



Review Article

www.ijrap.net

(ISSN Online:2229-3566, ISSN Print:2277-4343)



UNDERSTANDING ARDHAVABHEDAKA (MIGRAINE) IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW

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Received on: 02/05/22 Accepted on: 13/06/22

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DOI: 10.7897/2277-4343.1304109

ABSTRACT

Headache is a prevalent annoying symptom in general practice. Migraine is a common type of headache experienced by the general population. It is a chronic debilitating third most prevalent disease. However, Ayurveda is preventive, and curative science postulates that migraine can be cured, or its episodes can be handled well with ayurvedic medications if the samprapti is adequately understood. Ayurvedic texts mentioned the detailed explanation of shirorooja and its treatment protocol. This review article gives an idea about the ayurvedic and the modern concept of the pathophysiology of migraine, summarises the possible causes for the migraine attacks, and treatment to be done based on understanding the systemic causes, i.e., doshavastha also.

Keywords: Migraine, shirorooja, ardhavbhedaka, amlapitta, rasawaha strotas.

INTRODUCTION

Any Diseased condition is always a loss to human efficiency, and if they are debilitating, it impacts a person's ability to concentrate and remember things. Headache is also a condition that often reduces performance, and a physician rarely comes to contact with such patients daily. Migraine is a primary headache disorder. It often begins at puberty and mainly affects those aged between 35-45 years. It is more common in females, usually by a factor of about 2:1.¹

Commonly shown symptoms in migraine can be aggregated as follows:

Pulsating and recurrent headache often on one side, Pain in eyebrow area worsening with sunlight sometimes radiating to the neck and shoulder, Nausea, Giddiness, Intense sensitivity to light, sound, touch, and smell, Tingling or numbness in extremity or face, Blurred vision, Fatigue, Different classical texts of Ayurveda, Modern medicine books, physiology books and old articles from the internet were scanned for references regarding.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Migraine can be defined as a condition marked by recurring moderate to severe headache with throbbing pain that usually lasts from four hours to three days, typically begins on one side of the head but may spread to both sides, and is often accompanied by nausea, vomiting, and sensitivity to light or

sound, and is sometimes preceded by an aura and is usually followed by fatigue.²

Migraine Causes

The cause is not yet fully understood through changes in the brain, and its interactions with the trigeminal nerve might be involved.

Ayurvedic literature has explained shirorog very well. As well as according to ayurvedic literature, various causes of migraine can be categorized as follows:

Physical factors like over-exposure to intense sunlight and smell, smog etc., exposure to frost, exposure to wind from the front, weird climate/season, Frequent travelling, the wrong posture of sleep, overuse of screens, trauma to the head etc.

Dietic factors include skipping or delaying meals or irregular eating habits, overeating heavy, sour, and green food, freezing water, alcohol, caffeine, tea consumption, preservative foods, cheese, and artificial additives.

Hormonal causes like Premenstrual or perimenstrual syndrome, Pregnancy, and Menopause use of birth control pills, especially in females, can be considered causes of migraine attacks.

Emotional causes like Stress, overexcitement, Depression, inability to handle emotions, anxiety, excessive weeping, or suppression of tears may also contribute to the various causative factors of migraine.

Pathophysiology

Vascular theories: Thomas Willis introduced this theory in the 1930s (Harold Wolff became the first researcher to place migraine scientifically, measuring the diameter of the extracranial (temporal) arteries in patients suffering migraine attacks and finding them to dilate. These patients were treated with vasoconstrictors (ergotamine) which relieve the pain and decrease arterial dilatation. Vasoconstriction occurs during an aura where dilatation leads to headaches.³

Headache is thus a cranial vascular consequence of a way of life.” Wolff extended his theory that the body responded to stress in a manner that was often self-destructive to other disorders such as hypertension and peptic ulcer.⁴

Neurogenic theory: According to which the excessive excitement of nerve cells in the cerebral cortex is the origin of migraine. It focuses on the cause of migraine pain and is currently linked to activation of the trigeminovascular system. The trigeminovascular theory focuses on the relationship between the trigeminal nerves and intracranial vessels.³

There are 11 types of shirorog explained by Acharya Sushruta in the Ayurvedic context can be listed as follows:

1. Vataj Shiroroga
2. Pittaj shiroroga
3. Kaphaj Shiroroga
4. Sannipataj Shiroroga
5. Raktaj Shiroroga
6. Kshayaj shiroroga
7. Krimija shiroroga
8. Sooryawarta
9. Anantvaat
10. Ardhawahedaka
11. Shankhaka⁵

After studying the signs and symptoms of a migraine headache can be correlated with Ardhawahedaka.

Ardhawahedhaka is mainly caused due to simultaneous imbalance in the Tridoshas, namely vata, pitta and kapha dosha. Vitiated vata dosha affects the pitta and kapha dosha. The pain is very severe and is intolerable in the sides of the neck, eyebrow, ear, eye, and forehead.⁶

If understood on anshash kalpna samprapti basis, one can conclude that ‘shiras ruk’ is one of the symptoms of ‘ajeerna’.

Symptoms of ajeerna are stated in grahani chikitsa adhyay of charak as amavisha manifests clinical features like flatulence, uncomfortable physical and mental miseries, headache, altered consciousness, giddiness, stiffness of the back and lumbar region, yawning, body-ache, malaise, morbid thirst, fever, vomiting, tenesmus, anorexia and indigestion.⁷

Also, in Madhav Nidan, shirorooja is one of the symptoms of amlapitta.⁸

As well as symptoms that go hand in hand with migraine except headache are also grouped under raspradoshaj wikalp.

Aversion towards food, anorexia, altered sense of taste, inability to identify tastes, nausea, heaviness in the body, drowsiness, body ache, fever, blackouts, anaemia, obstruction of channels, impotence, tiredness (angavasada), emaciation, diminished agni,

and premature ageing (wrinkling of skin and greying of hair) are some of the disorders caused due to vitiation of rasa.⁹

Sometimes raised blood pressure can also cause headache, vertigo, pulsations in veins or arteries, neuralgia etc.¹⁰

DISCUSSION

Headache is a very commonly found symptom in general practice.

Shira (head) is foremost among all organs as it is the body region where the vital centres and all the senses (indriya) of a living being are located. It is critical (uttama) amongst all the other organs of the body.¹¹

According to Acharya Charaka, one should not be ashamed of one’s inability to name a disease since all disorders cannot be given standard names. There are innumerable diseases because the same vitiated dosha causes various disorders according to variations in aetiology and location.¹²

As explained previously, one can think of migraine headache samprapti ghatak, as shown in Figure 1.

As an Ayurvedic view of migraine states different samprapti ghatak in the pathophysiology of migraine, there is a different therapeutic approach too.

By Treatment of amlapitta /ajeerna: - e.g., Sutshekhar rasa - Sutshekhar Ras is an essential medicine used in Ayurveda, which acts on Pitta Dosha and reduces symptoms like heartburn, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, epigastric tenderness, hiccup, fever, breathing troubles, headache etc.¹³

As well as Godanti bhasma is effective due to its antipyretic, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties.¹⁴

Bhunimbadi kwath being a famous medicine for fever, also balances pitta dosha.¹⁵

Treatment of Rasadushti –As rasawaha strotas is also involved in the manifestation of migraine, Lakshmvilas rasa being kledhara can be used.¹⁶

Lajpeya, Tarpan, and Mand are the foods that can be advised. Local treatment like Shirolepa of Sunthi karpur and local massage can be given. Along with this treatment, the kalpas explained in shirorog chikitsa, e.g., Pathyadi qwath etc., can also be used. Further case reports are expected to prove the above claims.

CONCLUSION

Migraine is a complex, debilitating episodic disorder encountering a large population that remains undertreated with ergot and triptans derivatives. Ayurveda, a preventive and curative life science, put forth the concept of nidanparivarjan and expects equilibrium of tridosha, saptdhatu, and trimala through agnichikitsa. When applied to migraine, the same gives a multidimensional approach to its treatment through rasavaha strotodushti chikitsa, vidagdha rakt and pitta chikitsa and through amlapitta/ajeerna chikitsa. Thus, Ayurveda not only contributes to curing the disease but also tailors the condition of the individual's disease.

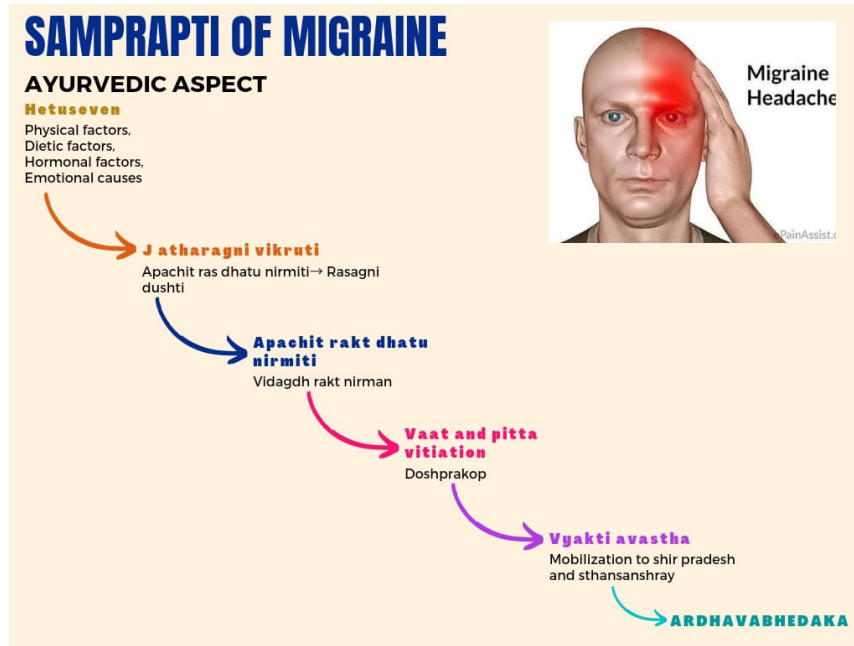


Figure 1: Samprapiti of migraine in the Ayurvedic aspect

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Cite this article as:

Sayali Ramdas Walunj et al. Understanding ardhavabhedaka (migraine) in Ayurveda: A Review. Int. J. Res. Ayurveda Pharm. 2022;13(4):164-166 <http://dx.doi.org/10.7897/2277-4343.1304109>

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

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