



Review Article

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON THE AYURVEDIC ASPECT OF KATIGRAHA (LOW BACK PAIN): A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In the present era, lower back ache is most common problem of all age groups. It can be compared with the disease *katigraha* as mentioned in *Ayurveda*. In the modern world people are fed up with this condition. It is a condition in which *katipradesha* (low back) is affected by symptoms of *shoola* (pain) and *stabhdhata* (stiffness). *Katigraha* is explained by the *Shodhala* in the *Kayachikitsa Khanda, Vataroga Adhikara*. In this condition either *shuddha* (pure) *vata* or *samavata* gets lodged at *katipradesha* or produces symptoms there. In contemporary science low back pain is a chronic condition characterized by a persistent dull or sharp excruciating pain of the lower back. It is a disorder with many possible causes, taking place in many groups of the people. In our ancient texts *katishoola* and *katistabhdhata* have been described in various clinical conditions. This article mainly emphasis on describing the *katigraha* condition more widely and to differentiate other clinical conditions with *katigraha*. This will help us to do treatment more efficiently.

Keywords: *Katigraha*, *Katishoola*, Low back pain, *Samavata* and *Shodhala*

INTRODUCTION

Low back pain affects approximately 60 to 85% of adults during some point of their life¹. As of 2005, lower back pain ranks as number one cause of disability in individuals under the age of 45². *Katigraha* is one such condition in which the vitiated *vata* is localizing in the *Kati Pradesha* and produces stiffness and pain there. The term *Katigraha* is constituted of two words 'kati' and 'graha'. The word 'kati' is derived from the dhatu "kat + in" and it is considered as a 'shariraavayavavishesha', a bodily part where the dress is tightened³. According to *Amarakosha Shroniphalaka* are called as *Kati*⁴. *Vaidyaka Shabda Sindhu* also considers *Shroni* as *Kati*⁵. According to Monier Williams – *Kati* is the hollow space above the hip or the loins.⁶ The term 'graha' is derived from the dhatus 'Adant-Churam-Atmam-Saka-Set'. The term is explained as 'Graho Grahanam', by *Durgadas*, which means to collect or catch.⁷ "Graha" means holding. It is originated from dhatu "Graha Upadane" –one which gives support. Thus "Katigraha" is a condition of the lower back region which is associated with pain and with stiff movements.

Etiological Factors

A low back pain can happen suddenly or gradually over time from repetitive movements. In modern lifestyle due to long sitting hours, unhealthy diet, lack of exercise and stress are the main

cause of low back pain. In *Ayurveda samanyavatyadhi nidana* for *Katigraha* are intake of dry, cold, deficient and light food, excessive sex and sleeplessness, improper treatments, by excessive fasting, swimming, walking, exercising and physical activity, worrying, grief, debilitating diseases, usage of uncomfortable beds or seats, anger, day sleep, suppression of natural urges, indigestion, trauma, abstaining from food, injury to vital areas, falling from swift moving elephant, camel or horse etc. Due to all this condition *vata* is aggravated. This gets filled in the vacuous channels in the body and leads to various generalized or localized disorders⁸.

Symptoms of *Katigraha*

The dominant symptoms of *Katigraha* are *Shoola* (pain) which may be dull, burning or sharp. *Stambha* (stiffness) also occurs due to muscle spasm produced by *sama* and *nirama* *vayu* movement in *Kati* (Lumbar region).

Samprapti

Vata and *Kapha* are the two main factors involved in the pathogenesis of *Katigraha*. Here the pain and stiffness are two symptoms present in the disease which can be attributed the *Vata* and *Kapha Dosh*. (Table 1)

Table 1: Samprapti Ghatakas of Katigraha

1.	Dosha	Vata	Apana, Vyana (Vridhi)
		Kapha	Sleshaka, avalambaka (Kshaya)
2.	Dushya	Dhaatu	Rasa, Asthi
		Upadhaatu	Kandara, Snayu
3.	Udbhavasthaana	Pakwashaya	
4.	Vyaktasthaana	Kati	
5.	Marga	Madhyamarogamarga	
6.	Srotas	Rasavaha, Asthivaha, Purishavaha	
7.	Srotodushti	Sanga	
8.	Agni	Mandya	

Gadanigrahakara considers Katigraha to be one among the Vatavyadhis. It clearly projects Vata Dosha as the major factor behind the whole pathogenesis involved in Katigraha. He explains that the vitiated shudha or samavayu takes its ashraya in the Kati Pradesha causing pain and stiffness⁹.

Kati Pradesha is an area where various sandhis, snayu and peshis unite. These structures help in stability of the joint. Shleshka Kapha found in joints provides lubrication; nutrients and keep joint firmly unite. Vata Dosha is responsible for producing all types of pain in our body. Acharaya Charak gave the concept of gata vata by which aggravated Vata gets lodged in other structures like dhatu, updhatu, ashraya and avayava. After getting lodged at those parts it impairs the functions of particular structure and produces disease.

According to Acharaya charaka there are two types of samprapti by which Vata can be vitiated one is dhatukshaya and other is margavarodhjanya¹⁰ in dhatukshaya and margavarodhjanya Katigraha there will be qualitative change in the joint which gradually leads to disease manifestation.

Dhatukshaya as a reason for katigraha

Continuous ingestions of food materials which are Ruksha (dry), sheeta (cold), laghu (light), in nature, ratrijagarana (waking at night), vegavidharana (holding urges) all such causes lead to dhatu kshaya and Vata prakopa¹¹ in body. Rukshaguna of vata decrease the snehansh of kapha dhatu which further leads to Reduction of Kapha in Sandhis makes Sandhi Bandhana Shithilata. Sthanasamshraya of Prakupita Vata take place in the Khavaigunyayukta Sandhi in Katipradesha. These all leads to stiffness and pain in the katipradesha ultimately resulting in the disease Katigraha.

Margavarodha as a reason for Katigraha

One should take food in proper quantity, because it depends on Agnibala. A person should eat food only when the previous meal is digested if one eats during indigestion then eaten food mix with the product of earlier meal and vitiates all the food. Excessive consumption of Guru, Shita, Vishtambhi, Shushka, Vidahi, Ruksha, Pichhilha Guna Ahara and sedentary lifestyle causes formation of Ama in body this leads to Dosha Prakopa, Disturbance in Agni and no metabolism of Rasa Dhatu. Both Jatharagni and Dhatwagni are deranged giving which cause Srotavarodha in the Adhishtana. Due to such srotavarodha Vata gets vitiated and produces symptoms like, ruk (pain) and stambha (stiffness) in khavaigunyayukta Sandhi i.e. Kati Pradesha.

Table 2: Differential diagnosis of katigraha

Name of disease	Pain at lumbar region	Stiffness at lumbar region	Involvement of other joint	Primary symptom	Associated symptom
Katigraha ¹²	+	+	No	Kati Shoola, katistambha	None
Ghridhasi ¹³	+	+/-	No	Sphikpurvakatiprishthaurujanu janghapadamkrmaat	Arochaka, tandra
Sandhigata ¹⁴ Vata	+	+/-	Yes (multiple joints may involve)	Vatapoornadritisparshashotha and Shoola	Aatop, Akunjan-prasaramvedana
AmaVata ¹⁵	+	+	Yes (multiple joints may involve)	Vrishchikadansha Vatavedana	Alasya, gaurav, jwara, apaka
Vatajjwara. ¹⁶	+	+	Multiple joints may involve	Jwara	Mukhashosha, hridgraha, shushkakasa
Vrikkjavidhradhi ¹⁷	+	+	No	Stravautpatti	Vedana, trishana, moha
Kshatakeena ¹⁸	+	+	Prishtha	Shonitachardi	Kasa, uroruka
Pandu ¹⁹	+	-	May be	Paandu varna gaatra	Durbala, gatraShoola, hridspandanam
Sangrahani ²⁰	+	-	No	Pakwa- ama mala pruvarti	Balakashaya, shoonapadakara. Parvaruka, jwara
Vatajpakwatisara ²¹	+	-	No	Atisara,	Kukshitoda, aadhmana
Upasthitaprasava ²²	+	-	No	Garbhinistree	Mutra purishapravarti, yonimukhashleshma
Medakshaya ²³	+	-	No	Dhatu kshaya	Pleehavridhi, sandhishunyata

<i>Bhagandara poorvaroop</i> ²⁴	+	-	No	<i>Nadivrana</i>	
<i>Heenamatraahara</i> ²⁵	+	+/-	No	<i>Nirantaraheenaaharasevan</i>	<i>Bala, vranakshaya, udavarta, avrishya</i>
<i>PakwashyagataVata</i> ²⁶	+	-	No	<i>Antra koojana</i>	<i>Shoola, atopa, anaha</i>
<i>GudagataVata</i> ²⁷	+	-	<i>Jangha, uru, prushtha</i>	<i>Vata, mutra graha</i>	<i>Shoola, adhaman, sharkarauttpatti</i>
<i>Vatarakta</i> ²⁸	+	-	<i>Janu, jangha, hasta, pada</i>	<i>Bhedana Vatapeeda</i>	<i>Sandhi shaithilaya, aalsya, sadana, pedikodgama</i>
<i>Khanja and pangu</i> ²⁹	+/-	-	No	<i>Kriya heenta</i>	-----

Prognosis of *katigraha*

The prognosis (*Sadhyata-asadhyata*) of a disease depends on many factors such as the *Bala* of *Nidana* or *Hetu*, the strength of *Dosha Prakopa*, the *Sthana* of the disease, severity of signs and symptoms, duration of the disease etc. It also depends upon the age, sex, *Rogmarga*, *Dhatudushti* etc. These common rules are applicable in the case of *Katigraha*. In addition, *Katigraha* is a *Vatavyadhi* and the *Svabhava* or natural trend of *Vayu* is also an important factor. *Acharya Sushruta* has explained *Vatavyadhi* as *Mahavyadhi* which is cured with difficulty. He also says that if the patient of *Vatavyadhi* develops the complication like *Sunam*, *Suptatvacham*, *Bhagna*, *Kampa*, *Adhamana* and pain in internal organs, then he doesn't survive³⁰.

DISCUSSION

Vata and *Kapha* are the two main factors involved in the pathogenesis of *Katigraha*. Here the pain and stiffness at low back are the two symptoms present in this disease. Due to *Vata* aggravating factors in an individual *vata* gets vitiated and aggravated at its main lodging place i.e. *Pakvashaya* due to *Apana*

Vaigunya which is created by relative vitiation of *Samana* and *Prana Vayu* due to *Nidana Sevana*. This *dosha* vitiation may be of two forms one is *dhatukshayajanya* and other *margavrodhajanya*. This vitiated *Vayu* spreads to its other lodging places like *Kati*, *Sakthi* etc.

There are various *Sandhi*, *Snaayu* and *Peshi* which are collected in *katipradesha*. All these structures help to provide stability to the joint. *Snaayu* also considered as ligament helps to bind the joint together which causes desirable movement of joints and therefore prevent the excessive and undesirable motion in a specific direction. Alignment of the joint is done by the help of muscles. When *vata* is imbalanced it causes pathologies of these structures in the *Kati Pradesha* leading to their hampered functioning. *Ruksha* and *kharaguna* of vitiated *vata* reduces *dravansha* of *Rasa, Rakta*. *Shleshkakapha* presents in *sandhi* also decreases due to *rukshaguna* of *vata*. It leads to loss of *Sthiratva* and *sandhi bandhana* in *sandhis*. This all cause appearance of *vata* vitiated symptoms like *katishoola*. If *ama* involvement also there it causes *stabhdhata* at *Kati Pradesha*. As there are two types of *samprapti* told by *charaksamhita* for *vatavyadhi* following *Chikitsa* may be adopted.

<i>Nidaana</i>	<i>Samprapti</i>	<i>Probable Chikitsa</i>
<i>Asatmayaindriyarthasamyog</i>	<i>Dhatukshayajanya</i>	<i>Snehana, swedana, snehbasti, yapanabasti</i>
	<i>Margavrodhajanya</i>	<i>Amapachana, rukshan</i> followed by <i>snehana, vaitranbasti</i>

CONCLUSION

Due to the increased prevalence of low backache in the present era, it is very important to have a critical knowledge regarding this topic. *Kati shoola* and *stabhdhata* both the symptoms are present in *katigraha* but they may be present in other diseases also. One should know the differential diagnosis and treat the patient accordingly.

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