

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING MIGRAINE: AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This thorough book will help you discover the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda through the lens of managing migraines. Explore the underlying causes of migraines using Ayurvedic concepts, comprehending the effects of doshas on headaches. Learn about individualized strategies for relief and prevention that include dietary advice, natural therapies, and lifestyle changes. Discover the importance of maintaining the nadis, or energy channels, and the function of Ayurvedic treatments like shirodhara. This essay offers a comprehensive viewpoint on migraines, encompassing both holistic and practical solutions. It encourages readers to adopt Ayurvedic principles for improved overall health and a deeper comprehension of this difficult ailment.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Migraine management, Doshas, Holistic approaches, Ayurvedic remedies.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a guiding light of age-old knowledge in the fields of holistic health and conventional medicine, providing deep understanding of the complex interplay of the mind, body, and spirit. Ayurveda's vast body of knowledge offers a distinctive viewpoint on a variety of illnesses that have afflicted people for ages, including the mysterious and

frequently incapacitating migraine disorder. By revealing the holistic ideas that underlie this age-old healing practice, this in-depth book seeks to untangle the complex connections between Ayurveda and migraine relief.^[1]

Medical professionals and patients with migraines have long been baffled by this condition, which is typified by severe headaches that are frequently accompanied by nausea, light sensitivity, and throbbing pain. Whereas modern medicine focuses on treating symptoms, Ayurveda explores the underlying doshas—or imbalances—in the body's constitution. The five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether) are represented by these doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha), which are essential to Ayurvedic diagnosis and treatment.^[2]

As per the World Health Organization's data, migraine stands as the third most prevalent medical condition globally, impacting 14.7% of the population annually.^[3] It ranks as the second most common cause of headaches, affecting approximately 15% of women and 6% of men worldwide.^[4] Its prevalence peaks during young and middle adulthood, particularly between the ages of 30 and 39, with 28.1% of women and 9.0% of men experiencing migraines.^[5] This condition imposes social handicaps and contributes to significant job productivity loss, with a noteworthy socioeconomic impact. Migraine, as per modern science, typically manifests as recurrent severe headaches with autonomic symptoms, lasting 2 to 72 hours and accompanied by sensory, motor, and mood disturbances.^[6]

Need of Study

This study is essential to explore Ayurveda's holistic perspective on migraines, offering comprehensive insights into understanding and managing this debilitating condition, potentially contributing to personalized and integrative healthcare approaches.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

ARDHAVABHEDAKA

The word Ardhavabhedaka has two parts Ardha and Avabhedaka.

- **Ardha** means one half or half side.
- **Ava** means from within
- **Bhedaka** means breaking, perforating or bursting type of pain. Thus, literal meaning of Ardhavabhedaka is bursting or perforating type of pain in one half of the head (Ardha Mastaka Vedana).^[7]

A severe, sporadic, unilateral headache that appears every three, five, ten, fifteen, or thirty days is how it is described. The cause of this phenomenon is a vata, vatakapha, vatapitta, or tridosha imbalance.

What is Ardhavabhedaka?

Ayurveda uses the term "ardhavabhedaka" to describe a particular kind of headache. It means "half-sided headache" when translated into English. The Sanskrit terms "Ardha," which means "half," and "Bhedaka," which means "split" or "divided," are the source of the name "Ardhavabhedaka." According to Ayurveda, Ardhavabhedaka is characterized by intense, throbbing pain that affects half of the head and is frequently linked to dosha imbalances, specifically the Vata dosha. Ayurvedic methods of treating Ardhavabhedaka emphasize the importance of identifying and correcting the particular doshic imbalance.

What Is Migraine?

A neurological disorder called migraine is typified by frequent, severe headaches that are frequently accompanied by other symptoms like light and sound sensitivity, nausea, and vomiting. The headache usually affects one side of the head and is intense, throbbing. Numerous things, such as hormone shifts, particular diets, stress, and environmental conditions, can cause migraines. They can greatly affect day-to-day activities and linger for hours or even days. Given their genetic and environmental roots, migraines are thought to be a complicated illness. Preventive strategies, drugs for acute episodes, and lifestyle changes are all part of management. The variety of symptoms typically necessitates individualized treatment regimens.

SYNONYMS

- Ardha Sheersha Shoola^[8]
- Ardhabhedaka^[9,10]
- Shiroardhashoola^[11]
- Ardhavabhedaka^[12]

All these synonyms carry the same meaning i.e., shoola is present in half portion of head.

ETIOLOGICAL FACTOR FOR ARDHAVABHEDAKA^[13]

According to Ayurveda, imbalances in the doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) are thought to be the cause of a number of etiological variables that lead to Ardhavabhedaka, a condition

usually associated with migraine. Key etiological factors for Ardhavabhedaka include the following.

Vata Dosha Imbalance

- Disturbances in the Vata dosha, representing the air and ether elements, are often considered a significant factor. Vata imbalance can lead to irregularities in blood flow and nerve function, contributing to migraines.

Pitta Dosha Aggravation

- Excess Pitta, associated with fire and water elements, may contribute to the intensity of headaches. Pitta imbalance can result from factors like excessive heat, stress, or certain dietary habits.

Kapha Dosha Involvement

- While less common, imbalances in Kapha dosha (earth and water elements) may also contribute to Ardhavabhedaka. Kapha-related factors such as congestion or sluggish circulation may play a role.

Dietary Triggers

- Certain dietary factors, including irregular eating patterns, consumption of excessively hot or spicy foods, and dehydration, may contribute to doshic imbalances and trigger migraines.

Environmental Factors

- Changes in weather, exposure to extreme temperatures, and other environmental factors can influence Vata and Pitta doshas, potentially triggering Ardhavabhedaka.

Stress and Emotional Factors

- Emotional stress, anxiety, and tension are considered significant contributors to migraine in Ayurveda. Emotional disturbances can disturb the balance of doshas and manifest as headaches.

Hormonal Changes

- Fluctuations in hormonal levels, particularly in women during menstruation, pregnancy, or menopause, are recognized as potential triggers for Ardhavabhedaka.

TYPES OF ARDHAVABHEDAKA^[14]

In Ayurveda, Ardhavabhedaka is often classified into different types based on the predominant doshic involvement and specific characteristics of the headache. Here are some common types of Ardhavabhedaka.

Vataja Ardhavabhedaka

This type is associated with an aggravated Vata dosha, characterized by throbbing, pulsating pain on one side of the head. It may be accompanied by symptoms such as sensitivity **to light and sound, restlessness, and a feeling of coldness.**

Pittaja Ardhavabhedaka

Pitta dosha predominance manifests as a sharp, burning pain on one side of the head. Individuals with Pittaja Ardhavabhedaka may experience nausea, sensitivity to light, and irritability. The pain is often intense and exacerbated by heat.

Kaphaja Ardhavabhedaka

In this type, an imbalance in Kapha dosha leads to a dull, heavy pain on one side of the head. Kaphaja Ardhavabhedaka may be associated with congestion, a feeling of heaviness, and a general sense of lethargy.

Tridoshaja Ardhavabhedaka

This type involves an imbalance in all three doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. The headache may present with a combination of characteristics from each dosha, making it more complex and challenging to manage.

Kshayaja Shiroroga

Lakshana (Symptoms): Severe pain in the eyebrows due to depletion of fat and muscle.

Suryavatha

Lakshana (Symptoms): Pain in the eyes and eyebrows that starts mildly during sunrise, peaks in the afternoon, and gradually diminishes.

Anyathovata

Lakshana (Symptoms): Pain referred to the eyes, temples, and neck.

Ananthavata

Lakshana (Symptoms): Intense pain in the eyes, eyebrows, temples, and cheeks; accompanied by tremors on the side of the neck or chin.

Shankhaka

Lakshana (Symptoms): Severe pain and burning sensation in the temple region.

Adhimantha

Lakshana (Symptoms): Throbbing pain in the eyes, tearing, splitting headache, and a feeling of heaviness in half of the head.

Vata Viparyaya.

Lakshana (Symptoms): Varied pain sensations, sometimes in the forehead, eye, or eyebrows.

Sl.No.	Vyadhi	Lakshana
1	Vataja Shiroroga	Animitta ruja, toda in shiras, shoola in bhru, shankha, akshi, lalata and ghatapradesha, occurs in ratri, prakasha santrasa. It occurs bilaterally.
2	Kshayaja Shiroroga	Ugra ruja in bhru due to vasa and bala kshata
3	Suryavatha	Akshi bhru ruk which starts manda from suryodayam and reaches its peak in the afternoon and gradually subsides.
4	Anyathovata	Referred pain in akshi, shankha, manya
5	Ananthavata	Teevra ruja in akshi, bhru, shankha and ganda, parswa kampa which will be referred from manya or greeva parswa
6	Shankhaka	Shankhadesa teevara ruk and daha
7	Adhimantha	Aranimanthanavat shoola in netra, toda, bheda, avilatha of netra, vyatha in half portion of head
8	Vata viparyaya	Vedana sometimes in the Pakshma, sometimes in eye or sometimes in bhru

RISK FACTOR FOR ARDHAVABHEDAKA^[15]

According to Ayurveda, doshic imbalances and lifestyle choices can have an impact on a variety of conditions, including ardhavabhedaka, or migraines. In Ayurveda, as in modern medicine, the term "risk factors" is not defined officially; however, some ailments and lifestyle choices are thought to be associated with the development or exacerbation of Ardhavabhedaka. The following are some elements that could be deemed significant.

Imbalanced Doshas

- Ardhavabhedaka is often associated with an imbalance in the Vata dosha, which represents the air and ether elements. Other doshas (Pitta and Kapha) may also play a role, depending on individual constitution and imbalances.

Poor Dietary Habits

- Irregular eating patterns, consuming excessively hot, spicy, or incompatible foods, and dehydration are believed to disturb the balance of doshas, potentially triggering Ardhavabhedaka.

Stress and Mental Strain

- Emotional stress, anxiety, and mental strain are considered significant contributors to migraines in Ayurveda. These factors can aggravate Vata dosha and disturb the overall balance.

Hormonal Fluctuations

- Changes in hormonal levels, particularly in women during menstruation, pregnancy, or menopause, are recognized as potential triggers for Ardhavabhedaka.

Environmental Factors

- Exposure to extreme weather conditions, excessive noise, bright lights, and other environmental stressors can disturb the equilibrium of doshas, contributing to migraines.

Lack of Proper Rest

- Irregular sleep patterns, inadequate rest, and disturbed sleep are considered risk factors as they can exacerbate Vata imbalance and contribute to the onset of migraines.

Excessive Physical Exertion

- Overexertion or engaging in strenuous physical activities without proper rest and recovery is believed to disturb the balance of doshas, potentially triggering migraines.

Genetic Predisposition

- While not explicitly mentioned in classical Ayurvedic texts, there is an acknowledgment that genetic factors, or an individual's inherent constitution (Prakriti), may play a role in susceptibility to imbalances that lead to migraines.

MANAGEMENT OF ARDHAVABHEDAKA^[16]

The management of Ardhavabhedaka (migraine) in Ayurveda involves a holistic approach that aims to restore balance to the doshas and address the root causes of the condition. Here are some general principles and strategies used in the Ayurvedic management of Ardhavabhedaka.

Identify Dosha Imbalance

- An Ayurvedic practitioner assesses the individual's constitution (Prakriti) and the current doshic imbalance (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) to tailor the treatment plan accordingly.

Dietary Modifications

- Adopting a migraine-friendly diet involves avoiding trigger foods that may aggravate doshas. This can include reducing intake of spicy, hot, and oily foods and incorporating cooling, nourishing, and easily digestible meals.

Lifestyle Adjustments

- Establishing a regular daily routine (Dinacharya) and sleep pattern helps balance Vata dosha. Adequate rest, proper sleep hygiene, and stress management techniques, such as meditation and yoga, are emphasized.

Herbal Remedies

- Ayurvedic herbs with anti-inflammatory, calming, and nervine properties may be prescribed. Examples include Brahmi, Ashwagandha, Jatamansi, and Shatavari. These herbs aim to pacify aggravated doshas and support the nervous system.

Nasya Therapy

- Nasal administration of medicated oils (Nasya) is used to balance Vata dosha and address nasal congestion. This therapy is believed to have a positive impact on migraine symptoms.

Shirodhara

- Shirodhara involves a continuous stream of warm herbal oil or decoction poured onto the forehead. It is known for its calming effect on the nervous system and is often recommended for managing headaches.

Panchakarma

- Panchakarma, a set of detoxification therapies, may be recommended to eliminate toxins and restore balance. Virechana (therapeutic purgation) and Nasya (nasal administration) are examples of Panchakarma procedures.

Ayurvedic Massage (Abhyanga)

- Gentle massage with medicated oils (Abhyanga) can help relax the muscles, improve circulation, and promote overall well-being.

Personalized Treatment

- Ayurvedic treatments are highly individualized based on the unique constitution and imbalances of the individual. Therefore, a personalized treatment plan is crucial for effective management.

HOW TO PREVENT ARDHAVABHEDAKA^[17]

Preventing Ardhavabhedaka (migraine) in Ayurveda involves adopting a holistic approach that addresses lifestyle, dietary, and environmental factors to maintain balance in the doshas. Here are some preventive measures based on Ayurvedic principles.

1. Maintain a Regular Routine (Dinacharya)

- Establish a daily routine that includes regular wake-up and sleep times. Consistency in daily activities helps balance Vata dosha and promotes overall well-being.

2. Balanced Diet

- Adopt a balanced and nourishing diet. Include a variety of whole foods, fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and moderate amounts of healthy fats. Avoid excessive consumption of spicy, hot, and oily foods, as they can aggravate Pitta dosha.

3. Hydration

- Stay well-hydrated by drinking adequate water throughout the day. Dehydration can exacerbate Vata dosha, contributing to headaches.

4. Identify and Avoid Triggers

- Pay attention to factors that trigger migraines, such as specific foods, environmental stimuli, or stressors. Avoid or minimize exposure to these triggers.

5. Manage Stress

- Incorporate stress management techniques into your daily routine. Practices such as meditation, deep breathing exercises (Pranayama), and yoga help calm the mind and balance the nervous system.

6. Adequate Sleep

- Ensure sufficient and restful sleep each night. Lack of sleep can disturb the balance of doshas, especially Vata, and contribute to the onset of migraines.

7. Avoid Overexertion

- Practice moderation in physical activities. Overexertion can disturb the balance of doshas and potentially trigger headaches.

8. Limit Stimulants

- Minimize the consumption of stimulants like caffeine and alcohol, as these can aggravate Pitta dosha and contribute to migraines.

9. Regular Exercise

- Engage in regular, moderate exercise to promote overall health and balance. Activities like walking, swimming, and gentle yoga can be beneficial.

10. Seasonal Adaptations

- Be mindful of seasonal changes and adapt your lifestyle accordingly. Changes in weather and environment can influence dosha balance.

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