

Vatakantaka: A Review

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Abstract - In daily life pain is the symptom which changes our activities, affecting the quality of life. Painful heel is one among such pain, which causes difficulty in walking and in turn disturbs daily routines. In Ayurveda Vatakantaka having similar symptoms as heel pain. The term 'Vata kantaka' is made of two words vata & Kantaka. The term 'vata' is derived from the root 'va' meaning 'gatigandhanayoh' that which moves.¹The word kantaka is derived from 'Kati'+ 'evul', which means point of a needle, which is similar to thorn, which becomes troublesome like a minor enemy.²When the foot is kept unevenly on the ground, Vata gets localized and gets aggravated in the kaduka and produces pain. This is known as Vatakantaka.³

In modern science plantar fasciitis is most common cause of heel pain in adults. It is estimated that 1 in 10 people will develop Plantar Fasciitis during their life time.⁴ In present article an attempt is made to understand the Nidana, Samprapti, purvarupa, rupa of vatakantaka with its typical features and treatment described in ayurveda like raktamokshana, agnikarma, swedana.

Keywords: Vatakantaka, plantar fasciitis, raktamokshana, sweda, agnikarma.

I. INTRODUCTION

A painful condition of heel caused by improper placement of foot on the ground is *Vatakantaka*.⁵ It implies pain which is like 'Prick by Thorns'. In this condition patient will have pricking kind of pain in the heels.

Due to exertion and walking on uneven surfaces the aggravated vata takes ashraya in heel and produces pain. As there is repeated abhighata it indicates that there is rakta dhusti also. As a whole we can consider involvement of vata and raktha in this condition.

II. ETIOLOGY

Nidana- Nidana is the cause of disease. It can be aharaja, viharaja or manasika. In vatakantaka along with aharaja, viharaja is the main cause. Acharya vagbhata told excessive srama⁶ as nidana while acharya sushruta⁷, keeping the foot on uneven surfaces is said to be the etiology. Since there is repeated abhighata either because of excessive srama or because of keeping the foot on uneven surface; it can be considered that there will be raktadhusti as well. Increased intake of *teekshna* and *ushna aharas* and *madya*, increased intake of *lavana*, *amla*, and *kshara cause Rakta dushti*.⁸ Meat of aquatic and marshy and *prasaha* types of animal, Curd, *Amla* (Sour) *Mastu*(Whey) *Sukta*, *Sura* (Wine) *Sauviraka* are also included. *Viruddha Ahara*, *Manasika* factors like *krodha*, and habits like sleeping after food, day sleep, excessive exposure to sun and fire, suppression of natural urges like *chardi* is also important factors.

Prodromal Symptoms:

In Ayurveda purvaroopo of vatakantaka is unavailable. According to Acharya Charaka avyakta lakshanas is considered to be the Purvaroopo for all Vata vyadhi.⁹ In commentary on Madhava nidana Vijaya-rakshita told Avyaktham means 'Na Ati Abhivyaktham' and those symptoms which are not exhibited clearly are known as Poorvaroopo. So mild symptoms of vatakantaka can be considered as purvaroopo.¹⁰

Clinical Presentation (Rupa)

Pain is said to be the main clinical presentation in vatakantaka. In all the ayurvedic literatures, in roopavastha similar symptoms of vatakantaka is mentioned; i.e ruja(pain). Even though there is similar opinion in the clinical presentation of vatakantaka as pain, there is difference of opinion in the site of the

pain mentioned by different acharyas. According to acharya sushruta, the site of the ruja is mentioned as khudaka pradesha while acharya vagbhata mentioned ruja at gulfa sandhi. Since vatakantaka is mostly correlated with plantar fasciitis, the site of pain in plantar fasciitis is told to be in the medial tubercle of calcaneum.

Samprapti

Due to sevana of the *nidanans*, *Vata dosha* gets vitiated and lodges in *Gulphasandhi* and produces *Padaruk (khuddakaashrit)* in heel. The *nidanans* like *vishama pada* and *shrama* may leads to *vataprakopa*. The *rakta dushti* happens because of *abhighata* due to placing the *pada* in uneven surfaces, i.e *marga* of *vata* gets blocked by *prakupita rakta*, *Vata* gets *aavrata* by *rakta*.¹¹

Prognosis

Acharya yogarathnakara said *Vatavyadhis* ato be *asadhya* and its management should be done without giving any assurance.¹²

According to *charaka samhita*, *vyadhis* without any *upadravas* in *balvan* patients are said to be curable.¹³

Samanaya Chikitsa

The general treatment protocol is explained for the *vyadhavyadhis* in all the *Ayurvedic* classical texts.

The general treatment told for *Vatavyadhis* are *Snehana*, *svedana*, and *basti*. *Charaka* has advised *dravyas* with *madhura*, *amla*, *lavana*, *snigdha* and *ushna* properties and *upakramas* like *snehana*, *swedana*, *asthapana* and *anuvasana basti*, *nasya*, *abhyanga*, etc. Among all of the above *asthapana* and *anuvasana basti* is told the best treatment for *vata*.¹⁴

Methods *Veshtana*, *trasana*, *madya*, *sneha siddha* with *deepana* and *pachana* drugs, *mamsarasa* and *anuvasana basti* pacify the *vata*. In *Ashtang Samgraha* *ritucharya* of *Hemant ritu* is indicated in *vatavyadies* According to *Sushruta shirobasti*, *shirosneha*, *snaihik dhumapana*, *sukhoshna gandusha* is advised for the treatment of *vatavyadhis*.¹⁵

III. VISESHA CHIKITSA

Siraveda is considered as a treatment of *Vatakantaka* by *Acharya Susruta* and followed by *Vagbhata*. It should be done 2 *Angula* above *Kshipramarma* with *Vreehimukha Shastra*.¹⁶

In *Vangasena Samhita*, *Chakradatta*, *Gadanigraha* and *Bhaishjyarnavali*. They have stated *Rakthamokshana*, *Pana* of *Erandathaila* and *Daha* with *Soochi* as line of treatment of *Vatakantaka*.^{17, 18, 19}

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