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Review Article

UNDERSTANDING OF VISVACHI OR BRACHIAL NEURALGIA (BRACHIAL NEURITIS)

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Abstract:

Visvachi is a *vata vyadhi*. *Vatavyadhi* are specific diseases caused by vitiated *vata*. Various types of *vata vyadhi* have been described in detail. All *Ayurvedic Acharyas* have described *vatavyadhi* in separate chapter which shows the importance of *vatavyadhi*. *Vatavyadhi* are rare but these are very difficult to treat. *Visvachi* is comparable to the brachial neuralgia or brachial neuritis of modern medicine, in which a radiating pain in the shoulder and upper arm caused by damage to a nerve in the brachial plexus of neck.

Key Words: *Visvachi*, *Vata vyadhi*, Brachial neuritis, Neuralgia etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Excessively vitiated *vata* after entering the *kandara* of the palm, fingers and back of arms causes impairment or loss of sensory and motor functions of the same is known as *visvachi* [1]. In this condition flexion, extension power decreases [2]. It is very difficult to treat. In modern era it can be understood as brachial neuritis in which the nerves that control shoulder, arm, and hand become inflamed. These nerves, forming what is known as the brachial plexus, run from spinal cord along neck and shoulder into arm. Brachial neuritis can cause severe pain in shoulder and, when this subsides, shoulder may be weak, limiting movement. Brachial neuritis is uncommon. The condition often begins suddenly, and frequently the pain will begin during the night [3].

a) **Etiology[4]-** *Visvachi* is a *vata vyadhi* and according to *Ayurveda* disturbed and provoked *vata* is responsible for the development of *vata vyadhi*. *Vata* gets aggravated by adopting

- Excessive consumption of ununctuous, cold, scanty, and light food
- Excessive sexual intercourse
- Excess vigilance
- Improper therapeutic procedure
- Excessive elimination of *doshas* and *rakta* (*Dhatukshaya*)
- Excess fasting
- Excessive movements as jumping, leaping and vigorous exercises
- Excessive emaciation due to worry, grief, and affliction of diseases
- Sleeping and sitting in odd posture
- Fear and suppression of natural urges
- *Ama dosha*
- Trauma, injuries to vital body parts, falling down from elephants, horses etc.

Besides these *margavarana* also causes vitiation of *vata*[5]. When *vata* is surrounded by either other *doshas* or *dhatu*s or *mala* or *ama*, normal movements of *vata* get obstructed, causes vitiation of *vata*.

In modern medicine while the cause remains unknown, brachial neuritis is known to occur in association with certain factors, which include [6]:

- A recent infection caused by bacteria or viruses
- Parasite infestation
- Illnesses such as systemic lupus erythematosus
- Vaccinations
- Accidental injury elsewhere in the body
- Surgery
- Medical procedures such as a lumbar puncture
- Giving birth

Symptoms of *Vata Prakopa*[7]:-

• <i>Sransa</i>	• Looseness
• <i>Bhransa</i>	• Dislocation
• <i>Vyasha</i>	• Expansion
• <i>Sanga</i>	• Obstruction
• <i>Bheda</i>	• Separation
• <i>Sada</i>	• Depression
• <i>Harsha</i>	• Excitation
• <i>Varta</i>	• Circular movement
• <i>Chala</i>	• Motion
• <i>Toda</i>	• Piercing pain
• <i>Vyatha</i>	• Pain or discomfort
• <i>Khara</i>	• Coarseness
• <i>Parusha</i>	• Harshness
• <i>Vishada</i>	• Non Sliminess
• <i>Sushira</i>	• Porousness
• <i>Aruna varna</i>	• Reddish luster
• <i>Kashaya rasa</i>	• Astringent taste in mouth
• <i>Virasha mukha</i>	• Tasteless in mouth
• <i>Sosha</i>	• Wasting
• <i>Sula</i>	• Various kinds of pain
• <i>Supti</i>	• Numbness
• <i>Sankoca</i>	• Contraction
• <i>Stambha</i>	• Rigidity
• <i>Khanja</i>	• Lameness

- Increase in qualities and action of *Vata*

b) **Prodromal symptoms** -Premonitory signs and symptoms of are distinct so of *visvachi* also.

c) **Signs and Symptoms [9]** -In *Ayurveda* signs and symptoms of *vata vyadhi* are divided in two categories

1. *Samanya rupa* (General sign and symptoms)
2. *Vishesha rupa* (Specific sign and symptoms)

1. *Samanya rupa* (General sign and symptoms)

Contraction, stiffness of joints, tearing pain in bones and joints, horripilation, delirium, spasticity of hands, back and head, lameness of hands and feet, hunch back, atrophy of limbs, insomnia, destruction of foetus, twitching sensation and numbness of body, crookedness of head, nose, eye, clavicular region and back, splitting pain, pricking pain, distress, convulsions, mental confusion and other features as per involvement of lesions.

2. *Vishesha rupa* (Specific sign and symptoms)

Pain is the main feature of *vata vyadhi*. This pain may be of various types as bursting, colicky, exploding, hitting, hammering, pricking, pinching, piercing, squeezing, spasmodic, tearing etc.

According to modern medicine although the duration and severity of each phase may vary according to the individual, brachial neuritis generally begins with pain, which leads to a period of muscle weakness. The symptoms may experience include [10]:

- Sudden, intense shoulder pain, most often in the right shoulder, but sometimes in both
- The pain is described as stabbing or burning
- The pain becomes worse movement of shoulder
- The pain is only relieved by the strongest painkillers, and remains constant for a number of hours or even weeks
- As the pain goes away, some of shoulder muscles are weak or even paralyzed
- Wasting of muscles
- Occasionally, areas of numbness that develop in arm or shoulder
- Shortness of breath if the nerve to diaphragm is affected

d) *Pathogenesis*

Pathogenesis of all *vata vyadhi* are very similar but manifestation of diseases occur where *doshas* get *kha vaigunya* (Vitiated Channels). In this aggravated *vata*

fills up the empty channels and moves greatly inside them or by getting enveloped by the other *doshas*, which have filled up the channels and produces different types of ailments affecting the whole body or part of a body [11].

MATERIAL METHOD

Various *Ayurvedic*, modern literature, text books, articles, and journals are studied for this review work.

RESULT

It is a type of review article so any result cannot be drawn.

DISCUSSION

Vata being the most powerful of all the *doshas* having the capacity to manifests acute diseases, nature of diseases being serious, very difficult to treat. Nerve root pain comes from a nerve in the spine. Nerves carry messages about sensations and control of muscles and so disorders of nerves can cause pain, numbness, increased sensitivity or weakness of muscles. The pain is often felt in the area of the body supplied by that nerve. Brachial neuralgia (nerve pain in the arm) is very similar to sciatica but comes from the neck nerves. Sometimes the pain goes down the arm as far as a specific finger [12]. *Sransa* (looseness), *bhransha* (dislocation) in various parts of body caused by vitiated *vata* may also cause herniation of vertebrae in any region. Due to herniation of disc nerve compresses leading to neuritis and ultimately produces symptoms according to area of manifestation. *Sanga* (Obstruction) can be understood obstruction in the movement of normal motor or sensory impulses as a result limbs do not function well. In *Ayurveda* it has been said that there is no pain without involvement of *vata*. Surgery, trauma and giving birth causes of brachial neuritis may be due to *dhatukshaya* that is excessive loss of *rakta dhatu* as *dhatukshaya* is also one of the most important factor causing vitiation of *vata*.

General approach of management [13]

Oleation, fomentation, palliation and purification are included in general treatment of *vatika* disorders.

- *Snehana karma* (Oleation therapy)
- *Brahana* dietary food

- *Anuvasana vasti*
- *Swedana* (Fomentation)
- *Mridu virechana* (Soft purgatives)- following formulations are preferred for this purpose
 - *Tilvaka siddha ghrita*
 - *Satala siddha ghrita*
 - *Eranda* oil with milk
- *Vatanulomana*
- *Niruha vasti*
- *Nasya karma*

CONCLUSION

On the basis of above description it can be concluded that although in present era all the diseases related to nerves may have different etiology, pathology, management but in ancient era all these diseases were included under one broad group *vatavyadhi* which has same etiology, pathology, signs and symptoms and line of management but produces deformity according to area of manifestation of disease.

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