



BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PAIN MANAGEMENT IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Pain is a topic of great concern in the field of medical science. Pain may present itself as a symptom of an underlying problem or may sometimes be a cause of a person's visit to a physician. This has always been a topic not to be overlooked whether ayurveda has an instant as well as permanent remedy for different types of pain. The need is to have a deep study of the subject for welfare of society. Basic principles as explained in ayurveda explain the vitiated *vata* (*vayu dosha*) to cause *shoola* either alone or accompanied by other *dosha*, as it is the one that controls the *naadivah samsthan*. Also, the treatment and *pathya-apathya* varies in different types of *shoola*. This review is an attempt to summarize the various aspects of pain and its management according to ayurveda.

KEYWORDS: *Shoola, Swatantra shoola, Partantra Shoola*, Psychosomatic component.

INTRODUCTION

Oooh, Aaah, Ouch... These are the expressions that very well describe the agony of an individual referred commonly as pain. Be it (pain) a symptom due to some underlying cause or the problem in itself, the sufferer tries for an immediate remedy to get relief. Pain is indispensable part of our life since existence of human being on the earth. Pain is a common symptom with extraordinary complex sensation which is difficult to define and measure in an accurate, objective manner. Pain is a subjective and multidimensional experience. The degree of pain is very wide, ranging from the pain due to the prick of a mere thorn to severe pain caused by trauma like RTA.

The international association for the study of pain (IASP) defines pain as “an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in term of such damage”.

Today, this piece of note is an effort to focus on the chapter of pain and its management in ayurveda. Being subjective feeling intensity of pain differs from individual to individual, time to time, site to site. It depends greatly upon susceptibility of mind.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Materials – Available literature (*Brihatrayees, Madhav Nidaan*)

Methodology – Study of etiology of *Shoola*, its types, basic principles of choice of treatment have been taken into account to understand the subject in a better way.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda describes the word pain through terms like शूल, रुज, तोद, etc. as and when required according to the context.

The word शूल is formed by combination of “शूल रुजायाम (धातु) + क (प्रत्यय)”.

Shoola is classified as *swatantra shoola* & *paratantra shoola*. While, *swatantra shoola* is defined as a *vyadhi* itself, *paratantra shoola* is considered as *upadrava* of a disease. *Aacharya Charak & Vagbhatta* did not mentioned *shoola* as a *swatantra vyadhi*.

Sushruta Samhita, Uttara Tantra, Ch. 42 explains *shoola* as abdominal pain. Also, it has been explained as *upadrava* of *gulma* in the same chapter. He explains 4 types of *shoola* i.e. *Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Sannipataja*. Further, he explains 7 types of *shoola* i.e. *Parshava Shoola, Kukshi Shoola, Hrit Shoola, Vasti Shoola, Mootra Shoola, Vit Shoola, Avipaka/Anna dosaja Shoola*.

Other references include *Madhav Nidaan* and *Kashyapa Samhita*. *Madhavakara* explains 8 types of *shoola* as - *Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Dwandwaja (3), Sannipataja*,

Amaja. Later, each of these were described as - *Vataja Parinama Shoola*, *Pittaja Parinama Shoola*, *Kaphaja Parinama Shoola*, *Vatapittaja Parinama Shoola*, *Vatakaphaja Parinama Shoola*, *Pittakaphaja Parinama Shoola*, *Sannipataja Parinama Shoola*, *Annadrava Shoola*.

Coming to the etiology of *Shoola* “न हि वाते दुते शूलं”

i.e. no pain can occur without *Vata Dosha*. Based on above principle, the basis of treating *shoola* is to treat the underlying cause (aggravated *Dosa*) with special preference to *vayu dosha* in all types.

Sushruta Samhita suggests the concept of pain management as -

- 1) Local entity.
- 2) Systemic agent.
- 3) Acute condition.
- 4) A chronic pathology.
- 5) Psychosomatic component.

The General principles to treat *Shoola* include –

- 1) **Lepa** – is external application of medicines to deliver analgesic effect of drugs to a specific area. A lepa seems to have effective role in acute pain or early stages of the inflammatory indurations.
- 2) **Swedana** - is fomentation procedure where some of the painful regions are applied with certain degree of temperature by various means for a specified duration. It is to be incorporated in *daruna* (chronic) and *kathina* (indurate) painful lesions.
- 3) **Vimplapana** - is the process where gentle pressure is exerted in and around the affected part with pulp of the fingers to liquify localized and immovable vitiated. This can be effectively practiced in areas with constant mandaruja (dull pain).
- 4) **Visravana** - is drainage of vitiated blood from a localized, acutely inflamed, indurate lesion. Congestion results in severe pain and such congestion is drained through visravana (blood-letting) procedure. This procedure has an add-on effect to prevent suppuration.
- 5) **Snehapan** - Medicated oil depending on the predominance of *doshas* are used as internal medicines to get rid of the pain.
- 6) **Vamanadishodhana karmas** - can also be considered under the means of pain management by acting at the root level.
- 7) **Parishek** - is method of pouring the medicated liquid from a distance for specific period.
- 8) **Dhupan** - aiming at alleviating the pain which is superficial, it also has additional benefits of fumigation like sterilization of wound to prevent growth of micro organism.
- 9) **Agnikarma** – is used in severe pain of *twak*, *snayu*, *sandhi*.
- 10) **Basti** – by administering medicines through rectal route. Primarily, *basti* is indicated for vitiated vata dosha which is said to be the cause of pain. Hence,

basti can be considered as best line of pain management for painful lesions of lower extremities.

- 11) **Nasya, dhoom pana** - are the different routes of drug administration which are used to relieve the pain in *urdhva jatru gata* areas.
- 12) **Management of psychosomatic component** - Confidence boosting, consoling would diminish the intensity of pain.

In ayurveda, there are some indigenous drugs which act as analgesics. But, there is need for more research on these herbal drugs to evaluate their analgesic effect.

Dosha wise treatment of Shoola

- 1) Vata Dosha Predominance:- Snehana, Payasa, Krishra, Snighdha Peya, Tila Sweda, Bilwadi Sweda, Madana Lepa, Hingwadi Kalka, Sarshapadi Lepa, Kulatthadi Yusha, Balaadi Kwatha, Naagaradi Kwatha, Indrayava Kwatha, Dashmula Kwatha, Karanjadi Churna.
- 2) Pitta Dosha Predominance:- Vamana, Virechana, Shatavaryadi Kwatha, Brihatyadi Kwatha, Triphala-Aragwadhadi Kwatha, Shatavari Rasa, Amalaki Swarasa, Gudadi Yoga, Ksheera Sarpi, Jaangala Mamsa Rasa
- 3) Kapha Dosa Predominance:- Shaali Dhanya, Jaangala Mamsa, Arishta(Neem), Katukam Rasam, Madya, Jeerna Godhuma, Patoladi Kwatha, Drakshadi Kwatha, Pathyadi Kwatha, Matulunga Rasa, Shigru Kwatha, Loha Bhasma

Charak Samhita Sutrasthana 4/17 mentions 10 herbal drugs that act as analgesic. *Dravyaguna Vigyan* describes *Vedanasthapak Gana*, to name a few medicinal plants possessing analgesic property -

- 1) *Shunthi* (Zingiber Officinale)- It has a strong analgesic action which acts by cyclo-oxygenase-1 (COX-1) inhibition. Gingerol and their derivatives act as analgesic.
- 2) *Padmak* (Prunus cerasoides) - In the bark, it has contents like securanetin, jenquanin, prunetin, padmkashtin, padmetin, sakuranin, taxifolin. Due to these contents it acts as analgesic.
- 3) *Guggulu* (Commiphora mukul) - It acts as vatashamak due to ushna guna(hot nature) and so acts as vedanasthapak (analgesic).
- 4) *Parasik yawani* (Hyoscyamus niger linn.) - In leaves and flowers, it has contents like hyoscyamine, hyoscine and so acts as analgesic.

Bhasma - Godanti Bhasma, Shankha Bhasma, Mukta Shukti Bhasma, Giloy Satva, etc.

Rasayana - Kushmanda Rasayana, Gudardrakam etc.

Proprietary Medicine - Tab Acidon (Dhanwantari), Tab Alsarex (Charak), Tab Amlonil (Manil), Tab. Gasex (Himalaya), Tab Gupizyme (Gufic).

Pathya - Patola, Karavellaka, Kshara, Shigru, Samudra lavana, Lashuna, Ushna Jala, Jambira Rasa, Kushta, Eranda Taila, Gomutra, Vastukam, Samvatsaroshita Shali, Laghu Padartha.

Apathya – Ruksha, Tikta, Kashaya, Katu, Amla, Madya, Tila, Sheeta, Guru, Virrudha Ahaara, Vyayaama, Maithuna, Vegavrodha, Shoka, Krodha, Ratri jagrana.

CONCLUSION

Shoola is a very terrible condition which presents itself either alone or along with some underlying cause. *Ayurveda* definitely has immense potential to manage all types of pain successfully.

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