

## ROLE OF SNEHANA-SWEDANA IN KATISHOOLA: REVIEW ARTICLE

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### ABSTRACT

Low back ache is an important public health problem affecting the population worldwide. It is one of the top five reasons for hospital visit. Common culprit behind this is faulty lifestyle, dietary habits & stress. Person suffers colossally with this disease hampering his daily activities. Pain is the common symptom which in long run can turn into disability. *Katishoola* is not mentioned as a separate disease in any *Brihatrayees*. *Gada Nigraha* has explained *Katigraha* as a separate entity in *Vataroga Adhikara* where *Vata* along with *Ama* settles in Kati and causes pain in that region. The prevalence of LBP in Indian population has been found to vary between 6.2% (in general population) to 92% (in construction workers). Heavy occupational load is bore due to this problem. Modern medical treatment includes pain killers, steroids & surgery as prime treatment modality which have their own fair share of side effects in long term use & proves to be mentally, physically, economically devastating. *Snehana* & *Swedana* can be used as a good alternative therapy in providing effective relief. *Snehana* is the best *Vatashamaka* & *Swedana* is the best treatment for vitiated *Vata* & *Kapha* dominant disorders according to *Acharya Charaka*.

**Keywords:** *Katishoola, Katigraha, Snehana, Swedana*

### INTRODUCTION

Low back pain (LBP) is a common disorder involving the muscles, nerves, and bones of the back<sup>[1]</sup>. It is a multi factorial disease affecting vast population. According to the report of World Health Organization in 2002, LBP constituted 37% of all occupational risk factors which occupies first rank among the disease complications caused by work. Due to this high prevalence of complications at international levels, World Health Organization named the first decade of the third millennium as the “decade of campaign against musculoskeletal disorders (as the silent epidemic)”

(WHO, 2005)<sup>[2]</sup>. In the 2016 Global Burden of Disease study, musculoskeletal conditions were the second highest contributor to global disability and lower back pain remained the single leading cause of disability since it was first measured in 1990. While the prevalence of musculoskeletal conditions varies by age and diagnosis, between 20%–33% of people across the globe live with a painful musculoskeletal condition<sup>[3]</sup>.

Several risk factors are responsible for development of low back ache. According to WHO risk factors are of

two types, occupational and non-occupational/personal. The two major occupational risk factors for low back pain symptoms are static muscle load<sup>[4]</sup> and flexed curvature of the lumbar spine, both of which are involved in seated work tasks<sup>[5]</sup>. Prolonged improper static sitting has been considered as an important risk factor<sup>[6]</sup>. Other socio-demographic factors responsible are sex, age, education level and smoking. Obesity too is associated with increased incidence of disease.

Ayurvedic approach in the disease management is by strengthening the *Dhatu*s or by retarding the degeneration process, paying special attention to *Vata Shamana*. In this article we will discuss about the effect of *Snehana- Swedana* in the management of *Katishoola* which can prove to be a cost effective management against other treatment modalities.

#### DISEASE REVIEW

*Katishoola* has not been described as a separate disease in *Brihatrayee*. It comes under the umbrella of *Vata Vyadhi*. Acharya Shodhala<sup>[7]</sup> is first to describe *Katigraha* as a separate entity.

Vayuh katyaashritah shuddhah saamo vaa janyet rujam | katigrah sa vigyeh.....|| (*Gada Nigraha 19/160*) . *Prishta Graha* has been mentioned as a *Nanatmaja Vyadhi* of *Vata*<sup>[8]</sup> along with its associated symptoms like *Pada Shula*, *Pada Suptata*, *Prishta Shula*, *Trika Shula*, etc by Acharya Charaka. Acharya Bhava Mishra has introduced *Trika Shula*<sup>[9]</sup> as a separate disease. Various terms like *Kati Shula*, *Kati Vata*, *Kati Samira*, *Kati Prishta Amaya*, and *Kati Pida* etc have been used by *Yogaratnakara*.

*Katishoola* can be physically, mentally and economically devastating. Low back ache is a vast term with multiple etiological factors. It can be caused due to strain in muscles, ligaments or tendons due to an injury or any other cause. Long working hours in office with improper sitting position, stress, depressive mood and cognitive functioning acts as an additional factors. As a part of normal ageing process, dehydration of the intervertebral disc occurs; which can lead to annular tear, disc bulge or herniation. Disc degeneration causes increased mechanical stress to the cartilaginous end

plates leading to osteophyte formation which further compresses nearby nerves (as in sciatica) or encroaches to spinal cord leading to severe impairment.

Due to intake of different *Vata* aggravating factors, *Vata Dosha* gets vitiated & when it accumulates in *Kati Pradesh*, *Kha-Vaigunya* occurs. After *Dosha-Dushya-Sammurchna Vata Dosha* vitiates *Sandhis*. The chief qualities of *Vata* are *Khara*, *Ruksha*, *Vishada*, and *Laghu*. *Sandhi* gives *Ashraya* to *Shleshaka Kapha* having *Guru*, *Snigdha* and *Mridu Guna*. When aggravated *Vata* gets localized in *Kati Sandhi*, it over powers and undoes all qualities of *Kapha*. The main *Karya* of *Kapha* is *Dharana* (to sustain) which is destroyed by the influence of aggravated *Vata*. Pain in lower back is the foremost symptom complained by patient entrapping his daily life activities. Other symptoms are stiffness, numbness and pain that may radiate to one or both legs. Pain increases in certain posture as prolonged standing, sitting, lifting heavy weight or backward bending of back. Modern treatment includes use of NSAID'S, analgesics, muscle relaxants or narcotics which gives good relief temporarily. Health supplements are given alongside. Lifestyle modification is made, patient is to avoid the activities precipitating pain & take rest. In case of unrelenting pain associated with pain radiation or progressive muscle weakness caused by nerve compression, surgery can be advised. Surgery is usually reserved in case of structural abnormalities. Use of NSAID'S has adverse effect on long term use. Surgery proves to be economically draining for the patient; moreover there are chances of reoccurrence.

Seeing the role of different medical system in the management, it is very important to provide cost-effective management of the disease. Ayurvedic approach towards the disease can prove to be fruitful by prudentially using *Panchkarma*, *Shamana* and by following proper *Pathya- Apathya*. *Snehana & Swedana* are very effective in the management as *Katishoola* has been said as *Swedanasadhya Vyadhi*<sup>[10]</sup>. It provides immediate relief in the pain. It works by *Samprapti Vighatana*.

## DISCUSSION

Aggravated *Vayu* when gets seated in any localized area, it produces contraction, stiffness and pain<sup>[11]</sup>. In modern science, there is no permanent treatment with NSAID'S and analgesics. Moreover when used for long term, they are detrimental to health. In Ayurveda *Sneha* is the best *Vatashamaka* and *Swedana* has been said for *Vata* and *Kapha Dosh*. *Vata* bears properties opposite to that of *Sneha*. *Sneha* with its antagonist properties pacifies *Vata Dosh*. It liquefies the *Doshas* of the body which are easily expelled out through *Swedana* procedure. Oil used in *Abhyanga* enters the body through *Romakupa*, *Siramukha* and *Dhamani*. Modern science also says that absorption through the skin is increased by suspending the drug in oily medium and rubbing it into the skin. *Acharya Dalhana* says that *Sneha* gets absorbed and reaches to different *Dhatu* levels curing the disease of that *Dhatu*. *Swedana* relieves *Stambha* and *Graha* promoting movement. *Swedana Dravya* possesses *Ushna*, *Teekshna Guna* by virtue of which these are capable of entering microchannels through circulation & produce sweating. *Swedana* increases the absorption of *Sneha* or drugs through the skin. After dilatation of these channels, *Doshas* liquefied by *Snehana* are excreted out through microspores of the skin in the form of sweat. *Swedana Dravya* possesses cleansing effect in the body.

Research has reported massage is beneficial on cellular, physiological, neurological and psychological level. Massage increases the circulation flow to the area increasing the oxygenated blood supply. Level of serotonin increases, it modulates pain control system. Heat administration in *Swedana* produces hypoanalgesic effect by diverted stimuli. *Abhyanga* when administered to acutely damage skeletal muscle appears to be clinically beneficial by reducing inflammation and promoting mitochondrial biogenesis<sup>[12]</sup>. Massage stimulates skin mechanoreceptors inhibiting the stimulatory signal of muscle contraction at the spinal level, and reducing the synaptic release of acetylcholine, causing muscles to relax. It decrease muscle tension by reducing neuromuscular excitability.

When anything hot or warm is applied to the skin, it immediately causes capillary dilatation. Warm *Sneha* when applied, enters through dilated capillaries & gets absorbed through the skin. *Snehana Swedana* increases oxygenated blood supply to the organ. It increases the level of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that modulates pain control system. It promotes the removal of waste products from the body. It reduces muscle tone, which are in excessive tension, restoring flexibility and motion. Local application of *Sneha* to the peripheral sensory endings in the skin results in depletion of this substance P from the whole neuron, both peripherally & centrally, hence it can be used in relieving pain. *Swedana karma* stimulates the sympathetic nervous system leading to vasodilation causing *Srotoshodhana*.

Pain gate control theory<sup>[13]</sup> explains the mechanism. Afferent pain receiving nerves comprises of two types of fibers, A $\delta$  and C fibers carrying signals for intense and chronic pain respectively. Large diameter A $\beta$  fibers don't transmit pain stimuli and inhibit the effect of A $\delta$  and C fibers. Activation of nerves that do not carry pain signals can interfere with the ones carrying pain signals, thereby inhibiting pain, closing a gate to the transmission of their stimuli. Pain reduces when *Abhyanga* is done due to activation of non-nociceptive fibers which further inhibit the nociceptive fibers. *Snehana* is a potent mechanical stimulus and a particularly effective trigger for the pain gate process. Substance P is one of the neurotransmitters secreted from afferent nerves, which propagate pain and is involved in inflammatory process. Through massage chemical mediator, substance P sensitizes the nociceptors by altering the transduction properties of the free nerve endings<sup>[14]</sup>. By this, perception of pain is reduced.

## CONCLUSION

Katishoola can occur independently or as a complication of any other disease. It affects normal life of a person very badly. Treatment is very challenging due to recurrent nature of the problem. "*Vatasyopakrama sneha sweda...*" is the quotation that is highlighting about the primacy of *Snehana Swedana* in the treat-

ment aspects of *Vata Vyadhi. Snehana Swedana* can provide promising solution in arresting the disease progression and in the symptomatic management of the disease.

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