



A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON SHOTHA: AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVES ON INFLAMMATION AND OEDEMA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient system of medicine that originated in India many years ago. It focuses on balancing the body, mind and spirit to promote overall health and well being. It is based on concept of balance in the body, mind, spirit with the belief that health and wellness depend on the balance of three doshas vata, pitta, kapha. Shotha explained in all the classical text of Ayurveda, which depicts its importance. Shotha is a term in Ayurveda that referred to inflammation or swelling often resulting from an imbalance in the body's dosha's. Shotha can be caused by various factors including Infections, Injuries or Improper digestion. Ayurvedic treatments for shotha typically involves anti-inflammatory herbs, detoxification techniques and balancing the Dosha through diet and lifestyle adjustments.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Shotha, Chikitsa, Pathya apathya.

INTRODUCTIONS

In Ayurveda, The term shotha is derived from the Sanskrit root 'shuth which means to swell or become inflamed. shotha refers to inflammation or swelling, often caused by and imbalance in the body 's three dosha's mainly vata, pitta, kapha. It is considered as pathological condition where there is an abnormal accumulation of fluid in the tissues, leading to oedema or swelling. This condition can affect any part of the body and may results from various factors like infection, injuries, improper digestion, or disease. In modern era, Shotha is correlate with oedema. Ayurvedic treatments for Shotha typically involve anti-inflammatory herbs, detoxification techniques, and balancing the Doshas through diet and lifestyle adjustments. The goal is to restore balance in the body and alleviate the underlying causes of inflammation, promoting overall health and well-being.

Nidana: The nidana (causative factor) of shotha are elaborated in classical texts such as Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Madhav Nidaan, and Asthanga Hridaya.

General nidana for shotha

1. Aahara (Dietary causes):

Intake of guru (heavy), Abishyandi (channel-blocking) foods.

Excess consumption of salty, sour, spicy foods.

Improper food combinations or incompatible food (Viruddha Aahara).

Excessive intake of alcohol or fermented foods.

2. Vihara (lifestyle causes): sedentary lifestyle, lack of physical activities. Excessive exposure to cold or damp environments. Day sleep (Divaswapna), especially, after heavy meals. Suppression of natural urges (Vegavidharana)
3. Manasika Nidana (psychological causes): Stress, grief, or emotional disturbances can vitiate vata, pitta.
4. Agantuja Nidana (external causes): Injury, Trauma, Insect bites, Poisons or Infections.

Dosha's -specific causes

1. Vataja shotha Nidana

- ❖ Excessive fasting
- ❖ Overexertion
- ❖ Cold and dry food
- ❖ Emotional stress

2. Pittaja Shotha Nidana

- ❖ Hot and spicy food
- ❖ Anger or emotional heat
- ❖ Exposure to sun or fire

3. Kaphaj Shotha Nidana

- ❖ Heavy, oily, sweet food
- ❖ Oversleeping
- ❖ Lack of exercise

Purvarupa (Prodromal symptoms)

1. Feeling of warmth in the affected area
2. Burning in localised area
3. Vasodilation
4. Heaviness in affected parts

Rupa (Symptoms)

1. Swelling: Abnormal enlargement or swelling in a localised or generalized area.
2. Pain: Various depending on the Dosha involved (sharp, burning, or dull).
3. Stiffness: Especially in the affected area.
4. Discolouration changes in skin colour (Redness, pallor or Darkening).
5. Burning sensation: Especially if it is pitta involved.
6. Heaviness: Feeling of Heaviness in the body or affected part.
7. Temperature change: Depending on Dosa, hot for Pitta, cold for vata.

Samprapti (pathogenesis)

The pathogenesis of Shotha involves

1. Vitiation of Doshas (Vata Dominant Tridoshas).
2. Obstruction or vitiation of Rakta (blood), Mamsa (muscle), and meda (fats) dhatus
3. Accumulation of ama (Toxins) and blockage of srotas (body channels).
4. Inflammatory response in the body due to Dosha imbalance, leading to fluid accumulation, pain, and dysfunction in the affected area.

Samprapti Ghataka

Dosha: Vata dominant Tridosha

Dushya : Rasa, Rakta

Adhisthana : Between Twacha - Mansa

Srothas: Rasavaha, Raktavaha

Srotodushti: Sanga, Vimarga gamana

Agni: Mandagni

Vyadhi svbhava: Ashukari, Chirkari Bheda (Types)

Various type of shotha can be explained by different writers in the vedic textbooks

1. **Vata shotha:** Caused by an imbalance in the vata Dosha, leading to dry, painful swelling, often accompanied by stiffness and difficulty in movement. It usually affects the joints. Vata shotha is called rapidly pitting oedema due to increased hydrostatic pressure.
2. **Pitta shotha:** This type of swelling occurs due to an imbalance in the pitta Dosha. It is characterised by redness, heat, tenderness and is associated with inflammation due to infection or irritation. Pitta shotha is called Tender and painful (Inflammatory swelling) due to increased capillary permeability.

3. **Kapha shotha:** Caused by imbalance in the kapha Dosha, This type of swelling is typically associated with excess fluid retention, leading to heavy, cool, and painless swelling. It usually manifests as generalized edema or fluid retention. Kapha shotha is called slowly pitting oedema due to lowered osmotic pressure.

Chikitsa (Treatment)

The Ayurvedic approach to treating shotha is holistic, involving internal, external and procedural therapies including:

A Shodhana (Purification Therapies)

Used mainly in chronic or systemic shotha.

- Virechana (Purgation) -For pitta shotha.
- Basti (enema) -Especially effective in vata Dosha.
- Raktamokshana (Bloodletting) - Raktadushti Induced Shotha.

B. Shamana (Palliative Therapy)

Herbal medicines are used to pacify the aggravated doshas:

- Kishore Guggulu
- Punarnavavadi Mandura
- Dashamoola Kwatha
- Triphala Guggulu
- Gokshuradi Guggulu

C. Sthanik chikitsa (Local Application)

- Lepa (herbal paste)- Anti-inflammatory herbs like Haridra (Turmeric), Manjishtha and Arjuna.
- Svedana (Fomentation) - Relief stiffness, and improves circulation.
- Abhyanga (Oil massage) - Using medicated oils like Mahanarayana Taila, Sahacharadi Taila.

D. Pathya - Apathya (Diet and lifestyle modifications)

- Avoid heavy, oily, and Kapha aggravating foods.
- Include warm, light and easily digestible food.
- Encourage regular, mild exercise, proper sleep, and stress reduction.

E. Role of specific Herbs in Shotha

- Punarnava (Boerhavia diffusa): Diuretic and Anti inflammation.
- Haridra (Turmeric): Potent Anti-inflammatory and Antioxidant.
- Guduchi (Tinospora Cordifolia): Immunomodulator.
- Triphala: Detoxify and Anti-inflammatory.
- Guggulu: Anti - arthritic and Anti- Inflammatory.

DISCUSSION

Shotha, commonly translated as swelling or inflammation, is a condition that has been extensively described in classical Ayurvedic literature includes charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya. In Ayurveda Shotha is not merely a symptom, but is also classified as independent disease entity. It can be either acute or a chronic and is understood in term of

Dosha involvement, Dhatu (tissue) vitiation, and srotha (Channel) obstruction.

CONCLUSION

Shotha in Ayurveda is understood, not merely as local travel swelling as a manifestation of deeper, systematic imbalances. Ayurvedic treatment emphasizes the correction of Dosha imbalance, removal of toxins, and restoration of normal tissue function through a combination of internal medicines, Detoxification Therapies, external treatments, and lifestyle regulation. This comprehensive and individualized approach makes Ayurvedic management of Shotha both effective and sustainable, especially in chronic or recurrent inflammatory conditions.