



Concept of Alarka Visha and its treatment in Ayurveda- A literature Review

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Abstract

Alarka visha is correlated with Rabies according to modern science. Alarka Visha is a disease of sangyavha srotas in Ayurveda. Acharya Sushrut opines that in animals like dog, jackal, wolf, bear, tiger etc. when vata gets vitiated and causes vitiation of Kapha, invading the channels carrying sensation after situating in Sangyavaha Srotas (Nervous System) causes Sangya Vinasha (loss of sensation). Rabies is also an acute, highly fatal viral disease of the central nervous system caused by Lyssavirus type-1. Symptoms of rabies are fever, headache, excess salivation, muscle spasms, paralysis and mental confusion. According to modern science, there is no specific treatment for rabies. Rabies is usually fatal and major efforts are only for prevention. Ayurveda emphasizes the same. Ayurvedic management of Alarka Visha is described by Acharya Sushruta. According to Ayurveda, Sthavara Visha should be used to treat any jangama Visha (Animate Poison). It is clear that the uses of Dhatura (Sthavar Visha), Shweta Punarnava, and Sharapunkha have been described as possible treatments for dog bites.

Introduction

The literal meaning of word Alarka is Canines. All the animals with canines are to be discussed in the topic, hence it comes under Jangam Visha. Visha Prasar or spreading of Poison takes place by Dansha (bite or lick). Visha Adhisthan is lalastrav (Salivation). According to Ayurveda it is taken as Chatushpada Dansha. Detailed description of Alarka visha is mentioned in Sushrut Samhita Kalpasthan and Ashtang Hrudaya Uttartantra. Alarka Visha is a disease of sangyavha srotas in Ayurveda. Alarka visha is correlated with Rabies according to modern science. According to WHO, there are about 10 million cases of rabies reported every year. Annually there are about 55,000 human deaths worldwide due to rabies. India has been reported as having the highest rabies cases in the world. Rabies is also an acute, highly fatal viral disease of the central nervous system caused by Lyssavirus type-1. Rabies is a viral disease of animals which is usually transmitted to man or any animals after the bite of a rabid dog having infective saliva. The virus from the injured site reaches the brain through the cognate sources and causes inflammation, produces loss of sensation,

causing the animal to run about a lot, hanging its tail, lower jaw, and shoulder, emitting more saliva, becoming deaf and blind, and biting everyone. During the rainy season, the poison's effect (hydrophobia) rises, making the patient restless and incurable. It is an infectious disease characteristic of encephalitis with spasms of different muscles paralysis, fear of water, etc. caused by a neurotropic filtrable a virus (rhabdovirus) transmitted commonly by the bite or lick of an infected dog.ⁱ

Samprapti(Pathogenesis)

Acharya Sushruta has stated that Poison originated from rabid animals vitiated the Vata & Khaph situating in Sangyavaha Strotas causing Sangya Vinasha (loss of sensation).ⁱⁱ Acharya Charak stated that the dog bite causes vitiation of all the body constituent (Tridosha) & Essence (Rasadi Dhatu) while another carnivorous causes vitiation of vitiated the Vata- Khaph, while Vagbhata stated that the dog bite causes vitiation of Kapha, invading the channels carrying sensation after situating in Sangyavaha Strotas (Nervous System) causes Sangya Vinasha (loss of sensation).^{iii iv}

Unmatta Chattushpad Lakshana

As per Acharya Sushrut in animals like dog, jackal, wolf, bear, tiger etc. when vata get vitiated and combines with aggravated kapha and accumulates in the channels of their sense organs and carries away the sense which results in the following lakshanas can be seen in Unmat Chatushpad (Mad 4 legged animal).^v

- Prastrastalangul hanuskandho (Dropped tail, shoulders and Chin)
- Atilalavan (excessive salivation)
- Badhira (Deafness/losses its senses)
- Andhasya (Becomes blind)
- Anyonyabhidhavati (Runs everywhere after one another)

If such mad (rabid) animal bites then the Dansha sthan or bitten site shows following symptoms-

- Suptata (Numbness)
- Danshe Krushanam (Blackish discoloration)
- Atistravatyasruk (Excessive bleeding/ Excessive haemorrhage)
- Digdhavidhasya lingen (general features of poisoned arrow).

Alark Visha Lakshana:

Alarka visha lakshana as per different samhitas can be better understood as per the following sub-divisions:

1. Sthanik Lakshana^{vi}

According to Acharya Vagbhat following symptoms are present locally in Savisha Dansha-

- Kandu (itching)
- Nistod (constant pain)
- Vaivarnya (discoloration)
- Supti (loss of tactile sensation)
- Kleda (exudation)
- Jwara (fever)
- Bhrama (giddiness)
- Vidaha (burning sensation inside the abdomen)
- Raga (the site becomes red and painful)
- Paka (suppurative)
- Sopfa (swollen)
- Granthi (tumours developing)

- Vikunchanam (contractures)
- Danshavadaranam sphota (Tearing and falling off skin/muscles and formation of vesicles)
- Karnika (Patches in the shape of lotus seeds)
- Mandalani cha (Formation of ring like patches)

2. Sarvadehik Lakshana^{vii}

- Suptah (loss of sensation)
- Krushna Ksharatyasruka (Profuse bleeding with blackish discolouration)
- Symptoms of wound made by poisonous weapons manifests if neglected

3. Asadhya Lakshana^{viii, ix}

- When a person immitates the voice and and activities of an animal by which he got bitten.
- Gradually person becomes paralyzed which may lead to death.
- If a person bitten by a rabid animal sees the image of that animal then it mentioned as Arishta lakshanas by Acharya Sushrut.

Jalasantras^{x, xi}

Generally a person gets frightened by water without cause that should be inferred as affliction of Jalatrasa. Jalatrasa is an Arishta lakshan. If a healthy person gets frightened by water in waking or in sleep then it is regarded as fatal symptom.

Chikitsa^{xii}

1. Vistravan (Draining from the bitten site)
2. Sarpisham Paridahitam (cautery or Agnikarma with Sarpi)
3. Pradihyad gade (Application of Agadas)
4. Sarpi Puranam Payayet ch (Person shall be made to drink Purana Ghrut).
5. Shodahan with Arkaksheer.
6. Shwet Punarnava shall be given with Dhatur root.
7. Combination of Tila + Tila Taila + Arka Ksheer + Jaggery destroys poison of rabid animal.
8. Sharpunkha (1 Karsha i.e 10gm) + Dhatur root (1/2 Karsha i.e. 5gm) shall be taken and pasted with Tandulodaka. The paste shall be then wrapped in Dhatur leaves and isto be baked. The prepared Apupa (cake) is to be given to the person.
9. During digestion of this Apupa, person performs acts same as the dog, therefore it is to be managed by keeping the person in cool and dry chamber away from water.
10. When the complications get pacified, then person is given bath and made to eat Shashtika-shali rice along with milk. This procedure shall be repeated on 3rd and 5th day in half dose.
11. Dhatur Patra 15 gm shall be given with milk early morning.

Snanavidhi^{xiii}

Person bitten with rabid animal shall be made to bath on crossroads or on river banks with pitcher full of water containing herbs, gems. This is part of Mantra chikitsa where in oblations like Tila, curd, meat are offered. Along with the bath mantra is to be chanted for nullifying the poisonous effect of rabid animal bite. After bath Teekshna Shodhan is to be given because if not cleansed then poison flares up even after wound has healed.

According to Acharya Sushrut if the bitten person imitates animals then in spite of Intensive care that person dies. Mardan on Injuries inflicted by these animals shall be done followed by Sinchan (pouring) of warm oils.

Discussion and conclusion

Rabies is also an acute, highly fatal viral disease of the central nervous system caused by Lyssavirus type-1. Symptoms of rabies are fever, headache, excess salivation, muscle spasms, paralysis and mental confusion. According to modern science, there is no specific treatment for rabies. Rabies is usually fatal and major efforts are only for prevention^{xiv}. Ayurveda emphasizes the same. According to Ayurveda, Sthavara Visha should be used to treat any jangama Visha (Animate Poison) and jangam visha should be used to treat any sthavae visha. Dhatura (Sthavar Visha), Shweta Punarnava, and Sharapunkha have been described as possible drug of choice for dog bites. According to Bhavaprakash, Dhatura (Dhatura metel) and Sharapunkha (Tephrosia purpurea) are vishapaha (antipoisonous)^{xv}, when both the drugs are used in combination the anti-poisonous effect is enhanced.

Conclusion:

1. Dhatura itself is a Sthavar visha (Vegetable poison) and hence it is used in treatment of Jangam visha (Animate poison).^{xvi}
2. Many yogas, including Pipalyadi anjana and Mansyadi yoga, which are beneficial in curing the Alarka visha or to stop the pathogenesis of rabies are mentioned.

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