



Review Article

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APPROACH FOR PATIENT PRESENTING 'SHOTHA' IN CLINICAL PRACTICE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HASTA-PADA SHOTHA: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the age-old science of healing which encompasses the scriptures of Acharyas like Charaka, Sushruta, and Vagbhata etc. What differentiates Ayurveda from other Pathy is its supreme objective that is to help maintain the health of healthy individual and cure of diseases of a patient. Shotha (edema) is dealt in Ayurveda by different names such as Shotha, Shopha, Shvayathu, Utsheda, samhata etc. In Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa sthana chapter-12 Shvayathu chikitsa, Acharya Agnivesh questioned the great sage- Lord Atreya about the etiology, sign and symptoms and treatment of Shvayathu roga regarding which the Lord Atreya explained in detail about the disease. Although, Shotha has been documented in Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga sangraha but the profound essence of pathogenesis is found in Madhava nidana (700 AD) which is influenced by the Brihat trayees. In clinical practice, many patients come with the symptom of hasta-pada Shotha (swelling of the limbs) and without the proper knowledge of Ayurvedic literature, it is very much difficult for an Ayurvedic practitioner to differentiate them as whether it is a symptom of disease or prodromal symptom or complication of a disease etc. This paper is an honest effort on differentiating hasta-pada Shotha in different diseases or conditions.

Keywords: Hasta-pada Shotha, Swelling, Edema, Diagnosis.

INTRODUCTION

Indian system of medicine, Ayurveda includes all aspects of living health and sickness. Shotha (edema) is characterized by elevation, heat sensation, heaviness, discoloration, etc. Shotha occur as a symptom in many diseases. Sometimes it comes alone as a prominent symptom; then at that time Shotha should be considered as an independent disease. Sometimes it comes as a complication of different diseases etc.

Description of Shotha has been mentioned in scriptures of all Acharyas. In Charaka Samhita, chapter 12, Shvayathu chikitsa adhyaya, Acharya Charaka has explained samprapti (pathogenesis) of Shotha that is

“When vitiated vata dosha enters into blood channels it vitiates Prakrut kapha, rakta and pitta which results in aggravation of kapha, rakta and pitta which further lead to the obstruction of natural movement of vata. This results in random movement of vata which further causes elevated structure (Utsheda) that is named as shotha¹.”

Further Acharya Charaka has also explained the specific samprapti (pathogenesis) of specific Shotha. All possible efforts have been made to identify hasta-pada Shotha (swelling of the limbs) in different Samhitas in different diseases and conditions and differentiate them.

Literary review

Hasta-pada Shotha (swelling of the limbs) has been mentioned by Ayurvedic seers as a symptom in various diseases such as udara roga (obstinate abdominal diseases including Ascites), grahani

roga (malabsorption syndrome), Mrit Bhakshan Janit Pandu roga (anemia due to pica), Pravridha Amavata (complicated rheumatism) etc. After detailed study we have tried to simplify approach for patients presenting hasta-pada Shotha in clinical practice. Here we are mentioning how we can differentiate patient of different disorder presenting hasta-pada Shotha in hospital.

Udara Roga (Obstinate abdominal diseases including Ascites)

To make provisional diagnosis of udara roga of a patient presenting hasta-pada Shotha (swelling of the limbs) in a hospital, a clinician should ask about tympanitis, gurgling sound in abdomen, poor digestion, smooth cheeks and emaciation because these are clinical features of udara roga.²

Grahani Roga (Malabsorption syndrome)

If a patient is presenting edema in hands and feet, so in that case, to reach up to final diagnosis of grahani roga, a doctor should examine for constipation, stool frequency, thirst, anorexia, abnormal taste in mouth, excessive salivation, feeling of darkness, eructation with metallic or fleshy odour and bitter sour taste, pain in bone joints, vomiting and fever because these are clinical features of grahani roga.³

Mrit Bhakshan Janit Pandu (Anemia due to pica)

Patient with edema on feet and edema of the eye orbit, cheeks, eyebrows, umbilicus and genital organs with other symptoms such as parasites develop inside their alimentary tract, eliminate watery faeces mixed with blood and mucus and with also other symptoms of pandu roga must be provisionally diagnosed as Mrit Bhakshan Janit Pandu.⁴

Pravridha Amavata (Complicated rheumatism)

When Amavata roga get increased in excess, then it leads to the painful edema in hands and feet with painful edema on head, ankle, sacral joint, knee joint, severe pain like scorpion bite; other symptoms such as decrease in digestion, excessive salivation, anorexia, heaviness in body, burning sensation, increased frequency of micturition, excessive thirst, congestion in chest/heart. Patient complaining such symptoms should be provisionally diagnosed as Pravridha Amavata.⁵

Rajyakshma Poorvaroopa (Prodromal symptoms of phthisis)

Swelling in feet with swelling in face, coryza and exhaustion during mealtime; other symptoms are like finding fault in utensils, water, cereals, pulses and caterers, nausea after meals, frequent looking at the hands, curiosity about measurement of arms, longing for women, frequent dreams of waterless water places, deserted village, city, district and region, forests dried, burnt and destroyed etc., if found in patient, that patient should be diagnosed as Rajyakshma purvarupa.⁶

Sahaja Arsha (Congenital piles)

Edema in hands and feet and edema on face and orbital brim, present from the very birth, too lean, with abnormal complexion, exhausted with other symptoms such as having anxious expression, flatus, urine and stool copious as well as constipated, having intense cutting pain in umbilical, pelvic and inguinal regions, afflicted with ano-rectal pain must be provisionally diagnosed as Sahaja arsha.⁷

Shlipada (Filariasis)

A swelling starting at the groins and gradually involving the leg, associated with fever and severe pain is known as Shlipada. It may occur even in the hands, ears, eyes, penis, lips and nose, so say others.⁸

Snayuka roga (Guinea worm infestation)

In the beginning of this disease, doshas are aggravated, spread to the limbs and cause edema as in case of Visarpa. Then, an ulcer is formed. The local temperature is raised, and the muscle tissue is dried. A thread like elongated structure comes out of the ulcer.⁹

Dushi visa (Poisons with less potency)

If a patient is presenting with profound swelling of the hands and feet with loosening of joints, toxicity after meals, so in that case, to reach up to final diagnosis of Dushi visa, a clinician should must ask for excessive sleep, feeling of heaviness of the body, yawning, horripilation, mild pain in the body, indigestion, loss of appetite, appearance of rashes and papules on the skin, emaciation, fainting, vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty in breathing, thirst, fever and enlargement of the abdomen.¹⁰

Gara visa (Homicidal poison)

To make provisional diagnosis of gara visa of a patient presenting edema of the hands, a clinician must examine for paleness, emaciation, poor digestion, pain or other difficulties in vital organs, abdominal distension, whether he/she has become affected with udara roga, grahani roga, Yakshma roga, gulma (abdominal phantom tumor), kshaya (emaciation), jwara (fever) and other diseases with allied symptoms.¹¹

Raktaja gulma (Abdominal phantom tumor due to vitiation of blood)

Female with edema in feet without pregnancy and with symptoms such as abdominal enlargement, pulsation in the entire mass of gulma (instead of movement of body parts of foetus), absence of menses, pregnancy like vomiting, indigestion, milk in breasts, blackness in lips and breasts, nausea, slight appearance of line of small hairs, dilatation of vagina along with foul smell and discharge should be diagnosed as Raktaja gulma.¹²

Garbhavastha and dauhridya (Pregnancy and the state of two hearts)

If a pregnant female presenting with slight edema in feet and symptoms like disappearance of menses, anorexia, vomiting, appearance of milk in breasts, blackness in lips and areola of breasts, appearance of the line of small hairs, dilatation of vagina, then she should be diagnosed as above-mentioned condition.¹³

Ratakshoba (Jerking on vehicles)

Edema in feet with numbness, tingling sensation, laxity in big and small joints; other symptoms are like pain particularly piercing one in jaw, nose, ear and head, irritation in abdomen, meteorism, gurgling sound in abdomen, pain in buttocks, sides, groin, scrotum, waist and back may be diagnosed as ratakshoba.¹⁴

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda is a very vast science. It has dual aims that are to prevent the occurrence of disease and to cure the disease if occurred. Shotha (edema) has been mentioned in Ayurvedic literature as an independent disease, as a symptom of diseases and other conditions, as a complication of diseases etc. As you know that in clinical practice, many people come with the symptom of hasta-pada Shotha. So, there is a need to concise the knowledge about this, so that, it will help the Ayurvedic practitioners to differentiate hasta-pada Shotha in various diseases or other conditions and they will not wander here or there. To meet the above-mentioned objective, I first studied Shotha as a distinct topic in Charaka Samhita Chikitsa sthana, adhyaya 12 and Madhava nidana chapter 36 and then further advancing my approach, I studied and started identifying hasta-pada Shotha in various diseases and other conditions in different Samhitas and felt the need to write a research paper on this.

CONCLUSION

In modern times, many of diseases have symptom of hasta-pada Shotha. Not only diseases, but trauma can also be included in this. Hasta-pada Shotha has also occurred as an incurable symptom (Asadhya Lakshana) of a disease such as in Arsha (piles), Pandu (anemia) and Gulma. It has also called as an arista lakshana (features which predicts death is nearby). It can also occur due to poisoned bath, massage, anointing, etc. So, by précising the vast knowledge of Ayurvedic literature, hasta-pada Shotha and its ill effects can be better understood and in clinical practice, it will be easier to differentiate them.

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