

**REVIEW ARTICLE ON ROLE OF SIRAVEDHAN IN GRIDHASI W.S.R. TO
SCIATICA - A CONCEPTUAL STUDY**

[Neha Uniyal](#)¹, [Vipin Kumar](#)², [Sheetal Verma](#)³, [Pankaj Kumar Sharma](#)⁴

¹PG Scholar, Dept of Shalya Tantra, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Gurukul Campus, Haridwar

²Assistant professor, Dept of Samhita & Siddhanta, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Gurukul Campus, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India

³Associate professor, Dept of Samhita & Siddhanta, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Gurukul Campus, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India

⁴Professor, Dept of Shalya Tantra, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Gurukul Campus, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India

Corresponding Author: neha30uniyal@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj3308092020>

(Published online: September 2020)

Open Access

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Article Received: 26/08/2020 - **Peer Reviewed:** 08/09/2020 - **Accepted for Publication:** 08/09/2020

**ABSTRACT**

Katishool, low back ache (lumbago) is the most common problem in middle and old age people hampering the normal activity. There are several reasons associated with the pain such as – neurological, metabolic, degenerative, traumatic, bad posture, restless lifestyle, etc. *Gridhasi* is one of the *Nanatmaja Vata Vyadhi*, characterised by *Katishool* where the site of pain starts from the *Sphika* (back region) and then radiates to *Kati*, *Pristha*, *Uru*, *Janu*, *Jangha*, *Pada* in order. The signs and symptoms mentioned in ayurvedic texts resembles the medical condition named sciatica. Sciatica describes leg pain that is localised in the distribution of one or more lumbosacral nerve roots, typically L4-S2, with or without neurological deficit. This causes abnormality in the gait of the patient. *Gridhasi* being a dominant lifestyle disorder needs a proper management and *Siravedhan* is one of the propitious managements of *Gridhasi* described in *Ayurveda* classics. *Acharya Sushruta* explained the importance of *Siravedhan* by accepting it as *Ardha Chikitsa* (half of the therapeutic measure) in *Shalya tantra* like *Basti* in

Kayachikitsa. Acharya Sushruta also mentioned that the diseases which are not relieved so quickly by *Snehana*, *Lepanadi* measure, in this *Siravedhan* do wonders by acting as an emergency management to achieve good results.

Keywords: Pain, Sciatica, *Gridhasi*, *Siravedhan*

INTRODUCTION

Pain is the unpleasant sensation and emotional experience that hampers one's normal day to day routine and productivity of life. It is the most common problem with which patient arrives to the physician for consultation. *Gridhasi* is the painful condition in which patient can neither sit nor walk properly. In this disease the patient walks like the bird *Gridhara* and his legs becomes tense and slightly curved, so due to resemblance with the gait of a vulture, *Gridhasi* term might have been given to this disease.^[1] The description regarding *Gridhasi* is given in almost all *Ayurveda* classics. Acharya Charaka describes the *Lakshana* of *Gridhasi* as pain starting from *Sphika* then radiating to *Kati*, *Pristha*, *Uru Janu*, *Jangha* orderly.^[2] He mentioned two types of *Gridhasi*, *Vataj* and *Vata-Kaphaj*. *Vataj Gridhasi* where symptoms like *Ruk*, *Toda*, *Stambha*, *Muhuspanana* are present. Acharya Sushruta mentioned *Sakthikshepa Nigrahanti* as a symptom.^[3] Commenting upon this symptom *Dalhana* opines that *Kandara* that forbids the movement of limb is called *Gridhasi*. This is the additional manifestation of limited mobility of affected leg.^[4] *Vagbhata* while describing the *Gridhasi Lakshana* used the word *Utkshepana* in place of *Kshepa* means that patient finds difficulty or fails to uplift the leg due to *vata*.^[5] Acharya Madhav described another symptom of *Vata Gridhasi*, *Dehasyapi Pravakrata* considering the gait where the body of patient bends towards the affected side of the body.^[6] Another type of *Gridhasi* is *Vata Kaphaja* where symptoms like *Tandra*, *Gaurava*, *Arochaka*, are present. Acharya Bhavprakash and Madhava have mentioned *Mukhpraseka* and *Bhaktadwasha* as symptoms of *Vata Kaphaja Gridhasi*. *Staimitya* (feeling as if wet cloth is wrapped) as the symptom of *Vata Kaphaja Gridhasi* is mentioned by Acharya Harita only. The symptomatology of disease *Gridhasi* closely resembles sciatica in modern medical science. Sciatica is a common painful condition becoming a significant

problem to working population and burden to both industrial and health service providers. Sciatica is a relatively common condition with lifetime incidence varying from 13% to 40%. The corresponding annual incidence of an episode of sciatica ranges from 1% to 5%.^[7] Sciatica is the term used for low back pain that radiates into buttock, hips and down the leg to the foot. The pain often is associated with tingling, numbness, or weakness of the leg. Sciatica can be caused by number of conditions that lead to compression or irritation of nerves as they exit the spinal canal in the region of the lower back where they come together to form sciatic nerves at the end of spinal column.^[8] The treatment of sciatica is done symptomatically in conventional medical practice. NSAIDS, physiotherapy, etc are primarily given to the patient and lastly surgery is recommended. All this doesn't necessarily show satisfactory results and also have more of adverse effects. So, there is a need to find promising management which is easier and cost effective. In ayurvedic texts several methods are used as a line of treatment of *Gridhasi* which includes *Bhesaja*, *Siravedha*, *Agnikarma*, and *Basti*. *Siravedhan* (vene puncture) which is a parasurgical procedure used as treatment modality to reduce pain, stiffness, muscle spasm and inflammation in patients of *Gridhasi*. It is one of the methods of *Raktamokshana* or bloodletting used as emergency management of disease.

Materials and Methods

A literary review is conducted using references that has been collected and compiled from various available ayurvedic classics texts like *Sushruta Samhita*, *Charak Samhita*, *Astanghridaya*, *Astangsamgraha*, *Madhavanidana*, etc and available commentaries on it. Electronic database like Google scholar, AYU, IJPAAM, JAMA, IJCAM, IJAPR, etc are also used to conduct the conceptual study.

Siravedhan in Gridhasi

Siravedhan is one of the *Shodhana Chikitsa*. It is accepted as half of the therapeutic measure in *Shalya Tantra* like *Basti in Kaya Chikitsa*. Cardinal symptoms of *Gridhasi* such as *Ruk*, *Toda*, etc are relieved by *Siravedhan*. The different sites of *Siravedhan* are mentioned by *Acharyas* in ayurvedic texts which is as follows: *Acharya Charaka*: In between *Kandara* and *Gulfa*.^[9] *Acharya Sushruta*: 4 *Angula* above or below from *Janu Sandhi*.^[10] *Acharya Harita*: 4 *Angula* above from *Gulfa*. *Acharya Sushruta* described the whole *Siravedhan Vidhi* in *Sharir Sthan*. A patient done with *Snehana* and *Swedana*, is advised to take liquid diet and *Yavagu Paan* (gruel). Then in *Yogya Kala* (not in rainy or winter season) patient is asked to visit the surgeon and made him sit or lie in position that doesn't hinder his vital functions. The site selected for *Siravedhan* is then tied neither loose nor too tight with cloth, creepers, inner fibres of bark, etc. Then use appropriate instrument for the *Siravedhan* procedure.^[11] *Acharya* also mentioned the maximum quantity of bloodletting that is 1 *Prastha* (640 ml) of blood per sitting. This volume of blood is indicated in people having more *Doshas*, strong built and young age.

Probable Mode of Action of Siravedhan

Gridhasi is the *Shool pradhana Vatavyadhi* and wherever *Shoola* is present there is always involvement of *Vata Dosh*. Treatment or using particular therapy in *Ayurveda* is simply correcting the aggravated *Doshas* and bringing the *Tridoshas* into state of equilibrium. *Siravedhan* is predominantly indicated in *Pitta*, *Rakta* and *Kaphaja Vyadhies* or when *pitta* and *Kapha* is in *Anubandha* to *Vata Dosh*. In such conditions of *Vata Prakopa* due to *Kapha* and *Pitta Avarana*, *Siravedhan* can help to remove the *Avarana* of *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosh* giving way for *Anuloma Gati* of vitiated *Vata* that indirectly cures the *Vatika* symptoms along with symptoms produced by *Kapha Dosh*.^[12] By *Siravedhan*, pain in *Gridhasi* might get reduced due to reduction of pressure over the surrounding nerves. *Siravedhan* also have significant effect on SLR. It might be due to accumulated blood that is let out through *Siravedhan* and allows free space for movement of limb.^[13] According to the modern concept various

probable mechanism are going to change in body by bloodletting, such as local blood supply is improved, local metabolism is improved, fresh RBC'S are produced which are active. Release of hormones, sympathetic nerve function etc, are triggered which directly stimulates bone marrow and immune related T- lymphocytes helping in relaunching of healing mechanism.^[14]

DISCUSSION

Siravedhan is a procedure that is used as a treatment in *Sarvadehika Doshas Dushti* or vitiation of *Doshas* in whole body. *Acharya Sushruta* in *Sharir Sthan* explained the functioning of *Siravedhan* with an example. It states that, during *Siravedhan* procedure when the vein is opened the vitiated blood is seen to flow out first like drop of yellow pigment that comes out of *Kusumbha* flower whenever it is plucked.^[15] So by this vitiated blood comes out with elimination of *Doshas* and finally curing the disease. Disease like *Gridhasi* where affliction of *Rakta* along with *Vata* occurs, there *Siravedhan* plays an important role in management. It helps in immediate lowering of symptoms like *Ruka*, *Stambha*, *Toda*, *Spandan*, etc and works as an emergency treatment. Patients of *Gridhasi* comes with the most common symptom that is pain which is unpleasant sensation that effects physical and emotional wellbeing. There also *Siravedhan* serves as a boon for the pain management along with the cure of disease hence providing treatment satisfaction to the patient.

CONCLUSION

Gridhasi is the most common pain dominant disease that dominates in the society. *Siravedhan* is a parasurgical procedure which is cost effective and promising management of diseases like *Gridhasi*. It is a simple procedure and does not necessarily requires hospitalization. When other treatment doesn't show marked improvement or fails then *Siravedhan* shows miraculous effect by relieving symptoms like pain, stiffness, heaviness, pricking sensation, heaviness and drowsiness. *Acharya Vriddha Vagbhatta* made a beautiful comparison while describing the importance of *Siravedhan*. He mentioned that as the water comes out and plants die

on cutting the borders of field likewise vitiated blood comes out and automatically the disease gets cured by *Siravedhan*.^[16] In *Gridhasi Vyana Vayu* is the most important factor responsible for the disease. *Siravedhan* acts on the *Avarana* or the obstruction further establishing normal *Vata* function. The symptoms of *Samyak Siravedha* are *Laghvam Vednashanti, vyadhivegaparishaya, Prasado Manastatha*.^[17] It means that patient feels lightness and alleviation of pain in the affected part by an abatement of disease, and a sense of joy. So, by this we can conclude that *Siravedhan* is beneficial for pain dominant diseases like *Gridhasi*.

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Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Neha Uniyal et al: Ayurvedic Management Of Upavishtaka Garbha Due To Pih An Integrated Approach - A Single Case Study. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2020 {cited September, 2020} Available from: http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/4504_4507.pdf