

FIBROMYALGIA W.S.R TO AMAVATA -- AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE**Rahul Kadam¹, Vinay Chaudhary², Ruta Kadam³, Dimple⁴.**¹Associate Professor, Dept. of Shalyatantra, Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, College of Ayurved, Pune, Maharashtra, India²A.M.O. Sonipat, Govt. of Haryana, India.³Professor, Dept. of Agadtantra, Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, College of Ayurved, Pune, and Maharashtra, India⁴P.G. Scholar, Dept. of Agadtantra, Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, College of Ayurved, Pune, Maharashtra, India**ABSTRACT**

'Fibromyalgia' is one of the most common rheumatic syndromes affecting 3-10% of the general population and shows an increased frequency among women aged 20 - 50 years. Its main causes are painful stimuli, sleep disorders, depression and viral infections. The features of fibromyalgia simulate 'Chronic Fatigue Syndrome' but the former shows a dominance of musculoskeletal pain whereas lassitude dominates the latter.

According to *Ayurved*, this clinical condition shows *angamarda* (body ache) as a primary symptom which is secondary to many diseases especially showing a congruence to *Amavata*, *Vata-rakta*, *Mansagata vata*, *Rasagata samata* etc. This paper proposes the line of treatment for fibromyalgia in accordance with the principles of treatment for *Amavata* viz. *Langhana*, *Swedana*, *Pachan* with drugs having *Tikta-Katu Rasatmak* properties and *Deepana* action, *Snehapana* and *Virechana* as also *Anuvasana basti* along with *Ksharabasti*.

Keywords: *Ama*, *Amavata*, Fibromyalgia, *Mandagni*.

INTRODUCTION

Fibromyalgia is the most common rheumatic cause of chronic diffuse pain. Its main symptoms are- diffuse aching, stiffness and fatigue. While doing physical examination multiple tenderness points are found in specific areas.¹ Fibromyalgia is having predominance in females (>75%) with a peak incidence at ages 20-60 years.¹ Fibromyalgia shows a close relation with 'Amavata' as its main symptom like *Angamarda* (Bodyache) has been given in the condition of *Samavata*. The allopathic management of fibromyalgia includes drugs having ill-effects like

dryness in mouth, blurred vision etc. and hence its management by *Ayurved* may prove to be beneficial thereby playing a relevant role.

REVIEW

Fibromyalgia is a common disorder characterized by chronic musculo-skeletal pain, stiffness, paraesthesia and fatigue with multiple painful tender points. It affects predominantly women in the ratio of 9:1 compared to men.² Fibromyalgia also occurs in children though it is not very common.² In this condition, pain is often accompanied with stiffness which is often worse in morning and hence

mimics RA (Rheumatoid Arthritis). Its symptoms can be exacerbated by exercise inactivity, poor sleep, emotional stress and humid weather.¹

There is no single test that can fully diagnose fibromyalgia. In most of the cases, patients with symptoms of fibromyalgia may also show normal lab test results. Besides, many of the symptoms may mimic those of other arthritis. Hence the differential diagnosis must be done taking into consideration all the possible factors like gender, age, geographic location, medical history. According to American College of Rheumatology the diagnosis of fibromyalgia cannot be done objectively by machine and requires a physician's subjective estimate.

CRITERIA FOR DIAGNOSIS:

1. History of widespread pain greater than 3 minutes. i.e. Pain in the left side of the body, right side of body, pain above the waist and below the waist with axial pain
2. Pain in 11 to 18 tender point sites on digital palpation.

(Occiput, Low cervical, Trapezius, Supraspinatus second rib, lateral epicondyle, Gluteal, Knee, Greater Trochanter)³

CONTEMPORARY AND TRADITIONAL CORRELATION:

A Fibromyalgic patient complains of chronic aching pain and stiffness frequently involving the entire body but with the predominance around shoulders, low back and hips. Fatigue, sleep disorders, chronic headache, anorexia, lassitude, depression and irritable bowel syndrome are the other common complaints¹

According to *Ayurved*, this clinical condition can be compared with the symptom *angamarda* (body ache) which is secondary to

many diseases and is specific to *Amavata*, *Vatarakta*, *Mansagata vata*, *Rasagata samata* etc. A careful analysis of the above conditions shows one factor to be very common in all clinical syndromes viz. *Ama*. *Ayurved* believes that *Mandagni* (low digestive fire) plays an important role in the manifestation of most of the diseases and its sluggishness results in the production of *Ama*. Among the three types of *Agni*, *Jatharagni* is considered to be the most important and therefore its power needs to be maintained as it augments the functions of *Bhutagni* and *Dhatavagni* and any breach therein leads to *Dhatvagnimandya* as well as *Bhutagnimandya* resulting in the non-production of *Aahar rasa*. Due to *Dhatvagnimandya*, proper nutrition is not provided to *Rasadhatu* resulting in *Dhatukshaya* which further vitiates *Vata* thus leading to *Ama* (toxic material remaining after undigested food) that gets a *gati* (direction) towards other tissues of the body. In case of fibromyalgia this *Sama vata* gets lodged in the *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mansa* and *Asthi dhatu* but due to weakened *mansa dhatu* (*kha-vaigunya*), the muscle and related tissues are seen to produce more symptoms.

The *Ama* mixed with *dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala* produces *samadosh*, *samadhatu* and *saa-mamala* respectively. In the present context of fibromyalgia it will be relevant to mention the symptoms of *Samavata* available in the classics viz. *Agnivaishamya* (Irregular digestion), *Anaha* (Retention of stool and gases), *Shoola* (Colic pain), *Angamarda* (Body ache), *Bhrama* (Giddiness), *Murchha* (Fainting), *Parshva - prishtha - kati graha* (Stiffness of flanks, back and waist), *Sira akunchana* (Constriction of vessels) and *Stambha* (Stiffness)⁴

Vagbhatacharya added *Tandra* (Drowsiness), *Staimitya* (Feeling of wetness), *Gaurava* (Heaviness), *Snigdhatta* (Unctuousness), *Aruchi* (Anorexia), *Aalasya* (Laziness), *Shaitya* (Coolness), *Shopha* (Oedema), *Agni-mandya* (Hypofunctioning of digestive power), *Srotorodha* (Obstruction in channels), *Balabransha* (Loss of strength), *Anil Moodhata* (Inactivity of *Vata dosha*), *Apakti* (Indigestion), *Nishthiva* (Excessive Salivation), *Malasanga* (Constipation) to the list⁵. These symptoms bear a resemblance to fibromyalgia and hence the pathophysiology of fibromyalgia can be stated as follows-

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY :

Sanchaya : When a person is exposed to the aetiological factors such as *Viruddha Aahar*, *Vyayama* after intake of *Snigdha Aahar*, *Chinta*, *Shoka*, *Bhaya* etc. then the vitiation of *Agni*, *Dosha prakopa (Vata)* and *Dushya Daurbalya (Rasa, Rakta, Mansa, Asthi, Snayu, Kandara etc.)* occurs.

Prakopa : Due to the vitiation of *Agni*, *Mandagni* occurs causing *Ama* formation. The fermentation of this *Ama* brings about *shukratva (Vidagdhata)* and it converts in *Amavisha*⁶. With the help of vitiated *Vayu* it attains *Prasaravastha* and is termed *Samavata*⁶.

Prasaravastha : *Samavata* reaches the *Dhamani (Rasavaha Srotasa)* along with the vitiation of *Amavisha* by the *Tridosha*. It thus becomes *Nanavarna* (various coloured) and *Atipichhila* (viscid, unctuous and heavy) and is named *Atidaruna*

Sthana Sanshraya : *Yugpat Kupita Vata* and *Ama* with the help of *Dushya Daurbalya* takes *Sthana Sanshraya* in *Rasa, Rakta, Mansa dhatu* and related *upadhatu* like *Kandara* and *Snayu*.

Vyakti : As it reaches *Vyakti* stage, most of

the symptoms of fibromyalgia are manifested like *Angamarda* (bodyache), *Daurbalya* (weakness), *Hridgaurava* (heaviness in the chest), *Gastrastabdhata* (stiffness), *Sandhishhula* (painful joints), *Sandhigraha* (stiffness in joints), etc.

DISCUSSION

Management of fibromyalgia :

The principles of treatment for fibromyalgia, considering its correlation with *Ama dosha* are *Langhana*, *Swedana*, *Pachan* with drugs having *Tikta-Katu Rasa* and *Deepana* action, *Virechana*, *Snehapana* and *Anuvasana* as well as *Ksharabasti*. Therapies like *Abhyangam*, *Upanaham* etc. are also helpful.

Langhana : It is the first measure that has been advised for the management of *Amavata*, which is considered to be an *Amashayottha Vyadhi* and also a *Rasaja Vikara*. *Langhana* is the first line of treatment in such conditions.^{7,8} Further *Charaka* has advised *Langhana* in *Saamavata* condition. In *Yogratnakara*, *Langhana* has been mentioned to be the best measure for the treatment of *Ama*. It has been described that *Sama Dosha* cannot be eliminated from the body unless and until *Ama* attains the *Pakva* form and for this purpose *Langhana* is the best therapy⁹. *Langhana* is contraindicated in *Vata Vriddhi* but is indicated in *Sama vata* condition. Hence care should be taken to stop *Langhana* as soon as *Nirama Vata* state is achieved.

Swedana : The role of *Swedana* therapy in rheumatic diseases is well recognized. In the management of *Amavata*, *Ruksha Sweda* has been advocated in the form of *Baluka Pottali*, owing to the presence of *Ama*. In chronic stage of the disease when *Rukshata* is increased, *Snigdha Sweda* can be employed. *Swedana* have been specially indicated in the

presence of *Stambha, Gaurava and Shoola*¹⁰ and these manifest as the predominant features of fibromyalgia. In this disease *Ushna Jalapana*, a kind of internal *Swedana* is also indicated which is *Deepana, Pachana, Jwaraghna, Srotoshodhaka* etc.¹¹ *Swedana* also helps in liquefying *doshas* and aids in their transportation from *Shakha* to *Koshtha* so that they can be eliminated by *shodhana* therapy.

Katu - Tikta - Deepana Dravyas : Though *Katu Tikta Rasa dravyas* are supposed to increase *Vata Dosha* yet they have been indicated in *Amavata* because of their *Deepana* and *Pachana* properties eg. *Rasna Erandadi kashayam (Sahastrayoga)* . These drugs due to their *Laghu-Tikshna guna* increase *Agni*, digest *Ama*, remove excessive *Kledaka kapha* and prevent further production of *Ama*.

Virechana : After *Langhana, Swedana* and *Tikta, Katu, Deepana dravyas, doshas* attain *Niramavastha* and may require elimination from the body by *Shodhana*. Generally *Vamana* precedes *Virechana* but in *Fibromyalgia (Amavata)*, the patients should be subjected to *Virechana* therapy due to the involvement of *Mansa* and *Rakta dhatu*. Symptoms of *Amavata* like *Anaha, Vibandha, Antrakujana, Kukshishoola* (irritable bowel syndrome) etc. are all indicative of *Pratiloma Gati* of *Vata*. This is best conquered by *Virechana*, while *Vamana* is likely to aggravate these features.

Snehapana :After giving the above mentioned therapies the patient should be subjected to *Shamana Snehapana* which is justified on the basis of following points :

a) The therapeutic measures employed so far are likely to produce *Rukshata* in *Dhatu*s which may provoke the *Vata Dosha* and further aggravate the disease process. This is

best prevented by *Snehapana*.

b) Reduction in *Bala* of the patient is the result of the *Shodhana* therapeutic measures employed and the nature of the disease itself. This is also effectively controlled by the administration of *Snehas* it is described to be the best *Balavardhaka* regimen¹². Moreover, *Shamana Sneha* (*Ghrta* etc.) has been stated to augment the *Agni*¹³. Since *Snehapana* pacifies the vitiated *Vata* due to its inherent *Vatanulomana* effect, it is strongly indicated in *Amavata*, when there is predominance of *Vata Dosha* in its *Nirama* stage. However, the patients of *Amavata* are prone to develop derangement of digestion. Hence, *Sneha* is best administered medicated with *Deepana* and *Pachana Dravyas*.eg *Indukantam ghrutam(Sahastrayogam)*

Basti :Among the *Tridoshas Vata* is the chief factor in the pathogenesis of *Fibromyalgia (Amavata)*. *Basti* has been considered as the best treatment for *Vatavyadhi* as it promotes *Agni* and thus restore the causative factor for the disease process. In *Amavata*, both *Anuvasana* as well as *Niruha basti* can be given. *Anuvasna basti* removes the dryness of the body caused by the *Amahara* treatment and thereby alleviates *Vata dosha*, maintains the function of *Agni* and nourishes the body. *Niruha basti* eliminates *doshas* brought into the *koshtha* by *Langhana* and allied therapeutics. In addition to the generalized effects, *Basti* produces local beneficial effects too by removing *Anaha, Antrakujan, Vibandha* etc. eg. *Saindhavadi Taila* has been mentioned for *Anuvasana* and *Kshara basti* for *Asthapana* in the treatment of *Amavata* and can be used in *Fibromyalgia* .

CONCLUSION

Fibromyalgia is a clinical condition comparable to the to *Amavata*, *Vatarakta*, *Mansagata vata*, *Rasagata samata* etc. A careful analysis of the above conditions have revealed involvement of *Ama* as a common factor in all clinical syndromes. *Ayurved* believes that *Mandagni* plays an important role in the manifestation of most of the diseases and its sluggishness results in the production of *Ama*. The proposed principles of treatment for fibromyalgia can be *Langhana*, *Swedana*, *Pachan* with drugs having *Tikta-Katu Rasatmak* properties and *Deepana* action, *Virechana*, *Snehapana* and *Anuvāsana* as well as *Ksharabasti*. Topical therapies like *Abhyangam*, *Upanaham* etc. can also prove to be helpful.

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