TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA – EXPLORING ITS TREATMENT THROUGH PANCHKARMA

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ABSTRACT

Trigeminal neuralgia is inflammation of the trigeminal nerve causing intense facial pain. It tends to afflict people older than 50 year of age. Possible cause of TN is transmission of intense pain resulting vascular compression of root of trigeminal nerve. In modern science anticonvulsant medications are prescribed and if pain persists or medications fail then surgery or radiation therapy is advised which is very costly and has adverse effects. Ayurveda has a ray of hope for management of TN through holistic way. The symptoms of TN can be correlated with Ardhabhedak which has been mentioned under Shiroroga by our Acharyas. Panchkarma procedures like MriduVirechana, Basti, Nasya can be very much helpful in this disease. They are safe, less costly and natural way of being healthy. This article deals with the concept of understanding TN in Ayurved perspective and management with Panchkarma.

Key words: Trigeminal neuralgia, Ardhabhedak, Panchkarma management

INTRODUCTION

Trigeminal neuralgia has been described as one of the most painful conditions known to mankind. It is a unilateral disorder characterized by brief electric shock like pain episodes which are abrupt in onset and termination limited to the distribution of one or more divisions of the trigeminal nerve. It is estimated that in a majority of cases TN symptoms begin appearing more frequently over the age of 50. It is more common in females than males. Most commonly it involves the middle and lower branch of trigeminal nerve. Although the exact cause of TN is unknown. A popular hypothesis for TN is the vascular compression of the trigeminal nerve. Patients may describe trigger area on the face so sensitive that touching or even air currents can trigger on episode. Pain attack is felt like stabbing, electric shocks, burning, pressing, crushing or shooting pain that leads to difficulty in chewing, speaking, tooth brushing and washing the face. Loss of weight and depression found due to interference with food intake and recurrence of pain over a prolonged period. Treatment may include medicines, brain surgery or radiation therapy. Carbamazepine is the drug of choice but over time high doses may be required. It treats the condition very well but can have undesirable side effects such as dizziness and drowsiness. Patients may have to continue treatment lifelong. If medica-
tions no longer control TN pain or side effects are intolerable then surgery is the option. It is risky and complications after surgery like dysesthesiae in most cases and most important pain may come back after some years. Ayurveda can play a good role for better management and for better quality of life of TN patients. In Ayurveda Panchkarma is the best treatment for stopping recurrence of disease and being healthy ever. So here an attempt is made to explore the Ayurvedic line of treatment for TN.

AYURVEDA AND TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA

First of all an attempt is made to understand TN in Ayurvedic perspective. Symptoms of TN are similar with Shiroroga described in Ayurvedic classics. Acharya Charak described 5 types of Shiroroga (Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Sannipataja, Krimija) in Kiyantashirahsiyam Adhyaya and 4 types of Shirorogas (Ardhavbhedak, Suryavart, Anantvata, Shankhak) in Trimeirmiya Siddhi Adhyaya. Acharya Susruta and Vagbhatta have described 11 types & 10 types of Shiroroga respectively. Among them Vataja Shirahshoola, Ardhavbhedak, Anantvata, Raktaja Shirahshoola are much similar to TN. Following table shows the similarity of TN with different Shiroroga.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>TN</th>
<th>Ardhavbhedak</th>
<th>Anantvata</th>
<th>Vatik Shirahshoola</th>
<th>Raktaja Shirahshoola</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral/Bilateral</td>
<td>Unilateral (Ardha Shira)</td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site of pain</td>
<td>External to ala nasi, infraorbital foramen or mental foramen below canine tooth</td>
<td>Pain in Manya, Bhru, Shankha, Karna, Akshi, Lalaata</td>
<td>Pain at nape of neck Pain referred to Manya, Bhru and temporal region.</td>
<td>Pain in temporal region, nape of neck, Bhrama dhya, Lalaata,</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character of pain</td>
<td>Electric shock like pain</td>
<td>Severe Stabbing, cutting like pain</td>
<td>Severe pain</td>
<td>Like Pricking, piercing,</td>
<td>Burning pain Sparshasahatva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of paroxysm</td>
<td>In hours, weeks or years</td>
<td>Every 15 days, 10 days</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous pain</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated symptoms</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Weight loss</td>
<td>Spandana in Gandaparshva region Netra roga</td>
<td>Tinnitus</td>
<td>Trishna Daha Bhrama Sweda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hanugraha

From the above similarities it can be said that Ardhavbhedak is very much similar to TN. Before the planning of treatment it is essential to understand Nidana Panchak and Samprapti Ghatak of TN~ Ardhavbhedak which are as follows.

**NIDANA PANCHAKA**

| Nidana – Ruksha Bhojana, Purva Vata Sevana, Avashyay, Vega Sandharana, Vyayama, Aayasa³ |
| Purvaroopa – no |
| Rupa – episodic intense pain in half of face |
| Anupshaya – Shit a kala |

**SAMPRAPTI GHATAK**

| Dosha – Vata (Prana), Kapha Vata only⁹/
| Tridosha⁷ |
| Dushya- Rakta¹⁰ |
| Srotas- Pranavaha¹¹ |
| Srototudhti- Atipravritti |
| Rogamaarga–Madhyama¹² |
| Adhisthana- Mundha |
| Sadhyasadyata-Krchhtrasadhya / Yapya¹³ |

**PLANNING OF MANAGEMENT:**

In Ardhavbhedaka mainly Vata Dosha is vitiated. So, during treatment consideration of vitiated Vata Dosha is important. So, treatment can be done according to Shiroroga Chikitsa and Vatvyadhi Chikitsa. Only herbal medications or other topical procedures are not beneficial for sustained pain relief. So here first of all Shodhana is required for pacification of Dosha. Treatment can be planned Mridu Shodhan, Basti, Nasya, Shirobasti etc.

**SANSHODHANA**

Vaman and Virechana both are procedures for Shodhana. Vaman is contraindicated in Shiroroga, but Virechana is indicated in Shiroroga by all Acharyas¹⁴. So Virechana is the first line of treatment. Particularly MriduVirechna is advisable due to old age and vitiation of mainly Vata. Acharya Charaka mentioned Mridu Virechana in Vatvyadhi. Snehana and Swedana pre procedures should be done before Virechana according to Prakriti and Agni of patient.

**Virechana** is appropriate with following Yoga:

1. Castor oil and milk in required dose according to patient¹⁵. Particularly this Yoga is beneficial because it is not aggravating Vata due to Snigdha Guna.

**BASTI**

Acharya Charak described Ardhavbhedak in Trimarmiya Siddhi Adhyaya. So, hypothesis can be made that here in particular Shira Marma is affected. Shira is one of the most important Marma amongst all Trimaroma. It is the site of Prana Vayu particularly⁸. Here in TN Prana Vayu is mainly disturbed¹⁶. Acharya Charak advised that always protect Marmas from vitiated Vayu. When Marmas are afflicted by Vata Dosha Basti is the choice of treatment¹⁷. So in planning of the treatment emphasis should be given on proper management of Vata. Basti is the best treatment for pacifying Vata as well as for Shiroroga. All Acharyas have described Shirorogaas Basti Sadhya¹⁸. There are many types of Bastis described in classics; among them Yapana Basti seems beneficial in this disease as it is Rasayana type of Basti. It has both actions of Niroha and Anuvasana. There is no need of Pathya- Palana during administration. Mustadi Yapan Basti seems beneficial as it is indicated in Shiroruja and best for nourishing sensory and motor organs¹⁹. It also acts on Rakta Dhatu which is Dushya in this dis-
ease. It must be given after Mridu Shodhana.

LOCAL TREATMENT

After purification of body with Mridu Shodhana and nourishment of body with Yapan Basti, other local treatment should be done. In Siddhi Sthana Acharya Charak mentioned that when specific Shiro Marma is afflicted by Vata, following Panchkarma procedures should be done: Abhyang, Swedana, Upnah, Snehapana – with Ghrita, Taila, Vasa, Majja, Puran Ghrita, Nasya Karma, Dhumpana and Shirobasti \(^{20}\). All these local treatments pacifying remaining Vata Dosha and nourishes Shira. Mainly Snigdha Guna is used here, which is opposite Guna of Vata. Thus pacifies Vata.

**SHIROABHYANG**- Abhyang is beneficial when Sparshanendriya is affected. Pain is one type of sensation. Here in TN intense pain is observed which is due to Vata and disturbed Sparshanendriya Karma. So Abhyang with Mahanarayana Taila, Bala-Ashvagandhadi Taila seems effective.

**SWEDANA-Mridu Swedana** like Shashtika Shali Pinda Sweda

**UPNAH-** Tilamasha Pinda upnah

**NASYA-** Ardhavbhedaka is Urdhvajatragat Vikara. Nasya is specific treatment of Urdhvajatragata Vikaras. So, drug administered by Nasa can reach to Shira and pacifies Vata. Nasya with Mahanarayana Taila or 101 Aavarti Ksheera Bala Taila seems beneficial.

**DHUMPANA-** Ksheeradhuma or Snehik Dhumpan seems beneficial.

**SNEHAPANA-** Abhayantar Snehapana is indicated in Ardhavbhedak. Sneha has Snigdha, Guru, Mridu, Sara, Sukshma Gunas which pacifies Vata Dosha and also effective in Shirahshoolaya, particularly.

**Taila and Ghrita Sneha** is beneficial if patient is vegetarian. If patient is non-vegetarian Majja and Vasa is useful. Puran Ghrita is highly beneficial because it has intense Sukshma property by which it can reach in fine channels of the body. It also has Shirahshoolaghna effect\(^{21}\).

**SHIROBASTI**

It is specifically indicated in Ardhavbhedak\(^{3}\). It pacifies Daruna Rogas situated in Shirapradesha.

**CONCLUSION**

Onset of TN is mainly in old age and intense pain is the main symptom. Only Shaman Yogas are not beneficial for pain relief in TN. Along with Mridu Shodhan, Basti is choice of treatment specifically Mustadi Yapana Basti. It nourishes body and has Shirorujahar effect. After Basti Karma, Nasya and other local Panchkarma procedures are effective. Above line of treatment if followed can give marked relief in symptoms of TN. Along with this Panchkarma procedure if Shamana Yoga given can even yield better results in patients of TN.

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