



## SIGNIFICANCE OF VATA DOSHA IN SHOOLA AND ITS MANAGEMENT THROUGH YOGA

Ruchika Dighekar<sup>1</sup>, Gajanan Wayal<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, <sup>2</sup>Professor & HOD, Department of Kriya Sharira, Shri Ramsingh Chunawale Ayurveda College, Chikhli, Maharashtra, India.

Corresponding Author: [ruchikadighekar@gmail.com](mailto:ruchikadighekar@gmail.com)

<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj2910102022>

(Published Online: October 2022)

### Open Access

© International Ayurvedic Medical Journal, India 2022

Article Received: 15/09/2022 - Peer Reviewed: 08/10/2022 - Accepted for Publication: 12/10/2022



### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a "Divine science" due to its origin as well as its incredible potency in curing diseases and protecting the health of a healthy person. Ayurveda is a fundamental state of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Health is a balance of all these three states and their relationship with the outside world. In Ayurveda for understanding the physiological and pathological aspects, the five elements are grouped into three humours called the *Tridosas*— *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. Out of three *doshas*, *vata dosha* is responsible for all functions carried out in the body. Pain is a symptom of mental and physical hurt or disease. It is known as *shoola roga* in Ayurveda. *Vata dosha* is responsible for pain. Pain can be of any region, but it is caused due to the aggravation of the *vata dosha*. Yoga is a unity of breath, mind, and senses and the abandonment of all states of existence. Yoga is particularly helpful in promoting relaxation when encountering stress and agitation. Yoga is helpful in pain management with both physical and mental balance. Yoga is very helpful in treating some of the mechanical aspects of pain. This review paper takes a view of the importance of *vata dosha* in pain and some health-promoting benefits of yoga with respect to pain.

**Keywords:** principles of *shoola*, *vata dosha*, its management through yoga.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurvedic medicine is a system of traditional medicine native to India. The aim of Ayurveda is to maintain the proper equilibrium of *dosha*, *dhatu*, and *mala* constituents in order to preserve health in a healthy person and cure a disease in a diseased person. Every medical stream has its own science in which its matter is developed, evolved, and explained. Ayurveda is based on peculiar fundamental principles like *tridosha* theory, *Panchamahabhuta* theory, *prakriti*, *ojas*, *dhatu*, *mala*, *agni*, *manas*, *atma*, etc. The fundamental principle holds a strong position in Ayurveda. From the creation of living to issues of health, disease, and its treatment these fundamental principles are the root. According to Ayurveda, there are three substances or biological humors in the human body that governs all life processes of growth and decay. In Ayurveda, these biological humors are known as *doshas*. The *doshas* are *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. All types of pain are considered under *vata* aggravation in Ayurveda. According to ayurvedic theory, pain can only occur due to *vata* involvement. *Vata dosha* is responsible for every movement and action in the body<sup>[1]</sup>. The hindrance in *vata* leads to pain. *vata* is energy that belongs to the vacuum and air elements. It is present in the hollow organs, nerves, blood vessels, and all other body channels. It allows the other *pitta* and *kapha* humors to function in the body<sup>[2]</sup>. *Pitta* and *kapha* cannot work without the help of *vata* humor. Therefore, *vata* should work easily in the body without any obstruction. The obstruction in *the vata* causes pain.

Pain has been given at most importance even in Ayurveda thereby, offering varied treatments to cure the same. Despite recent advances in pain treatment including anesthesia, its management still remains challenged. Treatment modalities offered in Ayurveda such as *agnikarma*, *jalaaukaavcharna*, etc. offer immediate pain relief without many untoward effects. It is hence mandatory to explore the basic concept of *vata dosha* in pain and its practical utility requiring establishment in pain care reconnoitered in Ayurveda and yoga.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Data from this literature is collected from different Ayurvedic *samhitas* and their respective commentaries, various articles from different websites like ayujournal, and jaim have been referred for the specific materials.

### Principle of *vata dosha* in *shoola* (pain) in Ayurveda:

According to Ayurveda *vata* is the main *dosha* involved in pain. It is responsible for generating and spreading pain. However, a specific fraction of *vayu* is responsible for pain in a specific region such as generalized pain caused by *vyana vayu*, headache - *prana* and *vyana vayu*<sup>[3]</sup>, abdominal pain - *saman* and *apan vayu* [4] and chest pain - *vyana* and *prana vayu*<sup>[5]</sup>.

In Ayurveda, *vata dosha* is the root cause of all types of *shoola* - “*Vatat rute nasti ruja*” as mentioned by *acharya sushruta*<sup>[6]</sup>. The concept of pain in Ayurveda is based on the fundamental theories of *tridoshas*, *triguna*, *strotas*, and *ojas*, but it has also certain relations with the karma of previous birth as depicted by *maharishi charaka* as “*karmaja roga*”. The Ayurvedic texts describe a wide range of pain *shoola* (piercing pain), being the most prominent form, *dank* (bursting), *vedana* (unbearable sensation), *dagdha* (burning pain), *chosa* (sucking pain), *nirmathan* (churning-like), *shastraviddh* (cutting like), *spandana* (vibration) are some of the other expressions. Associated *doshas* with the *vata* can alter the type and intensity of the pain as dull aching and from sharp neuralgic pain to burning pain in *kapha*<sup>[7]</sup> and *pitta*<sup>[8]</sup> associated *vata dosha* respectively. The hindrance in *vata dosha* flow leads to pain.

### *Shoola* as Ayurvedic Review:

The definition of *shoola* is an experience similar to driving a nail into the body of a person. It has been further elaborated that out of *tridoshas*, vitiated ‘*vata*’ is the main causative factor responsible for all painful conditions<sup>[9]</sup> There is no special chapter for pain or its related synonyms in the *brihatrayee* of Ayurveda, but it is discrete in several chapters dur-

ing the description of the disease, either it's *purva-roopa* (prodromal symptoms), *roopa* (signs and symptoms) or *upadrava* (complications). From the very beginning in the *Bheshaja chatushka* of *charaka*, there is different medicinal preparation for the management of pain in different parts of the body. Likewise, in the *charaka sutrasthana*, there are two *mahakashaya* directly mentioned for the management of pain i.e., *shoola prashamana* and the *vedana sthapana* <sup>[10]</sup> also there is another one that directly relates to pain management as *angamarda prashamana*. In *madhava nidana*, the first time a special chapter is mentioned for *shoola*.

In Ayurveda, all types of pain are considered under *vata* aggravation. Pain can only occur due to the *vata* involvement, and it cannot occur if *the vata* is not involved in it. There are different synonyms related to pain in Ayurveda i.e., *shoola*, *rooja*, *rook*, *vedana*, *arati*, etc. As *vata dosha* is responsible for every movement and action in the body, the hindrance in *vata* flow leads to pain. As *vata* also allows the other *pitta* and *kapha* humors to function in the body, therefore *vata* should flow easily in the body without any obstruction. The obstruction in the *vata* flow causes pain. Diet having similar properties causes aggravation of *vata dosha* <sup>[11]</sup> due to which *vata* gets situated in one suitable part of the body and attains growth and leads to the manifestation of symptoms caused by aggravated *vata dosha*.

Some of the physical activities causing aggravation of *vata dosha* <sup>[12]</sup> are *ativyavaya* (excessive sexual indulgence), *prajagara* (remaining awake at night in excess), *vishamat upachara* (inappropriate panchakarma/ other therapies), *ati dosha sravana* (excess of panchakarma therapies), *ati asruk sravana* (excess *Raktamokshan* or excess bleeding), *ati plavana* (excessive swimming), *ati langhana* (excessive fasting), *atyadhva* (walking for long distance), *ativyayama* (physical activities or exercise in excess), *dhatu samkshayaat* (depletion of body tissues, loss of *dhatu*), *chinta shoka karshana* (weakening due to excess stress, grief, and worries), *roga ati karshana* (excessive emaciation because of the affliction of disease), *dukhshaya* (sleeping over un-

comfortable beds and sitting), *vega vidharana* (suppression of natural urges), *ama* (product of improper digestion and metabolism), *marmaghata* (injuries to *marmas*), riding over an elephant, camel, horses, or fast-moving vehicles. These all-aggravated factors give rise to the following symptoms <sup>[13]</sup>. *Sankoch-contraction*, *parvanam stambha bheda*- stiffness of joints and pain, *loma harsha*- horripilation, *pralapa-irrelevant talk*, *pani prushta shiro graha*- stiffness of hands, back, and head, *khanjya pangulya kubjatva*- lameness of hands, and feet, and hunch back, shortness, *anganam sosha*- atrophy, emaciation of limbs, *anidra*- insomnia, *garbha shukra rajo nasha*- the destruction of the foetus, semen and periods, *span-danam gatra suptata*- twitching sensation and numbness in the body, *shiro nasa akshi jatrunam griva hundanam*- shrinkage of the head, nose, eyes, clavicular region and neck, *bheda*- splitting pain, *toda* -pricking pain, *arti*- excruciating pain, *aak-shepa*- convulsions, *moha*- unconsciousness, *aayasa*- excess tiredness, and similar other signs and symptoms.

Apart from the influence of *tridoshic* factors, there are other factors that may alter the nature of pain. The main ones are a) Tissues or *dhatu*s involved b) Organ or *kostha* and site involved c) Specific functions of the tissue or organ involved d) The mental state of the victim e) Environmental factors, both endogenous and exogenous.

In Ayurveda, all pathologies are brought about through the phenomenon of *dosha dushya samurchana*, and this interaction of vitiated *dosha* with vitiated *dushya* is governed by two factors, *srotamsi* and *ojas*. An increase degree of *srotodushti* and *oja* disorder makes the disease gradually chronic, as chronic pain condition in *amavata*, whereas in acute pain conditions such increase degree of *srotodushti* and *ojas dushti* is not seen and can be treated by pacifying *vata dosha* only. This vitiation of *vata* occurs in two ways, *dhatukshya janya vata prakop* (increased catabolism) and *margavarodh janya vata prakop* <sup>[14]</sup>. Furthermore, the '*ruksha*' (Dryness) and '*chala*' (Vibrations) *gunas* (characters) of *vata* are mainly involved in the manifestation of pain. Pain

management in Ayurveda has a holistic view that incorporates several therapeutic procedures and behavioral modifications under the light of basic principles narrated in Ayurveda.

#### **Classification of pain according to Ayurveda:**

1) Sushruta (11 types of *shoola*)<sup>[15]</sup>: *vataja*, *pittaja*, *kaphaja*, *sannipataja parsva shoola*, *kukshi shoola*, *hrit shoola*, *vasti shoola*, *mootra shoola*, *vit shoola*, *avipaka/anna dosaja shoola*.

2) Madhavakara (8 types of *shoola*): *vataja*, *pittaja*, *kaphaja*, *vata-pittaja*, *vata-kaphaja*, *pitta-kaphaja*, *sannipataja*, *amaja parinama shoola*, and *annadrava shoola* are special types of *shoola* closely resemble with peptic ulcers and have strong relationships with the food intake.

#### **Yoga therapy for pain management:**

Yoga approaches to relax, energize, remodel and strengthen the body and psyche. The Asanas and Pranayama harmonize the physiological system and initiate a "relaxation response" in the neuro endocrinal system. This consists of decreased metabolism, quieter breathing, stable blood pressure, reduced muscle tension, lower heart rate, and a slow brain wave pattern. As the neural discharge pattern gets modulated, hyper arousal of the nervous system and static load on postural muscle come down. The function of the viscera improves with the sense of relaxation and sleep gets deeper and sustained; fatigue diminishes. Sleep and meditation also help an individual deal with emotional aspects of chronic pain, reduce anxiety and depression effectively and improve the quality of life perceived.

Yoga and Meditation are helpful in the management of pain in daily practices. Practices of yoga help us to attain physical wellbeing through asanas. It is helpful to remove the strain on the particular group of muscles that causes pain. Similarly, for *vata dosha* regulation especially in abdominal discomfort, asanas like Pavanmukta asana are prescribed. Pranayam in yoga inclusive of meditation practices also serves to see we are distinct as a witness to the sufferings of body & mind, spirit being untouched by the same. One such pranayam is Kapalhati (one of the exercises done in Hath yoga), kriya like

Dhauti (purification of esophagus and stomach), and agnisaar kriya (exercises especially useful in menstrual disorders) and uddiyan bandh (body lock at the region of the diaphragm) is prescribed in varied painful conditions<sup>[16]</sup>. Apart from yoga and meditation practices, the technique of mindfulness helps a person deal with pain more efficiently. Mindfulness helps one to observe thoughts and feelings from a distance. Pain is perceived through the body, but it is the mind that associates itself with pain and therefore, renders physical and mental suffering. Mindfulness makes one watchful for all the actions and responses of the body making its mind distinct from the perception of pain<sup>[18]</sup>.

#### **DISCUSSION**

*Vata dosha* is responsible for all movement in the physical body and mind. Balanced *vata* produces flexibility and a balanced mind. Out of balance, *vata* is the fearful, anxious and nervous system to understanding basic qualities and tendencies. It controls breathing, movement of muscles, movement of food through the digestive tract, and nerve impulses to and from the brain.

Signals are received by the cell from its environment which can be correlated with *chala guna* of *vata dosha* called *sarveindriyanamudyojaka*, *sarveindriyaarthanaambhivodha*. *dhatukshaya* leads to *vataprakopa* which increases the *chala guna* of *vata dosha*. *Charak samhita* explains three *mahakashaya angamarda*, *shool prashaman*, and *vednasthapak mahakashaya*. Out of these, *angamarda mahakashaya* consists of herbs with both *sheeta* (cold) and *ushna* (hot) *virya* which indicates treatment options and choice of herbs as per *angamarda* due to *dhatukshaya* and *margavrodhjanya vataprakopa* respectively. *Shoolprashamiya mahakashaya* consists of all *ushna virya* herbs which chiefly act on the gastrointestinal tract. *Vednasthapak mahakashaya* consists of herbs with *kashaya rasa* and *sheeta virya*.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In a nutshell, this article is an attempt to explore the concept in classical texts of Ayurveda in light of yoga

management. Re-exploring of the basic principle of pain, *vata dosha*, yoga, and meditation practices in life helps one to understand the modulation of pain in light of the ayurvedic concept. Many other facets of vitiation *vata dosha* and pain for example treatment of *vatavyadhi* (disorders due to vitiated *vata dosha*) chiefly are out of the purview of this article. The management of pain itself is still under research persistently as it is a subjective parameter with a different threshold for different individuals. The current article is an attempt to cover the maximum aspects of the causes of pain and its treatment through yoga therapy. There are a few distinct formulations and therapies mentioned in the classical text of sushrut samhita for pain management such as *shatphal ghrutam* and *hingvadi gutika* in *udarshool*, *siravedh chikitsa* in *gridhrasi*, *vardhaman pippali* in *vatarakta*. it needs therapeutic validation leaving scope for future research in the principle of vata dosha, causes of pain through Ayurveda <sup>[17][18][19][20]</sup>.

## REFERENCES

1. Agnivesha, Charaka, Drudhbala, Charak Samhita, Sutrashtana, Charak Chandrika Commentary, Vaatkalakaliya Adhyaya, 12/8. Vd. Tripathi Bramhanand, Chaukhambha, Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 1983
2. Sharangdhar, Sharandhar Samhita, Purvadh, 5/43. Vd. Desai Ranjit, Baidynath Ayurved Bhavan, Nagpur 1984
3. Vagbhata, Ashtang Hridaya Samhita, Sutrashtana, Doshadivijnaniya Adhyaya 12/8, Translated by Prof. Srikantha Murthy KR. Vol.1. Chaukhamba Krushnadas Academy, Varanasi; 2011
4. Chandrat, Nagarjuna, Sushruta Samhita, Nidansthana, Susrutavimarsini Hindi Commentary, Vaatvyadhi Nidanam Adhyaya, 1/14, Vd. Sharma Ram Anant, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 2015
5. Chandrat, Nagarjuna, Sushruta Samhita, Nidansthana, Susrutavimarsini Hindi Commentary, Vaatvyadhi Nidanam Adhyaya, 1/18, Vd. Sharma Ram Anant, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 2015
6. Chandrat, Nagarjuna, Sushruta Samhita, Uttartantra, Susrutavimarsini Hindi Commentary, Gulmapratishedha Adhyaya, 42/81, Vd. Sharma Ram Anant, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 2015
7. Chandrat, Nagarjuna, Sushruta Samhita, Uttartantra, Susrutavimarsini Hindi Commentary, Gulmapratishedha Adhyaya, 42/85, Vd. Sharma Ram Anant, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 2015
8. Chandrat, Nagarjuna, Sushruta Samhita, Uttartantra, Susrutavimarsini Hindi Commentary, Gulmapratishedha Adhyaya, 42/84, Vd. Sharma Ram Anant, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 2015
9. Sushruta, Aampakwaaishaniya adhyay. In: Prof. K.R. Srikantha Murthy, Susruta Samhita Sutrashtanam, 2nd ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2005.
10. Agnivesha, Charaka, Drudhbala, Charak Samhita, Sutrashtana, Charak Chandrika Commentary, Shatvirechanshatashritiya Adhyaya, 4/17. Vd. Tripathi Bramhanand, Chaukhambha, Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 1983
11. Agnivesha, Charaka, Drudhbala, Charak Samhita, Sutrashtana, Charak Chandrika Commentary, Khudakchatuspadiya Adhyaya, 9/4. Vd. Tripathi Bramhanand, Chaukhambha, Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 1983
12. Agnivesha, Charaka, Drudhbala, Charak Samhita, Chikitsasthana, Charak Chandrika Commentary, vatavyadhichikitsa Adhyaya 28/15-18, Vd. Tripathi Bramhanand, Chaukhambha, Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 1983
13. Pt. Kashinatha Sastri, Vidyotini Hindi commentary on Charaka samhita vol 2, Varanasi, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, 2011.
14. Agnivesha, Charaka, Drudhbala, Charak Samhita, Chikitsasthana, Charak Chandrika Commentary, vatavyadhichikitsa Adhyaya 28/56, Vd. Tripathi Bramhanand, Chaukhambha, Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 1983
15. Chandrat, Nagarjuna, Sushruta Samhita, Uttartantra, Susrutavimarsini Hindi Commentary, Gulmapratishedha Adhyaya, 42/68-69, Vd. Sharma Ram Anant, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi; 2015
16. Dwivedi Amarprakash P, Chougale Pradnya D.: Pain Management Through Ayurveda: A Meticulous Review International Ayurvedic Medical Journal, Volume 2, Issue 4, April-May 2018
17. Sushruta, Sushruta Samhita Nibandha sangrah Commentary; Sri Dalhanacharya by Jadavji Trikamji & Narayan Ram Acharya, Chikitsa sthan 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia, 2005.
18. Sushruta, Sushruta Samhita Nibandha sangrah Commentary; Sri Dalhanacharya by Jadavji Trikamji & Narayan Ram Acharya, Chikitsasthana, 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia, 2005, p.429,5:28
19. Sushruta, Sushruta Samhita Nibandha sangrah Commentary; Sri Dalhanacharya by Jadavji Trikamji & Na-

rayan Ram Acharya, Chikitsasthana, 1st ed. Varanasi:  
Chaukhambha Orientalia, 2005, p.428,5:23

20. Sushruta, Sushruta Samhita Nibandha sangrah Com-  
mentary; Sri Dalhanacharya by Jadavji Trikamji & Na-

rayan Ram Acharya, Chikitsasthana, 1st ed. Varanasi:  
Chaukhambha Orientalia, 2005, p.426,5:12

**Source of Support: Nil**

**Conflict of Interest: None Declared**

How to cite this URL: Ruchika Dighekar & Gajanan Wayal: Significance of Vata Dosha in Shoola and Its Management Through Yoga. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2022 {cited October 2022} Available from: [http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/2863\\_2868.pdf](http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/2863_2868.pdf)