

## ROLE OF BASTI IN SCIATICA- A REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

*Gridhrasi* can be equated with sciatica, where pain, weakness, numbness, and other discomforts along the path of the sciatic nerve often accompanies low back pain. It is a common affliction of adults, costing billions of dollars in healthcare and resulting in more lost days of work than any other illness but the common cold. In present era, attentively engaged in professional and social life, eventually forgotten normal sit and lie postures. Hustles like Jerky movements during travelling, poor postures, bending and lifting awkward etc., creates extreme pressure on the spine which affects functional ability of lower limbs. Basti is a purificatory process by which all the three vitiated

doshas are expelled from The anal canal and especially vata is pacified. As a result of excretion of vitiated dosha the physiological equilibrium in three doshas is maintained and lasting results are produced after the therapy in the form of sound health. Basti therapy is a complex process in which several factors take active part for completing the action of basti. Instead of pinpointing to one type of mechanism it is presumed that various factors work in collaboration with each other to produce the beneficial effect of basti therapy. Here an attempt has been made to explain the probable mode of action of matra basti treatment of *Gridhrasi*.

**KEYWORDS:** *Basti, Sciatica, dosha, vata.*

## INTRODUCTION

Vata is main thing for all the functions of the body comprise Gati and Cheshta.<sup>[1]</sup> In practice life the union of lower limbs play a significant role to do the performance normally. The most common disorder which affects the mobility of the legs along with backache. *Gridhrasi* the name itself indicates the way of gait shown by the patient due to extreme pain i.e., like *Gridhra* (vulture). It undoubtedly indicates that this disease not only cause difficulty in

walking but also causes the pain and affecting on the daily routine activity of the patient. The cardinal symptoms of Gridhrasi are 'Sphikpurva, Kati, Prushta, Uru, Janu, Jangha, Pada – Kramatvedana, Stambha, Toda, Muhurspandana. Kaphanubandha Gridhrasi is associated with the symptoms Tandra, Gourava, and Arochaka. Sciatica resembles with the Symptomatology of Gridhrasi. In Sciatica, the pain in the distribution of sciatic nerve which begins from the buttock and radiates downwards to posterior aspect of thigh, calf and to outer border of foot. Herniation and degenerative changes in intervertebral disc, often history of trauma, lifting of heavy weight or exposure to cold are most common causes. As the disease Gridhrasi is Vatananatmaja Vyadhi<sup>[1]</sup>, the disease will not manifest without the presence of Vata. In Ayurveda there are many treatment modalities for the Vatavyadhi along with internal medications. Panchakarma is very unique therapeutic procedure because of its preventive, promotive and rejuvenative properties as well as radical cure. Among the Panchakarma, Basti Karma is having the superior role to treat the Vatavyadhi and it is considered as Ardhachikitsa.<sup>[2]</sup> Therefore, once Vata is controlled by Basti, the body equilibrium can be achieved. Sciatica is characterized by a pain running from the lumbar (lower back) region to the back of the legs. Sciatica pains – felt in either one or both of the legs – are usually experienced after the age of thirty and can go on aggravating as the person ages.

This pain is a chronic pain and is difficult to cure with conventional medicines. While the pain can subside when painkillers are taken, Ayurveda offers the holistic management of chronic diseases by treating the underlying cause of the disease.

### **INVESTIGATIONS NEEDED IN SCIATICA**

Routine investigations were done in all cases included hemoglobin, total leukocyte count, differential leukocyte count, erythrocyte sedimentation rate, fasting blood sugar, and RA factor; routine examination of urine and stool; and x-ray of lumbosacral region (anteroposterior and lateral view)

### **ON EXAMINATION TABLE PATIENT IS EXAMINED WITH SLR TEST**

Degree of SLR test will help in determining the status of patient pain and help in management.

### **SYMPTOMS**

- Pain travels from the buttock, down the back of the thigh, and into the toe.
- Sciatica usually affects either the lower left or right side of the body.

- Walking, standing, bending over, driving a car, working at a computer, catching up on household chores, sneezing or coughing, and many other activities of daily living can cause sudden and intense pain.

### CAUSES OF SCIATICA

- Spinal injury
- Overweight
- Irregular exercises
- Herniated disk
- Degenerative disc disease
- Lumbar spinal stenosis
- Spondylolisthesis
- Sleeping on a soft mattress
- Wearing high heels

### AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF SCIATICA

Sciatica is known as Gridhrasi in Ayurveda. (*Gridhra* means Eagle), as the gait of the affected person can resemble that of an eagle's walk and the inflamed nerve appears like an eagle's beak. Sciatica is typical of Vata imbalances.

Sciatica is also considered to be caused by an impaired digestive system. A faulty digestion causes the build-up of toxins (ama) that keep on accumulating in the minute channels of the body.

### TREATMENT PLAN

Ayurvedic treatment of Sciatica consists of cleansing herbs that eliminate the toxic build up, digestive herbs that restore proper digestion. Medicated oils can be applied to soothe the sciatic nerve. Panchakarma, massage therapies are very effective in subsiding the pains of sciatica.

### THERAPIES

External oil application with medicinal oil and "Bolus" or bundles of fresh and dry herbs wrapped in cloth is applied to improve the blood circulation, stimulate and strengthen the nerves and reduce the aggravated Vata Dosha which helps reduce the pain. Usually the treatment period is 4 – 5 weeks according to the severity of the disease. More treatment

procedures like, Elimination (*Sodhanam*) of the accumulated toxic products of digestion, metabolism and the disease process, Pacification (*Samanam*) and correction of the entities responsible for altered functioning and Rejuvenation (*Rasayanam*) of the bodily tissue to regain and maintain natural strength and vitality.

The strength of Ayurveda in the area of spine and joint treatments is globally appreciated. Since it addresses the root cause of the issue the results are fantastic.

Therapies like *Dhanyamla dhara*, *Abyanga swedam*, *Pathrapotali swedam*, *Sarvangadhara*, *Kadeevasthy*, *Navarakizhi*, *Vasti* (the most important procedure in Ayurveda for curing Sciatica permanently) etc., are done as per the necessity and condition. These therapies are directed towards relieving the inflammatory changes and underlying causes of Sciatica, releasing the spasms and nerve compressions in the affected area, strengthening and nourishing entire spine & supporting tissues. Usually the treatment period is 4 – 5 weeks according to the severity of the disease.

Along with these therapies, Ayurveda has also described *Sira vedana* (Venesection) and *Agni karma* (Heat therapy) for treating Sciatica.

In four to six weeks, the majority of patients find their symptoms are relieved with our treatment. Ayurveda stands as a better alternative to surgery in Sciatica.

## **BASTI PROCEDURE**

As the Basti is one of the Chikitsasutra for the Gridhrasi, the Matrabasti improves Varna and Bala, which is indicated for Bala, Vruddha and Alpagni person. Guda is the main root of the body and having blood vessels in it, if we administer the Basti in anus it nourishes all the limbs and organs of the body.<sup>[3]</sup> Probable mode of action of Basti The action of Basti is taken place in two ways i.e. action through the vascular route and through nervous route. If we place Sneha in a container, close the lid and invert it, the Sneha dribbles from the junction of the lid and vessel or from the pores of the lid and escapes. This is called as Anu pravanaguna or percolation. Similarly, the basti medicine can percolate and cross the barrier of ileo-caecal valve which is a door between (lid) the end of ileum (last part of small intestine, where it enters the large intestine) and caecum (first part of colon or large intestine). The Bastidravya reaches to the level of stomach, duodenum and ileum (parts of small intestine) wherein the active principles of the Bastidravya are absorbed and made use of.

Even modern studies have shown the action of Basti(enema) beyond the level of colon (large intestine). Pharmacokinetic study has also proved that drug administered via rectum can achieve higher blood levels of the drug than oral route due to partial avoidance of hepatic first-pass metabolism. The rectum has a rich blood and lymph supply and drugs can cross the rectal mucosa as they can other lipid membranes. Thus, un-ionized and lipid-soluble substances are readily absorbed from the rectum. The portion absorbed from the upper rectal mucosa is carried by the superior haemorrhoidal vein into the portal circulation, whereas that absorbed from the lower rectum enters directly into the systemic circulation via the middle and inferior haemorrhoidal veins. Thus, administration of drugs in the Basti form has faster absorption and provides quicker results. The rectal wall contains neuroreceptors and pressure receptors which are stimulated by various Bastidravyas. Stimulation results in increase in conduction of sodium ions. The inward rush of sodium ions through the membrane of the unmyelinated terminal is responsible for generating the action potential, influx of ion there by generating action potential. The drugs, immediately after entering into the Pakwashaya (intestines), strike at the very root of vitiated Vata.<sup>[4-5]</sup> basti help in removing ruk, toda, ruksha guna and help in relieving vata (pain).

## DIET

A large proportion of the diet must be carbohydrates, which facilitate proper movement of bowels, thereby bettering the body's digestion. Green leafy vegetables should be incorporated in the diet as they provide fibre which improves digestion and elimination of wastes. Fruits such as bananas and apples are recommended. Heavy meals must be avoided as they take a long time to digest. This may exert undue pressure on the lower back region.

## DISCUSSION

If We See Day Today Life, It is hectic, stressful, and demanding; both, physically and mentally. A sedentary job, lack of exercise and an unhealthy diet take a toll on your health, and one of the glaring signs of the same is a pain in the lower back. Pain in the lower back and Sciatica is one of the most ordinary troubles that affect the vast majority of people in their lifetime.

Ayurveda has some of the most effective solutions for a broad spectrum of health problems, including Sciatica and lower back pain. According to Ayurveda, lower back pain is predominantly caused by Vata, which is referred to as 'Apana Vata'.

Apna Vata is situated in the colon, pelvis, and lumbosacral part of the lower back where the Vata finds its natural stride and governs several physiological functions such as lower back movement, hips, thighs, and excretory processes in the body such as urine, faeces, menstruation, and more.

As mentioned above, Ayurveda offers effective treatments for lower back pain and Sciatica.

### **1. Kati Basti**

Kati Basti is one of the unique Ayurvedic treatments for lower back pain. 'Kati' means lower back and 'Basti' translates to 'to hold'. A flour dough well is made on the lower back which is then filled with warm oil that is replaced continuously when it cools down.

The hot oil enhances blood circulation significantly in the lower back and relaxes the muscles, which decrease pain, stiffness and increases movement.

### **2. Steam and massage therapy**

A typical Ayurvedic full body massage relieves tension and relaxes the muscles in the body. The skin absorbs the herbal oils which nourish the body and skin. The skin therapy is known as Abhyanga in Ayurveda and is primarily used to relax and soften the muscles.

### **3. Therapeutic enema**

Therapeutic enema is one of the most effective treatments to deal with lower back pain. In this treatment, Ayurvedic oils are inserted inside the colon and extra Vata is eliminated from the pelvic region. Various studies have revealed that substances delivered by enemas administered through the mouth quickly pass through the bloodstream.

### **4. Herbal supplements**

Herbal supplements are highly effective in offering relief from lower back pain and Sciatica. However, it is essential to consult with your Ayurvedic practitioner before using these supplements.

1. Castor oil – helps in the reduction of Vata
2. Dashamula
3. Ashwagandha – offers nourishment, rejuvenation, and decreases the pain significantly.

Lower back pain and Sciatica can significantly lower the quality of your life. However, with effective and age-old Ayurvedic treatment, we can easily treat these patients. Hence Ayurveda plays significant role in sciatica.<sup>[6-7]</sup>

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