THE CONCEPT OF AVARANA IN AYURVEDA – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Every genre of science acts by standing within their methodologies. Being an independent health science, Ayurveda also has its methodology in understanding and managing health and disease. The ideas and principles evolved from Indian schools of philosophy form the base of Ayurvedic principles. Avarana is one among them, which has been often mentioned in the texts but has very less unanimity and clarity among the readers. In this article, the mentioning's regarding Avarana have been scrutinised, systematically presented, and conclusions have been drawn from them that Avarana is a concept that has its influence in diagnosis as well as treatment, and it is not confined to just Vata disorders.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Avarana, Vata

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda's basic principles have their origin from the cornerstones of Indian philosophy. The relation between Panchabhuta Siddhanta and Tridosha Siddhanta is an example of the same. Ayurveda understands the human body as a conglomeration of various physiological processes. Doshas are terms which denote these processes, denoting life. When they complement each other in maintaining normalcy, it results in health and when not, in disease. Doshas often undergo vitiation independently and in association with other factors. A group of imperceptible pathological processes wherein the qualities responsible for the functioning of these Doshas undergo deviation from normalcy is called Avarana. It comprises of two components: the vitiator or Avaraka, and the vitiated, or Avrutha. It is one of the grey areas among the Ayurvedic concepts. The knowledge regarding Avarana is inevitable to an Ayurveda Vaidya, as it significantly influences diagnosis, prognosis, line of management, time of medications, etc.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Ayurvedic texts including Brihattrayis, Laghutrayis, and their commentaries were explored for the words 'Avarana', 'Avruta', 'Ruddha', 'Abhibhava', 'Abhibhuta', and their synonyms. The Sanskrit lexicons including Sabdakalpadruma, Shabdastomamahanidhi, Ayurveda Sabdakosha, Monier William's Sanskrit Dictionary and Apte Practical Sanskrit English dictionary were examined for the literary meanings of these words. The existing literature database from Ayurvedic research was also searched. The keywords 'Avarana', 'Vatakopa', 'Samprapti' were searched for in the journals indexed under PubMed and Scopus. The articles under the timeline 2000 to 2019 were searched for.
AVARANA – A GRAMMATICAL EXPLANATION

Etymology: ¹

The word Avarana is derived from 'Aa' + 'Vr' + 'Lyut' means to cover, to conceal, or to obstruct.

Synonyms: ²

Abhibhava: Overpowering/Predominance

Ruddha: Obstruct/Impede

Aacchadana: Cover

Veshtana: Encompass/Encircle

AVARANA IN AYURVEDIC TERMS

Beyond the lakshanas or symptoms of Avarana, no accurate mentions regarding the concept of Avarana are available in any of the classical texts or their commentaries. One of the very few practically feasible definitions of Avarana is seen in Ayurveda Sabdakosa.

Abhisarpata balavata doshena abhibhuto durbalo dosah pratyavruttah sat avrutah ityuychate ||

Here, the stronger dosha impedes (in terms of Guna and Karma) the weaker one, resulting in the stronger one more conspicuously exhibiting its lakshanas and that of the weaker one getting suppressed or altered. This process is called Avarana.³

Here, the stronger Dosha means that the Dosha that has been vitiated by its causes independently (Svatantra dosha kopa). Due to the influence of this independent Dosha kopa, certain functions and properties of other Doshas are also altered. This is called dependent or Paratantra dosha kopa. Here, the independent, strong one is called Avaraka and the weak impeded one is called the Avruta. Avaraka is to be estimated from the diet and regimen of the patient that are potential risk factors, and also the factors that have aggravated or relieved the presentations of the disease (Upashaya and Anupashaya).

THE CONCEPT OF AVRUTA VATA

Avarana, in Samhitas, is often seen explained along with Vata dosha. When the Samprapitis of Vatavyadhis are mentioned, half of the total Sampraptis have itself been allotted to Avarana.⁴ the Upastambha Vata mentioned in treatment also points towards Avarana.⁵ If the etiological factors leading to kevala Vata vitiation are kept apart, in all other pathogeneses, Avarana plays a key role. There are broadly two types of Avaranas mentioned in the Samhitas. The first of them is when Vata gets Avrita by other Doshas and Dushyas. Next comes Anyonyavarana, wherein the Avaraka and Avruta are Vata itself. On examining them separately:
Dosha-dushyavruta Vata:

Other Doshas and Dushyas get vitiated by their etiological factors, causing hindrance to the normal functioning of Vata. Hence, a patient in whom this pathological process has taken place shows various symptoms denoting derangement of Vata too. Hence it can be summarized as a condition where Vata gets vitiated by a set of etiologies that are not Vata-vitiating but exhibits Vata-vikruti. For example, in Kaphavruta Vata, along with the classical Vata symptoms, the patient presents with a desire for Langhana, Ayasa, Ruksha, Ushna. This indicates an independent vitiation of Kapha and dependent vitiation of Vata. Similarly, if Raktavruta, Medovruta Vatas and similar conditions are examined, they all reveal etiological factors having the potential to vitiate respective Dhatus, leading to the symptoms of the Dhatus, and also an associated vitiation of Vata. The reason behind the presentation of the Avaraka besides the vitiation of Vata can also be attributed to the Yogavahitva of Vata.

Anyonyavarana:

In the process mentioned above, when the independently vitiated component is also a subtype of Vata, then it is called Anyonyavarana. In Samhitas, the causative factors leading to the vitiation of each subtype of Vata are mentioned elaborately. an independently vitiated Vata leads to the hampering of the functions and thereby presentation of symptoms of another Vata. For example, in Pranavruta Vyana, the Avaraka is Prana, and Avruta is Vyana. Here, Prana gets vitiated due to the etiological factors like Raukshya, Vyayama, etc. and influences the functioning of Vyana.

IDENTIFICATION OF AVRUTA VATA

Charaka says that Avarana is to be clinically understood by two attributes: Sthana, Karma. Sthana here means the primary seats of these five subtypes of Vata.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subtype of Vata</th>
<th>Seat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prana</td>
<td>Murdha (Head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Udana</td>
<td>Uras (Chest/Thorax)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Samaana</td>
<td>Grahani (Duodenum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vyana</td>
<td>Sarvadeha(Wholebody)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Apana</td>
<td>Pakvasaya(Large gut)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The occluded Vata, along with the symptoms of the vitiated Doshas or Dushyas, exhibits the excess (hyperfunctioning) or deficit (hypofunction) of their functions in these sites.\textsuperscript{12} For example, Kaphavruta Vyana, when examined, shows heaviness of the whole body (Sarvagatra gaurava), which is a Kapha symptom, and along with that, it also presents with loss of movements at various sites (cheshtahani), which is a Vyana-oriented symptom. Example: Restricted joint movements (Parvagraha), Abnormal gait (Skhalita Gati), etc.\textsuperscript{13} Similarly, in Pittavruta Apana Vata, the change in the colour of faeces, the symptoms like burning sensation in the organs that lie in the Pakvasaya which are indicative of Pitta, whereas difficulties in defecation like pain are representative of Apana Vayu kopa.\textsuperscript{14}

The same is the situation in Anyonyavarana too. Some interesting examples regarding the same would be the Avarana of different Vatas by Apana. Here, the vitiation happening at Apana gradually ascends to the sites of other Vatas and causes myriads of symptoms. The symptoms arising from the suppression of urges of Apana region justify the above observation.\textsuperscript{15}

Gulma: Apanavruta Samaana, Hrdroga: Apanavruta Vyana and Udana, Siroroga,Drshti vaikalyam: Apanavritta Prana and similar symptoms are evidence of Anyonya avaranas.

**AVARANA: DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT APPROACH**

Diagnosis: Certainly, the diagnostic tools in Avarana are also the Nidana panchaka. Among them, Upashaya and Anupashaya have high importance. In a disease that is assumed to be Avaranajanya, the primary objective must be to identify the Avaraka. This is because even while presenting with many of the symptoms of the Avruta dosha, there need not be a supporting aetiology for the vitiation of this dosha. Rather, there would also be etiologies for the Avaraka doshas which might need detailed examination for identification.

In short, it is important to discriminate if the effect or Karya in the patient is associated with the cause or Karana. When there is no certainty regarding the Avaraka, the tools Upashaya and Anupashaya are to be used. Moreover, the chances of error are very high when the lakshanas alone are targeted and treated in such conditions.

Treatment: Proper deciphering of the Avaraka and administering a precise intervention against it is the basic aim of treatment. When the influence of Avaraka is pacified, the Avruta dosha also gets pacified by itself. If the seat of Avruta dosha has undergone an insult or injury in the process of Avarana, then the treatment must address the Avruta dosha too. The Kapha chikitsa mentioned in Kaphavaruta Vata, Pramehahara chikitsa or Medohara chikitsa in Medovruta Vata, etc. are indicative of this line of management.\textsuperscript{16} Similarly, in Vidavruta Vata, the indication of Malanulomana, advising Mutrala dravyas in Mutravruta Vata, etc. reflects the importance of Avaraka in chikitsa.\textsuperscript{17} Hence the mainline treatment of each Avaraka is targeted towards the Avaraka. The use of Shita-Ushna-Snigdha-Ruksha alternately is adopted in Pitta-Rakta related Avaranas only. It is not a generalized principle.\textsuperscript{18} In short the knowledge regarding Avarana helps the physician have a better understanding of Samprapti, which makes the treatment precise, simple, and cost-effective

**Oushadhakala and Avarana:** one of the other advantages of knowing the Avaraka is that it facilitates the precise administration concerning Oushadhakala. Avaraka is the target here too.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Condition of Avarana</th>
<th>Time of administration of Medicine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kaphavruta Vata</td>
<td>Empty stomach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pittavruta Vata</td>
<td>Middle of the food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Apanavruta</td>
<td>Before food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Samaanavruta</td>
<td>Middle of the food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vyanavruta</td>
<td>After breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Udanavruta</td>
<td>After evening diet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IS AVARANA CONFINED TO VATA ALONE?**

Avarana is often considered as a pathological process that comes to play in Vatavyadhis alone (probably due to its mention along with Vatavyadhis in Samhitas). But Avarana is mentioned in numerous other Sampraptis too. Some examples for the same are:

When the disease Atatvabhinivesha (a psychological problem) is explained, Charaka mentions the word ‘Rajomohavrutatmana’. Here, Manas is said to undergo Avarana by Rajas and Tamas, i.e. it must be understood that the Gunas and Karmas of Manas are influenced by Rajas and Tamas.

In the context of Jvara, it is explained that Agni undergoes Avarana by Ama, which means that the formation of Ama hampers the normal functioning of Agni or Agnibalā.

When Charaka explains Vatadi prakritis, he observes that depending on the Doshas that exert Abhibhava on the site of Agni (Grahani), the Agni of the person varies from Vishama to Manda or Tikshna. This indicates that depending on the Doshas that influence the Grahani, the Agni, which itself is dependent on Grahani, undergoes similar variation. In these conditions, the influence happening is Abhibhava or in other words, Avarana.

**CONCLUSION**

Among the Brhattrayis, Charaka and Vagbhata seem to describe regarding Avarana in detail. Avarana is a functional derangement in the body. It is not only seen in Vatavyadhis but also many other diseases. It also plays an important role in the manifestation of various symptoms (symptomatic complexes or Lakshana samuccaya) within a particular disease. Hence for the precise understanding of pathogenesis, disease diagnosis, and treatment strategy, this concept needs to be clarified. The utility of Oushadhakala is expected to be more in Anyonya Avarana. It helps Vaidya make his intervention more precise. As epochs are changing, newer and newer diseases have been occurring. The role of Avarana has to be examined and understood in them too.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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REFERENCE


