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RISK OF HRIDROGA (CARDIOVASCULAR DISORDER) IN AMAVATA PATIENTS (RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS) AMONG COASTAL POPULATION: A HEALTHCARE CHALLENGE

Ravi Golghate¹. Gouri Mulik². Suhas Mohite³

¹Ph.D Scholar, Rognidan &Vikriti Vigyan, LRP Ayurvedic Medical College,

Islampur, Sangli, Maharashtra, India. (HOD, Bhaisaheb Sawant Ayurved, College, Sawantwadi, Sindhudurg, Maharashtra, India)

²Guide, Professor & HOD, Rognidan & Vikriti Vigyan, LRP Ayurvedic, Medical College, Islampur, Sangli, Maharashtra, India.

³Associate Professor, Panchakarma, LRP Ayurvedic Medical College, Islampur, Sangli, Maharashtra, India.

Corresponding Author: golghateravi3@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Amavata (RA), which is a systemic disease affecting mainly Koshta (gastrointestinal tract) and Sandhi (marmasthisandhigat vyadhi), is a prevalent condition encountered in our day-to-day practice. In modern science, Aamvat can be correlated with Rheumatoid Arthritis. The association between RA and heart disease has been studied extensively, and the results are concerning. Patients with RA have an average risk of heart disease that is almost 50 percent higher than the general population. Changes in the occurrence/ outcome of Amavata due to Geographical differences must be considered. According to our observation, Aamvat prevalence in the coastal population was exceptionally higher than in any other region. Inadequate access to healthcare services and limited health knowledge in remote coastal locations are associated with a higher burden of such chronic diseases. This Review article focuses on the need to understand and assess the risk of Hridroga (CVD) in Amavata vyadhi (RA) among the Coastal population so that we can help them lower the incidences of this vyadhi and its Updravas (complications). Keywords: Aamvata, Rheumatoid Arthritis, cardiovascular diseases, coastal population.

INTRODUCTION

The eternity of Ayurveda is in the sense of its great affection in its approach to diseases, people, and life. There are many non-communicable diseases in which Amavata (Rheumatoid Arthritis) and Hridroga (cardiovascular diseases) are tremendously increasing in our society due to changes in diet patterns, lifestyle, and environmental conditions. They are also known as chronic diseases. Although many advanced techniques exist to cure such diseases and live life further, these techniques are not pocket-friendly to every human being. Amavata (RA), which is a systemic disease affecting mainly Koshta (gastrointestinal tract) and Sandhi (marmasthisandhigat vyadhi), is a prevalent condition encountered in our day-to-day practice. Hridgraha (stiffness in the cardiac region) is one of the symptoms mentioned in the Pravridhha Amavata (advanced stage of this disease)¹. Hridgraha (stiffness in the cardiac area) is one of the symptoms of Hridroga. The Nidanpachaka of Hridroga vyadhi (CVD) has been explained in Ayurved Samhitas. In modern science. Amavata can be correlated with Rheumatoid Arthritis. The association between RA and heart disease has been studied extensively, and the results are concerning. Patients with RA have an average risk of heart disease that is almost 50 percent higher than the general population ^{2,3}. The morbidity rate of Amavata patients due to cardiovascular events is high among them. Variations in the occurrence/ outcome of Amavata due to Geographical differences must be considered. According to our observation, Aamvat prevalence in the coastal population was exceptionally higher than in any other region. Furthermore, inadequate access to healthcare services and limited health knowledge in remote coastal locations are associated with a higher burden of chronic diseases (e.g., Arthritis, cardiovascular and hypertension).⁴ Ayurveda focuses more on prevention of disease rather than a curative aspect.⁵ Despite innovative advances made in the management of patients with RA, premature mortality from comorbid diseases remains a significant challenge. This Review article focuses

on the need to understand and assess the risk of Hridroga (CVD) in Amavata vyadhi (RA) among the Coastal population so that we should help them to lower the incidences of this vyadhi and its Updravas (complications). By understanding Amavata vyadhi in the coastal area population, we can help them reduce the incidences of this vyadhi and its updrava, especially Hridroga. This study will give broad spectrum data on the Amavata vyadhi and actual knowledge of its role as an updrava in the manifestation of Hridroga (cardiovascular pathological conditions). Identifying those Amavata patients with high risk of cardiovascular disorders and providing them with appropriate treatment can prevent premature deaths among the coastal population.

Material and methods:

- A review has been done of Ayurvedic texts, modern science literature, various research publications, government projects, internet resources, etc.
- Research studies from Google Scholar, Medline/PubMed, Scopus, etc. databases have been reviewed to analyze data regarding the topic.

Review of Amavata and Hridroga vyadhi from Ayurvedic perspective:

Amavata, a systemic disease affecting mainly Koshta and Sandhi (marmasthisandhigat vyadhi), is a prevalent condition encountered in today's practice. Amavata is a disease with two predominant factors: ama and vata. Agni plays an essential role in the manifestation of the disease. When a person having Mandagni follows wrong food habits, it results in the production of Ama. Ama and vitiated Vata move all over the body and get Sthanasanshraya (accumulation) at the Sleshma sthanas like Sandhis (Joints). Amavata is Kapha Vata dominant Tridoshaja Vyadhi. Rasa, Mamsa. Asthi Majja are involved in the pathogenesis. The strotodushti of Annavaha, Rasavaha, Asthivaha, and Majjavaha are present. Vyakti Sthana is Sarvashareera, particularly Sandhi sthan (Joints). It mainly affects Sandhies and produces symptoms like aruchi, gaurava, angamardana, alasya, Jwara, Sandhi shoola, Sandhi Shotha which are the cardinal symptoms of Amavata⁶.

- Hridgraha (stiffness in the cardiac region) is one of the symptoms mentioned in the Pravriddha Amavata. Hridgraha (stiffness in the cardiac region) is one of the symptoms of Hridroga. The Nidanpachaka of Hridroga vyadhi has been explained in Avurved Samhitas⁷. Depending upon the severity, Madhavkara classified the disease Amavata into two categories:-1. Samanya Amavat and 2. Pravriddha Amavata. In Samanya Amavata the symptoms are less severe, but in Pravriddha Amavata, the symptoms are more severe, and they present with Upadrava. In Madhava Nidana, the following etiological factors are mentioned which are responsible for causing the Amavata8:- Viruddha Ahara (Unbalanced diet), Viruddha Chesta (Improper physical activity), Mandagni (weak digestive power), Nishachalata (lack of physical exercise). Snighdham Bhuktavato vyayamam (Exercise immediately after Snigdha Ahara).
- In the disease pathogenesis, if samprapti ghataka are more powerful and the patient continues with the causative factors, he may develop Updravas (complications). The involvement of complications turns the disease towards kashtasadhyat- $va^{9,10}$.

Review over Rheumatoid Arthritis :

• Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic, multisystem, inflammatory, autoimmune, arthritis of peripheral joints usually with symmetrical distribution having unknown cause which, if left untreated, leads to functional disability, pain, reduced health-related quality of life and premature mortality. It is estimated to affect between 0.5 - 1.0% of the adult population worldwide, increases in prevalence with age and affects more women than men with a prevalence of 460 per 100,000 people. On a global scale, RA affects about 3 people in every 10,000 and has a prevalence rate

of about 1 percent (which increases with age and is highest between 35 and 50 years of age)^{11,12,13}.

The magnitude of the severe long-term economic consequences of RA has been underestimated in the past. Most patients with the disease require continuous treatment to retard or stop progression and to control disease flares. Many also require surgery, such as total hip or knee replacement. In addition to these direct costs, work disability leads to reduced productivity and early retirement, and as a result, substantial indirect costs. The individual and his or her family must cope with the feeling of loss of contribution to society combined with redefined social roles, and the effects of pain, fatigue, low self-esteem, mental distress and depression. Disease severity, activity and disability are strongly linked to premature mortality in patients with RA^{14} .

Epidemiology of the risk of hridroga (CVD) in Amavata (RA) patients:- extend of the burden:

- Several epidemiological studies in the last few decades confirmed that patients with RA are 30 to 60% more likely to suffer Cardiovascular events than subjects from the general population^{15,16}.
- In a retrospective study of a baseline cohort of RA patients in Rochester, MN, we found that RA patients had an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, and heart failure compared with age- and sex-matched community controls. In addition, when we examined coronary tissue from necropsied RA patients. We observed an increase in inflammation and an increased proportion of unstable plaques. Epidemiological studies have shown that patients with RA are more likely to have silent coronary heart disease, heart failure, and sudden death compared with controls.¹⁷.
- In a recent study, RA patients have a four-fold increase in CV risk compared to the general population from the same geographic location. However, no mortality studies of CV events among Indian RA patients are available. Since the 1960s, the gap in CVD mortality between RA patients

and the general populations in other countries has widened, as RA patients have remained at an increased risk compared with general populations¹⁸. A standardized mortality ratio derived from a meta-analysis of North American and European studies suggests that mortality from CV events is 1.5-fold higher among RA patients than among the general population^{19,20}. Most epidemiological work suggests that cardiovascular mortality is increased in RA, with standardized mortality ratios of between 1.13 and 5.15^{21,22,23,24}.

Many observational trials have shown that higher disease activity leads to increased cardiovascular risk, e.g., in a Dutch study, the researchers found that an increased DAS-28 score of 1 unit resulted in a 28% increased CV risk, irrespective of the disease duration. Vice versa, one can expect a reduced CVD risk with lower disease activity. In a large-scale trial done in 2015, Solomon et al. showed that a 10-point reduction in the CDAI (Clinical disease activity index) resulted in a 26% reduction in CV events^{25,26}.

Possible Pathogenesis of CVD in RA patients:

- Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is well recognized as the most common cause of mortality in patients with RA, being associated with endothelial dysfunction and arterial stiffness due to inflammation-associated loss of elasticity of the vascular wall. This results from alterations in the structural proteins, collagen, and elastin, leading to accelerated atherosclerosis, usually detected by measuring carotid intima-media thickness 27,28,29,30
- Chronic, low-grade systemic inflammation leading to prolonged endothelial activation and an accompanying pro-thrombotic/ pro-coagulant state is believed to be the major contributor to the increased risk of CVD in RA³¹. Some of the most prominent proposed immunopathogenic processes underpinning these events are summarized as follows: increased systemic levels, presumably synovium-derived, of the endothelial-activating cytokines interleukin (IL)-1β, IL-6, tumor necrosis factor (TNF)-α and interferon (IFN)-γ^{32,33}

binding and activation of neutrophils, monocytes, and platelets to cytokine-activated, pro-adhesive vascular endothelium, potentiated by the neutrophil and monocyte chemokines, CXCL8 (IL-8) and CCL2, respectively. ³³ Systemic activation of platelets, not only via interaction with cytokinesensitized vascular endothelium and proximal neutrophils/monocytes, which may trigger further platelet activation via protease-activated receptors (PARs) 1 and 4, but also by exposure to AC-PA³⁴, activation of vascular endothelium PAR-1 by adherent neutrophils/monocytes, thereby exacerbating systemic inflammation and endothelial dysfunction,³⁵ creation of a pro-inflammatory milieu conducive to the formation of proatherogenic oxidized low-density lipoprotein³⁶ NETs, in turn, contribute to the intravascular, pro-inflammatory/ pro-thrombotic/pro-coagulant environment via expression of endothelialactivating proteases and histones, as well as the expression and presentation of functional tissue factor³⁷.

Why should we focus on the risk of Hridroga (cardiovascular diseases) in Amavata patients living in the coastal area?

- People living in coastal areas face various challenges in health, healthcare, and quality of life, as some are remote and inaccessible. Due to remoteness, many coastal areas have yet to receive enough health services whenever needed. The environment influences the health of the population positively and negatively. Nevertheless, there are several factors contributing potential negative impact to the coastal population^{38,39,40,41}.
- The lack of progress in healthcare facilities and other associated resources has resulted in difficult access to these services, low health awareness and health inequalities between coastal, noncoastal and urban population.^{42,43} These, in turn, can result in poor health and poor quality of life among the coastal communities, which may lead to numerous negative health consequences⁴⁴. Data from Numerous studies Prevalence of RA is greater in coastal population than other geograph-

ical areas. In coastal areas, rheumatoid arthritis (RA) remains a seriously under-prioritized disease, particularly among the underprivileged, often resulting in presentation of patients late in the course of their disease, further complicated by limited therapeutic options and inconsistent follow up. The consequences are often severe with irreversible disability, increased frequency of comorbidities, especially cardiovascular disease (CVD), and higher mortality rates. Despite addressing traditional cardiovascular risk factors, the impact of subclinical or 'residual' inflammation from uncontrolled RA needs to be considered.

- According to Acharya Charaka, Desha is a habitat (clime) meaning geographic region⁴⁵. It is one of the factors which have to be assessed in ascertaining the Hetu (etiological factors) and also in deciding the treatment. Desh pariksha has been mentioned under Dashavidha pariksha ^{46,47}. Climate, diseases, food, treatment and so many factors may vary according to it. Considering Charakokat types and description of Desh, Coastal areas resemble the anup desh where people are more prone to develop Aam and Kaphavata predominant diseases like Amavata. Coastal areas are Madhur ras and Vata- Kapha Dosha dominant sector^{48,49,50}.
- As most of the people from coastal areas are involved in fisheries, agriculture, oil and gas exploitation, tourism etc. where they need to spend a long time in cold and humid climates. While working in the coastal area, we came to observe that Aamvata patients have developed Hridroga (CVD) at high rates. The morbidity rate of Amavata patients due to cardiovascular events is high among them⁵¹.

CONCLUSION

An update on the fundamental descriptive epidemiology of the link between Aamvat and Hridroga has considerably added to our knowledge and understanding of the disease pathology. This will definitely prove helpful to find in future promising preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic solutions for amavata and related risk in Hridroga among coastal populations. Accordingly, the quality of life of the Amavata patients can be enhanced, and the morbidity burden due to it can be reduced. Advances in anti-inflammatory treatment partly mitigate this risk by reducing the inflammation (aam). Amavata incidence and prevalence may be influenced by environmental differences, changes in diet and lifestyle. More research studies are needed over this topic.

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