A CRITICAL REVIEW ON AMAVATA CHIKITSA

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ABSTRACT

Amavata is a disease of Rasavaha strotasa, it is generally compared with Rheumatoid Arthritis. Amavata is the outcome of Agnidushti, Amotpatti and Sandhivikruti. Amavata is a disease in which vitiation of Vata Dosha and accumulation of Ama take place in joint(s), and it simulates rheumatoid arthritis (RA) at modern parlance. Shamana (conservative) and Shodhana (biological purification of the body) treatments are advised in Ayurveda whereas anti-inflammatory, analgesics, steroids, and disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs are required for its management as per modern medicine, which are not free from side effects. The therapy which normalize Agni, Metabolizes Ama, and Regulates Vata and maintain healthy Sandhi and Sandhistha Shleshma will be the supreme one for this disease. Many people in society are unaware about disease and its complications which is responsible for lifelong joint deformities. Many herbal as well as Ayurvedic preparations are mentioned in the classics which are very effective remedy in Amavata.

Keywords: Amavata; Rasavaha Strotas; Amotpatti; Sandhivikruti, rheumatoid arthritis

INTRODUCTION

Amavata is a disease in which vitiation of Vata Dosha and accumulation of Ama take place in joints, which simulate rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in modern parlance. When there is improper digestion, there is a sluggish material produced which is known as Ama. Ama is caused by poor eating habits such as excessive consumption of processed foods, lack of exercise, poor digestive system, eating high-calorie foods and poor metabolism. Amavata is also known as Rheumatoid Arthritis is an autoimmune disease which causes inflammation in the joints. Ama is an undigested product, which is not homogeneous for the body.

Worldwide prevalence of RA is estimated between 0.3% and 1% and is commonly seen in women in developed countries. In India the prevalence is estimated to be 0.75%. Though causes of RA are not yet clearly understood, it is believed to affect persons who are genetically susceptible as a manifestation of response to an infectious agent. Whenever that Ama gets localized in the body tissue or joint, it can lead to production of pain, stiffness, swelling, tenderness, etc., in the related joints. The features of Amavata are Much identical to RA, an autoimmune disorder which causes chronic inflammatory and symmetrical polyarthritis. Ayurveda believes that healthy body is the result of
3 components – Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Ama is formed due to excessive Vata, which over the period of time damages the tissues. The most commonly affected joints include pelvis, low back, knees, and hips. These joints experience pain and stiffness which reduces mobility. As evident from the progression of the disease, the symptoms start in the digestive system and gradually reach the joints and muscles. Some of the common symptoms include indigestion, increased thirst, poor appetite, constant bloated feeling, weight gain, vomiting and nausea. Few people may also experience swelling in the joints and muscles leading to pain and stiffness. Most commonly affected joints include the ankles, knees, elbows, fingers, toes, head and neck, and hips. Ayurvedic classics confine use of oils for external application and advocate use of dry sudation (ruksha sweda) in Amavata. [7] It would greatly help in patients having more vitiation of ama as compared to vata, so that glutinous (styana) and slimy (pichcchila) ama can be controlled. Basti is the treatment of choice for vata ailments. In Amavata, vaitarana basti is popular treatment widely practised and studied as well.

Aim and Objectives

1. To explore the hetu (causative factors), Samprapti (pathogenesis), linga (symptomatology) of Amavata.
2. To explore the Chikitsa (treatment modalities) of Amavata.
3. Understanding Amavata in relation to Rheumatoid arthritis and need of ayurveda over the conventional treatment of Rheumatoid arthritis

Material and methods

This study was carried out by literature search, critical review, various medical research data base like pubmed, and other national research database.

Causes and path physiology of Amavata

The root cause behind the pathogenesis of Amavata is agnimandya. State of agnimandya leads to production of ama and further leads to vata prakopa along with impairment of other doshas. Hence it can be said that any factor whether dietary, environmental or psychological, which causes impairment of agni is responsible for the production of ama and gets lodged in sleshma sthanas especially in the sandhis (synovial joints) and produce various symptoms of Amavata. Among five types of vata, vyanav vayu and samana vayu which are responsible for the circulation of rasa dhatu and control agni respectively are mainly vitiated in Amavata[8].

Clinical aspect of Chikitsa sutra- In Ayurveda vigyan there are three types of chikitsa.

1. Shamana
2. Shodhan
3. Nidan parivarjan

In chikitsa these three types are play equally important role in management and further progression of disease. Amavata firstly described by Acharya Madhav. Later the description is found in Yogratnakar, Bhavprakah, Sharangdhher. The line of treatment described for the disease as “langhnam swednam tiktam”[9] can be summarized under following captions-

1. Measure to bring agni to normal state.
2. Measure to digest ama.
3. Measure to eliminate vitiated vata and ama.

Ama and vata are the two chief pathognomic factors in production of Amavata. Ama is guru, snigdha, sthira, sthula and pichhila while the vata have the properties like laghu, ruksha, chala, sukshama and vishada.

1. Langhana-

Any measure, which brings in laghuta in the body, [10] is known as langhana Acharya Vagbhata in ashtanga hridya has considered langhana similar to apatarpana and has described under the heading shodhana and shamana.

It is the first measure that has been advised for the management of Amavata, Which is considered to be an amasayothavyadhi and also rasaja vikara, langhana is the first line of treatment in such conditions. The pathology originates in amashaya due to poor digestion in presence of mandagni, ultimately resulting in formation of ama. So the starvation will further stop the production of ama. In Nirama Avastha this
measure may increases the vata dosha. So langhana should be stopped immediately after achieving the niramalakshana.

2. Swedana-
The process, which causes perspiration, destroys stiffness, heaviness of the body and cold\[11\]. It is beneficial because of its ushna guna that digests (pachana) the ama present in affected area and also dilates the channel. Thus obstruction of channels (srotorodha) is removed. Relief in obstruction results in perspiration. Other type of swedana, which is good in case of Amavata, is internal administration of ushana jala (hot water). Ushana jala is dipana, pachana, srotoshodhana, jvaraghna, balya, ruchikara and sedawakra.

3. Tikta-Katu and Deepana Dravyas-
Tikta dravya are Ama and pitta pachak and srotomukhishodhanam\[12\]. Katu dravya are chedak margvivrak and Kapha shamak. Tikta and katu ras is laghu ushna and tikshana in properties. Which are very useful for ama pachana. These are also deepana and pachana, so by means of these properties digestion of ama, restoration of agni (deepana) removal of excessive kledaka kapha and bringing of the pakva dosha to the kostha from the shakha takes place.

4. Virechana –
Virechana is a therapy, which is indicated in shodhana purpose. By Virechana the dosha are eliminated by adhomarga \[13\].

Reasons for the administration of virechana are as follows:-
Production of ama is the result of involvement of pittasthana and kleda Kapha. Virechan removes the kledaka kapha from the pitta sthana.it is the most suitable therapy for the sthanik pitta dosha. antrakujana and katisula are indicative of pratiloma gati of vayu. Virechana does anulomana of vata.

5. Snehapana –
Snehapana is the process by which snigdhata vishyandata, mriduta and kledana in body are Achieved. The properties of sneha are drava, sukshama, sara, snigdha, pichhila, guru, sheet, manda and mridu snehapana is of two types achha snehapana and sidha snehapana. These can be used as per the condition (samavastha & niramavstha) and bala of the patients. Shamana or brimhana type of snehapana is indicated in nirama stage or chronic condition of the disease.

6. Basti –
The procedure of administration of medicated liquid materials through anus (adhomarga) is known as basti. In ayurvedic classics, basti is advocated as ardha chikitsa \[14\], which is the best procedure to control vitiated vata dosha. Asthapana basti eliminates the dosha brought to the kostha by deepana and pachana. Besides these it also strengthen the local function of the kostha and remove the anaha, vibanadha etc. Chakrapani has recommended saindhavadi taila for anuvasana basti and kshara basti, vairarana for asthapana (niruha) basti.

Pathya-
(a) Anna varga- Purana shali, raktashali, shastikashali, yava (barley), chanaka (chickpea), kulatha (horsegram),
(b) Jalavarga- Shrutasheetajala (luke warm water), panchkolashrutjala, shunthi siddha jala,
(c) Madhya varga- Purana sidhu(old wine)
(d) Mutra varga- Gomutra (cow's urine)
(e) Kanda varga-shunthi, lasuna, ardraka,
(f) Ksheervarga-Takra
(g) Shakavarga- patol, karvellak (bitter gourd) ,varthaka (brinjal),nimpatra,shigru
(h) Mamsavarga- Jangalamamsa

Apathya-
Aahaaraadi Rupa Apathya {Apathya in the form of Diet, Vegetables, Grains etc.}:

- Dadhi - Curds
- Matsya - Fish
- Guda - Jaggery / Molasses
- Ksheera - Milk
- Masha - Black Grams
- Upadika
- Pishtakam - Flour Product
- Guru Aahara - Foods which are heavy to digest
• **AbhishyandhiAahara** - Foods which cause stagnation and blocks in the body
• **ViruddhaAahara** - Mutually incompatible foods
• **VishamaAashana** - Odd and Weird practice of food w.r.t. quality, quantity and timing of food
• **DushtaNeeram** - Contaminated water

**Vihara rupa apathyya:**-
• **Poorvavata** - Getting exposed to wind coming from east
• **Vegarodham** - Suppressing or forcibly avoiding/neglecting the natural calls of the body like those of Flatus, Stools, Urine, Hunger, Thirst, Sleep etc.
• **Jaagaram** - Excessive awakening during night and making a habit of the same for prolonged periods

**CONCLUSION**

In spite of the description of the multiple drug therapy in different classics of *Ayurveda* potential and durable results are not found due to non-removal of the basic cause. Hence Special emphasis should be put into by the correct application of *chikitsa sutra* described in our classics for a holistic approach with diet, life style intervention and continuous use of drugs to have a good control of the disease and to achieve improvement in quality of life. As *Amavata* is one of the common debilitating disease by virtue of its chronicity and implication and *ama* and *vata* have the properties on opposite pole of each other so these things come in across while treating it, because any measure adopted will principally oppose one another. So a very careful approach can only benefit the patient. In this paper an attempt has been made to substantiate these principles scientifically.

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