



Review Article

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VAITARANA VASTI: A SPECIFIC TREATMENT MODALITY FOR AMAVATA (RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS)

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ABSTRACT

Amavata is one of the commonest disorders mentioned in newer texts of Ayurveda. On the basis of clinical appearance it can be taken parallel to Rheumatoid Arthritis. Presently, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are the mainstay of treatment in this condition. However they have serious adverse effects and have limitations for a long term therapy. The immunosuppressive drugs are reserved for selected cases, while the disease modifying drugs like gold-salts are costly and have low benefit to risk ratio. Hence, there is a need for therapy having good efficacy. VaitaranaVasti is the potent and time tested method of management of Amavata in both acute and chronic stages. It helps to regain the balance and homeostasis of Doshas (humors). Through extensive review of basic texts in Ayurveda, authors have tried to explain the pathophysiology of Amavata in short mode of action of VaitaranaVasti, its contents and method of administration. This study shows that Vaitarana Vasti is the best alternative to conventional therapy practiced for Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Keywords: Amavata, Panchkarma, Vaitarnavasti, Rheumatoid Arthritis.

INTRODUCTION

Human life is considered as the valuable opportunity to achieve the prime goals of life viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha¹. To achieve all these things, one needs a healthy and calm life. Whole ancient society tried to achieve all four prime goals of life, so that they had a smooth, sound, safe, assured, steady and healthy life style. On the other hand today everyone is trying to gain good financial status and to fulfill all the physical desires; therefore today's metaphysical society is facing unsteady, weakened, hard and everyday changing life style. The gift of these life style, is emerging in the form of newer diseases, one of them is Amavata (Rheumatoid Arthritis). In Ayurved Aamavata has been named keeping in view two predominant pathological factors viz. Ama and Vata. Vitiated Vata Dosha along with Ama is termed as Amavata. It indicates the propulsion of Ama by vitiated Vata in the entire body getting lodged in Sandhithana (joint areas) producing Amavata. According to Ayurveda, Ama is the product of improper metabolism and its origin, Mandagni (decreased digestive power) has been considered an important factor for the pathogenesis of the most of the diseases² and Vata is the chief functional operator of the all types of bodily movements³. All type of movements whether voluntary or involuntary are possible only under the influence of Vata Dosha³. In Ayurvedic text the Pratyatma Lakshanas⁴ (Cardinal signs and symptoms) of Amavataare described as Sandhi Shoola (Joint pain), Sandhi Shotha (Joint swelling), Stabdhatata (Stiffness) Sparshasahyata (Tenderness), Sashabda Sandhi (Bony crepitations). From the modern point of view, the disease 'Rheumatoid arthritis' can be

considered similar to Amavata in its signs and symptoms. This disease mainly involves the locomotor system, but it is also a systemic disease affecting the cardiovascular, nervous, respiratory, reticuloendothelial and excretory systems of the body. Remissions, exacerbations are the hallmarks of the rheumatoid arthritis but sometimes disease progresses relentlessly to joint destruction and crippling. Its etiology is still unknown and treatment according to modern science is also too expensive, prolonged, creates many side effects and affects the quality of individuals to larger extent. In Ayurveda, there is emphasis on a therapeutic programme for managing the patients of Amavata instead of a single drug therapy. This therapeutic programme is more or less etiologically oriented and aimed at Samprapti Vighatana (breaking the pathogenesis). This line of treatment depends a good deal on the stage of the disease process. In the line of management of Amavata, Vasti Chikitsa (medicated enema), especially Vaitarana Vasti (special type of Vasti described for treatment of Amavata) is considered as the chief treatment regimen for Amavata. When used along with Valuka Sweda (sudation using bolus of sand), it gives even better results⁶. But in this article, we will consider only Vaitarana Vasti as it is the major procedure. Vasti Chikitsa is the cornerstone in the management of Amavata. It is a proven and a fundamental solution to it. Vasti Chikitsa is considered to be a prime treatment modality among the Panchakarma (five fold treatment) in Ayurveda⁵. It is applicable to all cases of Amavata covering a wide range of preventive, curative and promotive conditions. It is an important measure to eliminate ama and to pacify vatadosha. Vasti is supposed to be the principal (specific) treatment for Vatik (due to

Vata) diseases⁷. Vasti procedure is expelling body toxins and vitiated doshas (humors) by introducing medicated liquids or oils through anal, urethral or vaginal route. Introducing medicated liquids and oils through urethra or through vagina in women, is called uttaravasti. Vasti literally means urinary bladder. In ancient times the enema apparatus used to be made up of urinary bladder of animals. Hence this detoxification process is called Vasti. Vasti procedure is mainly used in vata dominant diseases and is best for them⁸. There are mainly two types of Vasti based on the medicines - Anuvasanavasti and Asthapana (Niruha) vasti. Anuvasanavasti (Medicated oil enema)-

In anuvasana vasti medicated oil is introduced through anus, immediately after the consumption of food. There will be no harm even if medicated oil remains inside colon for a long time. This type of vasti nourishes and strengthens the body. Asthanavasti (Medicated decoction enema) - In this type of vasti (also known as Niruhavasti) an enema of herbal decoction is given. Asthanavasti is administered on empty stomach. The administered decoction has to come out from body maximum up to 1 muhurta (45 minutes). The expelled herbal decoction brings out toxins and vitiated dosha along with it. Anuvasana vasti and Asthapana vasti are mainly given alternatively. Patient is advised to take bath after herbal decoction is expelled. Strict diet and lifestyle rehabilitation is not required after vasti procedure, as vasti do not cause irritation in digestive system. But it is necessary to take light and nourishing diet. Vasti purifies all the systems and makes a clear passage up to the micro channel level. It acts on various disorders because of the selection of the drugs according to the disease. Acharya Charaka quotes that Vasti introduced in the colon acts upon the whole body and on every system. Thus, drawing out the impurities by its potency like sun evaporates the liquid from the earth by its heat⁹. It can be used in almost all the disease by using specific drugs indicated in that disease condition¹⁰.

Vaitaranavasti

Chakradatta an Ayurvedic scholar while describing the line of management of Amavata has indicated the use of Vaitarana Vasti¹¹ as a specific treatment modality for the disease Amavata. VaitaranaVasti is Pakvashayagata Niruha Vasti i.e. the drugs are administered through anal canal into the colon (Pakvashaya) and is considered as special indication for Amavata. The term Vaitarana has been made from the word "Vitaranam", which literary means to donate, go across, to leave which help to expel out the Dosha (humors). Thus, we can say that Vaitarana Vasti help to expel out the morbid Dosha (humors) from the body and thereby giving relief in the disease Amavata. VaitaranaVasti is composed of¹¹:

S. No.	Name	Quantity
1	Saindhava Lavana (Rock Salt)	1 Karsha (12 g)
2	Guda (Jaggary)	1 Shukti (24 g)
3	Chincha (Tamarindus)	1 Pala (48 g)
4	Gomutra (Cow's Urine)	1 Kudava (192 ml)
5	TilaTaila (Sesame oil)	Q.S.

Method of Preparation of Vaitarana Vasti

VaitaranaVasti is prepared as per the classical method used for the preparation of Niruha Vasti¹². Metric measurements are as per Ayurvedic formulary of India.

Step 1	Initially 24 g (1 Shukti) of Jaggary (Guda) was mixed uniformly with equal quantity of Gomutra.
Step 2	12 g (1 Karsha) of Saindhava was added to the above.
Step 3	Tila Taila was added till the mixture becomes homogenous.
Step 4	48 g (1 Pala) of Chincha Kalka was taken and added to above said mixture carefully.
Step 5	Lastly Remaining quantity [out of 192 ml (1 Kudava)] of Gomutra was added slowly and mixing continued so as to have uniform Vasti Dravya.
Step 6	Vasti Dravya was filtered and made lukewarm by keeping it into hot water.

Time of Administration

It is a Niruha Basti that can be given after the meals¹¹.

Method of administration of Vasti

- After Mala Mutra Veganivarana, Sthanika Snehana and Swedana (local oleation and sudation) of lower abdomen, waist and thighs of patient was done as pre procedure preparation (after Laghu Ahara as is especially applicable in case of Vaitarana Vasti instead of being a Niruha Vasti).
- Patient was advised to lie on an even Vasti table in left lateral position with straight body and left hand kept as pillow. His right leg was folded at knee joint and made to rest flat over the left leg.
- Patient's Anus and Vasti Netra (catheter) was smeared with unctous substance like Taila.
- Vasti Netra was introduced in anus by its 1/4th part slowly, straightly parallel to the backbone. Vastidravya was forced slowly in one push and Vastinetra was taken out slowly¹³.

DISCUSSION

Vasti therapy has a systemic purifying action over the body. Vasti generates a systemic action and it is mentioned in Ayurvedic texts that the Virya (potency) of drugs administered through the Vasti procedure into the Pakvashaya reaches the whole body through the channels (Srotasa), as the active principles in the water when poured at the root of the tree reaches the whole plant¹⁴. Vasti administered into Pakvashaya draws the morbid matters from all over the body from foot to the head by the virtue of its Virya, just as the cloth while coloring absorbs only the color and not the water.¹⁵ Vata is considered to be the main controller of the body. Now if Vata alone or in combination with other dosha get vitiated, then Vasti by the way of evacuation or elimination normalizes the path of Vata along with Pitta, Kapha and fecal matter. Vaitarana Vasti works by the virtue of action of ingredients present in it and by action of Vasti Karma. The ingredients present are Chincha, Saindhava, Guda, Gomutra and Tila Taila. The action of each ingredient can be described as follows¹⁶. Saindhava:

Due to its Sukshma and Tikshna properties, Saindhava helps to pass the drug molecule in systemic circulation through mucosa. Thus, it helps the Vasti Dravya to reach up to the molecular level. It is also helpful for the elimination of waste due to its irritant property. It is capable of liquefying the viscid matter and breaking it into minute particles (Vishyandana). Jaggary: In this Vasti instead of honey (Madhu), jaggary is used. It along with Saindhava makes homogenous mixture (an emulsion), that makes water easily permeable. The retention of the irritant substances may be favored by making its solution as nearly isotonic as possible by using colloidal fluids. Here, Purana Guda should be taken as it is Laghu, Pathya, Anabhishtyandi, Agnivaradhaka, Vatapittaghna. It also helps in carrying the drug up to micro-cellular level. Tila Taila: Tila Taila mixed with the solution of jaggary and Saindhava helps in forming emulsion. It also counteracts some of the irritating properties of Saindhava and Guda. Tila Taila itself is best in Snehana and pacification of Vata. Chinch: Chinch is having Vata-Kaphashamaka, Ruksha and Ushna properties. These properties of the Chinch make it useful for the disease Amavata. Ruksha Guna helps in counteracting the Ama which is chief pathogenic factor of the disease. Gomutra: In Vaitarna Vasti, the Gomutra is chief content, which owing to its Katu Rasa, Katu Vipaka, Ushna Virya, Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna Guna pacifies the Kapha. The Ruksha Guna of Gomutra is very much helpful in the diseased condition like Amavata. It is useful for Vaitarana Vasti owing to its Tridosahara, Agnideepana, Pachana, Srotovishodhana and Vatanulomaka properties.

Probable mode of action of Vaitarana Vasti

As a whole, the qualities of Vaitarana Vasti can be considered as Laghu, Ruksha, Ushna, Tikshna. Majority of the drugs are having Vata-Kapha Shamaka action. Owing to this property, antagonism to Kapha and Ama the Vasti help in significant improvement in sign and symptom of disease. The Tikshna Guna of Vasti helps in overcoming the Srotodushti resulting due to 'Sanga'. Thus Vasti Dravya after reaching to large and small intestine get absorbed from intestine, due to Laghu, Ushna, Tikshna and Ruksha Guna of Vaitarana Vasti Dravya, it breaks the obstructions and expels out the morbid material from all over the body thus help in breaking down the pathogenesis of disease. Niruha Vasti helps in elevating the Avarana of Vata by Kapha. Reduction in this Avarana was seen as there was improvement of Kaphavrita Vyana symptoms. Vasti helps in Vatanulomana thus helping correcting the Apanavata. Basti therapy may be stimulator for Gastro-intestinal tract and also for whole body functions. Regulatory peptides like serotonin, enteroglucagon and vaso-active intestinal polypeptide (VIP) are produced in the colon. Many of the peptides have a role in the functioning of the basal ganglia and some of the substances among them, such as (Cholecystokinin) and VIP, are stimulators of the dopaminergic neuronal system. It is possible that Basti by stimulating many factors in GIT physiology effect on regulatory functions of these peptides either by moderation or by stimulation. Thus, Basti Karma exerts a

largely systemic action exerting local action in Gastro-intestinal tract by operating through large intestine involving enteric nervous system. Vasti Karma can activate the autonomic nervous system and thereby help in the evacuation of Vasti Dravya. The effects of Vasti can be encolonial (acting on the tissue of the colon), endocolonic (acting inside the colon) and diacolonial (systemic action). Modern pharmacokinetic studies have also proved that drug administration via the rectum can achieve higher blood levels of the drug than administration through the oral route due to partial avoidance of hepatic first-pass metabolism. The rectum has a rich blood and lymph supply and drugs can cross the rectal mucosa as they can cross other lipid membranes. Thus, un-ionized and lipid-soluble substances are readily absorbed from the rectum. The portion absorbed from the upper rectal mucosa is carried by the superior hemorrhoidal vein into the portal circulation, whereas that absorbed from the lower rectum enters directly into the systemic circulation via the middle and inferior hemorrhoidal veins. Thus, administration of drugs in the Vasti form has faster absorption and provides quicker results¹⁶.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be said that Vaitarana Vasti works as a curative as well as purifying measure. The procedure helps in breaking the pathogenesis of the disease Amavata, or Rheumatoid Arthritis. When used properly with scientific methods, Vaitarana Vasti can help in decreasing significant load on healthcare system due to Rheumatoid Arthritis and provide the patients a better and healthier life with lesser complications.

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