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A Review on Raktamokshana with Ghati Yantra in Gridhrasi

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ABSTRACT

Gridhrasi is a very painful condition which hampers the day to day activities of an individual. It is characterised by severe pain which starts in the back and radiates to one of the lower limb. Apart from various panchakarma therapies, para-surgical methods like *Agni karma* and *Raktamokshana* have been mentioned as effective therapies in the treatment of *Gridhrasi*. *Pitta* resides as *ashrayi* in *rakta* and *sweda*.^[1] Bloodletting is effective when *pitta* is vitiated and the physician is not successful in treating this vitiated *pitta* by various medicines or *shamana oushadha*. Bloodletting removes impure blood vitiated by imbalanced *doshas* from the body. The efficacy of three methods of *Raktamokshana* i.e., *shringa*, *jalouka* and *alabu* can be justified based on the principle of vitiation of *rakta* by the various *dosha*. The objectives of the review is to assess the role of *Raktamokshana* with *Ghati Yantra* in *Gridhrasi* from the point of view of providing instant pain relief and whether it can be a safe, cost effective and less invasive treatment tool in the management of *Gridhrasi*.

KEYWORDS: *Agnikarma*, Bloodletting, *Ghatiyantara*, *Gridhrasi*, *Rakta*, *Raktamokshana*

INTRODUCTION

In developed countries, the sedentary lifestyle of human beings has created several disharmonies in biological system. Factors like improper sitting postures in work areas, jerky movements during travelling etc lead to low back pain. Low back pain is the most commonly reported musculoskeletal problem in elderly adults. Sciatica has been reported to occur in 1 to 10 % of the population, most commonly in the age group of 25-45 years.^[2] In modern medicine the conservative treatment provides short-term relief in pain whereas surgical intervention provides varying relief associated with significant side effects. The recurrence rate is about 72-90 % within six months with non- surgical or conservative care and within a year there is about 15-35% chance of recurrence of pain^[3].

In *Ayurveda* sciatica syndrome may be correlated as *Gridhrasi*, which is one among the *vataja nanatmaja vyadhi* according to *Charaka*.^[4] The symptoms of *Gridhrasi* are pain starting from *sphik* to *parshni prathyanguli* and it is manifested by affliction of two *kandara* in leg. It is of two types-*vataja* in which pain will be severe and *vata kaphaja* in which *sthambha* or stiffness is the predominant feature.

Rakta nourishes all *dhatu* and maintains the complexion of the body as well as it eliminates the toxic and waste materials from cells and tissue and hence also considered as the basis for maintenance of life in the physical body. So being a treatment modality to purify the most essential *dhatu* of the body, *Raktamokshana* is one among the *shodana* procedure. *Raktamokshana* is less interventional, economical, provides immediate symptomatic relief and associated with least adverse effects when compared to the prolonged usage of NSAIDs and also the complications caused due to the abuse of NSAIDS.

Raktamokshana by *Siravyadha* has been explained by *Acharya Sushruta* in the treatment of *Gridhrasi* as vitiated *dosha* affects the *kandara* which is the *upadhatu* of *rakta* and *Ghati yantra* is indicated in *Avaghadathara Raktadushti*.^[5] *Ghatiyantara* can be a simple and effective treatment and it may reduce the symptoms of *Gridhrasi*^[6]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this article, citing the reference of *Ayurvedic* texts especially *Brihatrayee* in relation to *rakta* and *raktamokshana*, Bloodletting procedures by their recent advancements, relevant internet searches like research gate, ncbi, google, various articles concerned with bloodletting therapy and its applicability in today's world.

Here Ayurvedic and contemporary concept of bloodletting therapy is correlated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

TREATMENT	C.S	Su	A.H	B.P	Y.R	H.S	B.S	C.D
Snehana	–	–	–	–	–	✓	✓	✓
Swedana	–	–	–	–	–	✓	–	✓
Vamana	–	–	–	✓	–	–	–	✓
Virechana	–	–	–	✓	–	–	–	✓
Niruha basti	✓	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Anuvasana basti	✓	–	✓	✓	✓	–	✓	✓
Siravyadha	✓	✓	✓	–	✓	–	–	✓
Agnikarma	✓	–	✓	–	✓	✓	–	✓
Sastrakarma	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	✓

- In *Sushruta Samhita*, *Nidanasthana*, *lakshana* of *Gridhrasi* is mentioned and *Acharya* have also mentioned *Raktamokshana* in the *Mahavatavyadhi chikitsa adhyaya* [7].
- In *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtodhareeya adhyaya* of *Sutrasthana*, *bheda* of *Gridhrasi* is mentioned and in *Maharogaadhyaya* *Gridhrasi* is mentioned as one among the *nanatmaja vatavyadhi*. In *Vatavyadhi adhyaya lakshana*, *bheda* and *chikitsa* is mentioned. [8]
- In *Kashyapa Samhita*, *Sutrasthana* 27th chapter *Gridhrasi* is considered as one among the *nanatmaja vatavyadhi*.
- In *Bhela Samhita*, *Vatavyadhi adhyaya hetu, lakshana* and *chikitsa* of *Gridhrasi* is mentioned.

- **Hareeta** has mentioned a disorder of *vyanavata* specifically. He has noticed *vyana vata* and *rakta* involvement in *Gridhrasi*. **Hareeta** was the 1st one to give importance to *Gridhrasi* by naming 22nd chapter of *triteeyasthana* of his treatise as *gridhrasi chikitsaadhyaya*. He has mentioned *Raktamokshana* in *chikitsa*.
- In **Ashtanga Sangraha** and **Ashtanga Hridhaya**, *hetu* and *lakshana* of *Gridhrasi* are explained in *nidanasthana*.^[9]
- In **Madhava Nidana**, *vatavyadhi nidana lakshana* of *Gridhrasi* along with its *bheda* is mentioned.^[10] He added features like *dehasya pravakrata* in *vataja gridhrasi* and *mukhadwesa* and *bhaktadwesa* in *vatakaphaja gridhrasi*.
- In **Sharangadhara Samhita**, **Acharya** mentioned *Gridhrasi* as one among the *vataja nanatmaja vyadhi* and *chikitsa* for *Gridhrasi* is explained in 2nd and 5th chapter of *madhyama khanda*^[11,12]
- **Bhavaprakasha** has mentioned *ativakrata, sphurana*, and *sthambha* in *janu, jangha* and *uru sandhi* in *vataja gridhrasi* and *vanhimardhava, mukhapraseka, bhaktadwesa* in *vatakaphaja* type and *chikitsa* for *gridhrasi* is also mentioned.^[13]
- According to **Kalyanakaraka**, *samprapti* and *lakshana* of *Gridhrasi* are mentioned in 8th chapter *vatarogadhikara* and *chikitsa* is explained in 12th chapter *vataroga chikitsa*.
- In **Chakradutta**, *Raktamokshana* is mentioned for treatment of *Gridhrasi*.^[14]
- In **Yogaratanakara** and **Bhaishajya Ratnavali** *nidana, lakshana* and *chikitsa* of *Gridhrasi*^[15] is mentioned.

Nirukti of *Gridhrasi*: It is opined that in *Gridhrasi*, the gait of the patient becomes altered and resembles the walk of the vulture. Hence the name *Gridhrasi*.

Nidana can be classified as general and specific, no specific cause have been mentioned, only general causes of *vatavyadhi* have been explained. The provoking factors of *vata* can be also be taken as the cause of *gridhrasi*. It can be *ahara* like *ruksha, sheetha, alpa, laghu anna sevana, vishama upachara*, *vihara* like *ativyayama, ativyavaya, atiprajagarana, ati adwa, ativicheshtana, dhatu sankshaya, ati karshana, dukhashayyasana, divaswapna, vegasandharana, marma abhigataja* and *manasika* factors like *ati chintha, shokha and krodha*.^[16]

Samanya lakshana are *ruk, toda, sthambha, spandana, saktikshepa nigraha, kati uru janu madhye bahu vedana*.^[17,18,19,20] *vishesha lakshanas* of *vataja gridhrasi* are *dehasya vakrata, sthabdatha brisham, sphuranam,*

suptata ^[21,22,23,24] and in *vatakaphaja gridhrasi -mukha praseka, arochaka, vahnimardhava, tandra, gourava, staimitya* ^[25,26,27,28,29,30,31]

Chikitsa-

- *Nidana parivarjana*
- *Shodhana-* one specific type of *shodhana* as per *Sushruta Raktamokshana* in *gridhrasi*

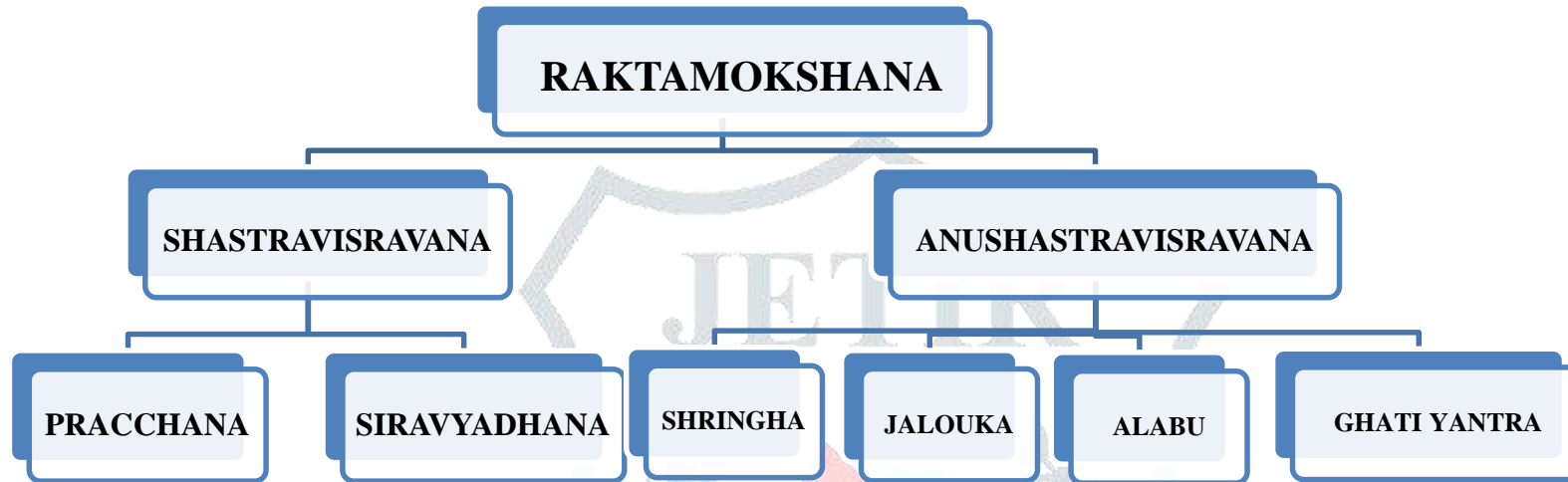
Primarily *nidana parivarjana* i.e. avoidance of causative factors. Secondly, the intensity of *dosha prakopa* should be considered before deciding the line of treatment. In *Ashtanga Hridhya Doshabhedeeya adhyaya*, it is mentioned that *chaya, prakopa, prashama of pitta dosha* occurs from *varsha ritu* onwards and it attains *prakopa avasta* in *sharad rithu*.^[32] So if we adopt *Raktamokshana* in *chaya avasta* we can avoid the further *dosha dushti*. *Shodhana* treatment like *snehana, svedana, vamana, virechana, vasti (niruha and anuvasana), siravyadha* and *raktamokshana* can be adopted.

When the regular treatment with *shadvidhopakrama* fails to give any relief, then one should consider the involvement of *rakta dhatu* in pathogenesis and is best treated by *raktamokshana*.

Rakta as *chaturtha dosha-rakta* is considered as *chaturtha dosha* by *Acharya Sushruta* as *rakta* itself has the *dushti karanas* and it can do the *dushana* of all the other *dhatu*. This shows the importance of *rakta* in treatment. It is the blood not vitiated by any *dosha* that helps in the promotion of strength.

Raktamokshana may be defined as a technique of controlled blood letting and comes under the *shodhana* spectrum of treatment to eradicate the diseases of *rakta* as well as to purify the *dhatu*. In *Shalyatantra* it is considered as *Ardhachikitsa*. A person undergoing this treatment from time to time, never have chance of developing skin diseases, cysts, inflammatory swellings and blood disorders which proves its excellence in preventive aspect also.^[33]

Types of *Raktamokshana* are:



Raktamokshana is generally indicated for both healthy person with the purpose of preventing the disease and in diseased for the cure of illness.

Srava pramana –pravara matra is 1 *prastha*.

Raktadooshana aharas like *nishpava, masha, nishpava, tila, anupa* and *jangala mamsa* and excessive intake of *dadhi, dadhimastu, kanji, sura* and *souveeraka* and *viharas* like *divaswapna, vegadharana* and *manasika vikaras* like *krodha, shokha* and *bhaya* should be avoided^[34]

PROCEDURE OF RAKTAMOKSHANA WITH GHATI YANTRA:

- After examination point of tenderness in low back is noted, marked and cleaned with an antiseptic solution. A maximum of 4 tender points are taken.
- Cups of appropriate sizes are taken and cleaned by gauze using spirit.
- Cups are attached to the low back at most tender point. A maximum of 4 cups are used .

- After a minute all cups are removed.
- A maximum of 8 superficial pricks per site is done with the help of disposable sterile needle no 18.
- Again the cups are at the predestined site and vacuum created for complete oozing of blood and till the blood clots.
- Amount of blood collected is recorded and the area is cleaned with sterile gauze dipped in spirit.
- *Haridra choorna* is sprinkled over the site and dressed.
- Patients are advised to take *kulatha, godhuma, rakta shali, navina tila, dadima, draksha, ksheera, mudga yusha* etc.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

In *Ayurvedic classics*, *Gridhrasi* is included under 80 types of *nanatmaja vatavyadhi*. It is characterised by *ruk, toda, stambha* and *spandana*. This primarily starts from the region of *sphik pradesha* and radiates downwards through the *prushtabhaga* of *kati, uru, janu, jangha* and *pada*. It is of two types-*vata* and *vatakaphaja*.

Gridhrasi can be correlated to *Sciatica*, as there is close resemblance in the manifestation of symptomatology in both, characterised by pain in lumbosacral region, radiating to lower limb through buttock, posterior aspect of thigh, leg and foot till toe.

Vata, pitta and *kapha* are considered to be pillars of life. They have various functions in the body, as *vata* is responsible for all the movements in the body. *Pitta dosha* is responsible for all type of metabolic activity at the GI tract as well as cellular level. *Kaphadosha* is responsible for growth and maintenance marking its anabolic or synthetic activity. *Acharya Sushruta* mentioned *Rakta* as *Chaturtha dosha*. The basic *Ayurvedic* treatment is based on two principles, *Shodhana chikitsa* and *Shamana chikitsa*. *Shodhana chikitsa* deals with five purifactory procedures among them one is *Raktamokshana*. *Pitta* resides as *ashrayi* in *rakta* and *sweda*. Bloodletting is helpful when *pitta* is vitiated and cannot be treated by *pitta* alleviating medicines. Bloodletting removes impure blood vitiated by imbalanced *dosha* from the body. The efficacy of three modes of *raktamokshana* i.e, *shringa, jalouka* and *alabu* can be justified based on the basic principles of *Ayurveda* and physiological actions. Here by the use of *Ghati yantra* may reduce the symptoms of *gridhrasi* like *ruk, toda, stambha* and *spandana*. There will be immediate and lasting pain relief, it can be done on OPD basis and have a long lasting result.

CONCLUSION

Gridhrasi is a painful condition afflicting the lower limbs is explained in the context of *vatavyadhi*, in which the pain from *sphik* radiates to *pada* through the posterior aspect of thigh, knee and leg and *Gridhrasi* can be correlated to Sciatica where there is severe pain, stiffness and restricted range of movements, it shows a high incidence in those with more physical exertion especially patients who were doing the manual labour, and also in persons having sedentary life styles. *Raktamokshana* can be adopted as the best treatment modality as it needs only short duration, less intervention, economical and immediate symptomatic relief. By the use of *Ghatiyantra* there can be a immediate and lasting pain relief until forthcoming *dosha dushti* . It can be done as an OPD procedure and it can have a long lasting result, a safe, cost effective and less invasive treatment modality in *Gridhrasi* may reduce the intensity of *ruja*, *toda*, *spandhana*, *sthambha* and thereby it may improve the quality of life.

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