

A MORPHOLOGICAL STUDY OF SUSHRUTOKTA VEDHYA SIRA IN THE UPPER LIMB

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a holistic system of medicine that is more than 5000 years old. Sushruta, who is known as the Father of Surgery, described many surgical procedures as well as para-surgical treatments. *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting) is one of the main *Shodhana* (purification) therapies in Ayurveda. Acharya Sushruta explained that if the five purification therapies (Panchakarma) cannot be done due to lack of time, *Raktamokshana* alone can give similar benefits. He also stated that *Siravyadha* (venesection) is the most important method of *Raktamokshana* and considered it as *Ardha Chikitsa* (half of the total treatment). However, *Siravyadha* is rarely practiced today in Ayurveda. This may be due to a lack of proper knowledge about basic anatomical concepts described in *Sharira*, such as *Vedhya* and *Avedhya Sira* (veins that should and should not be

punctured), the exact sites for *Shashtra Patana* (incision), and the important structures that must be protected during the procedure. *Siravyadha* should be performed at specific sites according to different diseases. In *Sharira* Sthana, Acharya Sushruta mentioned particular sites for *Siravyadha* in various diseases. It raises the question why different sites are recommended for different conditions instead of using a common site for all diseases. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify and locate the veins used for *Siravyadha* based on available classical literature. The study focuses only on the upper limbs.

KEYWORDS: *Sushruta Samhita*, *Siravyadha*, *Raktamokshana*.

INTRODUCTION

Acharya Sushruta clearly explains that a person cannot become a good physician without proper theoretical and practical knowledge of human anatomy (*Sharira Rachana*). Understanding the structure of the body is essential for safe and effective treatment.

When we study the chapters Sira Sharira and *Siravyadha Vidhi* in *Sushruta Sharira Sthana*, we learn that *Siravyadha* (bloodletting) is an important method of treatment for many diseases. In this context, the present study focuses only on the “*Urdhwa Shakha*” (upper parts/upper limbs of the body). Acharya Sushruta has mentioned different specific sites for *Siravyadha* according to different diseases.

Bloodletting at particular veins and locations is an important surgical procedure in Ayurveda and also in Marma therapy. Since it is a powerful treatment method, it should be performed only by properly trained practitioners who have good knowledge of superficial veins and nearby vital structures, so that injury can be avoided.

METHODS AND MATERIAL

Various classical Ayurvedic texts were studied to collect information related to Sira Sharir (anatomy of veins) and *Siravyadha Vidhi* (procedure of venesection). The references were gathered from the following ancient Ayurvedic sources

- a. *Brihatrayi* – *Sushruta Samhita*, *Charaka Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*
- b. *Laghutrayi* – *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *Bhavaprakasha*, and *Madhava Nidana*
- c. Upanishads
- d. Other important Ayurvedic texts

A comparative study of different structures was done to better understand the *Urdha Shakha s* (site of venesection in the upper limb) and other related structures included in this area.

References from different Ayurvedic journals and modern scientific sources were used to discuss the applied aspects from a surgical and anatomical point of view.

Review of Literature

According to Acharya Sushruta, there are 700 Siras (veins) in the human body. These are divided into 4 groups, and 400 of them are present in the limbs (arms and legs). The veins present in the extremities should be handled carefully during surgery.

Avedhya Siras (Veins that should not be punctured)

Acharya Sushruta was the first in Indian medical history to clearly describe *Siravyadha* (bloodletting therapy) and also classify veins into *Vedhya* (can be punctured) and *Avedhya* (should not be punctured).

He mentioned 98 *Avedhya Siras*, which must be protected during surgical procedures. Injury to these veins can cause serious complications or even death.

Siravyadha Sthana (Sites of Bloodletting)

In each limb, there are 100 *Siras*. Out of these, 4 veins should not be punctured:

One is called Jaladhara

Three are situated deep inside

These are considered *Avedhya Siras*.

OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION

Science keeps changing and developing with time. But Ayurveda mainly depends on its classical texts and the teachings (*Apta Vachana*) given by ancient *Acharyas*. These concepts were developed many years ago. Because of the generation gap and lack of proper interpretation, many of these ideas have not been clearly passed on to the present generation. As a result, we are facing difficulty in understanding them properly and clearing our doubts.

Therefore, this study was conducted to anatomically identify and locate the *Shakhagata Vedhya Sira Sthanas* in specific diseases through literary research. The aim of this study is to better understand the concepts of *Sira Sharira* and *Sira Vyadha Vidhi Sharira* and to preserve and transmit this knowledge to future generations for its practical application.

CONCLUSION

In ancient times, Acharya Sushruta described the procedure of *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting) to treat many diseases. One important method of *Raktamokshana* is *Siravyadha* (venesection). During the study of *Siravyadha* in *Urdhva Shakhagata Vedhya Sira Sthana* (veins of the upper limb), it is mentioned that a *Sira* located in the left upper limb between the little finger (*Kanishthika*) and ring finger (*Anamika*), near the left elbow joint (*Vama Kurpara Sandhi*), can be compared to the left median cubital vein in modern anatomy. Similarly, the *Sira* described on the right side near the right elbow joint (*Dakshina Kurpara Sandhi*) can be compared to the right median cubital vein.

In present medical science, the concept of *Siravyadha* is similar to procedures like intravenous (IV) infusion, IV injections, venesection, and use of veins for dialysis (fistula). Therefore, the procedure of *Siravyadha* explained by Acharya Sushruta is still relevant today, as the veins described in ancient texts correspond to the veins used in modern medical practice.

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