

A CRITICAL REVIEW ON CONCEPT OF DUSHIVISHA

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ABSTRACT

Dushivisha is one of the unique concepts explained in Ayurveda. It is type of toxin which remains inside the body for long and then produces various effects ill effects on the body. Ayurveda gives more importance to prevention of disease and maintain of health. As described in our samhitas, Dushivisha is an intake of toxic drugs which is less potent and remains in dormant state within the body for year together without causing any major harm to the body. The concept of Dushivisha seems to more relevant in present context. But the concept of Dushivisha is still an enigma. That is, what factors can be considered under Dushivisha, how it remains in the body without undergoing elimination, how does it causes cumulative toxicity, which factors will aggravate Dushivisha, how the clinical features of Dushivisha can be better understood? To get proper answer to all these practical queries, it is very much necessary to go through the pathology

and clinical impact of Dushivisha. Here an attempt is made to review the concept of Dushivisha in detail.

KEYWORDS: Dushivisha, Visha.

INTRODUCTION

The term Dushivisha is a combination of two different words, 'Dushi' and 'Visha'. 'Dushi' means denatured, attenuated, latent, vitiated. Visha means poison. Thus Dushivisha means denatured poison or attenuated poison. Attenuated or denatured poisons function as latent toxin in the body. Susruta and Vagbhata described Dushivisha as any kind of poison originating from inanimate or animate sources or any artificial poison (*Kritrima Visha*) retained in the body after partial expulsion or which has provisionally undergone

detoxification, by the anti-poisonous drugs, forest fire, the wind or the sun is termed latent poison (Dushivisha). Any poison that is devoid of the natural ten properties of Visha, incapable of producing acute symptoms of poisoning can also be designated Dushivisha. A poison, which is having fewer properties, which means less than ten classical properties that actually a poison should have, or either the poison, which is having lesser potency of all the ten properties, attains a latent or hidden stage in the body called Latent poison (Dushivisha). Low potency of all the ten qualities is said to be responsible for the delayed action and cumulative toxicity on the body. Because of the low potency of the poison, it usually won't causes sudden death. Because of the enveloping (*Avarana*) action by humor Kapha, this low potency poisons is retained in the body for a long period without producing any grave or fatal symptoms.

Clinical features of dushivisha

The prodromal symptoms of latent poison (Dushivisha) are narcolepsy, a feeling of heaviness of the body, yawning, laxity of joints, horripilation and body ache. One who suffers from latent poison (Dushivisha) will have loose motion, his complexion will be altered, his mouth will emit foul smell, olfactory and gustatory senses will be impaired and he will suffer from unquenchable thirst. Slurring and broken speech, vomiting, sorrow, and sudden bouts of unconsciousness are also seen, and symptoms of ascites (*Dooshyodara*) can be seen. The above symptoms are followed by sense of intoxication after consuming food, indigestion, anorexia, appearance of red patches all over the body, edema of the face and extremities, urticaria, fainting, ascites, vomiting, diarrhoea, discoloration, epileptic attacks, intermittent fever and increased thirst.

Symptoms according to site

- When Dushi Visha is retained in stomach (*Amashaya*) it produces the diseases due to derangement of humors Kapha and Vata humors i.e. unconsciousness, vomiting, diarrhoea, tympanitis, burning sensation, tremors, altered sensorium etc.
- When located in intestines (*Pakwashaya*), it produces diseases of deranged Vata and Pitta humors such as burning sensation all over the body, fainting, diarrhoea, tympanitis and anaemia.
- When located in Rasa Dhatu it produces disinclination towards food, anorexia, indigestion, fatigue, fever, excessive salivation, feeling of satisfaction even food not

taken, heaviness of the chest, anemia, obstruction of the srotas, emaciation, lassitude, premature graying of the hair, premature wrinkling of the skin.

- When located in Rakta Dhatu it produces skin disorders, erysipelas, vesicles, elevated mole, nilika, tilakalaka, nyaccha, vyanga, alopecia, disorders of spleen, abscess, tumors, disorders of blood with arthritis, haemorrhoids, fatigue, menorrhagia, etc.
- When located in Mamsa Dhatu it produces tumors, haemorrhoids, adhimamasa, disorders of goiter, disorders of gums, etc.
- When located in Medo Dhatu it produces granthi (cyst), galaganda, diabetes, obesity, excessive perspiration, etc.
- When located in Asthi Dhatu it produces osteoma, odontoma, pricking pain in bone, onychosis, etc.
- When located in Majja Dhatu it produces syncope, fainting, giddiness, pain in the phalanges, conjunctivitis etc.
- When located in Shukra Dhatu it produces impotency, sterility, spermolith, etc.
- When located in the skin it produces skin disorders.

Symptoms according to predominance of humor (Dosha)

Vitiation of each humor (Dosha) produces specific clinical features and these are described in Charaka Samhita and can be ascertained by the respective symptoms (table-1)

Table 1: Clinical feature produced by doshas.

Dosha	Symptoms
Vata	Chest pain (<i>Hrtpeeda</i>), belching (<i>Urdhwanila</i>), stiffness (<i>Sthambha</i>), pain in the bones (<i>Asthiruk</i>), joint pain (<i>Parvaruk</i>), binding pain (<i>Udveshtana</i>), Lassitude(<i>Gatrasada</i>)
Pitta	Sensory loss (<i>Sanjnanasha</i>), warm expiration (<i>Ushnanishwasa</i>), chest burn (<i>Hrtidaha</i>), pungent taste in themouth (<i>Katukasyata</i>), edema (<i>Sopha</i>)
Kapha	Vomiting (<i>Chardi</i>), anorexia (<i>Arochaka</i>), heart burn (<i>Hrillasa</i>), salivation(<i>Praseka</i>), heaviness of the body (<i>Gourava</i>), coldness(<i>Shaitya</i>), sweet taste (<i>Mukhamadhurya</i>)

Complications of dushivisha

- Pyrexia
- Diarrhoea
- Burning sensation
- Fainting
- Hiccough

- Cardiac disorders
- Distension of abdomen
- Abdominal enlargement
- Oligospermia
- Insanity
- Edema
- Tremors

Factors aggravating dushivisha

Polluted land (*Dushita desha*), deranged seasons (*Kala*), toxic food (*Anna*) and daytime sleep (*Diwaswapna*) are factors that aggravate Dushivisha.

Vagbhata says – exposure to *Pragvata* (Wind coming from east), indigestion, cold weather, cloudy days, day sleep, intake of unwholesome food also aggravates Dushivisha.

A. Dushita desha (Polluted land)

Dushita desha can be considered as wet, watery or humid land (*Anupa desha*) where excess wind, cold weather and increased rainfalls are present. Anoop desha thus influences kapha and vata and leads to aggravation of dushi visha.

B. Dushita kala (Deranged season)

It can be considered as *sheetanila* (Cold wind) and *durdina* (Cloudy days), which may have relation with Dushivisha. Rain makes body *klinna* (Moist), cold air reduces the power of *pachakagni* (Digestion) ie. Metabolism or detoxification is deranged and may lead to aggravation of both kapha and vata.

C. Dushita anna (Toxic/harmful food)

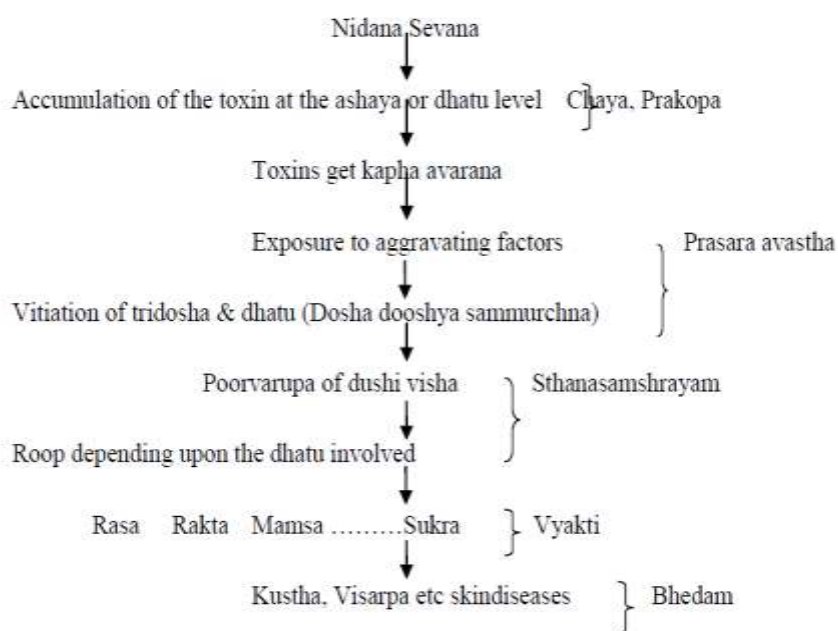
It can be considered as alcohol, sesame oil and kulattha (*Dolichos biflorus*) etc. *Tiksna*, *vidhai dravyas* and *viruddhahara*, also aggravate *pitta dosha* by their nature.

D. Divaswapna (Daytime sleep)

It increases kapha in the body and thus causes aggravation of dushivisha.

Certain miscellaneous factor such as *vyavaya* (Sexual act), *vyayama* (Physical exercise), *krodha* (Anger) etc. leads to aggravation of dushi visha.

Pathogenesis (Samprapti) of dushi visha



Transformation of visha into dushivisha

There certain factor which convert visha to Dushivisha

1. *Jeernam* (Partially metabolized)

It has got two aspects

- When visha which is capable of producing acute ill-effects is kept for a long time, some of them may loose its original gunas and ultimately gets converted into low potency visha leading to dushivisha.
- Visha wheather *sthavara*, *jangama* or *kritrima* which is not completely eliminated from the body or partially detoxified and being deposited and accumulated in the body at various sites of the tissues producing cumulative effect '*Dehadshesam yat nirgati tat jeernam*'. It can also be called as chronic poisoning or latent poisoning. In the chronic poisoning symptoms develop insidiously and more gradually.

2. *Vishaghnohadhi bhir hatam* (Inactivated by anti-toxic drugs)

It means partial detoxification by antidotes or in-complete metabolism of poison, which also retains some properties. Detoxification is a chemical process that occurs in the body to convert toxic substances in to non-toxic substances to be eliminated from body through excretion.

3. *Davagni* (Burnt by forest fire)

Exposure to heat flame or fire etc. converts visha to Dushivisha. This is because, certain properties of poison are altered by exposure to heat or fire and this, in turn results in reduced potency of visha leading to Dushivisha.

4. Exposure to vata (Dried up in wind)

Sheetala vata (Cold wind) dries up the water content of poison reducing its properties such as *teekshna*, *ushna* etc. thus transforming potent poison in to less potent (Dushivisha).

5. Exposure to aatapa (Dried up in the sun)

Sun rays have got powerful disinfecting properties especially UV rays. On exposure to sunlight the toxic effects will be reduced.

6. *Swabhavato va svagunairn na yuktam visha* (Naturally less potent)

Naturally all visha whether it is sthavara, jangama or kritrima consist of ten gunas like tiksna, ushna, rooksha etc. Presence of these gunas can cause acute or subacute poisoning. But if few gunas are absent or weak in potency in the visha, it will turn to dushivisha. In a poisonous substance if laghu, rooksha, avyakta rasa are not potent enough to produce acute or subacute poisoning then the same will produce symptoms of dushivisha gradually. Some substances are naturally less potent and may cause dushivisha eg. Poisoning due to certain insects which are low in potency by nature itself.

It is now obvious that 'any type of poison irrespective of inanimate (Sthavara), animate (Jangama) and artificial poison (Kritrima visha) will attain a stage called Latent poison (Dushivisha) after they divert their potency to some extent or if they are improperly expelled or partially detoxified in the body. Some things are basically less toxic can be considered as latent poison (Dushivisha).

Prognosis of dushivisha

Diseases produced by Latent poison is cured quickly in person who are self-controlled, those which are persisting for more than one year and are uncontrollable and become incurable in persons who are emaciated and who indulge in unsuitable food and activities.

Dushivisha vitiates rakta dhatu and causes skin lesions such as *Kitibha* and *Kota*. Dushivisha vitiates the humors (doshas) one by one and at last cause's death. The poison, which gets aggravated after a long time is Dushivisha.

Management

- The main and important principle of treatment of any disease is '*Nidana–Parivarjanam*'. In dushivisha treatment also this should be applied. Factors like *pragvata*, *ajeerna* etc. which aggravate it, should be avoided.
- A patient afflicted with dushivisha should be well sudated and then purified by both emetics and purgatives. After that an anti-poisonous drug (Agada), specifically meant for the destruction of the effects of dushivisha should be administered. The drugs of this Dushivishari-agada should be taken with honey.
- In dushivisha, visha is in mild active form and is covered and blocked by kapha. By the application of sweda, kapha will be liquefied and avarana (Blockage) of visha will be removed and is brought to koshta, which can be removed by purification process. But *snehapana* is not maintained. It may be because of the fact that doshas are in *utklesa* state. So purva karma by snehapana is not required.
- Due to the predominance of vitiation of rakta in dushivisha, Acharya Charaka prescribes raktamokshana and panchakarma.
- Use of *tiksna virechana* drug like *sudha* (*Euphorbia nerrifolia*) is mentioned in kushta, dushivisha etc. and is given only when doshas accumulation is more in the body.
- While treating the Dushivisha patient, *prakriti* of the patient, *satmya* (Habit), *ritu* (Season), *vishasthana* (Site of poisoning), *bala* (Strength of the patient) should be taken into consideration.
- According to involvement of doshas, drugs having opposite properties should be used.
- Anti-toxic rasa like madhura, tikta, katu, kashya should be used.
- Haritaki, Lavana, Magadhi and Maricha together is a purgative recipe for patient of dushivisha told by Kashyapa or the recipe called Vyoshadi yoga should be administered by the physician as a purgative recipe in diseases produced by visha.
- In all types of poisoning; ghrita is useful, especially in vata vitiated conditions because visha possesses anti-ojus property. Anti-ojus property of visha is counteracted by ghrita. It is also useful in hridayavaranam of visha. As, it has got cardio-protective action.

Patyapathya

Pathya

- Raktasali, sastika (Paddy) and priyangu (A type of grain).

- Yusha (Soup made by pulses mudga and harenuka), mamsarasa (Meat soup) of ena (A kind of deer), sikhi (Peacock), svavit lava (Chataka bird), tittiri (A kind of bird), prasata (cock).
- Yusha and rasa should be prepared by using antitoxic drugs and diets which do not produce vidaha.
- Saindhava (Rock salt) tanduliyaka (*Amaranthus spinosus*), jivanti (*Leptadenia reticulata*), vartaka (*Solanum melongena*), sunisannaka (*Marselia minuta*) etc.
- Amalaki (*Embllica officinalis*), dadima (*Punica granatum*) as amla dravyas.

Apathya

- Navadhanya (Freshly harvested grains).
- Kulattha (*Dolichos biflorus*), tila (Gingelly), souvira (Sour barley soup), phanitam (a kind of jaggery), sura (Alcoholic drink).
- Food and drugs which are tiksna, ushna, vidahi, particularly tiksna dravyas.
- Ajeerna (Indigestion), adhyasana (Intake of food frequently), divaswapna (day time), vyavaya (Sexual intercourse), krodha (Anger), atapa (Sun rays).
- Tailam, tamboolam, lavana, guda, amla, sarsapa, narikela, takra, kshara dravyas, mamsa dravya, sura, dadhi, shaka, athya-atapa, panasa, avala, toram, masha, kulattha, nityavyayama, athisukha, athya-adhwana, dhooma, thuhina pavanasevana, dhooli, padhas ancharam, bahula kopam, chinta, shokam, hasam, divaswapna, atisabda, vyapath chintha.

CONCLUSION

The concept of Dushivisha (Latent Poison) is not properly explained in our Ayurvedic classics. In present era, concept of Dushivisha is quite different. It is not mandatory that only direct intake of a poisonous materials lead to Dushivisha *lakshanas*. At present scenario polluted air, water, land and the increased exposure to electromagnetic radiations through cellular phones and computers, faulty food habits, stressful life style, unpleasant feelings, continuous usage of any particular medications, high use of pesticides and even suppression of urges can act as a cause for Dushivisha. It is felt that this is the right time to consider these factors and should further be studied separately under the heading of latent poison (Dushivisha) for better perception.

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