A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ON VATARAKTA IN AYURVEDA W.S.R. TO GOUT

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the science of life which not only deals with the curative but also with the preventive aspect of health. Vatarakta as the name indicates is caused by both vitiated vata and vitiated rakta. This dosha sammurchana gets lodge in the different joints of the body causing pain, redness, odema, in the joints. On the basis of signs and symptoms vatarakta can be correlated to Gout to a greater extent. Gout is caused by high uric acid levels in the blood, but they usually go unnoticed. It is estimated that around one in three people with high uric acid levels have gout. Uric acid is a waste product of substances called purines, which are components of nucleic acid. Modern system of medicine has no option in metabolic disorders like Gout except the Analgesics and Anti-inflammatory agents. Ayurveda has much potential in such disorders. The aggravated Vata located in the Shakha (peripheral tissues) and joints cause obstruction to the channels of blood instantaneously. Blood letting is done to lessen the abundance of vitiated blood. If this blood is bled, the morbid materials of blood will be less. The patient is given medicated enema therapies (both Niruha and Anuvasana) frequently. He is given Seka – affusion, Abhyanga – massage, Pradeha – application of thick ointments Food and unctuous substance which do not cause burning sensation.

KEYWORDS: Vatarakta, dosha sammurchana, vitiated vata and vitiated rakta.
INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the immortal and sacred science of life (Ayurveda) consisting of three principles viz., Hetu – causative factors of disease, Linga – symptomatology, Aushadha Jnana – knowledge of therapeutics, treatments and medicines.[1] Hetu, Linga and Aushadha are known as Trisutra – the three formulas of treating disease. Ayurveda is the science of life which explains about remedy for Hitayu – advantageous life, Ahita Ayu – disadvantageous life, Sukhayu – happy state of health and mind, Ahitayu – unhappy state of health and mind. It also explains what is good and bad for life and measurement of life.[2] The term ‘Ayu’ stands for the combination of the Shareera – body, Indriya – sense organs, Satva – mind and Atma – soul. This means that when the body is intact with sense organs, mind and soul, then one has life. Otherwise not.[3] The foremost aim of Ayurveda is to maintain or take care of Health of a Healthy person and second aim is to cure the diseases.[4] A person can prevent himself from being targetted by the lifestyle diseases and metabolic diseases by incorporating the dietary regimes(pathya aahara), life style (Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Sadvruta), Shodhanakarma (detoxification) mentioned in the Samhitas in his daily routine activities. Not following these healthy measures vitiates the Dosha, Dhatu, mala and makes the body vulnerable to many diseases. One of the such disease mentioned in samhitas is Vatarakta. Acharya Sushruta has described Vatarakta along with other vata vyadhies, but due to its specific nidana, samprapti and chikitsa, Acharya Charak has described it separately. The detailed description of aetiology, pathogenesis, signs and symptoms and treatment of vatarakta is available in Charak Samhita. As per Aacharya Sushruta, both Vata and Rakta get aggravated in Vatarakta due to their own respective causative factors and start circulating in the body. Both these vitiated doshas get localized in the big toe of the foot (Padyormulam) or in the thumb of the hand (Kadachiddhastyorapi).[5] The disease further spreads all over the body like a virulent rat poison. These features can be correlated with that of Gout to a great extent as described in the modern texts. The skin also gets eroded on the site of localization of vitiated doshas that resembles the desquamation of the skin, as mentioned in modern texts, in case of untreated gout.

In superficial stage (Uttanavastha) of Vatarakta, vitiated doshas (pathogeny) are located in Twaka and Mamsa (Skin & superficial muscles) which represents as brownish red or coppery overlying skin, itching, severe burning and piercing pain. While deeper or severe form (Gambhiravastha) further vitiates deeper tissues exhibiting swelling with stiffness and
rigidity, inflammatory changes, distress, severe pain and pulsations in the affected parts. The symptoms are more prominent in bones, nerves and muscles.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
1. To explore the Hetu (causative factors), Samprapti (pathogenesis), linga (symptomatology) of Vatarakta.
2. To explore the chikitsa (treatment modalities) of Vatarakta.
3. Understanding Vatarakta in relation to Gout and need of Ayurveda over the conventional treatment of Gout.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
This study was carried out by literature search, critical review, various medical research database like pubmed, and other national research database.

DISCUSSION
The term vatarakta is formed by the amalgation of two words i.e. vata and rakta. Vata and Rakta gets vitiated independently leading to the pathogenesis of Vatarakta.

Causes and pathophysiology of Vatarakta
Generally people of tender health who indulge in sweet food, leisurely eating, sedentary habits, not doing exercises get afflicted by Vatarakta because of the following.[6]

lavanāmla katu kṣāra snigdhoṣṇājīrṇa bhojanaihi – Excessive intake of salt, sour, pungent, alkaline, unctuous, hot and uncooked food. Excessive intake of lavana rasa (salt) vitiates the pitta and causes rakta vridhi (aamrupi) both. Excessive amla rasa causes pittaprakopa, rakt dushti, vidah in mams and looseness (shithilta) in body. Katu Rasa constitutes of vayu and agni mahabhoot. As per Acharya Charak katu rasa is laghu, ushna and rooksh. If katurasa is taken in excess, it vitiates the vata due to laghu and rookshguna. Excess of katu rasa due to agni mahabhuta and ushna guna vitiates the pitta dosha. Kshara causes daha in body. Acharya Charak has compared kshar with agni and suggested not to take kshar daily and in excess. Excess of it causes vidaha and pittaprakopa in the body. As per aacharya sushruta avidhiyukta aahara like ajeernashana vitiates the rakta dosha. Acharya Charak suggested not to eat when the previous Meal is undigested. If one eats during ajeernavastha, the digestive product of the previous food, i.e. immature rasa gets mixed up with the food taken, leading to the vitiation of all the three doshas.
Intake of putrified or dry meat of aquatic (Ambuja) or marshy land (Anupa) inhabiting animals, Excessive intake of oil-cake preparation or radish. All these things vitiates *pitta* and *vata*.

Intake of horse gram, black gram, Nisava, Leafy vegetables, etc. meat and sugarcane. Acharya Bhavmishra says that it is *laghu*, *vidahi* and *ushna veerya*. It causes different disorders of *Pitta* and *Rakta*.

Excessive intake of curd, Aranala(Kanji), Sauvira (sour preparation of dehusked barley), Sukta (vinegar), Buttermilk, alcohol and wine,. All these preparations are *vidahi* and in excessive amount vitiate *rakta* and *pitta*.

Intake of mutually contradictory food.

Intake of food before the previous meal is digested.

Resorting to anger in excess.

Sleeping during day time and.

remaining awake at night.

All the above factors vitiates both *Vata* and *rakta dosha* leading to the pathogenesis of *vatarakta*.

*baka*ya *kaṭu* *tiktāla* *rākśāhārādabhojanāt* - intake of *kasha*, *katu*, *tikta* *pradhana aahar* vitiates the *vata*, taking of *ruksha*, *alpa*, and excessive fasting causes *dhatu* *shaya*. *Dhatu* *shaya* further vitiates the *vata dosha*. *Hayoṣṭrayānānāmbu krīḍā* – Riding over horses, camels or on vehicles drawn by them. *Plavāna laṅghanaīḥ* – Resorting to aquatic games, swimming and jumping. All These activities vitiates the *vata* *dosha* and helps in spreading the *doshas* into joints. *Uṣṇe cātyadhvā vaišamyādyavāyādvega nigrahāt* – Excessive wayfaring in hot season, which disturbs the equilibrium of *Vata*. *Ati maithuna* – Indulgence in sexual intercourse and *Vega nigrahāt* – Suppression of the manifested natural urges. Because of the these factors, *Vata* gets aggravated. Being obstructed in its course by the vitiated blood, the
excessively aggravated *Vata* vitiates the entire blood. The disease thus, caused is called *Vata-Rakta* (gout). It is also known by the synonyms like *Khudda, Vata Balasa* and *Aadhaya Vata*.\[7\] *Vatarakta* is commonly found in rich freternity or those indulging in leisurely eatings or sedentary life style so called *aadhayavata*. It affects the small joints so known as *khuddavata*. Already vitiated rakta gets more vitiated by the powerful vata so called as *vatabalasa*.

Merely jumping, swimming, running or riding over vehicles can not produce *vatarakta* all alone until or unless a person indulge himself into *rakta* and *pitta* vitiating foods both( mentioned in the causative factors).\[8\]

Advancement in technology has made the life at ease but the other side is mercyfull as it has accustomized the people to the leisurely life style making them very tender and gentle (sukumara prakruti). eating junk foods, incompatible food items, waking up at nights, eating at wrong time, increasing stress have become a part of life from the very beginning of childhood to adults. They are forgetting and neglecting our ancient measures of lifestyle mentioned in the samhitas. All these factors make the population prone to the disorders like *vatarakta* and other related metabolic disorders.

The sites where *Vatarakta* is manifested are –hands, feet, fingers including toes and all joints. In the beginning, the hands and feet are afflicted. From this base, it spreads to all other body parts because of the subtle (Sookshma) pervasive nature of *Vata* and *Rakta*.\[9\] Because of their fluidity (Dravatvaat) and mobility (Saratvaat), they (Vata and Rakta), while moving through the vessels; get obstructed in the joints which makes them further aggravated. Because of the tourtous nature of the course in the joints, the morbid matter gets lodged. There Being localized in joints, they get further associated with *Pitta*, etc., (i.e Kapha and Vata Dosha aggravated associated with Pitta and Kapha, the disease produces different types of pain characterized by nature of these elements. Therefore, in general, the disease gives rise to pain in all these joints. These different types of pain become excessively unbearable for the patients.\[10\]

*Vatarakta* is of 2 types\[11\]

*Uthana Vatarakta* (superficial) – located in the skin as well as muscle tissues and

*Gambheera Vatarakta* (deep seated) – located in deeper tissues.
The superficial or external (Uthana or Bahya) varieties of Vatarakta: Kandu – Itching, Daha – burning sensation, Ruk – ache, Aayama – extension, Toda – pricking pain, Sphurana – throbbing sensation and Aakunchana – contraction and, Shyava rakta tvak – The skin becomes brownish black, red or coppery in color.


If Vatarakta is located both in (Uthana) and interior (gambhira): Aggravated Vata while causing pain and burning sensation constantly, moves with high speed through the joints, bones and bone marrow as if cutting them to make the joints curved inwards. While moving all over the body, this aggravated Vata Dosha makes the person lame and paraplegic and all the signs and symptoms described above (in respect of Uthana and Gambhira types of Vatarakta) are manifested.

Further vatarakta has been classified on the basis of predominant dosh by Aacharya Charaka as Vataja, raktaja, Pittaja, kaphaja, and dvandaja. Their features are according to the dominant dosha.

Aacharya Charaka describes vatarakta as agnimaratataliya suggesting it as a durnirvarahroga that is its curability very difficult especially on chronicity. So treatment should be done as soon as possible. If not treated complications(upadrava) arises which hampers the day to day life activities, making the patient physically handicapped even.

On the basis of signs and symptoms vatarakta can be correlated to Gout to a greater extent. Gout is caused by high uric acid levels in the blood, but they usually go unnoticed. It is estimated that around one in three people with high uric acid levels have gout. Uric acid is a waste product of substances called purines, which are components of nucleic acid. Some uric acid is usually removed in our urine. But some people's kidneys are not able to remove enough uric acid with urine. That causes uric acid levels in the body to increase. If they are too high, the uric acid can start to form crystals that build up in body tissue. The crystals usually build up in the joints, Meat, fish and seafood contain a lot of purines. Purines are actually mostly produced by the body, but eating large amounts of animal-based products can increase the risk of gout. Alcoholic drinks promote the production of uric acid and have
a diuretic effect. Alcohol also reduces the amount of uric acid expelled by the kidneys. Beer in particular contains a relatively high amount of purines. Studies have shown that beer and high-proof alcohol can increase the risk of gout. Wine (in moderation) appears to have no influence. **Sugary drinks:** Drinks that contain lots of (fructose) sugar can also slightly increase the risk of gout. This is true of both sugary drinks like cola as well as fruit juices. Sodas that contain sweeteners instead of sugar are not linked to gout. The risk of gout increases with a higher body mass index. Even if these factors can slightly increase the risk of gout or gout attacks, it is more critical that the kidneys are working and able to lower high levels of uric acid. Gout is a metabolic disorder which causes inflammation of the joints. In acute cases, some joints swell up within just a few hours and become very sensitive to pain. The inflammation is triggered by tiny needle-shaped crystals of uric acid that build up mostly in the joints. These crystals may form if there is too much uric acid in the body. The inflammation normally goes away on its own within one to two weeks. The pain can be relieved by taking anti-inflammatory or pain-relieving medication. Some people already notice an improvement if they avoid certain foods and other possible triggers. Others need to take medication to reduce their uric acid levels over the long-term. It is important to make sure that the inflammation does not become chronic and damage the joints. Attacks often begins at night or in the early morning with sudden, very painful joint swelling. The inflamed joint is sensitive to pressure, and becomes overheated and red. The swelling and other symptoms are usually at their worst after six to twelve hours. The joint often becomes so sensitive that even the weight of a thick blanket can be unbearable. If the swelling goes down after a few days, the skin around the joint may begin to peel. An initial gout attack often only affects one joint, usually the base of the big toe. A lot of the time the midfoot and the ankle joints, the knee, the elbow and the wrist and knuckles also become inflamed. Acute attacks of gout are very rare in the shoulders or hips. If the gout is chronic, the joints will remain slightly inflamed all the time. They may become disfigured and restrict movement over the long term.[12]

Modern system of medicine has no option in metabolic disorders like Gout except the Analgesics and Anti-inflammatory agents. **Ayurveda** has much potential in such disorders. The aggravated *Vata* located in the Shakha (peripheral tissues) and joints cause obstruction to the channels of blood instantaneously. Then the *Vata* and blood enter into, and cause obstruction of each other giving rise to pain and even death. Blood letting is done to lesson the abundance of vitiated blood. If this blood is bled, the morbid materials of blood will be
less. The purpose of blood letting is to give the bone marrow an opportunity to replace the old stagnant blood contaminated with toxins, with fresh blood cells. In pain management, *Raktamokshana* has an excellent role. Probably release of stagnant and coagulated matter from the site may account for this.[13]

The leech produces number of substances including anti coagulant like, hirudin, calin, inhibitors of kallikrein, hyaluronidase, histamine like vasodilators, collagenase and poorly characterized anesthetic and analgesic compounds. It promotes circulation to the local organ and renders thrombolytic, anti-inflammatory and immune stimulant action.[14]

Effectiveness of Leech Therapy in Gambhira Vata-Rakta (Acute Gout): A Pilot Study BY Ashok kumar Panda and Saroj kumar Debnath Department of Ayurveda Research, Ayurveda Regional Research Institute - A unit of CCRAS, Department of AYUSH, Government of India, Gangtok, Sikkim, India. Published March 08, 2012 Showed significant results in pain, tenderness, oedema.

**Line of treatment in general:** In the beginning, *Snehana* – oleation therapy is given to the patient suffering from *Vatarakta*. Thereafter, he is given *Sneha virechana* – purgation therapy with unctuous ingredients (if the patient is slightly unctuous) or *Rooksha Virechana* – if the patient has excess oiliness.

These purgatives are of mild nature. [Sharp purgative may excessively provoke Vayu for which these are contra indicated for the treatment of patients suffering from Vatarakta].


The patient is given medicated enema therapies (both Niruha and Anuvasana) frequently. He is given *Seka* – affusion, *Abhyanga* – massage, *Pradeha* – application of thick ointments Food and unctuous substance which do not cause burning sensation.

*Kwatha* preparations usefull in vaattraka are: *Vasadikwatha, navakaarshikakwatha, guduchyadikwatha, patoladikwatha, manjishtadikwatha* (laghu and brihat).
Gugulu usefull in vatarakta are: kaishore gugulu, amrutadygugulu.

Tail preparations beneficial in vaatrakta are: Marichyadi tail, saarivaditail, padmakaditail. sukumarakatail, amrutadyatail, guduchyaditail, pindatail, balatail (shatapaki and sahastrapaaki). These oils can be administered as nasya, abhyanga, oral, basti.

Paste prepared of the seeds of sweet variety of Sigru – Moringa oleifera by triturating with Dhanyamla (sour liquid prepared of cereals with husk). It is applied for some time over the affected part, and thereafter, the part is affused with sour liquids (Kanji etc) which is beneficial in Vatarakta dominated by Vata and Kapha. Tagaradilepa, prapaundreekadilepa, sarshapadilep, tiladipralep told by aacharya charaka can be used as an external application to reduce Ruja – pain, Daha – burning sensation, Visarpa – erysiples, Raga – redness and, Sopha – swelling. Intake of the decoction of Bodhi tree along with honey instantaneously cures Vatarakta (Gout), even if it is of serious nature being caused by the simultaneous aggravation of all the three Doshas. Inkate of old barley or wheat, Sidhu and Arista types of wine, sura (alcohol) Asava (a type of wine), or Silajatu, Guggulu (Commifora mukul Engl.) and honey cures Vatarakta (gout).

PATHYA
Cereals like old barley, wheat, Nivara (a type of wild rice), and Sali as Sastika types of rice. Soup of the meat of Viskira (Gallinaceous) and Pratuda (Pecker) birds, Soup of Adhaki – Cajanus cajan, Chanaka – Chickpea, Mudga – Green gram, Masura – Lens esculenta and Makustha – Phaseolus aconitifolius added with ghee in liberal quantity. Leafy vegetables like Sunisannaka, tender branches of Vetra (Salix caprea), Kakamachi – Solanum nigrum, Shatavari – Asparagus racemosus, Vastuka – Chenopodium album, Upodika and Sauvarcala (suryavartta) sizzled with ghee and meat-soup. These are to be given to the making side dishes and Milk of cow, buffalo and goat.

APATHYA
Things to be avoided by the patient suffering from Vata Rakta (gout): Diva svapna – Sleep during day time, Santapa – exposure to heat, Vyayama – exercise, Maithuna – sexual intercourse and intake of Katu (pungent), Ushna (hot), Guru (heavy), abhisyandi (ingredients which cause obstruction to the channels of circulation), Lavana (saline) and Amla (sour) ingredients.
CONCLUSION

Time has come upon to explore the principles of Ayurveda to serve the humanity. Advanced technology has made the life easy, which in turn has made the person lazy. He is running behind the success at the cost of his own health. Increasing stress and adoption of western culture has increased the incidences of life style disorders and metabolic disorders. Vatarakta(Gout) is one of the such disease. Ayurveda is the science of life which has the much potential to cure the Vatarakta (gout) from its root and also maintains the healthy life Later on. But this is possible only if we truly follow the chikitsa sutras and pathyaapathya mentioned in the Ayurveda. So there is great need of research on therapeutic principles of Ayurveda, on the formulations, on the therapeutic procedures like raktamokshana, basti etc. World wide many Ayurveda scholars are successfully curing the vatarakta with Ayurveda. These researches should be documented in a proper way, analysis should be done, discussions should be done. Attempts should be done to make the common man aware about the Ayurveda.

REFERENCES


