



Review of Vishwachi (Cervical Radiculopathy) and its Management by Sahachara Taila Matra Basti

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Review Article

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Abstract

Cervical radiculopathy, a prevalent condition in today's world, arises from degenerative changes in the cervical spine. It commonly emerges during the fourth and fifth decades of life. Lifestyle factors, such as prolonged screen use, sedentary habits, and occupational strain, significantly contribute to its widespread occurrence. This ailment disrupts daily life, causing neck pain, radiating discomfort, and sensory disturbances. The contemporary surge in cervical radiculopathy highlights the impact of evolving lifestyles on musculoskeletal health, underscoring the need for proactive preventive measures. The Sushruta Samhita Nidana Sthana classifies Vishwachi under Vata Vikara, affecting the neck and upper extremities with symptoms akin to cervical radiculopathy. Both conditions share manifestations of Ruka, Stambha, Toda, Karmakshaya, and Chestapaharan of Bahu with Vata being the predominant Dosha responsible for Shoola. This article explores the impact of Matra Basti in managing Vishwachi, recognizing Basti as the premier therapeutic approach for Vata Vikara. There are many Siddha Taila used for Matra Basti in Vishwachi. Sahachara Taila (Cha.Chi.28/145) is one of them. The focus is on assessing the efficacy of Sahachara Taila Matra Basti in addressing the manifestations of Vishwachi, aligning with the acknowledged effectiveness of Basti in treating disorders associated with the Vata Dosha.

Keywords: Vishwachi; Cervical Radiculopathy; Matra Basti; Sahachara Taila

Introduction

In today's modern era, an increasing number of people are grappling with cervical problems, primarily attributed to the widespread use of electronic devices and occupational demands. Given the pervasive nature of these challenges, avoidance is often impractical, necessitating the identification of effective curative approaches. Ayurveda, a traditional system of medicine, offers numerous remedies for Vata Vyadhi, a category to which cervical problems bear resemblance. The present study explores Ayurvedic

interventions, specifically emphasizing the management of Vishwachi (Cervical Radiculopathy) through Matra Basti.

Cervical radiculopathy, marked by pressure and irritation of the cervical spine nerve root, is often linked to disc prolapse or injury. Common symptoms encompass neck pain radiating to the upper limbs, restricted neck movements, arm pain, and numbness or tingling extending into the hand and fingers. The reported annual incidence of cervical radiculopathy is 107.3 per 100,000 men and 63.5 per 100,000 women annually, predominantly during the fourth

and fifth decades of life., manifests as severe, throbbing pain extending from the neck to the shoulder, arm, forearm, and digits, accompanied by numbness and muscle atrophy in the upper limbs [1].

Posing as a pressing concern, the need for an effective and safe treatment for this alarming problem is paramount. Countless analgesics have been incorporated into the modern physician's toolkit, only to unveil their inherent limitations. Despite the expansive array of drugs in modern therapeutics aimed at managing this condition, the unfortunate aftermath reveals their proclivity for serious side effects and the potential for habit formation. The quest for a remedy that is not only efficacious but also devoid of adverse consequences remains a critical challenge in addressing this persistent issue.

Therefore, the search for safer management is of great importance. Matra Basti is indicated by almost all the Acharyas for effective management of Vata Vikara. A medicine administered through the rectal route goes into the whole body and expels out the vitiated Doshas. The Basti said to be the best treatment for Vata. Hence Matra Basti is of primary importance in the treatment of the Vishwachi.

Ayurvedic Review

In Sushruta Samhita Nidana Sthana (Shu. Ni. 1/75), Vishwachi is included in Vata Vikara [2]. According to Vagbhatta, when there is excessive pain in Gridhrasi and Vishwachi, they are termed as Khalli [3]. However, in Charaka Chikitsa 28/57, Khalli is mentioned differently from Vishwachi [4].

According to Sushruta Samhita, the disease in which the enraged Vayu affects the nerve trunks (Kandara), extending from the roots of the upper arms to the tips of the fingers, rendering them incapable of movement and depriving them of the power of flexion or expansion, is termed Vishwachi [2].

According to Chakradatta, Vishwachi is characterized by lameness and burning and tingling sensation in lower limbs. Treatment of Vishwachi as described in the clinical text includes various procedures like Siravedhana, Vata-Nashaka (Snehana, Swedana) Chikitsa, and Nasya Karma [5].

Samprapti ghataka: Samprapti Vighatana plays an important role in every disease for its treatment. Samprapti of Vishwachi includes Samprapti Ghatak as follows:

- Dosha – Vata-Pradhana
- Dushaya - Sira and Kandara of Bahu
- Vyaksthana - Manya, Bahu, Hasta, Pratyanguli
- Rogmarga - Madhyama

Mode of action of basti: According to Acharya Charaka “Basti Vataharanam,” Basti is the best treatment for Vata. The Basti drug travels to Pakvashaya initially (large intestine). Vata Dosha's main location is Pakvashaya. As a result of its activity on the primary site, Basti gains control over Vata throughout the body.

Sahachara taila: According to Charaka Samhita Sahachara Taila is useful for the treatment of all varieties of Vata diseases. It can be used in 4 different modes (viz., oral intake, Abhyanga, Nasya, and Basti).

- Preparation 1: Adhaka of oil is cooked by adding the decoction of 1 Tula of whole plant of Sahachara, the paste of 10 Palas of the root of Sahachara, and 4 Adhakas of milk after the oil is cooked, 18 Palas of sugar-powder is added to it by the physician. This medicated oil is useful for Daruna Vata Vikara [6].

Modern Review

Cervical radiculopathy, a degenerative ailment of the cervical spine, primarily originates in the cervical spine itself, specifically within the intervertebral discs and vertebral bodies. It manifests as neck pain, stiffness, radiating pain into the arm, headaches, vertigo, dizziness, paresthesia, numbness, and other symptoms [7]. It disrupts a person's daily routine and overall quality of life. While it may not be instantly fatal, it can lead to severe complications in the long run. It can render individuals incapable of performing daily tasks due to the intensity of pain, essentially robbing them not only of years of life but of the life within those years.

The degenerative process involves intervertebral disc protrusion, bony outgrowth of adjacent vertebra, and narrowing of intervertebral foramina and cervical canal. In order of frequency, the C5/6, C6/7, and C4/5 vertebral levels affect C6, C7, and C5 roots, respectively [8].

When a nerve root gets squeezed by material from the disc, it can harm the nerve in two ways:

Mechanical compression: The primary cause of cervical radiculopathy is the mechanical compression of a nerve root. This compression can occur due to:

- Herniated Disc: The soft, gel-like center of an intervertebral disc can protrude or herniate through the tough outer layer, putting pressure on nearby nerve roots.
- Bone Spurs (osteophytes): Over time, the edges of the vertebrae can develop bony outgrowths, called bone spurs, which may encroach upon nerve roots.
- Spinal Stenosis: Narrowing of the spinal canal, known as spinal stenosis, can compress nerve roots as they exit the spine.

Inflammatory response: While not a chemical pathway per se, inflammation can play a role in cervical radiculopathy. When the nerve root is compressed or irritated, the body's natural response may involve inflammation. This inflammation can further exacerbate nerve compression and lead to pain and other symptoms associated with radiculopathy.

Cervical Radiculopathy can be assessed by :

- Neck disability index
- Spurling's Test
- Cervical Rotation Test
- Upper Limb Extension Test
- Distraction Test

The treatment of this disease in contemporary medicine aims at pain relief, prevention of recurrence, and improvement of neurological functions. The conservative treatment involves analgesics, a soft cervical collar, and physiotherapy which mainly provide symptomatic relief.

Discussion

As we discussed above, cervical radiculopathy, a condition arising from nerve compression in the neck, significantly impacts day-to-day life. Manifesting as pain, numbness, or weakness radiating down the arm, it hampers routine activities. Simple tasks like typing, lifting, or turning the head become arduous, diminishing work efficiency. Sleep disruptions due to discomfort further exacerbate fatigue and cognitive challenges. Social interactions may suffer as individuals grapple with pain, limiting their ability to engage in recreational activities. Coping with the emotional toll of chronic pain adds another layer of complexity. Seeking timely medical intervention and adopting adaptive strategies are crucial for mitigating the profound effects of cervical radiculopathy on daily life. Treatment in the contemporary system is inadequate due to their side effects and impact only on symptoms. Allopathic medicine only gives temporary relief to the patient and becomes addictive. Spine surgery is very costly & high recurrence rate is seen after surgery. So, the principal aim is to provide a cost-effective, safe remedy for the problem. Ayurveda offers superior treatment for cervical radiculopathy, providing not only symptomatic relief but also addressing the root cause of the disease. In the Sushruta Samhita's Chikitsa Sthana, the Raktamokshana is prescribed as a treatment for Vishwachi [9]. According to Acharyas, the treatment for Vishwachi involves comprehensive Vata Nashaka Chikitsa, as Nasya, Sneha, Sweda, Matra Basti. Basti commonly referred to as Ardha Chikitsa, stands out as an exceptional remedy for Vata Vikara, playing a pivotal role in the therapeutic process.

Due to the Snighdha Guna and Ushna Veerya of Sahachara Taila, It has Vata-Kapha Shamaka, Vednasthapana, and Shothahara properties. Barleria prionitis (Sahachara)

has been recognized for its remarkable antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Various studies have showcased the utilization of B. prionitis in treating inflammations. The anti-inflammatory efficacy of B. prionitis was assessed using in vitro enzyme-based cyclooxygenase (COX-1 and COX-2) assays. Results indicated that the dichloromethane, petroleum ether, and ethanol extracts from leaves, stems, and roots demonstrated significant inhibition of COX-1 and COX-2, subsequently hindering prostaglandin synthesis associated with pain sensation [10].

Hence, Sahachara Taila Matra Basti can not only offer effective pain relief but also deliver permanent alleviation in Vishwachi by mitigating Vata Dosha and addressing its root cause. This approach ensures a holistic and effective treatment strategy, aligning with the principles of Ayurveda to alleviate cervical radiculopathy and promote lasting healing from its origin.

Conclusion

Vishwachi is a predominantly painful condition characterized by partial damage to nerve membranes, rendering them sensitive to mechanical and chemical stimuli. The pain in Vishwachi may manifest as either a burning superficial (dysaesthetic) type or a stabbing character. Therefore, the development of potent Vedanahara Yoga and nerve-nourishing drugs is crucial for effective management. Given that Vishwachi primarily affects the roots of the upper limbs in the Greeva (neck), the comprehensive approach involves Raktamokshana, Nasya, Abyanga, Swedana, and Niruha with Matra Basti emerging as a key component in the treatment regimen. So, the study concludes that, Sahachara Taila Matra Basti can offer effective treatment for Vishwachi, and the analgesic properties of Sahachara can contribute to pain relief. Therefore, further research-based studies are necessary to assess the efficacy of such interventions.

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