

DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF AMAVATA IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Amavata is most common disease among various joint disorder and the changing life style, dietetic pattern are also being manifested as the increment in the number of patient day by day. *Ama* which is produced due to *mandagni* and *vata* plays a major role in the ailment *Amavata*; it is characterized by *sandhishool*, *sandhisotha*, *stabddhata*, *sandhigaurav* etc. The line of treatment mentioned in Ayurvedic literature are *langhana*, *swedana*, *tikta*, *deepana*, *katu*, *pachana*, *virechana*, *snehapana* and *basti*. Usually *Amavata* can be equated with Rheumatoid Arthritis in contemporary parlance on the ground of its similar sign and symptoms. Here in this article, the diagnostic and treatment aspect are discussed using *Ayurveda* and contemporary literature.

Keywords: *Amavata*, *ama*, *mandagni*, *langhana*.

INTRODUCTION

Present era's hectic lifestyle, lack of exercise, faulty dietary habit like intake of unwholesome fast food, beverage, canned food, sedentary lifestyle, use of air conditioner etc have led to many digestive problems and one of them is *mandagni*, which results in production of *Ama* and among them *Amavata* is one of the important disease which is emerging very rapidly today. Owing to its chronicity, crippling nature, incurability, complication and morbidity *Amavata* is posing challenge to the physician. The disease entity has been described lately by *Acharya Madhavakara* in 9th century in diagnostic manual called *Madhav Nidana*. It is *kashtasadhya vyadhi* due to its repeated attacks and chronic nature. It is dreaded disease that the mankind faces today. Even

through *Amavata* is not proved to be fatal, it cripples to the affected patient. It produces stiffness of the body, becomes a cause of many other disease. It affects many facets of patient life, family, occupation and community relationship. *Amavata* is a disease in which vitiation of *vata dosha* accumulation of *Ama* take place in joints. When *Ama* and *vata* vitiated together and enter the *kostha*, *trika* and *sandhi pradesh*, they create *stabdhata* in whole body. The ailment is called *Amavata*. It is said to be most *kashtasadhya vyadhi* amongst all disease in its later stage with its typical symptoms of *vrischikidanshvat vedana* along with pain and swelling in joint of ankle, sacrum, knee and thigh¹.

Usually *Amavata* is equated with Rheumatoid Arthritis. It is chronic inflammatory disease of unknown etiology marked by symmetric peripheral, poly arthritis. It is most common form of chronic inflammatory arthritis and often results in joint damage and physical disability. Because it is systemic disease, Rheumatoid Arthritis may result in a variety of extra-articular manifestation including fatigue, subcutaneous nodules, lung involvement, pericarditis, peripheral neuropathy, vasculitis and hematologic abnormalities.

Rheumatoid Arthritis affects approximately 0.5-1% of the adult population worldwide. Like many other autoimmune disease, Rheumatoid Arthritis occurs more commonly in female than in male with 2-3:1 ratio².

CAUSES OF AMAVATA³

Amavata disease requires many causative factors for its manifestation. *Madhavakara* elaborate them as follows:

1. *Viruddhahara* (Antagonistic diet)
2. *Viruddha cheshta* (Erroneous habit)
3. *Mandagni* (Diminished Agni)
4. *Nischalata* (Sedentary habit)
5. Exertion immediately after taking *snigdha ahara* are the main etiological factor *Amavata*

SYMPTOMS OF AMAVATA

Amavata is a disease which is characterized clinically with *sandhigata lakshana* chiefly, but it is more systemic generalized disease.

Madhavakara, *Bhavmishra* and other have distinctly mentioned the *rupa* of *Amavata* which can be classified under following category:-

1. *Pratyatma lakshana*
2. *Samanya lakshana*
3. *Pravridha lakshana*
4. *Doshanusar lakshana*

Pratyatma lakshana

Affliction of *sandhi* by *Ama* and *vata* is central event of *Amavata*, also features associated with afflicted joint may be reckoned as *pratyatma lakshana* or cardinal sign and symptoms. These are as follows:

a. *Sandhi shul*

b. *Sandhi soth*

c. *Gatra Stabdhatata*

d. *Sparsh asahyata*

a. ***Sandhi shul***

In *Amavata* pain occurs in joints of fingers, wrist, elbow, and shoulder, joint of feet, ankle, knee hip, *trika* and tempo-mandibular joints⁴. Severe continuous pain in the affected joint, at time disturbing sleep is the cardinal symptoms of *Amavata*. It aggravates during cold, cloudy weather, oil massage and morning hours. These are characteristic feature of involvement of *Ama*.

b. ***Sandhisotha***

Sandhisotha results when vitiated *dosh* afflicts *twak*, *rakta*, *mansa* in joints. *Madhavakara* describe *sotha* as a result of affliction of *Ama* and *vata pradhan tridosh* in joints.

c. ***Gatra stabdhatata*** –

It means inability to perform *naman aadi karma*, restriction of joints, *sandhi* become stiff and unable to move in their normal range. It is caused due to affliction of joints by *samavata*.

d. ***Sparsh asahyata*** –

It is caused due to vitiation of *sandhi stitha shleshma kala* and *shleshmaka kapha*, as disease progress due to *sotha* and *shul sparsh asahyata* is found.

Samanya lakshana

Amavata is systemic disorder, though symptoms related to joints are prominent but patient also suffers from many symptoms related to whole body and are called *samanya lakshana*. *Acharya Madhavakara* describes *samanya lakshana* of *Amavata* as follows⁵:

- a. *Angamarda*
- b. *Aruchi*
- c. *Trishna*
- d. *Alasya*
- e. *Gaurava*
- f. *Jwara*
- g. *Apaka*
- h. *Angasunta*

Pravridha lakshana

It is advanced and troublesome stage of disease at which *dosh dushya sammurchhana* become stronger along with progression of disease, articular and extra-articular symptoms appear which are elucidated by *Madhavakara* and other *Acharya* as under given⁵:

- *Vrishchikdanshvat vedana*
- *Utsaha hani*
- *Vairasyata*
- *Praseka*
- *Daah*
- *Bahumutrata*
- *Kukshi kathinya and shul*

- *Nidraviparyay*
- *Bhram*
- *Chhardi*
- *Murchha*
- *Hridrog*
- *Vid vibandhata*
- *Jadta*

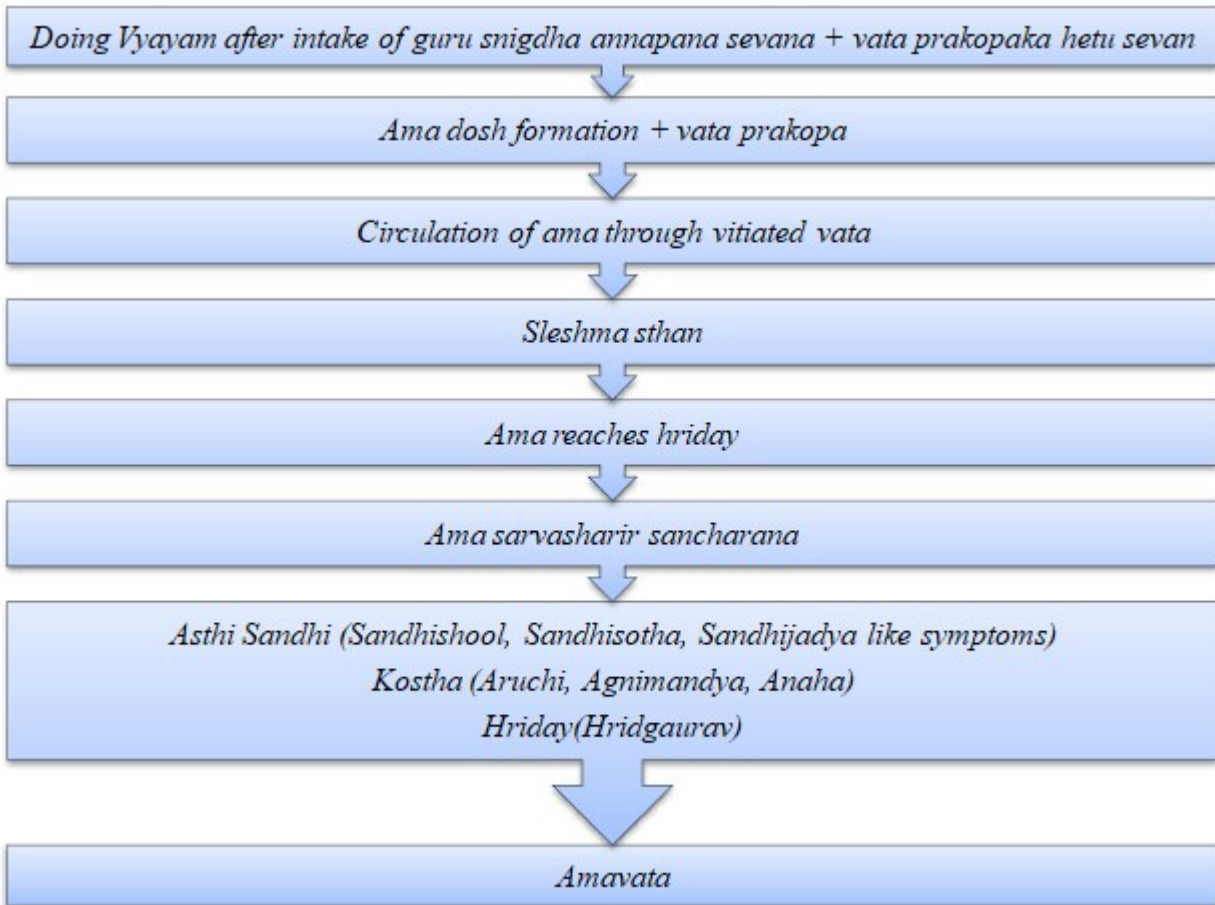
Doshanusar lakshana⁵

Vatanubandh - Throbbing pain which aggravate in night and cold atmosphere.

Pittanubandh - *Raga* and *daah* surrounding *sandhi sthan* is due to involvement of *pitta* in *Amavata*.

Kaphanubandh - Symptoms like *staimitya*, *guruta* and *kandu* present due to involvement of *kapha*.

PROBABLE SAMPRAPTI OF AMAVATA⁷



MANAGEMENT OF AMAVATA

In *Ayurveda* the line of treatment propounded by ancient *Acharyas* depends upon the stage of disease progress or *samprapti*, but the description of *Amavata chikitsa* is not available in *Brihatrayi* directly. *Charak Chaturanan Chakrapani* in his literature *Chakradatta* explored the line of treatment for *Amavata* as under – *langhana*, *swedana*, *tikta*, *deepana* and *katu* drugs, *virechana*, *snehapana*, *sandhavadi anuvasan basti* as well as *kshar basti* are praised for *Amavata*⁸.

In addition *ruksha sweda* by *baluka potali* and *upnah* without *sneha* have been mentioned in *Bhavprakash* for the management of *Amavata*⁹.

Effects of various *upkramas* and drugs with different *gunas* are presented below-

Langhana

The drug or procedure which creates sense of lightness in the body is known as *langhana* viz. four types of *shuddhi*, *pipasa*, *maruta*, *atapa*, *pachana*, *upwas* and *vyayam*¹⁰.

The morbid matters being diminished, and the gastric fire being reactivated by this lightening therapy, there will return to the patient freedom from fever, lightness of body and hunger¹¹.

Swedana

The predominant feature of *Amavata* are *stambha*, *gaurav* and *shul*, the condition in which *swedana* is specially indicated¹². *Ruksha swedana* has been advocated in the management of *Amavata* in the form of *baluka potali*, owing the presence of *Ama* as it have *ushna*, *ruksha guna* by which it performs the *pachana*, *shoshana* and *kaphahara* action and dilate the channel.

Snigddha sweda with some oil preparation will surely aggravate the condition, but in chronic stage of *Amavata* when *rukshata* is increased due to *vata vriddhi*, *snigddha sweda* should also be applied, as *Charaka* has also stated in *sutra sthan* that *ruksha sweda* followed by *snigddha sweda* should be applied when vitiated *vata* is located in the *shleshma sthan*¹³.

Katu tikta prayoga

Katu dravya are *vayu agni pradhan* having *vakra shodhana*, *agni deepana*, *bhuktahara shoshana* properties and helps to destroy *Ama*.

Vayu and *Aakash mahabhut* predominant *tikta dravyas* are antagonist to *Ama*. They possess *lekhana*, *deepana*, *pachana*, *vishaghana* and *arochakaghna* properties¹⁴.

Virechana

It helps in potentiating *Agni* and *mandagni* is one of major causative factor of *Amavata*.

Eranda tail is not absorbed systematically but acts locally in *kostha*, it is said to be best *vatanulomaka* drug because it not only perform *virechana* action but also control *vata dosh* by its *snigdha guna*. It governs the disease just like lion governs elephant¹⁵.

Snehapana

Snehapana should be given in *nirama awastha* and is of *shaman* type indicated in chronic condition of *Amavata*. *Tikta*, *katu* and *deepana* drugs *siddha sneha* is quite effective in this condition.

Basti karma

Concerning the disease *Amavata*, *Ama* and *vata* are two basic pathogenic factors. *Basti* is advocated as chief therapeutic measure to control vitiated *vata*¹⁶.

Basti eliminate *malsanchaya rupa Ama*, it indicated specially, where person suffers from stiff and contracted limbs¹⁷. *Acharya Chakradatta* prescribes *anuvasan basti* of *saindhavadi tail* and *kshar basti* as prototype *niruha basti* for ailment.

Sneha rahit upnaha

As local application *upnaha* subside inflammation and pain, major symptoms of *Amavata*.

PATHYA AND APATHYA IN AMAVATA¹⁸

Pathya

Annavarga - *Purana shali*, *sathi*, *yava*, *kodo*

Jalvarga - *Panchkol siddha jala*, *shrutshit jala*

Madyavarga - *Purana madya*

Mutravarga - *Gomutra*

Kanda varga - *Lasuna*, *aadraka*

Shaka varga - *Patol*, *karvellaka*, *shigru*, *varun*,

vastuka, *punarnava*, *Vartaki*

Ksheer varga - *Takra*

Mamsa varga - Takra siddha lavak mansa
Yush varga - Kulatha yush, kalaya yush, chanaka yush

Vihara - Ruksha sweda with baluka potali
Bhallatak, Gokshur, Nimb patra, Vriddha daru and katu, tikta deepana dravya are beneficial in *Amavata*

Apathya

Dravya possessing *guru, snigdha, ati dravya pichchhila guna, abhishyandi property* etc considered as *apathya* for *Amavata*.

Annavarga - Navanna, dwidala, masa, pistaka

Jalavarga - Dushita jala

Shakavarga - Upodika

Ksheeravarga - Kheera, dahee

Mansa varga - Matsya, anupdeshiya mansa

Vihara- Purvi vata sevana, Vega vidharana, Ratri jagarana, vishamasan

DISCUSSION

Amavata is a disease in which improperly metabolized byproduct known as *Ama*, produce due to hypo-function of *Agni* or *mandagni*, become core cause of disease which is transverse and get deposited in different part of the body mainly *sandhi* by vitiated *vata*. *Ama* may be nutritionally unimportant, but immunologically powerful in evoking strong immune response, as it is *vijatiya* or foreign substance to the body, this results in formation of antibodies by the defense cells of body. The *Ama* and antibody then interacts each other to form an immune complex, which is deadly combination. It gets deposited in tissue and produce symptoms of *Amavata*. *Madhavakara* was pioneer to describe *Amavata* as a disease entity in medieval period text *Madhav Nidana*, Its clear cut description is not found in *Brihatrayi* through references regarding *Amavata* was found in hidden form. But concept of *Ama* is prevailing since *Vedic period*.

CONCLUSION

Amavata is formidable ailment, capable of producing disability. In *Ayurvedic* texts categorize it

under *krichhasadhya vyadhi* and are challenging issue for contemporary medical science also owing to changing lifestyle. Its treatment consists of large range of analgesics, anti inflammatory, and finally surgery which is not a complete and effective solution with large number of side effects. *Ama* is chief pathogenic factor in ailment of *Amavata*, which is produced as result of *mandagni*. So first aim in management of disease is suggested to be prevention of formation of *Ama*, its *pachana* by stimulating *jatharagni* which achieved by taking *katu, tikta rasatmak* and *deepana, pachana guna* prominent drug.

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