

## CONCEPT OF VATAVYADHI IN MODERN MEDICINE

<sup>1</sup>Bora Deepanjali <sup>2</sup>Barman Niten<sup>1</sup> P.G Scholar, Samhita & Siddhanta department, govt. Ayurvedic College, Guwahati, Jalukbari-14<sup>2</sup>Associate prof. Samhita & Siddhanta department, Govt. Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Guwahati, Jalukbari-14

## ABSTRACT

*Vatavyadhi* in the present era is the most prevalent disease. *Vata* is the only *dosha* which governs all the other entities of the body like *pitta*, *kapha*, *dhatu* etc. diseases caused by *vata* in its vitiated condition are called *vatavyadhi*. So a proper understanding of the concept of *vata* is required in order to keep all the body functions in equilibrium. Although *vata* is said to be dominant during the old age only, but in present times, due to fast and busy life, stress, prolonged sitting posture in working place, dietary habits, working late night, improper sleep etc., *vata* is seen to be aggravated even in the young individuals. In the *Ayurvedic* Classics, a number of references are found where a detail description of *vata* is given. So, here an attempt has been made to correlate the concept of *vatavyadhi* with the diseases of modern medicine. This can thereby help to understand the *vatavyadhi* more clearly in the modern scientific language and in turn help to improve the treatment procedure as well as in preventive aspect. Deep study of modern books was done to establish the comparison as far as possible.

**Keywords:** *Vatavyadhi*, *vata*, *Ayurveda*, Modern medicine.

## INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is an age old science which dates back to thousands of years. This science is based on the entities like *dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala*. *Tridoshas*, which are *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* are called as the *Tristhuna* by *Acharyas*<sup>1</sup>. Among the three, *vata* is the most important one. *Vata* is the only *dosha* which is responsible for vitiation of other two *doshas* as well as the *dhatu*s and *malas*. It is also said that *pitta* and *kapha* are *pangu* (lame) without the involvement of *vata*<sup>2</sup>. *Sushruta* has called it as “*Swayambhu bhagwana*”<sup>3</sup>. It is the cause of origin, existence and destruction of all living beings. Due to various causative factors, *vata dosha* gets vitiated which

in turn vitiate the *dushyas* and cause *vyadhi*. A comparison of the *vatavyadhi* is needed for the proper understanding of the concept of *vatavyadhi*, as they are the most severe types of diseases which afflict the individuals. A better understanding will be helpful in further treatment and prevention also.

**AIM AND OBJECTIVE:** To correlate *Vatavyadhi* in modern medicine

**MATERIALS:** This article is based on a review of *Ayurvedic* and *Modern* textbooks. Materials related to *Vatavyadhi* and its modern correlation is collected to the utmost. References were taken from *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* and *Modern* books of

Medicine.

## DISCUSSION

*Vata* is the prime *dosha* and is described vividly in the Classics. The *gunas* of *Vata* as described by *Charaka* are *ruksha* (dry), *sheeta* (cool), *laghu* (light), *sukhma* (subtle), *khara* (rough), *chala* (movement) and *vishada* (non slimy)<sup>4</sup>. It is invisible, but manifest by only its functions. The functions of *vayu* in the human body are *utsah* (enthusiasm), *nishwasa* (inspiration, expiration), functioning of *vani* (voice) and *mana* (mind), normal transformation of the *dhatu*s (body tissue), proper excretion of the *mala* (faeces), *mutra* (urine), *sweda* (sweat)<sup>5</sup>. It is been rightly said that “*Vayus Tantra Yantra Dharaha*”. In normal condition, it sustains all the organs of the body and its functions<sup>6</sup>. So, when this *vayu* become vitiated, it leads to abnormal condition of the above said function and *gunas*. Within the body, there will be various types of *vata vikaras*, decrease of *ayu* (life span), *bala* (strength), *varna* (complexion). It can even lead to death. *Acharya Charaka* has described 80 types of *Nanatmaja VataVyadhis*. These are *Nakhabheda* (cracking of Nails), *Vipadika* (cracking of feet), *Padasula* (pain of feet), *Pada bhramsa* (feet drop), *Pada suptata* (numbness of foot), *Vata khuddata* (club foot), *Gulpha graham* (stiffankle), *Pindiko-udvestana* (cramps in the calf), *Gridrasi* (sciatica), *Janubheda* (genu varum), *Januvislesa* (genu valgum), *Urustambha* (stiffness of thigh), *Urusada* (pain in thigh), *Pangulya* (Paraplegia), etc.<sup>7</sup>

**Nidana:** The *nidanas* which leads to the vitiation of *vayu* are- having a war with the more powerful ones, *ativyayama* (excessive exercise), *ativyavaya* (excessive sexual activity), *ati adhyayana* (excessive study), *langhana* (fasting), *plavana* (swimming), *pratarana* (falling), *ratrijagarana*

(awakening at night), are the *viharas* (physical activity). *Aharas* (food habit) like taking of *katu* (pungent), *tikta* (bitter), *kasaya* (astringent), *ruksha* (dry), *seeta virya yukt* (cold potency), *suska shaka* (dry vegetables), *vallura* (dry meat), *mudga* (gram), *masura* (lentil), *anashana* (starvation), *adhyasana* (taking meal before the digestion of previous food), *vegadharana* (suppression of urges) like *vata* (flatus), *mutra* (urine), *purisha* (faeces), *sukra* (semen), *charrdi* (vomiting), *kshavathu* (sneezing), *udgara* (belching), *waspa* (tears), etc.<sup>8,9</sup>

**The lakshanas of vata vriddhi are-** *Sankocha* (contraction), *stambhana* (stiffness) of joints and *shoola* in the joints as well as in bones, *lomaharsha* (horripulation), *pralapa* (delirium), *graham* (spasticity) of hands, back as well as head. *Khanja* (lameness) and *pangulya* (total paralysis of leg) and *kubjata* (lunch-back), *sosha* (atrophy) of body parts, *anidra* (insomnia), *Spandana* (trembling of body), *gatrassuptata* (numbness), *hundana* (shrinking) of head, nose, eyes, clavicular region and neck, *Bheda* (breaking pain), *toda* (pricking pain), *akshepaka* (convulsion), *karshya* (emaciation), *karshnya* (blackishness of skin), *usna kamatva* (desire for hot substances), *kampana* (trembling), *anaha* (flatulence), *malabarodha* (obstruction to faeces), *bala indriya bhramsa* (loss of strength and sensory function), *pralapa* (incoherent talk), *bhrama* (giddiness), etc.<sup>10-12</sup>

The **lakshanas of kshina vata** are- *Anga saada* (weakness), *alpa bhasan* (decrease speech), *alpa sangya* (decrease conscious), *moha* (delirium)<sup>13</sup> (A.H/Su/11/15)

**Analysis of the gunas of vata<sup>14</sup>:**

**Laghu (light):** predominancy of *vayu* and *agni mahabhoota*, possesses *tikta* (bitter), *lavana* (salty) and *katu* (pungent) *rasas*, produces lightness, decrease of strength,

*dhatukshaya* (decrease body tissues) emaciation, increases *vata* and decrease *kapha* in the body.

**Ruksha (dry):** predominancy of *vayu* and *agni mahabhoota*, possesses *katu*, *tikta* and *kashaya* (astringent) *rasas*, produces *rukshata*, *kathinya* (hard), *stambhana*, decreases *dhatu* (body tissue) and is *vata vriddhikaraka*.

**Sheeta (cool):** predominancy of *vayu* and *jala mahabhoota*, possesses *tikta*(bitter), *madhura*(sweet) and *kashaya* (astringent) *rasas*, *stambhakaraka* (stiffness), *brimhanakaraka* (increase strength), *agnimandyakara* (decrease digestive fire), *kapha* and *vata vardhaka*.

**Suksma (subtle):** *sukshma srota* and *chidra pravasha* (enter into minute channels of body), *agni*, *vayu* and *akasha mahabhoota*, produces *snehana*(oleation), *stambhana* (stiffness) and *swedana* (sweating) in the body.

**Chala (movement):** *Chala guna* can be replaced with *Sara guna* according to *Acharya Vagbhatta*. The main functions are *anulomana* (downward direction of *vayu*), *pravartana* (increased frequency)

**Vishada (non slimy):** predominancy of *prithvi*, *vayu*, *agni* and *akasha*, functions are *soshana* (emaciation), *ropana*(healing), *balakshaya* (decrease strength), decreases *kapha*.

**Khara (rough):** produces *parushya* (rough), *karkashata* (coarse), *rukshata* (dryness), *apatarpana* (lightness), *lekhana* (scarifying)inside the body. It causes *vata vriddhi*.

The *vriddhi* of *Ruksha*, *sheeta* *gunas* of *vata* are chiefly responsible for the production of pain, stiffness, restricted movement, atrophy, loss of strength of body as well as decrease sensory and motor fuction. The vitiation of *sheeta guna* is responsible *mala abarodha* (constipation), *lomaharsha* (horripilation) and *ushnaka-*

*mitva* (desir for hot substances). The *laghu guna* is again responsible for all the atrophy disorders, *karshya*. It possesses dominance of *amla* (sour),*katu*(pungent) and *tikta* (bitter) *rasa* due to which it causes *vaddhavidha* (constipation). The *chala guna* is responsible for increased *pravritti*. The pathological changes like *spandana*(trembling), *kampana* (shiver) which mainly occurs in the neurological diseases are due to this *guna* along with other *gunas*.

#### Comparision with Modern Medicine:

From the analysis of *gunas*, *kupita lakshanas* of *vata* and from the 80 types of *vatika nanatmaja vyadhis*, it can be correlated with different diseases as mentioned in modern medicine which can be grouped under the following headings-

1. Disorders of joints and adjacent tissue<sup>15</sup>: Musculoskeletal disorders Pain related disease: shoulder pain, knee pain, hip pain Arthritis : osteoarthritis
2. Nerve and Muscle diseases<sup>16</sup>:  
Peripheral neuropathy  
Muscular dystrophies: muscle weakness, muscle pain, cramps, stiffness  
Neuropathic pain- burning, tingling sensation,  
Back and neck pain- Anomalies of spine
3. Disorders of bone and mineral metabolism<sup>17</sup>: Osteoporosis
4. Neurological disorders: diseases of the specific nerves
5. Nervous system dysfunction<sup>18</sup>: Dizziness, Vertigo, weakness, Paralysis, Numbness

The possible *Vatavyadhi* correlation with the musculoskeletal disorders and the muscle disease are:

- ◆ *Asthisosha*- osteoporosis
- ◆ *Asthibheda*- fragility
- ◆ *Asthishoola*- ostalgia
- ◆ *Asthiparva bheda*- pain, arthralgia

All the above are due to Kupita vata in as-thi.

- ◆ *Parvanamstambha*- joint stiffness, reduced range of movement.(eg: *hanustambha*, *manyastambha*- locked jaw, torticollis)
- ◆ *Panipristhasirograham*- spasticity, stiff back and neck
- ◆ *Akshepak*- convulsive disorders (*kupita vata in the dhamanis*)
- ◆ *Avabahuka*- *amsasosha*- Frozen shoulder (*vata in amsa Pradesh*)
- ◆ *Mamsakshaya*- different muscle atrophy diseases (*kupita vata in mamsa*)
- ◆ *Sandhishoola*-joint disorders(e.g OA)

### NEUROLOGICAL DISEASES<sup>19</sup>

Disorders of the **first** cranial nerve-

**OLFACTORY** this is a sensory nerve which is responsible for smell sensation. Damage of this nerve leads to Anosmia. The *vatavyadhi Ghrananasha* can be compared with this disease.

Disorders of **second** cranial nerve-

**OPTIC NERVE:** This nerve is a sensory nerve which is responsible for vision. The nerve is involved in trauma, vascular accidents, etc. the lesions produced due to it are papilloedema, optic neuritis. All the *netra* related disease caused by vata like *akshibheda*, *netrashoola* can be compared with this pathology.

Disorders of **third** cranial nerve-

**OCCULOMOTOR-** Ptosis - *Nimesh*, which occurs due to *vyan vayu prakopa*.

**Fifth** cranial nerve-

**TRIGEMINAL-** This is a mixed nerve. The effect of motor part is inability to move the lower jaw side to side, weakness and wasting of the masseter and temporalis muscle, inability to chew. The sensory part effects are loss of sensation of taste on the anterior two-third of the tongue on the same side. So, the *vatavyadhi* like *hanustambha*, *manyastambha*, *shankha-*

*bheda*, *arasagyata*, *kasayaasyata* can be correlated with the above.

**Seventh** cranial nerve –

**FACIAL** nerve- This is again a motor nerve. It supplies the individual muscles on the face. Its lesion includes facial paralysis. The clinical features are paralysis of the lower half of the face if the lesion is on the upper motor neurone. Paralysis on the one half of the face of the same side if the lesion is on the lower motor neurone. So, this disease can be correlated with the *vatavyadhi Ardita*.

**Eight-** cranial nerve-

**AUDITORY:** It has two parts. Cochlear division responsible for hearing and vestibular part responsible for maintenance of equilibrium. The clinical features of cochlear lesion are tinnitus, deafness while of vestibular are loss of equilibrium, vertigo, giddiness. Thus it can be concluded that *ashabdasravana* (tinnitus), *badhirya* (deaf), *bhrama* (giddiness) comes under this group of diseases.

**Ninth** cranial nerve-

**GLOSSOPHARYNGEAL:** It is a mixed cranial nerve whose effects of lesion are difficulty in deglutition, loss of taste sensation in the posterior one third of the tongue- *Arasagyata* (tastelessness)

**Tenth** cranial nerve-

**VAGUS-** Effects of lesion include hoarseness of voice along with other features. The *Vata vriddhi lakshana* given by *Sushruta* as *vakparushya*(hoarseness of voice) can be compared with this.

**Other comparable diseases:**

*Pakshavadha* - can be compared with Hemiplegia , *Pangulya* - can be compared with Paraplegia , *Kampavata* - It can be correlated with Parkinsonism, *Viswachi*- it can be correlated with brachial neuropathy, *erb's* paralysis, *Khanja*- it can be correlated with monoplegia cruralis, *Pangu*- it can be correlated with diplegia cruralis,

*Gridhasi*- it can be correlated with Sciatica, *Apatantraka*- it can be correlated with Hysteria, *Apatanaka*- it can be correlated with tetanus, *Dandapatana*- it can be correlated with Orthotonos, *Antarayama*- it can be correlated with Emprosthotonos, *Bahyayama*- it can be correlated with ophistotonos, *Akshepaka*- it can be correlated with Convulsive disorders, *Grivahundana*- it can be correlated with Cervical spondylities

### CONCLUSION:

From the above explanation, it can be said that the vatavyadhis can be correlated with the diseases of Nervous system including Musculoskeletal and Neuromuscular diseases. The pathology of the disease can be understood well from both the Ayurvedic and Modern point of view. The specific gunas of vata involved in causing the disease can also be found out. So, these understandings can further help a physician to diagnose as well as treat a disease more efficiently.

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**CORRESPONDING AUTHOR**

**Dr. Deepanjali Bora**

P.G Scholar, Samhita & Siddhanta department,  
Govt. Ayurvedic College, Guwahati,  
Jalukbari-14

Email- [deepanjali26@gmail.com](mailto:deepanjali26@gmail.com)

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**Source of support:** Nil

**Conflict of interest:** None declared