

AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO ULCERATIVE COLITIS & IT'S MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Ulcerative colitis (UC) is one of the common Gastrointestinal (GIT) disorders encountered by clinicians in day-to-day life. It is a type of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) that usually involves the mucosa of rectum and extends proximally to involve all or part of the colon. The major symptoms of UC are diarrhoea, rectal bleeding, tenesmus, passage of mucus and crampy abdominal pain. In *Ayurveda Raktatisara*, *Pittatisara*, *Raktaja Pravahikashows* symptoms having resemblance with Ulcerative colitis. *Ayurveda* described various treatment modalities for the management of ulcerative colitis such as; *Piccha Basti*, *Samshamanayogas*, proper nutritional supply, herbal therapy, *Yoga* therapy etc. In the management of Ulcerative Colitis, principle of *Atisara Chikitsa* can be followed. Therapies like *Picchabasti* is considered as first line of treatment for the control of ulcerative colitis, *Piccha Basti* used for the treatment of *Sangrahni*, *Raktatisara*, *Pravahika* and *VranaRopana*. *Picchabasti* reduces clinical manifestation of colitis such as; inflammation, burning sensation, pain and cramps. *Samshamanayogas*, along with the dietary modifications, gives the maximum benefit.

Keywords: Ulcerative colitis, *Raktatisar*, *RakajPravahika*, *Picchabasti*.

INTRODUCTION

Ulcerative colitis (UC) is a major form of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), characterized by chronic inflammation involving the colon and rectum. It is a cause of significant morbidity worldwide and its incidence and prevalence appear to be increasing with time^[1]. Its incidence is rising especially in Northern India, due to erroneous dietary habits and faulty lifestyle. This is substantiated by the fact that urban areas have a higher incidence of Ulcerative colitis than rural areas, and high socio-economic classes have a higher prevalence than lower socio-economic classes. The peak age of onset of UC is between 15 and 30 yrs. A

second peak occurs between the ages of 60 and 80 yrs. The male to female ratio for UC is -1:1^[2].

Ulcerative colitis is idiopathic in nature, but there are many possible factors such as genetics, environment, diet, drugs and stress. It is the result of an abnormal response by body's immune system. Normally, the cells and proteins that make up the immune system protect from infection. In people with inflammatory bowel disease, however, the immune system mistakes food, bacteria and other materials in the intestine for foreign or invading substances. When this happens, the body sends white blood cells into the lining of the

intestines, where they produce chronic inflammation and ulcerations^[3].

In ulcerative colitis, Numbers of stool are 5-6per day, consisting of small amount of watery stool, mucus, blood and pus. Extreme dehydration, hypocalcemia, anaemia, hypoproteinemia and marked weight loss are the features of acute fulminating form of UC.

Ayurvedic perspective

Acharya Charaka used the word *Mahasrotas* for whole digestive system. Factors affect *Jataragni* (digestive fire) cause the diseases of digestive tract and various kind of diseases of gastro intestinal system have been described in *Ayurveda* texts. Under the diseases of digestive tract, sub types of *Atisara* (diarrhoea), sub type of *Pravahika* (dysentery) show some of the similar signs and symptoms with Ulcerative colitis.

- IBD can be correlated to *Grahanidosha*

Vyavachedanidan (Differential diagnosis)

- *Pittatisara*
- *Raktatisara*
- *Raktajpravahika* - In *RaktajPravahika*, *Prakupita Pitta* erodes mucosa of large intestine producing ulcers. *Raktayuktpravahana* bleeding of ulcer leads to passage of blood, *Kapha* stools along with pain. As per *Madhava nidana*.^[4]

It can be correlated to the disease *Pravahika* which manifests in the form of *Atipravahana of Purisha* (repeated defecation), *AtidravaPurishaPravritti* (watery stool), *Udarashoola* (pain abdomen), *Picchila*, *Saphena* (sticky and frothy), and *RaktayuktaPurisha* (blood mix stool)^[5].

Etiology (Nidana)

The exact etiology of ulcerative colitis is unknown, but certain factors have been found to be associated with the disease. Etiological factors potentially contributing to ulcerative colitis include genetic factors, immune

system reactions, environmental factors, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) use, low levels of antioxidants psychological stress factors, a smoking history, and consumption of milk products. Certain type of food composition and the use of oral contraceptive may be associated with condition^[6].

Pathophysiology (Samprapti)

In *Ayurveda*, Ulcerative colitis can be considered as a *Pitta Pradhan Tridoshaj* disease of *PurishavahaSrotasa*. *NidanaSevana* leads to vitiation of *Pitta* along with *Vridhhi of Kapha and Vata*. *VridhhaKapha* and *Vata* cause the vitiation of *Agni* leading to *Agni-mandya*. Excessive consumption of *Pittaj-Ahara* (*Pitta* aggravating foods) and *Pitta* aggravating regimen leads to vitiation of *Pitta Dosha* which further cause the vitiation of *Rakta Dhatu*. *DoshaSanchaya* takes place in *Grahani and Pakwashaya* (Rectum and Colon) which results in *Shula* (abdominalpain), *Shotha* (inflammation of intestine), *Atisara* (Diarrhoea), *Vrana* (Ulcers) and *Raktasraava* (bleeding per rectum) etc. Vitiated *Kapha* blocks the channels causing further inflammation, mucous accumulation and oedema. Thus it produces symptoms.^{[7][8]}

Symptoms

According to modern^[9]

The symptoms are mainly of gastro-intestinal origin.

- Diarrhoea mixed with blood and mucus
- Bleed on rectal examination
- Anaemia
- Abdominal pain
- Increased abdominal sounds
- Fever
- Rectal pain
- Malnutrition
- Weight loss

According to Ayurveda^[10,11,12,13]

Disease	Signs and symptoms			
	<i>Charaka Samhita</i>	<i>SusrutaSamhita</i>	<i>Ashtanga Hridaya</i>	<i>Ashtanga Samgraha</i>
<i>Pittatisara</i>	Passing stool as yellow, green blue, black Blood and pitta present	Perspiration, thirst, fainting, burning sensation, inflammation,	Passing yellow, black, turmeric like or green feces mixed with	Passing yellow, black, turmeric like or green feces mixed with blood,

	Exceedingly foetid Thirst, burning sensation, sweating, fainting, colic pain, inflammation and suppuration in anus.	fever, passing forcefully, foul smelling, hot, resembling meat wash, loose in consistency, yellow, bloody stool	blood, foul smell, associated with thirst, fainting, perspiration, burning sensation, pain in abdomen, ulcerations of the rectum.	foul smell, associated with thirst, fainting, perspiration, burning sensation, pain in abdomen, ulcerations of the rectum.
Raktatisara	Same as signs and symptoms of <i>Pittatisara</i> along with bloody diarrhoea.	-	Bloody diarrhoea, rectal ulcerations.	Burning sensation, thirst, delusion, fever, colic and rectal ulcerations.
RaktajPravahika		Passing bloody stool.		

Management

Ayurvedic system of medicine is very beneficial in the treatment of Ulcerative colitis. The various conditions described in *Ayurveda* like *Raktaatisara*, *pravahika*, *rakajpravahika* resemble to Ulcerative colitis due to similarity in symptoms. *Acharya Sushruta* has described *Raktaatisara* advanced stage of *PaittikAtisaar*. Its symptoms like *Shulam*, *Vidaaham*, *Gudpaaka* & *Raktapravritti* can be compared with rectal pain, inflammation, rectal ulceration and bleeding of ulcerative colitis. Vitiating of *Agni (Agnimandya)* is the main cause of all these conditions. Thus, *Deepana-Pachana Chikitsa* forms the mainstay of the treatment. Along with this *Pichhabasti* is considered best among all of the *basti* by *Acharya Charak* for the treatment of *Raktatisara*, *pravahika*, etc.

PICCHA BASTI^[14,15]

PicchaBasti is named so because of its *Picchil* property which means it is sticky or lubricant. Because of this property it has ulcer healing effect. Moreover, it is *Agnideepak* and *Sangrahi* due to its contents.

- ***PicchabastiyamsiddhahghritkshodhrasharkrahA PravahikagudabhranshraktstravjwarapahAA*** (Cha. Chi. 14/228)

(This successful *picchabasti* alleviates dysentery, rectal prolapse, hemorrhage and fever.)

- ***PittatisarajwarshothgulmajirnaatisaragrahanidoshanA***

JyatayamshighramatipravaddhanvirechanasthapnyoshchbastihAA
(Cha.Chi.19/68)

(*Picchabasti* (enema) acting as evacuative as well as sustaining, overcomes quickly too advanced disorders of *Pitta* diarrhoea, fever, edema, *gulma*, chronic diarrhoea and *grahani* disorder.)

- ***AlpampabahushoraktamsarugyaupveshyeA YdavayurvibadhdhaschpicchabastistadahitahAA*** (su. utt. 40/111)

(*Picchabasti* should be applied (into the rectum) in a case of *Atisara* marked by painful and frequent emission of blood, though in scanty quantities at a time, and by an entire suppression of *vayu* (flatus).)

Possible actions of *Picchabasti* are –

- Shothahara* & *Vrana-Ropaka* (Anti-inflammatory & Ulcer-healing)
- Raktastambhaka* (Haemostatic agent)
- Sangrahi* / *Stambhan* (Anti-diarrhoeal)
- Pitta Shamaka*
- Agnideepaka*

These actions are due to contents present in it.

In *Charka samhita*, the treatment of *Raktatisara* is *Madhura* and *SheetaChikitsa* (sweet and cold potency drugs). e.g. *Chandana* (*Santalum album*), *Dhataki* (*Woodfordiafruticosa*), *Neelakamala* (*Nymphaeastellata*), Goat milk with Honey and Sugar etc. are used in different way for oral use and for local application. The concept behind that is *Stambhana* of excessive excretion of essential bio humors. Here some of the *Ayurvedic* preparation selected on the basis of involvement of *Doshas*, *Dushya* of the disease.

Shatavarighrit^[16] – It is useful in patient of *Pittatisara*, *rakta-atisara*, *Grahani*.

Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*) is *SheetaVeerya* and *Vaata Pitta Shamaka*. It is *Balya*, *Medhya* and *Rasayana*. *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*) has been suggested to heal the ulcers by potentiating defensive factors. The juice of fresh root of *Asparagus racemosus* has been shown to have definite curative effect in patients of duodenal ulcers.

Vijaya Parpati¹⁷– It is useful in patients of *Raktatisara* (ulcerative colitis) by, enhancing the normal functioning of *Pakwashaya* due to its *Rasayana* property. As described by *Bhaishajya Ratnavali* in the chapter of *Sangrahani Rogadhikar*, *Parpati* acts on digestive system as *Doshaghna*, *Jantughna* and *Balya*. It settles the irritation and inflammation of colon mucosa by reducing laxity. It helps to improve *Grahana Karya* of intestines thus, reducing complaints of *Atisara* (frequency), cure *mandagni* and *pandu* also.

Pravalapishiti¹⁸ have *rakta pitta shamaka* and *balya*.

Karpura rasa¹⁹ has a strong *stambhaka* property.

Nagkesharachoorna²⁰ has a *rakstambhaka* property and used for controlling bloody diarrhoea.

Dadimastakachoorna²¹ having *Deepana Pachana*, *Rochaka* property.

Kutajghanvati²² It is recommended for loose motion and dysentery. It creates a synergistic effect if given in case of stomach infection.

Dhanyapanchakawatha²³ is used for pain in abdomen, *Amapachana* and for controlling diarrhoea.

Yoga therapy for relief of ulcerative colitis

Bhujangasana, *Mayurasana*, *Paschimottanasana*, *Matsyendrasana*, *Sarvangasana*, *Shalabhasana*, *Uttanpadasana*, *Pawanmuktasana*, *Shavasana*, *Padmasana*, *pranayama*.

Pathya (to be taken)

The following specific foods are generally recommended in *Ayurveda* for patients of ulcerative colitis. However, not all patients will tolerate all of these food items. Physician can provide a more individualized nutritional plan. Curd, Old basmati rice (>6months), barley, mung dal, urad dal, saffron, coriander, cumin, fennel, kidney beans, green lentils, cow's milk and butter, goat's milk and butter, al-

monds, water chestnut, pomegranate, banana, mango, limes, and kiwi fruit.

Apathya (to be avoided)

- All leftovers, spicy foods, white sugar, wheat, pasta, red grapes, vinegar, mustard, salty and acidic foods should be avoided.
- Capsicum, Sarson ka saag, methi, raddish, cashew Nuts, walnuts, groundnuts, sesame seeds (white til), jaggery, green chillies, tomato ketchup, pickles, mustard oil and sesame oil.
- Also avoid raw salads, Arbi, cauliflower, grapes, mango, guava, alcohol, tea, coffee, milkshake, Soft drinks, cold drinks, fish, eggs and meat).
- Avoid smoking and alcohol.
- Avoid consumption of coffee, tea, milk, ice cream, cheese and dairy products except curd or Yogurt (plain).

DISCUSSION

According to *Ayurveda* vitiated *Pitta* and *Rakta* are responsible for inflammation and ulceration. Based on the probable mode of action of *Picchabasti* described above the role of *Picchabasti*. The symptoms of ulcerative colitis can be co-related with *Raktatisara* (bloody diarrhoea), *Raktajpravahika* as the frequent stool and blood in stool are the main culprits deteriorating the patient's general health. According to *Ayurvedic* Classics People with *Pitta Atisara* have tendency to develop *Raktatisara* when they do not follow *pathyaaahara* and *vihara*. Again consumption of hot, spicy and fried food along with stress, anxiety etc leads to *Raktatisara*. Therefore here the first line of treatment is *Nidanaparivarjana* followed by use of *Sansamana Chikitsa* [like *rakstambhaka* (blood coagulatory) and *purishasangrahi* (anti-diarrheal) medicines]. To measure to digest the *ama* (Biotoxin) to bring *Agni* (Digestive fire) in its normal state and control the diarrhoea and get the restoring health digestion and creating a bacteria friendly environment in the body and relief in all other complaints.

CONCLUSION

Treatment is focused in healing the ulcers and restoring the normal function of colon and maintaining the overall health of the digestive system. *Shamana Chikitsa* (internal medicines) includes *Agni Deepana*, *Amapachana*, *Grahi*, *Stambhana* and *VranaRopaka*. *Shodhana Chikitsa* (*Panchakarma therapy*). In more severe case *Panchakarma* therapy plays a vital role as it quickly detoxifies and rejuvenates the digestive system, controls the inflammation, rectal bleeding and heals the ulcerations. Usually results are very good with *Ayurvedic* line of treatment.

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