

AYURVEDIC APPROACH OF ALLERGIC CONJUNCTIVITIS (VATAJA ABHISHYANDA)

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ABSTRACT

Allergic conjunctivitis is one of the most common eye disorders that affect people of all age groups and can be correlated to *Vatajaabhishyanda* (*Allergic Conjunctivitis*) in *Ayurvedic* medicine based on their signs and symptoms. *Abhishyanda* (*Conjunctivitis*) is the root cause for most of the eye disorders and must be treated early with effective interventions or it might lead to severe complications and would be very perplexing to save the eyesight. If *Abhishyanda* (*Conjunctivitis*) takes a chronic course, it may lead to dreadful complications making the disease unmanageable. In Modern medicine, this is managed with the administration of eye drops and anti-Allergic medicines associated that are associated with some adverse effects. *Ayurvedic* management of Allergic conjunctivitis has shown some effective results in overcoming the ailment with no such effects and non-recurrence. Hence here an effort has been made to elucidate about *Vatajaabhishyanda* and its management that is outlined in *Ayurvedic* classics.

Keywords: Vatajaabhishyanda, Allergic conjunctivitis, Ayurveda, Shalakya Tantra

INTRODUCTION

In general, it is estimated that ocular allergies affect 5-22% of the population. [1] Most patients suffer from concomitant allergic rhinitis, although 6% have isolated ocular symptoms [2] Up to 44% of children and 20% of adults with asthma have symptoms suggestive of allergic conjunctivitis (AC). [3] The disease named *VatajaAbhishyanda* (*Allergic Conjunctivitis*) that occurs due to the vitiation of *VataPradhana Tridosha* can be correlated to Allergic conjunctivitis. The management of simple allergic conjunctivitis in modern ophthalmology is very expensive and needs to be followed for a longer duration to combat the allergy, whereas *Ayurveda* can provide a better relief in such manifestation. [4] *Abhishyanda* is the root cause of almost all the eye disorders and must be treated as soon as possible, otherwise its complications might become severe and difficult to save the eye sight. [5-8] If *Abhishyanda* takes a chronic course it may lead to *VatajaAdhimantha* (*Glaucoma*), *Hatadimantha* (*Atrophy of the eyeball*), *Akshipakatyaya* (*Hypopyon or Keratomalacia*), *Avranashukla* (*Opacity of Cornea*) etc. complications. [5]

In *Ayurvedic* system of Medicine, *Shalakya Tantra*, one of the eight major branches of *Ayurveda* deals with the diseases of Eye, Ear, Nose, Throat and Head. Among these, Ophthalmology had been the most popular branch for the practitioners of *Shalakya Tantra* in those times and they were designated as *Netra Visharada* or the *Shalaki*. Even *Vedas* speak about eye disorders, which is found in *Rigveda* perhaps the foremost, regarding the revival of lost eye sight of *Rishi Ravrija* by *Ashwini Kumaras*. [9] In *Kenasutra* of *Atharvaveda*, description of sensory organs and the position of the eye in the skull are mentioned. Also there is a reference about the local application of *Anjana* in the eye disorders. [10] *Atharveda* has referred Sun as the Supreme Lord of the eyes (*Surya Chakshunam Adhipati*).

The word *Abhishyanda* is derived from the root “*Syanda*” which is prefixed by “*Abhi*” *Upasarga* and

suffixed by “*Ghan*” *Pratyaya*. It means “*Ativridhdhi*” and “*Sravana*” [11] *Abhi* means going towards/ great/ excessive and *Syanda* means discharge /tremor/ to shaking. So, *Abhishyanda* means “towards shaking”. Other meanings of *Abhishyanda* are oozing, flowing or trickling. It also means where there is *Syandana* (*discharge*) in whole *Urdhva JatruSrotas* (*Upper part of the body*). It leads to *Kledana* (*moistening*) in *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* and resulting in profuse discharge from all around or all parts of the eye. So *Abhishyanda* means an excessive discharge from the eyes or the conjunctivitis and *Vatajaabhishyanda* refers to Allergic conjunctivitis. As there were no many studies on the *Vatajaabhishyanda* w.s.r. to allergic conjunctivitis, the present study was planned and this study focused to provide the complete information about *Vatajaabhishyanda* including the management that may be administered as a safe affordable and an alternative to the conventional management of Allergic conjunctivitis.

Nidana Or Aetiology

Like any other disease of the eyes, no specific and separate cause of *Abhishyanda* has been mentioned in *Ayurvedic* texts. Nevertheless, common causes that are described for all eye diseases are applicable to *Abhishyanda* as well. In addition, *Sushruta* [12] while dealing with *Aupsargikaroga* (*communicable disease*) in *Nidanasthana*, has enumerated *Abhishyanda* as one of the *Aupsargikaroga* and has given the causative factors as contact with diseased person, inhalation of expired breath of diseased one (Expiration), eating together, sleeping together and use of garments, ornaments, cosmetics/ointment used by diseased person etc.

Samprapti/Pathogenesis

In *Shastras*, we do not find the *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) of *Abhishyanda* in particular, but *Samanya Samprapti* (*general pathogenesis*) for all eye diseases is explained and it is applicable for *Abhishyandatoo*. This is detailed by *Sushruta* [12] that the *Abhishyanda* is

caused due to the unwholesome dietary and behavioral schedule, in which the deranged *Dosha* (humors) move towards the upper part of body through various *Sira* (blood channels), gets accumulated in eye as a whole and produces dreadful disease in specific parts of eye and that's known as *Abhishyanda*. This ailment presents in different stages of *Kriya Kala* (stage wise disease management process of Ayurveda) such as *Sanchaya* (stage of accumulation of *doshas*), *Prakopa* (stage of aggravation of *doshas*), *Prasara*, (stage of liquefaction and spreading of *doshas*) *Sthanasamshraya* (stage of invasion of tissues and lodgment of *doshas* in *dhatu*s or stage of premonitory symptom), *Vyakta* (stage of manifestation) and *Bhedavastha* (stage of complications). They are as below:

(a) *Sanchayavastha*: Here, the *Doshasanchaya* leads to *Netraroga* (eye diseases) by two ways, one is due to *Achakshushyaahara Vihara*, *Agnimandya* and *Ama* formation by which the *Doshas* get vitiated in the *Koshtha* and leads to *Doshasanchaya* in *Koshtha*. Secondly, due to the vitiated *Doshas* and *Ama*, *Srotorodha* takes place and *Vatapradhanadoshadushti* and *Vridhhi* manifests in *Koshtha*.

- (b) *Prakopavastha*: In *Prakopavastha*, provocation of the *Doshas* occurs due to continuous *Nidana Sevana* by the patient.
- (c) *Prasaravastha*: In *Prasaravastha*, *Doshas* diffuse in whole body through *Siras* and ascend towards *Urdhvajatrugatasrotas*.
- (d) *Sthanasamshryavastha*: In this *Avastha*, it leads to the localization of *Doshas* in different parts of the eyes during which *Doshadushyasamurchana* takes place and the manifestation of the *Poorvaroop*a like redness, itching, pain etc. occurs.
- (e) *Vyaktavastha*: Here, cardinal symptoms of the disease such as profuse discharge from different parts of the eyes and *Toda* etc. manifests.
- (f) *Bhedavastha*: If *Abhishyanda* is not treated in *Vyaktavastha* stage it leads to the complications like *Adhimantha* and ultimately resulting in *Hatadhimantha*.

VatajaAbhishyanda manifests due to the vitiation of *Vata Dosha*. It is predominant with *Vayu* and *Aakasha Mahabhoota*. The vitiation of *Vata* leads to *Uttapati* of *Lakshanas* like *Toda*, *Sangharsha*, *Vishushkabhava*, *Parushya*, *Achchashruta*, *Shushka Dushika* along with *Alpa AkshiShopha*.

Samprapti Ghatakas

<i>Dosha</i>	<i>VataPradhanaTridosha</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	<i>Rasa and Rakta</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Mandagni</i>
<i>Srotasa</i>	<i>Rasavaha and Raktavaha</i>
<i>SrotoDushti</i>	<i>Sanga, Vimargagamana and Atipravriti</i>
<i>Rogamarga</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>
<i>Adhishtana</i>	<i>Sarvaakshi – TejoJalashritaPatala</i>

Purvarupa/Prodromal Symptoms

Like the general causes, the prodromal symptoms of eye diseases in general are applicable for *Abhishyanda* such as *Aavilata* (Muddiness of eyes), *Samrambha* (Slight congestion with mild pain), *Ashru* (Watering), *Kandu* (Itching), *Updeha* (Stickiness), *Guruta* (Heaviness), *Ushna* (Burning sensation), *Toda* (Pricking Pain), *Raga* (Redness), *Vartma Kosha Shoola* (Pain in fornices of eye ball), *Vartma Kosha Shook Purnata* (Foreign body sensation in the conjunctival

sac of the eye ball), *Vihanyamana Rupa*, (Reduced visual acuity, colour), *Kriya SwakshiYathapura* (Perception and other subnormal function of the eyes like blinking etc.^[13]No separate description of *Poorvarupa* (premonitory symptoms) of *Abhishyanda* is available in the text. Yet few or all common prodromal signs and symptoms mentioned are of concerned to *Abhishyanda*.

Lakshanas/Clinical Features

The *Lakshanas* or the *Rupa* vary according to the predominance of different *Doshas*. Based on the *Dosha* predominance *Abhishyanda* is of four types i.e. *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, and *RaktajaAbhishyanda*^[12]Where, according to *Acharya Sushrutavatajaabhishyanda* is characterized by *Nistodana* (Pricking sensation), *Stambhana* Fixity (restricted movements), *Romaharsha* (Horripilation), *Sangharsha* (Foreign body sensation), *Parushya* (Hardness), *Shiro-abhitapa* (Headache), *Vishushkabhava* (Dryness) and *Shishirashruta* (Cold or watery discharges). The dryness does not mean dryness due to deficient tears, but only the absence of normal discharge. In addition to the symptoms of *Sushrutha*, *Acharya Vagbhata*^[14] has enlisted general symptoms in *Vataja Abhishyanda* like such as obstruction and swelling of the nasal cavities, pain in temporal region, eyebrow and forehead. The nature of pain will be of piercing and pricking type. The features found in eye are dryness and coldness, foreign body sensation of a static foreign body (*Shalya*) or a moving foreign body (*Jantu*), painful movements of eyelid and eyeball due to swelling.

Upashaya And Anupashaya

According to *Sushrutha*, *Vatajaabhishyanda* is relieved with *Snigdha* (oily) and *ushna* (hot) *Chikitsa*. While explaining the disease *VatajaAbhishyanda*, *Acharya Vagbhata* has also quoted that *Snigdha* and *Ushnaupachara* relieves the signs and symptoms of the *Vataja Abhishyanda*. Therefore, this can be considered as *Upashaya* for *Vataja Abhishyanda*.^[14,15]

Upadrava/Complications of Abhishyanda

Upadravas (complications) are the secondary symptoms occurring due to further progression of same process of main disease. It is often pacified when, the main disease is treated. As it manifests later, it becomes more complicated as patient will already be suffering from the disease. *Acharya Sushruta* described *Adhimantha* as a complication of the *Abhishyanda*. He also quoted *Hatadhimantha* in case of ignored *Vatadhimantha*.^[12]

Chikitsa (Treatment)

Acharya Sushruta has described the general principles of treatment as upon recognizing the possibility

of development of the disease. A proper course of prophylactic treatment should be given according to the affliction of *Doshas*, failing which grave eye diseases may develop. In brief, the management essentially consists the avoidance of the etiological factors and specifically counteracting the increased *Vata* and other *Doshas*.^[12]*Abhishyanda* is *Sarvagataraktajasadhyavyadhi*. *Chakradutta* has advised *Langhan* for five days for five disorders i.e. *Akshiroga*, *Pratishya*, *Vrana*, *Jwara* and *Kukshiroga*.

General Treatment of VatajaAbhishyanda

Some of the *Chikitsa* described by *Acharyas* in the treatment of *Vataja Abhishyanda* are *Snehana* with *Purana Sarpi*, *Snigdhaswedana*, *Siramokshana*, *Snaihikivirechana* followed by *Basti*, *Tarpana*, *Pu-
tapaka*, *Ashchyotana*, *Nasya*, *Snehaparisheka* *And-
shirobasti* etc.

Snehana

Snehana should be done with *Purana Sarpi*^[15]

Swedana

This is administered with the poultice prepared from meat, *Vesavara*, *Mahasneha*, *Yavachoorna* and salt. This poultice is put over the forehead and cheek, etc. for *Swedana*.^[15]*Swedana* can also be done with steam of *Aja Ksheera* mixed along with *Kwatha* of *Rasna*, *Dashamula*, *Bala*, *Kola*, *Kulattha* and *Yava*.^[15]

Nasya and Shirovirechana

Nasya is to be administered with *Kwatha* prepared by milk with addition of *Aushadhadravayas* like *Kasmar-
ya*, *Madhuka*, *Kumuda*, *Utpala*, *Kustha*, *Brihati*, *Ta-
malai*, *Sariva*, *Prapaundarika*, *Darbhamula* and *Ka-
sheru*.^[15]*Nasya* is also done with *Ghrta* prepared by *Kwatha* of *Ajaksheera* and *Aushadhadravayas* like *Rasna*, *Dashamula*, *Bala*, *Kola*, *Kulattha* and *Yava*. *Tila* should be soaked in decoction of *Bilva* at night and dried during the day for 5 days. After that, oil should be extracted and mix it with fat of pig and cooked in milk with paste of *Bilva* and *Madhuyashti*. This *Taila* can also be used in *Shirovirechana*.^[15]

SiramokshanaorRaktamokshana

In *Vatajaabhishyanda*, *Raktamokshana* is advised in order to eliminate the *Doshas* from *Netrasrotas*. So first *Snehapana* should be done with *Ghrta* and *Tilvaka* followed by *Virechana* and *Basti* and then

Siramokshana is to ^[15]Acharyas advise Siravedhana to be done over the Lalata, Shankha and Upanasika.

Seka

This is done with the Kwatha prepared by Aanoopajalamamsa, ^[12]with Kwatha prepared by Vata mitigating drugs, ^[12]with Vasa, Taila, Ghrita and Majja ^[13]Kwatha prepared out of Kantakari Moola in Ajaksheera, ^[13]Kwatha made out of Moola and Twak of Eranda in Ajaksheera ^[12]Kwatha prepared by Eranda, Brihati, Madhushigru and Brihatpanchmoola ^[15]Tutha, Trikatu, Haritaki, Lodhra, Madhuyashti mixed in Kanji and kept in bronze vessel. ^[15] These are some of the formulations that are described by Acharyas for performing Seka procedure in patients suffering from Vatajaabhishyanda.

Vidalaka

For this procedure in case of Vatajaabhishyanda, paste of Kustha, Pippali, Chandana and Utpala have been explained. ^[15]Paste of Musta, Agar and Chandana should be mixed with Madhu and used. ^[15]Paste of Saindhava, Agar, Trijataka, Trikatu, Svarnagairika, Kustha and Tagara. ^[15]Paste of Svarnagairika, Raktachandana, Daruharidra, and Vacha. ^[16]Paste of Yashti, Gairika, Saindhava, Darvi, and Tarkshya, paste of Kumari and Chitraka, paste of Dadimapatra, paste of Vacha, Haridra and Nimbi, ^[16]Paste of Saindhava, Shunthi, ^[15]Lodhraharithakividalaka, Gairikadilepa and Bhoomyamalakilepa. ^[17]All these can be administered in patients of Vatajaabhishyanda.

Anjana

Pratyanjana prepared by Sphatika, Shankhanabhi, Madhuka and Gairika macerated in sugarcane juice, dried and made into pills should be used as Anjana. Curds kept in silver vessel, after it becomes blue, dried and prepared into pills can be used as Anjana. ^[15] Anjana can also be done with Gutika prepared by Gairika, Saindhava, Krishna and Nagar macerated in water. ^[12]Anjana is administered with Ghrita, kept in a copper vessel added with Saindhavalavana. Thin sheets of Naga heated red and immersed in decoction of Triphala and juices Bhringaraja, Shunthi, Ghrita, cow's urine, Madhu, Ajaksheera can be used for Anjana. ^[16] Apamargaanjana and Anjana prepared by

Brihatyadivarti, Haridradyavartican also be administered in Vatajaabhishyanda. ^[17]

Aschyotana

In case of Vatajaabhishyanda, Aschyotanais to be administered with kwatha of Hriber, Tagar, Gunjamool mixed with goat's milk. ^[14]Kwatha of Erandmoola and leaves mixed with goat's milk, Kwatha of Shalparni, Prishnparni, Brihti, Madhuyashti mixed with goat's milk. ^[15] Amlarasadiaschyotana, Rasanjanadidravaaschyotana, Karveerpatraraspoorana and Bilvadikwathaaschyotana etc. ^[17]

Tarpana

The Ghrita prepared from addition of Kwatha of Kashmarya, Madhuk, Kumuda, Utpala, Kushtha, Brihati, Tamala, Mamsi, Sariva, Prapaundarika, Darbhamula, and Kasheru with milk and the milk mixed with the decoction of the head of black cobra should be boiled with Chandana, Ushira, Sarkara and Utpalakalkais to use for Tarpana in Vatajaabhishyanda. ^[15]

Putapaka

In Vatajaabhishyanda, Putapaka prepared from Nimbapatra and Lodhra mixed with Jala should be administered. ^[18]

Pathya ^[19]

Pathya plays a very important role both in the management and prevention of the diseases and even the same implies to Vatajaabhishyanda. Following Pathya and avoiding of Apathyaahara & Vihara is very essential, especially in diseased condition with or without the treatment.

Ahara

Regarding Pathyaahara, Shashtikashali, Purana Shali, Yava, Godhuma, Mudga, Janglamamsarasa, Patola, Karavella, Kadali, Soorana, Divyambu, Lava Mamsa, Mayuramamsa, Vanakukuttamamsa are advised by the Acharyas.

Aushadha

In Aushadhas, Purana Ghrita, Triphalaghrita, Patola, Shigru, Draksha, Lodhra, Karvella, Triphala, Punarnava, Kakamachi, Kumari, Chandana, Saindhava, Dadima, Vartaka, Karpura, Bhringaraja, Jivanti, Shatavari, Madhu etc. are said to be very effective in the management of Vatajaabhishyanda.

Upachara

Langhana, Ghritapana, Swedana, Upanaha, Virechana, Nasya, Dhmapana, Raktamokshana, Lepa, Seka, Ashchyotana, Pindi, Anjana, Pratisarana, Tarpana, Putapaka, Vidalaka, Avachoorana etc. therapies need to be followed.

Apathya

Ahara

Regarding *Apathya*, *Katu Amla Guru Ahara*, *Tikshana*, *Ushna*, *Masha*, *Nishpava*, *Virudha Anna*, *Vidahiannapana*, *Dadhi*, *Pinyaka*, *Matsya*, *Sura*, *Valoora*, *Kalinga*, *Phanita*, *Shashrpataila* etc. foods are to be avoided and specific *Apathya* explained in *Chikitsamanjari* for *Abhishyandaroga* is *Dadhi*, *Kadliphala*, *Narikela*, *Panasabeeja*. These also should be avoided.

Vihara

Lifestyle practices such as *Vega Dharana*, *Ratri-jagarana*, *Krodha*, *Shoka*, *Maithuna*, *Adhyashana*, *Raja Sevana* etc. should be stayed away from.

DISCUSSION

The diagnosis of allergic diseases has increased in the last few decades and allergic conjunctivitis has emerged as a significant problem, which can cause severe ocular surface disease. Patients complain of itching, watering and redness. It can result in decreased quality of life, as patients with severe symptoms, if left untreated or treated poorly, may become school dropouts, unable to work outdoors and sometimes fail to sleep. The symptoms are aggravated by exposure to dry and windy climates.^[20,21]

Though some authors have described management protocols, there are no universally accepted protocols of management for allergic eye diseases.^[22, 23] Various drugs are available, and the treatment options vary based on the severity of the disease. It is important to avoid any known allergen or reduce exposure to it by using wrap around glasses, by changing the environment, replacing allergen harboring items such as pillows and carpets. However, such recommendations may be challenging for patients. In addition, cool compresses can be done to prevent rubbing of the eye. Ocular lubricating eye drops can be used to dilute the

inflammatory agents in tears and wash away the allergen to reduce itching and to prevent further worsening of symptoms.^[24]

The mainstay of treatment is the use of lubricants, antihistamines and mast cell stabilisers.^[25, 26] These are indicated in all forms of disease. Steroids are to be given under proper medical care when the cornea is involved, or the disease is very severe with itching.^[27] Allergic conjunctivitis being the most painful disease affecting the eye is the one that makes us cover our self to avoid the spread of the disease. In the process of covering and avoiding the contact, people try to find out an immediate and a fast solution to overcome the problem. Therefore, different practices are being followed around the world and still no medicine has bestowed the immediate relief for the same. Ayurvedic system of Medicine being the oldest traditional medicine of India has the vast description of the disease *abhishyanda* with its various types. *Vatajaabhishyanda* is one among them that can be contemplated as allergic conjunctivitis. Varieties of therapeutic procedures including *aushadravayas*, *pathya* and *apathya* have been described in detail in the science. Incorporating the same would help the patient in providing the relief from its root and in turn the recurrence.

CONCLUSION

The present study provides the complete comprehension about the disease named *Vatajaabhishyanda*, the Allergic conjunctivitis including its etiology, signs, symptoms and management that are explained in *Ayurveda* system of medicine. The detailed in-depth knowledge of *Vatajaabhishyanda* and its management helps in providing an alternative, safe and an affordable treatment to the modern conventional management of Allergic conjunctivitis with no adverse effects.

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