CONCEPT OF LANGHANA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AMAVATA

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ABSTRACT

Amavata (Rheumatoid Arthritis) is a chronic inflammatory autoimmune disorder, having major clinical features like; sandhi-Shoola (Joint pain), Sandhi- Shotha (Joint and peripheral tissue inflammation), Jwara (Fever), Sandhi Graha (Morning Stiffness). These symptoms affect day to day activities of people. In India many people suffer by amavata. Today’s changing lifestyle and eating habits (fast foods, bakery products) are responsible for formation of Ama (Substance produced in stomach by impaired digestion). Ama results due to agnimandya (decreased function of digestive fire), which is considered to be root cause of amavata. In modern science there is only symptomatic and suppressive treatment is available for amavata but the pathogenesis remains same. For Samprapti Vighatana (Breaking of pathologenesis) and its management, amavata requires rational approach. Therefore in ayurveda as Amavata is considered to be rasaja and amashayotha vyadh; Agnideepana (enhances digestive fire) and Amapachana (digestion of ama) are the basic principles of treatment. Hence, Langhana (complete fasting or light diet) plays major role in this, which increases the digestive fire and helps in digestion of already formed ama.

Keywords: Mandagni, Amavata, Langhana.

INTRODUCTION

Amavata as a separate disease entity was described for the first time in detail by madhavaNidanam, in his famous treatise madhavaNidanam, dealing with the aetiopathogenesis of the disease in a systematic manner besides the signs, symptoms, complications and prognosis. Amavata has been named, taking into account two predominant pathological factors i.e. Ama and vata as they have important place in nidan(Causative factors) and chikitsa (treatement) of thisdisease. Amavata is the disease affecting madhyama roga marga(pathway which includes diseases related to joints and vital points of body) it involves marma(Vital points in our body), asthi(Bones) and sandhis(Joints). The disease is a product of vitiation of tridosha though ama and vata are the initiating factors in its pathogenesis. Term amavata reflects the equal role of both vata and ama. Thoughama is the initiating factor of this disease; which produced due to mandagni (decreased digestive fire). Hence For Agnideepana (Enhances digestive fire) and Amapachana(Digestion of ama),
Langhana (Complete Fasting or light diet) is the basic treatment which is given in Ayurvedic texts. In chakradatta, chikitsasutra of Amavata starts from langhana… which indicates the importance of langhana chikitsa.

CONCEPT OF LANGHANA:
Ayurveda explains about six basic principles of treatment called as shat-upakrama. Among them first one is Langhana derived from the word laghu which means light (opposite of heavy)
The procedure which creates laghavata (lightness) in body is called langhana. The substance which carry out functions of langhana have the characteristics like laghu (Light), ushana (Hot), tikshana (Fast penetrating), vishada (cleansing), sukshma (Micro), khara (Rough), and sara (Movable).

EFFECT OF LANGHANA:
During langhana (complete fasting/Light diet), food is not available for digestion; the agni metabolize the ama and sama doshas and resulting in agnideepana and amapachana.
Among three doshas; Vitiated Kapha dosha is responsible for strotasavarodha (Blockings in body channels) due to its guru (heavy), Abhishyandi (Channel clogging) and picchila(Sticky) guna(properties).which are resembles to the properties of ama, therefore ama is also responsible for Strotasavarodha. In langhana there is absence of food or light diet increases laghuta (lightness) in body and it reduces the ama and Vitiated kapha and helps to destroy the blockings in body channels.

TYPES OF LANGHANA:
The classics mentions 10 types of langhana therapies; shodhana-vamana (emesis).virechana (purgation),shirovirechana (instillation of medicine through nostrils),niruhabasti(decocition enema), pippasa (Thirst),maruta sevana(exposure to wind),atapa sevana (exposure to sunshine), pachana (digestion of ama), upavasa (fasting) and vyayama (Exercise).

Acharya vagbhata have classified langhana into two types;
shodhana: 5 types of shodhana viz.vamana (emesis),virechana(Purgation), nasya (Instillation of medicine through nostrils), niruha basti (Decoction enema), raktmokshana (Bloodletting) and
Shaman:
Pachana (The drugs which digest the ama), deepana (Which enhance the agni), kshut (Fasting), trushna (thirst), vyayam (Exercise), atapa sevana (Exposure to sunshine), maruta sevana (Exposure to wind)

INDICATION OF LANGHANA:
Rogi, Rogi bala, Roga are the basic criteria which should be taken into account before indicating langhana.

DISCUSSION
The body functions are governed by three basic entities called vata, pitta, and kapha. When these three are coordinating and cooperating with each other we are at the best of our health.
Amavata brings two components these are ama and vata.

Mandagni:
Mandagni (decreased power of digestion) is a root cause for all diseases. Here it does not mean only jathragni (digestion power) but seven dhatwagni (metabolism at the level of tissues) and three malagni are also considered under mandagni, and they are also able to create diseases. Vayu, Pitta and kapha; three dosha plays important role to
create mandagni when they increases or decreases in their proportion agni gets manda, and mandagni produces Ama. When it bleeds with dosha and dhatu; changes its proportion, becomes cause to create diseases. They are known as samaawastha of roga (the stage of disease with ama). In Amavata also mandagni produces ama and the disease amavata having the samaawastha for that agnideepana, Amapachana treatment are the first principles; mainly ksut-pipasa vegdhara and pachana are the types of langhana included in the chikitsa of Amavata.

**Ama**

Ama has a capacity to create blocks in the body due to its property of sticking to the surface of cells and channels of the body (transport systems). Ama is a metabolic toxin which has been created due to errors in metabolism, both at the gut as well as cellular levels. Sluggish digestion or weak metabolic fire leads to indigestion. This leads to the formation of unprocessed food essence (ahara rasa) which is about to get into the circulation for being distributed to nourish the body tissues. From this, the first tissue rasa dhatu is improperly formed and is unprocessed. This unprocessed and contaminated ahara rasa formed in the amashaya (Stomach) is called Ama. As Ama is the root cause of Amavata; it is very important to take ama into consideration while treating a disease. Therefore management of ama should be the first step of treatment. In Amavata as ama or sama dosha lodged into shleshma sthana (Joints and heart) which should not be moving out by Shodhana therapies. Because it is just like a attempts to taking the juice from an unripe fruits, leads to the destruction of site where the Ama has been lodged. Hence, ama should be treated with Langhan.

**Vata**

Vata is component in the causation of painful conditions in amavata. Among these Three doshas; vata is te important one which governs pitta and kapha, the tissue components, the distribution of essential nutrients in the body, the elimination of wastes and toxins, the normal functioning of the organs of the body, mind and the intellect and all other activities. All the activities are disturbed when vata is vitiated due to various factors. Vitiated vata causes blocks at various parts of the body, causes either excessive or deficit discharge of essential or non essential things, disturbs the body functions, degenerates the tissues, breaks the integrity of the body components, disturbs the immunity and causes various dysfunctions resulting in painful diseases, when the normal physiological process in which vata is impaired and results in the malformation of vata with ama then it is termed as Amavata. Ama is thrown out by vitiated vata, to the shleshmasthanas as vayu keeps the ama in mobile state. Chesta like Ankuchana (flexion), Prasarana (Extention) is restricted in amavata due to pain, it reveals the predominance of vata dosha in amavata. According to classics, Langhana helps to increase digestive power by Amapachana and remove stagnation and blocks in tissues and channels regresses the pathological processes, strengthens the digestive system. It reduces the sandhi shoola (pain) and shotha (inflammation). It has been described that sama dosha cannot be eliminated from the body until and unless ama attains the
pakwa form and for this purpose langhana is the best therapy. Langhana is contraindicated in vatavridhi but is indicated in Samavata. Hence care should be taken to stop the Langhana as soon as nirama vata condition is achieved. Therefore langhana should be given in Amavata upto the achievement of niramaawastha.

CONCLUSION
Ama is the root cause of Amavata and responsible for strotasavarodha. Langhana helps to increase digestive fire and amapachana. And remove the blockage in body channels therefore langhana is the basic principal of treatment in Amavata. Therefore, the concept of langhana is most useful part in the management of Amavata.

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