

HRIDROGA – AN OUTLOOK THROUGH SAMANYA LAKSHANA

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ABSTRACT

Hridroga (cardiovascular diseases) are the major causes of death globally, taking an estimated 17.9 million lives each year. In view of increasing incidence of cardiac disorders in the present era, there is a need to understand the disease more elaborately. Ayurveda has a unique approach towards understanding and diagnosing diseases. Diagnosis must be done by proper analysis of presenting symptoms of a disease. By the thorough knowledge regarding these signs and symptoms, right diagnosis can be done before planning any treatment. Ayurveda has given utmost importance for diagnosis with due consideration of *Lakshanas*. *Hritshoola* (chest pain), *Vaivarnya* (cyanosis), *Moorcha* (syncope), *Shwasa* (dyspnea), *Kasa* (cough) are the cardinal features of *Hridroga*. By knowing the whole concept of *Lakshanas*, diagnosis can be done at an earlier stage.

Keywords: *Hridroga*, Cardiovascular diseases, *Samanya Lakshanas*

INTRODUCTION

Cardiovascular diseases are the group of disorders of heart and blood vessels that include coronary heart disease, heart failure, rheumatic heart disease, congenital heart disease, cardiomyopathies and other conditions¹.

Any structural or functional abnormalities which hinders the normal functions of *Hridaya* can be considered as *Hridroga* (cardiovascular diseases). Classical texts of Ayurveda explain various types of *Hridroga* caused by *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Krimi*. In spite of the

description of heart diseases in Ayurveda, understanding the disease in modern way is the need of the hour. According to WHO, cardiovascular diseases are the major causes of death globally, taking an estimated 17.9 million lives each year². According to Ayurveda, *Vaivarnya*, *Moorcha*, *Jwara*, *Kasa*, *Hikka*, *Shwasa*, *Asyavairasya*, *Trisha*, *Pramoha*, *Chardi*, *Kaphotklesha*, *Ruja*, *Aruchi* are the cardinal features of *Hridroga*. Patients with cardiovascular diseases present with symptoms like chest pain and may even end up in death. The symptoms caused by heart disease result most commonly from myocardial ischemia, from disturbance of the contraction and/or relaxation of the myocardium, from obstruction to blood flow, or from an abnormal cardiac rhythm or rate³. Knowledge regarding these symptoms can help a Physician to diagnose the disease at an earlier stage and thus plan for the treatment. Since the description of *Hridroga* in Ayurveda is brief, there is a need for more clarification. Here, *Samanya Hridroga Lakshanas* are taken into consideration and an attempt is made to explain the important *Lakshanas* of this disease with reference to variety of cardiac diseases.

Materials and methods: Materials related to *Hridroga*, and cardiovascular diseases are collected from Ayurvedic *Samhitas* and textbooks of modern medicine respectively. Relevant matters are also obtained from medical journals.

Hridroga Samanya Lakshanas: According to Charaka Samhita, *Vaivarnya*, *Moorcha*, *Jwara*, *Kasa*, *Hikka*, *Shwasa*, *Asyavairasya*, *Trisha*, *Pramoha*, *Chardi*, *Kaphotklesha*, *Ruja* and *Aruchi* are the *Samanya Lakshanas* of *Hridroga*⁴.

Vaivarnya

Neela and *Shyava* are two among the *Vaikarika Varnas* explained in the literatures, which can be seen in patients with cardiovascular diseases. When *Oshta* turns *Pakwajambu Varna*, it is a morbid sign⁵. Cyanosis is more a sign than a symptom of heart disease. In central cyanosis due to cardiac cause, the extremities and tongue are all cyanosed. In congenital heart diseases, central cyanosis occurs due to the mixing of arterial and venous blood within the heart or outside⁶.

Peripheral cyanosis occurs when the peripheral circulation is slow. Differential cyanosis presents with half part of the body having natural complexion and other half having unnatural complexion, as seen in Patent Ductus Arteriosus. *Vaivarnya* can also be understood as anaemia, which can be seen in conditions like infective endocarditis, angina pectoris, ischemic heart disease, etc.

Pramoha-Moorcha

Moha is a state of confusion which leads to *Moorcha* (syncope). Patients with syncope may experience a prodrome (pre-syncope) in which the patient may have symptoms like lightheadedness, visual disturbance, nausea and sweating. These symptoms may last for a few seconds before the syncopal event. Syncope is a transient loss of consciousness that occurs when the cardiac output is not sufficient to maintain the cerebral blood flow⁷. Patient loses consciousness over seconds. Morbid signs include the patient fainting again and again while being taken out of the bed⁸. Postural syncope, due to orthostatic hypotension occurs due to cardiac causes, which prevents the body from responding rapidly enough to pump more blood while standing up. Syncope is commonly seen in cardiac arrhythmias, valvular heart disease, acute myocardial infarction, pulmonary hypertension, sick sinus syndrome, etc.

Jwara: Fever can be seen as a symptom in cardiac diseases like infective endocarditis, pericarditis, acute myocardial infarction, etc. In acute myocardial infarction, there will be mild rise in temperature within 24 hours and can last up to a week⁹.

Kasa-Hikka: In Charaka Samhita, there is a mentioning about *Vidradhi* in *Hridaya* and in that context, *Kasa* is told as one of the symptoms¹⁰. In case of heart failure, there will be decreased ventricular output, which results in the accumulation of fluid in the lungs. As the lungs become congested, excess fluid leaks into the alveoli. Coughing is body's natural response to clear the bronchial passages to relieve congestion¹¹. Hemoptysis occurs usually in advanced stages of cardiac diseases. It is seen in conditions like valvular heart diseases. Diseases like myocardial infarction can cause vagus nerve irritation leading to hiccups.

Shwasa

In Charaka Samhita, while mentioning *Vidradhi* in *Hridaya*, *Shwasa* is mentioned as one of the symptoms¹². *Urdhwashwasa* is very common in massive myocardial infarction. There will be cardiac failure leading to reduction in pumping ability of the heart which in turn causes pulmonary oedema. These diseases may predispose to *Urdhwashwasa*. Signs and symptoms of pulmonary oedema including breathing difficulty, frothy sputum, etc can be seen in *Urdhwashwasa*¹³. Many cardiovascular diseases present with symptoms like exertional dyspnea, orthopnea, paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea, Cheyne-stokes respiration. Dyspnea occurs due to many factors like increased work of breathing, reduced vital capacity, bronchial narrowing, etc. It is one of the cardinal manifestations of cardiovascular diseases, which is also seen in many other conditions like pulmonary disease, obesity and anxiety¹⁴. Cardiac causes of dyspnea include valvular disease, heart failure, cardiac arrhythmias and cardiomyopathy.

Chardi, Asyavairasya, Aruchi

Symptoms of gastrointestinal tract like *Chardi*, *Asyavairasya* and *Aruchi* can be seen in *Hridroga*. Chest pain with vomiting is seen in cardiovascular diseases like myocardial infarction, cardiac arrhythmias. As *Hridaya* is a vital organ which nourishes all other cells of the body, any morbidity in *Hridaya* can lead to the impairment of other organs of the body including the digestive system. In case of congestive heart failure, loss of appetite, nausea, fullness after meals and distension of abdomen are the common features. Vomiting occurs occasionally.

Ruja

Cardiac disease is the most important among the different causes of precordial pain, the most common being myocardial infarction. It can also be due to other causes like gastritis, any musculoskeletal conditions, etc. Chest pain of cardiac origin can radiate to different sites like inner aspect of left arm to little finger, left or both sides of neck and jaw, left scapular region, right shoulder, arm and epigastrium¹⁵. In Samhitas, there is mentioning of different characters of pain caused by *Doshaja* types of *Hridroga*. *Vataja Hridroga* presents

with *Toda*, *Shoola*, *Bheda* type of pain; *Daha*, *Chosha* etc can be seen in *Pittaja Hridroga* and patient feels as if loaded with a stone (*Ashmaavrta*) in *Kaphaja Hridroga*¹⁶. Modern Science also explains various types of pain for different cardiovascular diseases like ischemic pain is vague, crushing, bursting, lancinating, burning type; pain in acute myocardial infarction is sudden, severe, crushing, prolonged and is usually experienced at rest; anginal pain occurs during exertion and is relieved with rest¹⁷.

DISCUSSION

Vaivarnya, *Moorcha*, *Jwara*, *Kasa*, *Hikka*, *Shwasa*, *Asyavairasya*, *Trisha*, *Pramoha*, *Chardi*, *Kaphotklesha*, *Ruja* and *Aruchi* are the *Samanya Lakshanas* of *Hridroga*. These are the symptoms pertaining to *Doshaja*, *Sahaja*, *Margavaranajanya* and *Krimiija Hridroga*. A patient with *Hridroga* can present with any of these *Lakshanas* either individually or combined. A Physician who is well versed in all these *Lakshanas* can come to proper diagnosis without any fail. In case of serious heart disease, a great variety of symptoms may arise, which may or may not be connected with the cardiovascular system and care should be taken in order to identify the exact cause.

CONCLUSION

Symptoms of cardiovascular diseases ranges from chest pain, syncope to death. Many of these symptoms can also occur due to non-cardiac causes. So, to diagnose *Hridroga*, critical analysis of all its *Lakshanas* is necessary. Ayurveda has a unique way of understanding and diagnosing diseases. Diagnosis has to be done by proper analysis of *Lakshanas* of a disease. By the complete knowledge of these *Lakshanas*, right diagnosis can be done before planning any treatment protocol. Among all the symptoms, chest pain is one of the major manifestations of dreadful diseases like coronary artery diseases. So, every chest pain should be treated as cardiovascular origin considering the grave prognosis. Thus, by knowing the whole concept of *Lakshanas*, a Physician can do the diagnosis at an earlier stage and can succeed in his clinical practice.

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