

## A CRITICAL REVIEW ON AMAVATA CHIKITSA

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### ABSTRACT

*Amavata* is a disease of *Rasavaha strotasa*, it is generally compared with Rheumatoid Arthritis. *Amavata* is the outcome of *Agnidushti*, *Amotpatti* and *Sandhivikruti*. *Amavata* is a disease in which vitiation of *Vata Dosha* and accumulation of *Ama* take place in joint(s), and it simulates rheumatoid arthritis (RA) at modern parlance. *Shamana* (conservative) and *Shodhana* (biological purification of the body) treatments are advised in *Ayurveda* whereas anti-inflammatory, analgesics, steroids, and disease-modifying anti rheumatic drugs are required for its management as per modern medicine, which are not free from side effects The therapy which normalize *Agni*, Metabolizes *Ama*, and Regulates *Vata* and maintain healthy *Sandhi* and *Sandhistha Shleshma* will be the supreme one for this disease. Many people in society are unaware about disease and its complications which is responsible for lifelong joint deformities. Many herbal as well as *Ayurvedic* preparations are mentioned in the classics which are very effective remedy in *Amavata*.

**Keywords:** *Amavata*; *Rasavaha Strotas*; *Amotpatti*; *Sandhivikruti*, rheumatoid arthritis

### INTRODUCTION

*Amavata* is a disease in which vitiation of *Vata Dosha* and accumulation of *Ama* take place in joints, which simulate rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in modern parlance<sup>[1]</sup> When there is improper digestion, there is a sluggish material produced which is known as *Ama*. *Ama* is caused by poor eating habits such as excessive consumption of processed foods, lack of exercise, poor digestive system, eating high-calorie foods and poor metabolism. *Amavata* is also known as Rheumatoid Arthritis is an autoimmune disease which causes inflammation in the joints. *Ama* is an undigested product, which is not homogeneous for the body.

Worldwide prevalence of RA is estimated between 0.3% and 1% and is commonly seen in women in developed countries<sup>[2]</sup>. In India the prevalence is estimated to be 0.75%<sup>[3]</sup>. Though causes of RA are not yet clearly understood, it is believed to affect persons who are genetically susceptible as a manifestation of response to an infectious agent<sup>[4]</sup>.

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<sup>[5]</sup> The features of *Amavata* are Much identical to RA, an autoimmune disorder which causes chronic inflammatory and symmetrical polyarthritis<sup>[6]</sup> *Ayurveda* believes that healthy body is the result of

3 components – *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. *Ama* is formed due to excessive *Vata*, which over the period of time damages the tissues. The most commonly affected joints include pelvis, low back, knees, and hips. These joints experience pain and stiffness which reduces mobility. As evident from the progression of the disease, the symptoms start in the digestive system and gradually reach the joints and muscles. Some of the common symptoms include indigestion, increased thirst, poor appetite, constant bloated feeling, weight gain, vomiting and nausea. Few people may also experience swelling in the joints and muscles leading to pain and stiffness. Most commonly affected joints include the ankles, knees, elbows, fingers, toes, head and neck, and hips. *Ayurvedic* classics confine use of oils for external application and advocate use of dry sudation (*ruksha sweda*) in *Amavata*.<sup>[7]</sup> It would greatly help in patients having more vitiation of *ama* as compared to *vata*, so that glutinous (*styana*) and slimy (*pichchila*) *ama* can be controlled. *Basti* is the treatment of choice for *vata* ailments. In *Amavata*, *vaitarana basti* is popular treatment widely practised and studied as well.

#### Aim and Objectives-

1. To explore the *hetu* (causative factors), *Samprapti* (pathogenesis), *linga* (symptomatology) of *Amavata*.
2. To explore the Chikitsa (treatment modalities) of *Amavata*.
3. Understanding *Amavata* in relation to Rheumatoid arthritis and need of *ayurveda* over the conventional treatment of Rheumatoid arthritis

#### Material and methods-

This study was carried out by literature search, critical review, various medical research data base like pubmed, and other national research database.

#### Causes and path physiology of *Amavata*-

The root cause behind the pathogenesis of *Amavata* is *agnimandya*. State of *agnimandya* leads to production of *ama* and further leads to *vata prakopa* along with impairment of other *doshas*. Hence it can be said that any factor whether dietary, environmental or

psychological, which causes impairment of *agni* is responsible for the production of *ama* and gets lodged in *sleshma sthanas* especially in the *sandhis* (synovial joints) and produce various symptoms of *Amavata*. Among five types of *vata*, *vyanav vayu* and *samana vayu* which are responsible for the circulation of *rasa dhatu* and control *agni* respectively are mainly vitiated in *Amavata*<sup>[8]</sup>.

**Clinical aspect of Chikitsa sutra-** In *Ayurveda vighyan* there are three types of *chikitsa*.

1. *Shamana*
2. *Shodhan*
3. *Nidan parivarjan*

In *chikitsa* these three types are play equally important role in management and further progression of disease. *Amavata* firstly described by Acharya *Madhav*. Later the description is found in *Yogratnakar*, *Bhavprakah*, *Sharangdher*.

The line of treatment described for the disease as “*langhnam swednam tiktam*”<sup>[9]</sup> can be Summarized under following captions-

1. Measure to bring *agni* to normal state.
2. Measure to digest *ama*.
3. Measure to eliminate vitiated *vata* and *ama*.

*Ama* and *vata* are the two chief pathognomic factors in production of *Amavata*. *Ama* is guru, snigdha, sthira, sthula and *pichhila* while the *vata* have the properties like *laghu*, *ruksha*, *chala*, *sukshama* and *vishada*.

#### 1. Langhana-

Any measure, which brings in *laghuta* in the body,<sup>[10]</sup> is known as *langhana* Acharya *Vagbhata* in *ashtanga hridaya* has considered *langhana* similar to *apatarpana* and has described under the heading *shodhana* and *shamana*.

It is the first measure that has been advised for the management of *Amavata*,

Which is considered to be an *amasayothavyadhi* and also *rasaja vikara*, *langhana* is the first line of treatment in such conditions. The pathology originates in *amashaya* due to poor digestion in presence of *mandagni*, ultimately resulting in formation of *ama*. So the starvation will further stop the production of *ama*. In *Nirama Avastha* this

measure may increase the *vata dosha*. So *langhana* should be stopped immediately after achieving the *niramalakshana*.

## 2. Swedana-

The process, which causes perspiration, destroys stiffness, heaviness of the body and cold<sup>[11]</sup>. It is beneficial because of its *ushana guna* that digests (*pachana*) the *ama* present in affected area and also dilates the channel. Thus obstruction of channels (*srotorodha*) is removed. Relief in obstruction results in perspiration. Other type of *swedana*, which is good in case of *Amavata*, is internal administration of *ushana jala* (hot water). *Ushana jala* is *dipana*, *pachana*, *srotoshodhana*, *jvaraghna*, *balya*, *ruchikara* and *swedakara*.

## 3. Tikta-Katu and Deepana Dravyas-

*Tikta dravya* are *Ama* and *pitta pachak* and *srotomukhvisoshodhanam*<sup>[12]</sup>. *Katu dravya* are *chedak margvivrak* and *Kapha shamak*. *Tikta* and *katu ras* is *laghu ushna* and *tikshana* in properties. Which are very useful for *ama pachana*. These are also *deepana* and *pachana*, so by means of these properties digestion of *ama*, restoration of *agni* (*deepana*) removal of excessive *kledaka kapha* and bringing of the *pakva dosha* to the *kostha* from the *shakha* takes place.

## 4. Virechana –

*Virechana* is a therapy, which is indicated in *shodhana* purpose. By *Virechana* the *dosha* are eliminated by *adhomarga*<sup>[13]</sup>.

Reasons for the administration of *virechana* are as follows:-

Production of *ama* is the result of involvement of *pittasthana* and *kleda Kapha*. *Virechan* removes the *kledaka kapha* from the *pitta sthana*. It is the most suitable therapy for the *sthanik pitta dosha*. *antrakujana* and *katisula* are indicative of *pratiloma gati* of *vayu*. *Virechana* does *anulomana* of *vata*.

## 5. Snehapana –

*Snehapana* is the process by which *snigdhatva* *vishyandata*, *mriduta* and *kledana* in body are achieved. The properties of *sneha* are *drava*, *sukshama*, *sara*, *snigdha*, *pichhila*, *guru*, *sheet*,

*manda* and *mridu snehapana* is of two types *achha snehapana* and *sidha snehapana*. These can be used as per the condition (*samavastha* & *niramavstha*) and *bala* of the patients. *Shamana* or *brimhana* type of *snehapana* is indicated in *nirama* stage or chronic condition of the disease.

## 6. Basti –

The procedure of administration of medicated liquid materials through anus (*adhomarga*) is known as *basti*. In *ayurvedic* classics, *basti* is advocated as *ardha chikitsa*<sup>[14]</sup>, which is the best procedure to control vitiated *vata dosha*. *Asthapana basti* eliminates the *dosha* brought to the *kostha* by *deepana* and *pachana*. Besides these it also strengthens the local function of the *kostha* and remove the *anaha*, *vibanadha* etc. *Chakrapani* has recommended *saindhavadi taila* for *anuvastana basti* and *kshara basti*, *vaitarana* for *asthapana* (*niruha*) *basti*.

## Pathya-

- Anna varga*- *Purana shali*, *raktashali*, *shastikashali*, *yava* (barley), *chanaka* (chickpea), *kulatha* (horsegram),
- Jalavarga*- *Shrutasheetajala* (lukewarm water), *panchkolashrutajala*, *shunthi siddha jala*,
- Madhya varga*- *Purana sidhu* (old wine)
- Mutra varga*- *Gomutra* (cow's urine)
- Kanda varga*- *shunthi*, *lasuna*, *ardraka*,
- Ksheervarga*- *Takra*
- Shakavarga*- *patol*, *karvellak* (bitter gourd), *varthaka* (brinjal), *nimbapatra*, *shigru*
- Mamsavarga*- *Jangalamamsa*

## Apathya-

**Aahaaraadi Rupa Apathya {Apathya in the form of Diet, Vegetables, Grains etc.}:-**

- *Dadhi* - Curds
- *Matsya* - Fish
- *Guda* - Jaggery / Molasses
- *Ksheera* - Milk
- *Masha* - Black Grams
- *Upadika*
- *Pishtakam* - Flour Product
- *Guru Aahara* - Foods which are heavy to digest

- *AbhishyandhiAahara* - Foods which cause stagnation and blocks in the body
- *ViruddhaAahara* - Mutually incompatible foods
- *VishamaAashana*- Odd and Weird practice of food w.r.t. quality, quantity and timing of food
- *DushtaNeeram* - Contaminated water

#### **Vihara rupa apathya:-**

- *Poorvavata* - Getting exposed to wind coming from east
- *Vegarodham* - Suppressing or forcibly avoiding/neglecting the natural calls of the body like those of Flatus, Stools, Urine, Hunger, Thirst, Sleep etc.
- *Jaagaram* - Excessive awakening during night and making a habit of the same for prolonged periods

## **CONCLUSION**

In spite of the description of the multiple drug therapy in different classics of *Ayurveda* potential and durable results are not found due to non-removal of the basic cause. Hence Special emphasis should be put into by the correct application of *chikitsa sutra* described in our classics for a holistic approach with diet, life style intervention and continuous use of drugs to have a good control of the disease and to achieve improvement in quality of life. As *Amavata* is one of the common debilitating disease by virtue of its chronicity and implication and *ama* and *vata* have the properties on opposite pole of each other so these things come in across while treating it, because any measure adopted will principally oppose one another. So a very careful approach can only benefit the patient. In this paper an attempt has been made to substantiate these principles scientifically.

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