kapha*, the *Pachakapitta* fails to perform its normal function. This may be due to the antagonist properties of the *Pitta* and *Kapha*. So in the case of *Gridhrasi* also where *Kapha* is dominant, role of *Ama* must be taken into consideration. *Agnimandya* leads to the formation of *Ama* which in turn produces further *Agnimandya*.
- **Mukhapraseka:** *Mukhapraseka* is caused by the vitiated *Kapha*. In *Madhavanidana* and *Bhavaprakash*, *Mukhapraseka* has been mentioned in *Vatakaphaja* type of *Gridhrasi*. *Vata* may have a little role to play in case of *Mukhapraseka*. *Praseka* has been mentioned due to the involvement of *Ama* by some *Acharyas*. In nutshell it can be said that *Mukhapraseka* is caused by the involvement of *Kapha* and *Ama*.
- **Bhaktadewasha:** This symptom is also produced due to the involvement of *Kapha* and *Ama*. Here the patient shows aversion towards the food substances in general. Both *Madhavanidana* and *Bhavaprakash* have mentioned this symptom in the type of *Vatakaphaja Gridhrasi*.
- **Stamitiya:** This symptom is described by *Harit* only. *Stamitya* means frozen sensation. Due to *Kapha* vitiation patient feels like some wet cloth has been wrapped around the limb.

SADHYA- ASADHYTAV OF GRIDHRASI

It explains that *Vata Vyadhi*, which lasts more than a year or is chronic, is difficult to treat or is deemed incurable (*Asadhy*).^[12] The *Acharya* regards *Vata Vyadhi* as *Mahagada*^[13] because of its tendency to be lethal or irreversible. Furthermore, he states that *Vatavyadhi* is the cause if the patient experiences consequences like *Adhmana* (tenderness and distention of the belly), *Bhagna* (fracture), *Suptatvacha* (tactile senselessness), *Shunam* (edema/inflammation), and pain in the internal organs.^[14]

CHIKITSA SUTRA OF GRIDHRASI^[15,16,17]

Gridhrasi is one of the *Nanatmaja Vata Vyadhi*. The general treatment of *Vata Vyadhies* can

be applied. Some *Acharya* have mentioned some specific line of management of it.

1. Snehana
2. Swedana
3. Vamana
4. Virechana
5. Basti
6. Siravedh
7. Agnikarma
8. Sanshaman

1. *Snehana*

In the case of *Gridhrasi*, *snehana*, or oleation therapy, is applied both internally and externally. *Snehana* manifested externally as *pariseka*, *avagaha*, *abhyanga*, etc. *Snehapan* as *Shamana*, and *Shodhana* are mentioned in manuscripts for *Mridu*.

2. *Swedana*

Classics explain a great deal of *Svedas*, but not all of them are useful or applicable in *Gridhrasi*. These include *Pinda Sveda* in *Vataja Gridhrasi* and *Baluka Sveda*, also known as a *Ruksha Sveda*, in *Vatakaphaja Gridhrasi*.

3. *Vamana*

In *Gridhrasi Chikitsa*, *Vamana* is recommended by *Bhava Misra* and *Chakrapani*, following *Snehana* and *Svedana*. While it is true that *Vamana* plays no part in the *Vataja* kind of *Gridhrasi*, it might be useful in the *Vatakaphaja* type.

4. *Virechana*

In *Gridhrasi*, *Virechana* has a significant function. *Virechana's* action affects the entire body and is not confined to merely extracting the *Doshas* from *Amashaya* and *Pakvashaya*. Mild *Virechana* will be adequate in *Gridhrasi*.

5. *Basti*

Basti is the ideal remedy for *Vata* since *Gridhrasi* is mostly a *vataja vyadhi*. *Basti* is recommended for practically all *Vatavyadhies*, but it is especially recommended for patients who have impairments, constipation, loss of appetite, stiffness in the extremities, and

discomfort in the organs. Most of these symptoms are present in *Gridhrasi*'s case. As a result, *Basti* is crucial to the administration of *Gridhrasi*.

6. *Siravedha*

For the treatment of *Gridhrasi*, Acharya *Charaka* has recommended *Siravedha* to take *Gulpha* and *Kandara* together.

In *Gridhrasi*, Acharya *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata* have placed *Siravedha* at four angles above, four angles below, or four angles above the knee joint.

7. *Agnikarma*

In *Gridhrasi*, nearly every Acharya has mentioned *Agni Karma*. In *Snayu* and *Sandhigata Vata Vyadhi*, Acharya *Sushruta* and Acharya *Vagbhata* promote *Agni Karma*. Since *Gridhrasi* is a *Snayu gata Vata Vyadhi*, it is implied implicitly here. It is recommended that *Agni karma* be performed at four *angulas* below the *Indra Basti Marma*, on the posterior side of the leg. *Chakradatta* and *Vrindamadhava* both claim that it is on the affected leg's little toe. It is four *angulas* above the *gulpha*, or oblique boring on *pada sira*, according to *Harita*.

8. *Sanshaman*

Deepana and *Pachana* and can only function in *Gridhrasi* in *Shamana* treatments. The following oral medication preparations have been listed in the classics for the *Gridhrasi*:

- *Ghrita* - *Guggulu tikta Ghrita*
- *Taila*- *Balataila*, *Dhanvantri Taila*
- *Guggulu* – *Yogroj Guggulu*, *Amrit Guggulu*, *Lasunapak*,
- *Kwatha* – *Maharasnadi Kwatha*, *Rasna Saptaka Kwatha*, *Sahacharadi Kwatha*, *Shephalika Kwatha*
- *Rasa Ausadhi*- *Vatavidhvasnsa rasa*, and *Brihatvatachintamani rasa*.

CHIKITSYA YOG OF GRIDHASI^[18]

1. *Dashmooladi kwatha*-Intake of the decoction prepared with *dasamola*, *balamola*, *rasna*, *gudaci*, *sunthi* mixed with *erandataila* are beneficial in *gridhrasi*.
2. *Sephalika kwatha* -Administration of the decoction prepared with the leaves of *sephalika* on mild fire cures even severe type of *gridhrasi*.
3. *Panchamuli kwatha*- Administration of the decoction prepared with *panchamula*, *erandataila*, *trivrit ghrita* or mixed with *trivrit* destroys *gridhrasi*.

4. *Taila gritädi prayoga*- Administration of *taila* or *grita* or *ardraka swarasa* and *matulunga swarasa* mixed with *chukra* and *jaggery* alleviates pain in *gridhrasi*.
5. *Eranda taila*- Administration of *eranda taila* mixed with *gomutra* for a month destroys *gridhrasi*.
6. *Krishna churna*- *Pippali churna* taken with *gomutra* and *erandataila* alleviates chronic *vatakaphaja gridhrasi*.
7. *Vartaku prayoga*- Intake of *vartaka* (brinjal) cooked in *erandataila* revert the gait in *gridhrasi*.
8. *Erandaphaladi payasadvayam*- The *payasa* prepared with decorticated seeds of *eranda* or with *sunthi* in milk destroys *gridhrasi*.
9. *Rasna guggulu*-Pills prepared with one *pala* of *rasna churan* and five *karsa* of *guggulu* with *ghee* destroys *gridhrasi*.

PATHYA-APATHYA^[19]

Pathya

Rasa- Lavana

Shuka Dhanya -Godhuma, Raktha Shali

Simbi Dhanya- Masha, Kulattha

Mamsa Varga -Kukkuta, Chataka, Jangala

Vegadharana, Shrama

Shaka Varga- Patola, Kushamanda, Shigru, Mulaka

Phala Varga- Dadima, Badara, Draksha

Anyā Dravya -Lashuna, Punarnava, Jeeraka

Karma- Abhyanga

Apathya

Rasa-Kashya, Tikta, Katu

Simbi Dhanya- Mudga, Kalaya,

Chanaka

Shaka Varga- Bimba, Kareera

Vihara- Chinta, Prajagara,

Karma- Chardi, Langhana

DISCUSSION

The word "*Gridhrasi*" comes from the word "*Grudhra*," which means "vulture," and the disease's sufferer moves like a "vulture." A patient with severe, migratory, and persistent pain will walk differently. That is why it is called "*Gridhrasi*."

"*Gridhrasi*" is usually of two types: *Vata* and *Vatakaphaja*.

Gridhrasi is associated with symptoms like- *Stambha*, *ruk* and *toda*. Meanwhile, *Vataja* type of *Gridhrasi* had Symptoms such as *toda*, *dehasyativa vakrata bhram janu jangha uru sandhinam*, *stambhata sphuranam* and *Vatakaphaja* type is associated with *gaurava*, *tandra*, *mukhpraseka* and *bhaktadvesa*.

Acharya Sushruta mentions "*Sakthanah kshepan Nigriharniyata*" as a symptom, or limited limb movement, in his description of the *Gridhrasi*. *Dhatukshaya* or *Margavarana* are the causes of the *Samprapti* of *Gridhrasi*. Here, *Sankocha* will be given to the damaged limb's *Sira* and *Kandara*. In contemporary science, the treatment of sciatica is not without complications and numerous adverse effects; even surgical surgery is not exempt from these problems. Furthermore, surgeries are costly, and there is a potential for recurrence. There are many more effective solutions available in *Ayurveda* for treating this excruciating condition. The primary vitiations in this condition are found in *Apana vayu* and *Vyana Vayu*, however *Kapha* is typically still present as an associated *Dosha*. Consequently, the ideal medication for treating *Gridhrasi* should possess the qualities of *Vatashamaka*, *Kaphashamaka*, *Vanulomaka*, *Dipana-Pachana* (digestive-carminative), and *Shulaprashamana*. Here, particular mention is made of *karmas* such as *Snehana*, *Swedana*, *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, *Siravedha* and *Agni Karma*.

Some *Shanshaman dravyas* are *Sephalika*, *Vartaka*, *Eranda Taila* are also mentioned.

CONCLUSION

Gridhrasi is a painful condition that makes it difficult for the sufferer to sit and walk normally, which interferes with his day-to-day activities. Although it is one of the eighty *Nanatmaja Vata-Vyadhi*, the *Gridhrasi Nidana* and *Samprapti* are not mentioned individually in classics; the same *Nidana* are applicable in this ailment. Clinical observations further show that the most frequent causes of *Gridhrasi* are *Nidana* of *Vata-Vyadhi*, such as *Abhighata*, *Ahara*, *Dukhasana*, etc. *Vata* is the primary cause of the illness in *Gridhrasi*. There might potentially be other *Doshas* at play. Since *Gridhrasi* is a *Vata Vyadhi*, its *Purvaroop* is the *Samanya Purvaroop* of *Vata Vyadhi*. *Avyakta Lakshana* is described in the *Samhita* as the *Purvaroop* of *Vata-Vyadhi*. This sickness affects *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Meda*, and *Asthi*. The three main methods of treatment for any ailment are *Nidana Parivarjana Shamana Chikitsa* and *Shodhana Chikitsa*. While *Shodhana* is suggested for *Bahudosha*, *Shamana* is also necessary to eliminate any residual *Dosha* that remains after the *Shodhana* procedure. *Siravedh* and *Agnikarma* are also suggested by many *acharyas* for the successful treatment of *Gridhrasi*.

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