ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN MANAGEMENT OF ARDHAVBHEDAKA (MIGRAINE)

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ABSTRACT

The majority of presenting health related issues today is attributed to the life style, where there is immense urgency in whatever we do. Migraine can also be considered as one of them. Migraine can be defined as paroxysmal affection, accompanied by severe headache, generally on one side of the head and associated with disorders of digestion (Agni) and mental stress. Worldwide Migraine affects nearly 15% population or approximately one billion people; it is more common in women at 15% then men at 6%. In Ayurveda Migraine can be understood as “Ardhavbhedaka”. It has emphasized the role of Agni-dusti, Manah-santapa, Rodana, Shoka, Bhaya etc. psychological factors in the etiopathogenesis of this condition. Generally, traditional medicine focus on pain relief, but the main objective of Ayurvedic diagnosis is to find the root cause and eliminate it through changes in life style (Dinacharya), diet (Ahara) and keeping the Agni & Doshas in balance. Life style management like proper Diet and Sleep, Exercises, Yoga & Pranayam, following Ayurvedic Ritucharya and Dinacharya, Sadvritta etc. formulations like Ashwagandha, Madhuyasthi, Giloy satva, Godanti bhasma, Pathyadi kwath, Shirah shuladi vajra rasa are effective.

Keywords: Ardhavbhedaka, Migraine, Dinacharya, Shodhana therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Physical disorders are of several types amongst them incidence of migraine is found to be the most common one. Anyone who’s ever had migraine knows that it is a nightmare. It is one type of neurological syndrome; characterized by altered bodily perceptions, severe headache sometimes with nausea and irritability. Migraine can often be recognized by its activators (triggers) such as bright light, afferent stimulation, hunger, excess stress, physical exertion, stormy weather or barometric pressure changes, hormonal fluctuations, lack or excess of sleep or other chemical stimulants. This pain usually begins mainly in forehead, sometimes at the side of head or around the eyes, is pulsating...
in nature and gradually gets worse and it can last for 2-3 hours or even up to 2-3 days.

In Ayurveda, headaches are known by any of the following names: Shirovedna, Shiroabhitapa and Shirahshula. According to Sushrutascharya and Bhavaprakash, there are eleven types of Shiro-roga: Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Saniipataj, Raktaja, Krimija, Kshyaja, Shankhaka, Anantvata and Ardhavbhedaka. Of each of these types, the translation of Ardhavbhedaka seems to be most fitting for Migraine headaches. The word Ardhavbhedaka has two components viz. Ardha and Avabhedaka. Ardha means half side, Ava suggest bad prognosis, Bhedaka means breaking through, perforating or bursting out type of pain. In this, pain affects half region of the head. In colloquial language it is termed “Ardhasisi”. Chakrapani made it clear by saying Ardhavbhedaka means “Ārdha mas-taka vedana”.

**Aims and objectives -**
- To review the etiopathogenesis of Ardhavbhedaka (Migraine) in Ayurveda.
- To review preventive and curative aspects in Ayurveda for Ardhavbhedaka.

**Nidana (Etiological factors)-**
- Almost all ancient Acharya have described Ardhavbhedaka, with a mild difference in doshik involvement. According to Sushruta it is Tridoshaj, according to Charak it is Vata-kaphaja, according to Vagbhatta it is only vataj.

1. **Vata vitiating factors**-
- Intake of unctuous diet- undigested, non-nutritious, coffee, chocolates, cheese, ice-cream etc is triggers leading to gastrointestinal disturbance ultimately produce headache
- Taking food before the digestion of previous meal (Adhyasan)
- Expose to wind (Sheet marut sansparshaat)- increase of Vata by its Atisheeta guna leads to constriction of blood vessels causing headache
- Suppress of natural urges (Vega nigrahat)
- Rough aged meals (Ruksa meal)
- Improper sleep (Atiswpana, Jagaran)
- Excessive talking
- Contour with bad or pungent smell, dust etc, odour, movie, dust, eating uncooked food
- Vata’s influence is the involvement of the nervous system and of pain.

2. **Pitta vitiating factors**-
- Exposure to sun
- Taking food in excess (Vishmasan) Pitta’s influence is involvement of the circulatory system.

3. **Kapha vitiating factors**-
- Day sleep- Shirahsula due to Aavran of Vata
- Intake of cold food- ice-cream, refrigerated food
- Kapha’s influence is the presence of inflammation of tissue in the brain.

4. **Manasika nidana**-
Adharma i.e unrighteousness is the main cause of somatic disease (eg suppression of urges, Manah-santapa)

**Rupa (Clinical features)-**
The patient of migraine feels his head spinning after awaking up in the morning and darkness prevails in front of the eyes. After this, the head feels heavy, hunger dies, and nausea sets in, acidity comes in, belching increases, intense pain occurs in one portion of the head which spreads sometimes to the entire area of the head. The patient feels as if his head is ex-
ploding to bits and pieces. The patient feels trouble in making movements. Light and noise becomes intolerable. The patient feels piece and calm in isolation. The pain may subside after vomiting or may prolong for 3-4 days at stretch.

- According to Charak in Ardhavbhedaka severe Sastraarminibha (cutting or piercing type) pain usually half side of head affecting neck (Manya), eye brows (Bhru), eye (Akshi), ear (Karn), temporal (Sankh Pradesh) and forehead (Lalata)3

- According to Sushruta severe throbbing (Bheda) type or pricking type (Toda) of pain in one half of head associated with giddiness (Bhrama) features appear every fortnightly or ten days or any time4

- According to Vagbhatta in Ardhavbhedaka ghata (occipital or parietal region) and all shirogata sandhis are involved. He also emphasized its paroxysmal nature and said that it comes in every Paksa (fortnightly) or Masa (month)5

Samprapti (Etiopathogenesis)-

- Ardhavbhedaka is caused by deep rooted problems, including a sensitive nervous system and impaired digestion, improper diet and lifestyle causes aggravation of Pitta (Ayurvedic humour representing fire) in the body. In an aggraved state, Pitta impairs digestion, leading to production of digestive impurities (known as Ama). Also Kledaka Kapha accumulates and aggravates in the stomach causing slow digestion and a feeling of heaviness. This Ama gets stored in Manovahi srotas (mind channels) thereby becoming the cause for pains in Migraine.

- In other way we can say a sensitive nervous system lowers the Ojas (energy) in the body. Ojas is the essence of all body tissues and provides strength to the nervous system and body. If we have a strong nervous system, we are able to fight against problems and carry on with our work with healthy mind. Lowering of Ojas causes Migraine like problems.

- Also we can say weakness of Sira niyamak shakti (the vasomotor power), changes obtaining into the blood circulation in the blood capillaries is possibly the reason behind this tormenting disease of Migraine (Ardhavbhedaka).

- Another way we can say Migraine most frequently occur when systemic Pitta (Pachak Pitta) accumulates and aggravates in the Annavaha srotas. From there it overflows to the Rasvaha and Raktavaha srotas (cardiovascular system), relocating to the rasa and rakta dhatu of the Pranavaha srotas, there causing possible nose bleeds and or infection in sinus cavity. Relocation into the Manovahi srotas can result in anger and intensity, while relocating to Majja dhatu will express as “burning nerve” pain in the head. So Migraine (Ardhavbhedaka) is more of a gastroenterological disorder than a neurological one. Most of the sufferers have issues like acidity and stomach problems.

- History of gastric offset may be the root cause for vitiation of tridosha in the body. Improper digestion due to gastric disturbance may leads to chronic rhinitis as a result of which Kapha may accumulate in the srotas in the head. The accumulated Kapha may obstruct the pathway of Vayu leading to pain.

Pathya (recommended diet)-

- Avoid hot, spicy, salty, sour and fermented foods, white sugar, white flour products as they aggravate Pitta in body.

- Eat fruits and vegetables more.
Avoid tea, coffee, alcohol, meat.
Avoid direct exposure to the sun (as it may act as a trigger).
Regular head massage with herbal oil is very beneficial; massage gives a calming effect on nervous system.
Headaches due to tension and worry can be alleviated through deep breathing and relaxation especially in a lying down position in a quiet place.
Inverted postures or those where the head is lowered briefly, increase oxygen to the brain and can reduce headache causing strain.
Should take sweets after waking up in morning after sunrise (peda, badam halwa etc.), which are Kapha enhancers and bridles up Vata disorder and Migraine doesn’t attack.
Regular exercise is important in reducing stress and improving blood flow, Aerobic activity of at least 30 min. three times per week is recommended.

Daily routine (life style)-
One of the most important factors for balancing Vata and keeping the natural cleansing process strong is to have a lifestyle that does not disturb natural bodily rhythms. When we eat, sleep and exercise in constant fluctuating and disturbing patterns, the body loses its natural balancing cycle and cannot cleanse or heat itself properly. Therefore regularity in daily routine can be extremely important for reducing headache symptoms.

Chikitsa (medical approach)-
- Herbal remedies - Single drugs such as nerve tonics like Aswagandha churna, Rasayan and sansman effect causing like Giloy satv, pitta pacifying as Madhuyasti churna, Pathyadi kwath(nasyam) mentioned by acharya in acute condition, Swaskuthar ras nasya Sutashekharas ras (swarna yukt) as drug of choice for Migraine, Sirahsuladivajra ras etc. are mentioned in samhita.
- Snehan- According to Charak pana of ghrit, taila, vasa, majja in uttam matra or pana of purana ghrit is beneficial.
- Swedan- Charak mentioned Naadi sweda for it
- Nasyam (Shiro-virechan)- It is administration of herbal oil into the nostrils. If inhaled properly, it removes the blockages of the nasal passage, the patient feels light in head and heaviness as well as mental strain is relieved. He gets good sleep and the nerves and nasal passage is soothed. Oil’s commonly used for Ardhavbhedaka are Anutaila, Shadbindu tail etc. According to Sushruta Avpidan nasyam of Shirish mula and Phala swaras, vansh moola and kapoor with water, vacha and pippali churna, mulethi churna with honey is beneficial. After Avpidan nasyam medicated ghrit( sidh with madhur ausadh) nasyam is given.
- Virechan- Biopurification procedure help to remove toxins from and rejuvenate body and re-establish doshic balance, it’s mainly pitta (biofire) pacifying procedure.
- Herbal paste (lepa)- It has soothing effect on the headache. Specific lepa recommended by acharya as sandalwood paste, vay vidang and black til paste, saarivadi lepam etc.
- Shirodhara and head massage and Shirovassti-These Panchkarma procedures are helpful in relieving headache. Brahmi oil, Bhringraj oil, Shadhaut ghrit etc can be used for the purpose.
Pranayam - The practices of Shitali, Kapalbhati, Anulom-vilom, Bhashrika, Brahma-ri are used for pitta, these Pranayama exercises will lower the body temperature, help quench thirst, improves digestion, absorption and assimilation; thus helpful to relieve headache.

Yoga asana - Helpful yogic postures are Savasana, Setu bandha, Virasana, Prasarita padottanasana, Uttanasana, Janusirsasana, Pascimottanasana, Matsyendrasana etc.

Biofeedback – A technique that helps you to learn to relax and use your brain to gain control over certain body functions. If a migraine begins slowly, people can use biofeedback to remain calm and stop the attack.

Visualization – The act of visualizing oneself in a calm and serene environment may ease headache pain by relaxing the body and decreasing blood pressure in the head.

Meditation, Deep Breathing and Progressive Muscle Relaxation – All have a calming effect on the body, which may bring headache relief.

Reflexology – Application of light pressure to select pressure points on the hands and feet may provide headache relief.

Cervical Manipulation and Massage – May both help to correct alignment and relieve the muscle tension that can create or aggravate migraines. Transcendental meditation – It is helpful to remove the stress components of Migraine. Researchers show that TM creates virtually the opposite physiological response that stress does and helps the body recover more quickly from stressful stimulus.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda does not propagate short term pain relief for Migraine patients. Rather, it believes in cleaning the body from within and eradicating the disease from its roots. Ayurveda treatment of migraine therefore is centered on the pacification of Pitta dosha and restoration of digestion function in the body. Nerve tonics are also recommended to enhance the Ojas, relax the mind and give strength to the nervous system. Patients are given herbal medicine as well as customized diet and lifestyle plans in accordance with their body constitution and the root cause of disease. When the body’s digestion is enhanced, Ama production gets controlled; leading to cleansing of Manovahi Srotas….as a result; patient can get long term relief from the most chronic of pains.

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