A CRITICAL REVIEW ON GRIDHRASI (SCIATICA)

Jitender Kumar Rana

M.S (Shalya), Assistant Professor, Department of Rachana Sharir
Kunwar Shekhar Vijendra Ayurved Medical College and Research Centre
Shobhit University, Gangoh, Uttar Pradesh, India

Email: jitender.rana64@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Gridhrasi is a frequently encountered problem in the present era produced commonly due to the changed life style. Sciatica is characterized by severe pain which starts in the back and radiates down to one or both lower limb. It is prevalent all over the world. Gridhrasi (sciatica) is also pain dominant lifestyle disorder, in which the pain starts from Sphik Pradesh (back region) and radiates towards the foot. On the basis of the symptoms, Sciatica can be correlated with Gridhrasi in Ayurveda. Gridhrasi is included in Vataja Nanatmaja vyadhi and also considered as a maharoga by acharya Charaka. In all Ayurveda classics, the description of the diseases is available. But Sushruta, the father of surgery has described all the details about the disease.

Keywords: Gridhrasi, siravedha, sciatica, ayurveda

INTRODUCTION

Changing life style of modern human being has created several disharmonies in his biological system as the advancement of busy, professional and social life, improper sitting posture in office, factories continuous and over exertion jerky movements during travelling and sports – all these factors creates an undue pressure to the spinal cord and play a chief role in producing lower backache and sciatica. Similar progressive disorders affecting the pelvis and nearer structure are also precipitating in this condition. In this way, this disease is now becoming a significant threat to the working population, improper sitting posture, jerky movement during travelling & sports may worsen the disease condition.¹,²,³

Now a day’s most common disorder which effects the movements of leg particular in middle age is low backache out of which 40% are radiating pain which comes under sciatica syndrome which effects daily routine work.⁴ Sciatica is characterized by constant aching
pain which felt in the lumbar region may radiate to the buttock, thigh, calf and foot. Sciatic pain radiates along the course of the sciatic nerve. According to Stanlay J. Swierzewski, low backache affects 80-90% of people during their life time but sciatica occurs in about 5% of cases. It is common between 30-40 yrs of age and affects both the sexes (male and female) equally.

On the basis of the symptoms, Sciatica can be correlated with Gridhrasi in Ayurveda. Gridhrasi is included in Vataja Nanatmaja vyadhi and also considered as a maharoga by acharya Charaka. In all Ayurveda classic, the description of the diseases is available, but Sushruta, the father of surgery has described all the details about the disease.

Sushruta (2 A.C) has given elaborated descriptions of aetiopathogenesis , symptomology, management and various other aspects of Gridhrasi in his treatise, named Sushruta samhita.

The treatment of sciatica is a challenge for the modern medicine and surgery. The treatment option for sciatica in present time includes.

1. Conservative treatment
2. Epidural steroid injection
3. Peri-radiccular infiltration
4. Surgical treatment

In Ayurvedic texts, there are various type of treatment described for Gridhrasi.

They are as follow –
1. Oral medication
2. Swedana
3. Snehana
4. Basti karma
5. Agni karma
6. Siravedha

ETIMOLOGY

Gridh’ is the dhatu which makes the word ‘Gridhra’ from which the word ‘Gridhrasi’ is derived. The person, who desires to eat the meat greedily, is denoted as ‘Gridhra’ and the disease which occurs commonly in these persons is called Gridhrasi.

Definition of Gridhrasi:

Sushruta:
1. The condition in which Vata invading the Kandaras (tendons) of the ankles and toes produces kshepan (decrease movement) in the thighs, this disease known as Gridhrasi.

Charaka:
2. In Gridhrasi, Nitamba (gluteal region), Kati (lumber), Prushtha (posterior of thigh), Uru (knee), Jangha (calf) and Pada (foot) are affected respectively. Sthambha (stiffness), Ruk (pain), Toda (pricking sensation), and Muhuspandanam (tingling sensation) these found in Vataja type of Gridhrasi whereas in Vata-Kaphaja type of Gridhrasi Tandra (fatigue), Gaurava (heaviness) and Arochaka (aversion) in addition of Vataja type are found.

Bhavaprakasha:
3. He explained Dehapravakrata (improper posture of body) in Vataja type of Gridhrasi and in Vata-Kaphaja type of Gridhrasi Gaurava (heaviness), Agnimandha(loss of appetite), Tanda (fatigue), Mukhapraseka (excessive salivation), Bhaktadvesha (anorexia) in addition of Vataja type Gridhrasi.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

NIDANA PANCHAKA of GRIDHRASI

Nidana (Causative factors)

The particular causative factors of Gridhrasi are not mentioned in the classics. The general causes of Vata Vyadhi are considered as the causes of Gridhrasi because it is considered in 80 Nanatmajja Vata Vyadhi.\textsuperscript{12}

Poorvaroopa

Gridhrasi being a Vata Vyadhi, the samanya Purvaroopa of Vata Vyadhi are the Purvaroopa of Gridhrasi. In Samhita Ayvaktaka Lakshana (unmanifested symptom) is the Purvaroopa of VataVyadhi.\textsuperscript{13}

Roopa

In Gridhrasi Ruk, Toda, Stambha and Muhu-spandana are the cardinal symptoms.\textsuperscript{14} To be more precise about the track of pain, Chakrapani says that the pain starts at Sphik and then radiates to Kati, Prishtha, Uru, Janu, Jangha and Pada in order. Also Sakthik-shepanigraha is added to the list of cardinal signs by Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhata.\textsuperscript{15} Tandra, Gaurava, Aruchi, Bhaktadvesha, Mukhapraseka etc. are the lakshana of Vata- Kaphaj Gridhrasi. Some signs and symptoms like Dehasyapravakrata, Janu, Uru Sandhi Spurana etc. have been defined as Vatik Lakshana by Bhavaprakasha, Madhavnidana and Yogaratnakara. Vangasena has also added pain in Payu as one of the symptoms. Samprapti For the disease Gridhrasi, the detailed Samprapti has not been mentioned in Ayurvedic classics. Since Gridhrasi is a Vata Vyadhi, the general Samprapti of Vata Vyadhi along with specific description available are considered here for the explanation of Samprapti there are two main reasons by which Vata gets vitiated. They are Dhatukshaya and Margavarodha. In Gridhrasi, exposure to mild but continuous trauma to Kati, Sphik region occur because of improper posture, travelling in jerky vehicles, carrying heavy loads, digging etc. or sometimes spinal cord injury, improperly treated pelvic diseases are responsible for producing Sthanavaigunya at Kati, Sphik, Prishta etc. They may not be able to produce the disease at the instance, but after acquiring some Vyanjaka Hetu (exciting cause), the disease may be produced. Here, the Samprapti takes place either by Apatarpana or Santarpana or Agantuja.

Doshika Dominance in Gridhrasi

According to Charaka, Sushruta and Vagabha a Vata Dosha is dominance in Gridhrasi. Samprapti Ghatak\textsuperscript{16}

Dosha – Vata, Kapha pradhan Tridosha
Dushya – Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Nadi sans-than
Adhishthan - Kati, Uru, Janu, Jangha, Pada
Srotas – Raktavaha, Mamsavaha, Medavaha, Asthivaha
Sroto dushti prakar - Sanga, Sira granthi
Agni – Vishmagni, Mandagni Vyadhi
Swabhava – Aashukari/ Chirkari
Sadhyta - Naveen – Krichrasadhyta

SADHYA – ASADHYATA

Gridhrasi is a Vata Vyadhi and all the Vata Vyadhis become Asadhya (incurable) or Durroopakrama (complicated) if neglected after a certain period of time.\textsuperscript{17}
Generally, it is seen that Gridhrasi if given proper treatment and if proper diet is maintained together with Nidana Parivarjana is curable but, is usually not Sukhasadhya (easy to cure). It is usually Kashtasadhya (difficult to cure). Also, it is observed that Vata-Kaphaja Gridhrasi is easily curable as compared to pure Vataja Gridhrasi.

Pathya – Apathya 18- Nidana sevana results into various pathological changes in the body that creates a disease. Nidana Parivarjana will stop further pathogenesis in the body. Therefore Pathya & Apathya have a great role with each disease. Gridhrasi, being a Vata Vyadhi, the Pathyapathya mentioned for Vata Vyadhi should be followed.

Pathya— Rakta Shali, Purana Shashtika Shali, Kulatha, Maasha, Godhum, Navin Tila, Lavana, Dugdha, Ghrita, Dadhi, Matsyandika, Dadhikurchika, Patola, Shigru, Vartaka, Lashuna, Tambula, Jal Krida, Samvahan, Pari eka etc.

Apathya- Chanak, Kalaya, Shyamak, Nivar, Kangu, Mudga, Rajmashak, Katthilaka, Nishpavabija, Bimbi, Kasheruka, Tadag, Tatini Jala, Sheetambu, Viruddhanna. Dravyas Having Kashaya, Katu, Tikta Rasa indulgence in sex, excessive riding on vehicles, excessive walking, sleeping on hard beds should be avoided. Chinta, Ratrijagarana, Vegavidharana, Shrama, Vaman and Upavasa etc.

Chikitsa -Sutra:

In Ayurveda Aushadha is considered as one of the four fold constituents of Chikitsa Chatus- Pada. Gridhrasi being one of Vata Vyadhi general line of treatment can be explained here. For better understanding these principles of treatment are explained under three headings-

1. Nidana Parivarjana

2. Shodhana Chikitsa. Snehana Karma- Snehana should be done only in Niroopastambhita Vata. 19 By the word Snehana both external and internal Snehana is included. For internal Snehapana chaturvidha Mahasneha are indicated. But Taila is praised in Vata - Vyadhi as it is having exactly opposite properties as that of Vata. 20 Swedana Karma- Nadi, Prastara, Sankara etc. are the various types of Swedana Karma. 21 Virechana Karma- Trivrut, Aaragvadha and Erand Taila should be used for Virechana. 22 Nasya Karma Basti Karma - Niruh Basti- Erandmuladi Kwath. Anuvasan Basti- Saindhvadi Taila. Agnikarma- Charaka mentions Siravedha (between the Kandara & Gulfa), Basti (Anuvasan & Niruh) and Agnikarma as the line of treatment for Gridhrasi. 23 Siravedha - Sushruta, being the master of Shalyatantra has advised only Siravedha at Janu after flexion. 24 Siravedha four Angula above or below Janu is mentioned for Gridhrasi in both Ashtanga Samgraha and Ashtanga Hridaya. 25

3. Shamana Chikitsa- After completing the Shodhana Karma, Shamana Chikitsa is indicated to subside the residual Dosha. If Dosha Kopa is less, then Shamana Chikitsa is enough and if the patient is very weak, then only Shamana Chikitsa can be used even in Prabhuta Dosha condition. For Shamana Chikitsa following medicines are used in clinical practice-

Nakula Taila (Bhaishajya Ratnavali), Nukuladhyu Ghrita (Bhaishajya Ratnavali), Brihat
DISCUSSION

Gridhrasi is Vata Nanatmaja Vyadhi. Vata is playing main role in Gridhrasi. Obviously, Pakwashaya is the Udbhavasthana of the disease. Among the five types of Vata, Apana and Vyana Vayu are essential factor of Gridhrasi. Apana resides in the lower part of the body especially Kati, Basti etc. Because of various Hetu Apana vayu is vitiated. In Gridhrasi, Sakthiutkshepanigrahata is the main sign i.e., lifting of the lower limb is affected. This clearly explains the involvement of Vyana Vayu in the Samprapti as these movements are governed by Vyana Vayu. Also, sometimes Kapha is the Anubandhi Dosha producing Vata-Kaphaj Gridhrasi. The Samprapti of Gridhrasi takes place either by Dhatukshaya or Margavarana or due to Agantuja causes like Abhikhata. In Dhatukshayaja Samprapti, due to improper nourishment of Rasadi Dhatu, these Dhatu land into Kshaya avastha. Dhatukshaya further vitiates Vata causing Gridhrasi. When Vayu is obstructed by Kapha, Ama etc. it gets vitiated leading to Margavaranajanya Samprapti of Gridhrasi. Agantuja factors are mentioned as a cause of Gridhrasi by both the systems of medicine. All these vitiated Dosha affect the Kandara of leg. Movements of leg is the function of Kandara when this Kandara is affected, there is pain in the leg radiating from Nitamba (gluteal region), Kati (lumber), Prushtha (posterior of thigh), Uru (knee), Jangha (calf) and Pada (foot) etc. The pain is accompanied by Toda, mahuSphandananam, Stambha. Due to pain, the upward lifting of leg is painful. Acharya Sushruta clearly mentioned the involvement of Kandara in Gridhrasi. Dalhana explains Kandara as Mahasnayu. According to Vaidyak Shabdasindhu, Snayu are the Nadi that conduct Vayu. According to Sushruta, Vayu in its normal state, while coursing through its specific Sira helps the unobstructed performance of its specific functions viz. Prasarana and Akunchana and produces clearness and non-illusiveness of Buddhi and the sense organs. When vitiated Vayu enters the Sira, it causes variety of diseases Sushruta has quoted special variety of Sira called as Vata-vaha Sira, which are the channels of movement of Vata, in the senses. Charaka mentions Siravedha between the Kandara & Gulfa, Basti (Anuvasana & Niruha) and Agnikarma as the line of treatment for Gridhrasi. Ayurveda takes a unique approach to the management of above mentioned neuropathies with a special emphasis on eliminating their cause by Panchkarma, physiotherapy and medicinal treatment with help of a wide range of herbal and herbo-mineral drugs. Panchkarma therapy is especially advocated...
in the treatment of neurological diseases. Different type of Snehana, Swedana are efficacious. Besides special treatment like Shiro-basti, Shirodhara and Basti therapy are indicated in such diseases. Basti is the best therapy for mitigating Vata. Ayurvedic philosophy teaches us that the individual with a purely Sattvik nature does not experience disease. Likewise, one who is sick cultivates a Sattvik mind brings rapid healing to their body. Hence all patients should be encouraged to reduce stress and cultivates practices such as meditation which bring peace of mind.

Modern science have so many treatments like Conservative treatment Epidural steroid Injection, Peri-radiculier infiltration, Surgical treatment which are used in sciatica but complication are more in modern science. So Ayurvedic approach of treatment is much better as compared with allopathic treatment.

Nidana Parivarjana, Sodhana Chikitsa & Shamana Chikitsa are main route of treatment for any disease. Sodhana may be recommended for Bahu-dosha, but Shamana is also essential for removing the remained Dosha after Shodhana process.

CONCLUSION

Gridhrasi, a painful condition in which, the person cannot sit and walk properly affecting his normal day to day activity. The Gridhrasi Nidana and Samprapti are not given separately in classics but it is one of the eighty Nanmaja Vata-Vyadhi, the same Nidana are applicable in this disease. Clinically also it is observed that Nidana of Vata-Vyadhi such as abhignata, bharaharana, vegavidharana, vishtambhi, ruksa, alpa ahara, dukhasaiya, dukhasana are the most common causes of Gridhrasi. In Gridhrasi, Vata is the main factor producing the disease. Other doshas may also be involved. Gridhrasi being a Vata Vyadhi, the samanya Purvaroopa of Vata Vyadhi are the Purvaroopa of Gridhrasi. In Samhita Aavyakta Lakshana is the Purvaroopa of Vata-Vyadhi. Rasa, Rakta, Meda, Asthi, Majja dhatu are affected in this disease. Nidana Parivarjana, Shodhana Chikitsa & Shamana Chikitsa are main route of treatment for any disease. Shodhana may be recommended for Bahu-dosha, but Shamana is also essential for removing the remained Dosha after Shodhana process.

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