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Management of amavata (rheumatoid arthritis) with *Virechana karma*: A review article

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Abstract

Amavata is a disease in which vitiation of Vata Dosha and accumulation of Ama takes place in joints. When Ama and Vata gets vitiated simultaneously and gets deposited in the Koshtha (gut), Trik (sacral region) and Sandhi (Joints) where it produced Shotha (edema), Shoola (pain) and Stabdghata (stiffness). Due to impaired Jatharagni the Aahar rasa formed is Apakva, this Apakva Aahar rasa thus formed is in Amavata stage which causes Sarvadoshaprakopa. Shaman (conservative treatment) and Shodhana (biological purification of the body) are advised in Ayurveda whereas anti-inflammatory, analgesics, steroids and disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs are required for this management as per modern medicine, which have some side effects. According to Ayurveda Pathyapathya is also very important for Amavata treatment... Virechana is the purification process of Ayurveda. When doshas are expelled out from the body through anal route then it is called as Virechana. Ama which is formed as a result of Mandagni being macromolecular in nature gets accumulated in the sukshma strotas and there this Ama causes Strotavarodha (channel obstruction). Thus *Virechana karma* is one of the important bio-purificative procedure which is indicated for complete elimination of Dosha and thus results in eradication of disease.

Keywords: Ama, Amavata, Jatharagni, Mandagni, Virechana

Introduction

According to Ayurveda, all the diseases get manifested as a result of Mandagni, ^[1] the etiology of Ama Vata are very well described in Ayurvedic samhitas, Viruddha Aahar/cheshta (incompatible diet and habits) Mandagni (Impaired Agni), Nischalata (Sedentary lifestyle) and heavy exercise after taking fatty meals. All this leads to formation of Ama dosha. This Ama dosha under influence of vitiated Vata gets manifested at the Shleshma sthana ^[2]. Agni has been the basis of Ayu (longevity), Varna (complexion), Bala (power), Swasthya (health) etc. ^[3]. Thus due to impaired Agni the Aahar rasa formed is in Apakva stage and is known as Ama. Which causes Sarva dosh prakopa (vitiating of doshas) ^[6]. Another definition of Ama is as "The Anna rasa produced as a result of Ajirna awastha (Indigestion) gets accumulated in the gut known as Ama and causes Ruja (pain) in head and all over the body ^[6]. This gets engaged with vitiated Vata and enters sacral joints and makes the body stiff. This condition is called as Amavata ^[7].

Clinical features of Amavata correlate with Rheumatoid arthritis. A chronic inflammatory disorder affecting many joints, including those in the hands and feet minor and major joints. The prevalence of rheumatoid arthritis in India in person has been mentioned to differ from 0.5 to 3.8% in women and from 0.15 to 1.35% in men. Whenever that Ama gets localized in the body tissue or joints, it can lead to production of pain, stiffness, swelling, tenderness, etc., in the related joints. The features of Amavata are much identical to RA, an autoimmune disorder which causes chronic inflammatory and symmetrical polyarthritis. In Ayurveda, Nidana Parivarjana (avoidance of causative factors) is considered as the first and foremost line of management for any disease. Virechanakarma is a Shodhana process (biological purification of the body) to balance the vitiated Dosha in general and Pitta Dosha in particular.

Clinical features

- Body ache (Angamarda)
- Lack of taste (Aruchi)
- Feelings of heaviness (Gourava)
- Morning stiffness of the joints pain and swelling in the affected parts
- Shifting of pain in joints.

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Role of Virechana karma

One of the fundamental concepts of ayurvedic management of disease is to eliminate toxic materials (vitiated doshas) from the body in order to cure a disease. Panchakarma therapy is designed to eliminate the toxins. It is an important component of Ayurvedic management of disease. It is the method of internal purification of the body through emesis (Vaman karma), purgation (*Virechana karma*), enema (Basti), errhines (Nasya), and bloodletting (Raktamokshana) [7]. The vama and Virechak dravya induces emesis and purgation due to their specific prabhava [8].

Ama is a product of disturbed digestion/metabolism, which is carried by Vayu, it obstructs the channels at different sites and causes inflammation of joints [9].

In Ayurvedic texts virechana is described as the treatment procedure w.s.r Koshtha shuddhi in Pittaja vikara, Amajanya roga, Udara roga and Adhmaan [10].

As agnimandya is the reason for Amottpatti, the treatment of agnimandya as per Ayurveda includes Langhana, Langhana-Pachana and Doshavasechan [11].

Yogratnakara, in reference to treatment of Agnimandya describes a preparation that not only vitiates Agni but also is Pachaka and Rechaka in nature [12].

Thus we can understand the role of virechana in Agnimandya and *Agnimandyajanya vikara*. Virechana has been described to be the best remedy for Pitta dosha, yet it is effective in the vitiated Kapha and Vata dosha also to some extent. So in this way it appears to be the most appropriate measures in the condition [13].

Pharmacological Properties of Virechana Dravya**These are**

1. Vyavayi
2. Vikasi
3. Ushna
4. Tikshna
5. Sukshma

Mode of Action of Virechana Dravya

Step 1: Due to Vyavayi guna quick absorption of virechana dravya occurs.

Step 2: Vikasi guna causes softening and loosening of the bond by *Dhatu shaithilya* Karma.

Step 3: Ushna guna of virechana dravya creates the liquification (*Vishyandana*) of *Dosha sanghata*.

Step 4: Tikshna guna causes chedana of the doshas and able to disintegrates the sanghata of the doshas. According to Dalhana this action is due to the quick exertion. Thus, liquefied doshas are dragged towards the Koshtha.

Step 5: Due to Sukshma guna, Virechana dravya reached into micro channels and then disintegrates the endogenic toxins which are then exerted through micro channels.

Step 6: Due to dominance of Prithvi and Jala mahabhutas in the virechana drugs and their potent adbhoga hara prabhav, the vitiated doshas are made to pass through anal route and are expelled out of the body.

Conclusion

Since RA is the autoimmune in the nature therefore its management in modern parameters includes immune-suppressants and symptomatic cure through corticosteroids and NSAIDs. Thereby management of RA (Amavata) is not that trustworthy and safe in modern medical science and the provided management of Rheumatoid Arthritis is having some dangerous side effects, therefore we can reply upon

Ayurvedic management incorporating virechana as biopurificatory process followed by samshaman chikitsa which is comparatively much safer and promising therapeutic module.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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