ABSTRACT

Low back pain with sciatic pain is a major cause for morbidity and hampers quality of life of patients all over world. Signs and symptoms of Grudhrasi described in Ayurved samhitas are similar to those of sciatica. Excessive travel, improper food habits, lack of exercise, traumatic injuries, inflammation of spine and intervertebral discs are common etiological factors found in Grudhrasi (sciatica). As per Modern medicine, NSAIDs, steroids, local (epidural) injections, surgery are available treatments at present owing its some adverse effects. A case of Grudhrasi treated with Ayurvedic line of treatment is discussed in this present article. Patient was treated with Ayurvedic medicine formulations, Snehan (local massage with oil), Swedan (hot fomentation) and Basti (medicated enema) who was not relieved by NSAIDs. Patient showed good symptomatic relief with this treatment increasing our confidence in Principles of Ayurveda. Multiple such trials are necessary to prove usefulness of Ayurveda principles with modern correlation.

Keywords: Grudhrasi, Sciatica, Snehan, Swedan, Basti, Ayurveda treatment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Low back pain is one of disease conditions, which is causing morbidity and hampering quality of life of diseased person all over the world nowadays. Excessive traveling, improper food habits, lack of exercise, traumatic injuries, improper posture for long time, inflammation or bulging of intervertebral disc causing compression of nerve roots plays major role in etiopathogenesis of such pain. The pain starting in lumber region and radiating to one or both legs causing pain, stiffness, numbness is considered as sciatica or sciatic pain. The lifetime incidence of sciatica varies from 13% to 40%. The annual incidence of an episode of sciatica ranges from 1- 5%. 1

Patients of sciatica are mostly treated with analgesics, NSAIDs, steroids orally or locally (epidural injection) or surgery now a days. Medicinal treatment has its own limitations and some adverse effects along with benefits. Local steroid injections or surgery are rarely required and need expert doctors, also put financial burden on patient. Hence indigenous treatment with Ayurveda which has no adverse effects if given properly can be beneficial to such patients. Ayurveda has also emphasized on omission of etiological factors and giving strength to particular body part or system depending on disease which prevents recurrence of disease. Treatment with Ayurveda is easy, cost effective and non-invasive improving quality of life of patient.

Similar symptoms like sciatica are seen in disease Grudhrasi. Grudhrasi is a disease described under vata vyadhi chikitsa adhyaya in chikitsa sthan of Charaka samhita. In Grushrasi the pain starts from buttock in lumber region and radiates to thigh (Uru), knee (Janu), calf (Jangha) to reach foot (Pada). Pain may be severe and cause stiffness (stambha), restrictions.
to movements (sankoch). Sometimes it is prickling type. The entire region may show spanda (flickering movement). These symptoms are seen in vata predominant Grudhrasi. When there is kapha dosha along with vata dosha, above symptoms are accompanied by dullness (tandra), heaviness in that part of body and anorexia (aruchi). As Grudhrasi is Vata vyadhi i.e., Vata is important factor in samprapti (pathogenesis), the etiological factors responsible for vitiation of Vata are also responsible for development of Grudhrasi. Common causes for vitiation of vata dosha are described in Charaka samhita in vata-vyadhi chikitsa adhyaya.

Causative factors for vitiation of Vata dosha includes taking food which is ruksha (devoid of oiliness) and laghu in guna, sheeta virya, taking food in less quantity than required, excessive sexual activity, not sleeping till late night, improper processing of purification of body with vaman, virechana etc. Pan-chakarmas, excessive blood letting, excessive fasting, exercise, body movements, walking and travel, decrease in volume of Rasadi sapta dhatu in body, loss of body weight due to worry, unhappiness (shoka) or disease, sitting or sleeping on uncomfortable seat or bed, excessive anger, fear, sleeping in day time, holding / stopping natural urges like flatus, micturition etc., production of Aam, trauma to body and vital parts (marma ) of body and due to fall from vehicle or animals like elephant, horse etc. The vata dosha when vitiated due to such hetus (etiological factors), enters the empty spaces (strotas) in body and then produces diseases in one part of body or all over body with various symptoms.

Doshas produce different symptoms depending on the site of disease in the body. Three main rogmarga (sites) are described by acharya charaka – koshtha, shakha, marmasthisandhi (madhyam marga). In Grudhrasi, doshas are situated in asthi, sandhi, snayu etc. i.e., in madhyam marga. Whenever Asthi dhatu is vitiatiated by doshas, shows signs and symptoms like excess of bones or teeth over previous one, breaking of bones or teeth, pain in bones or teeth, discoloration of bones or teeth and diseases of hairs, nails etc. When snayu, sira, kandara (muscles, vessels, ligaments) get vitiatiated show signs and symptoms like stambha (stiffness), sankoch (contracture or restricted movements), khalli, granthi (nodules like Rheumatoid nodules) and sphuran (flickering movements of body or body part). Hence during treatment of Grudhrasi it is important to treat the dosha, dhatu, upadhatu, strotas involved in it. Vata and kapha dosha, asthi, majja, rakta, mamsa dhatu and upadhatu snayu are involved in pathogenesis of disease Grudhrasi.

Acharya Vagbhata, while describing treatment of vata dosha dushti, asked for snehapan (oleation therapy), swedan (hot fomentation), mild purgation, food with madhura, amla, lavana rasa dominance, madhya, abhyanga, mardana and basti treatment. Acharya Charaka also emphasized on above treatment protocols in vata vyadhi chikitsa adhyaya. Charaka has advised to apply oil (sneha) to respective part of body or whole body and hot fomentation (swedan) with nadi sweda, prastar sweda, sankar sweda or any other suitable sweda procedure for treatment of vata vyadhi. Treatment with external and internal oleation therapy is advised by him in vata vyadhi chikitsa adhyaya when vata enters Asthi and majja dhatu. Charaka also advised that, when disease involves Asthi dhatu (dhatugata avastha) or doshas are situated in Asthi dhatu, it should be treated with panchakarma like vaman, virechana etc., especially with basti (medicated enema) with milk and ghee fortified with medicines of tikta rasa (bitter taste). All these principles of treatment should be taken into account during treatment of any disease due to vata dominance including Grudhrasi. In the treatment of Grudhrasi, Acharya Charaka has advised for blood-letting from vein which is situated near ankle joint and Agnikarma advised at the same site. Along with it basti karma is also advised in treatment of Grudhrasi.

Sciatica is a disease of peripheral nervous system. It is a radicular pain experienced by patient starting from buttocks to one or both
legs with or without paresthesia in the distribution of sciatic nerve. It also restricts movements of that part making patient dependent on others. It occurs due to irritation of sciatic nerve or its root in spine. Sciatic nerve is longest and largest nerve in human body starting from lumbar sacral vertebrae and running up to foot.\(^{14}\) The sciatic nerve is made up of L4 – S2 nerve roots and runs posteriorly from buttocks to thigh, calf and foot sole. It has motor activity in upper part of leg while sensory and motor activity in lower leg and foot. Nerve root compression due to herniated discs, disc degeneration, lumber canal stenosis, spinal tumors, spondylolisthesis of lumber vertebrae, lumber and pelvic muscle spasm and / or inflammation may impinge a lumber / sacral nerve root causing sciatic symptoms.\(^{15}\) Following factors are seen to have positive influence with the development of sciatica - Increasing height in old age group, Genetic pre-disposition, smoking, walking and jogging in previously known patient, occupation - particularly associated with physical activity involving flexion/ torsion of trunk, driving etc.\(^{1}\)

Present article is related to the patient of Grudhrasi, who was treated with Ayurvedic medicines and Panchakarma considering all above-mentioned principles in mind. At the end of treatment patient reported good relief from his symptoms. One should emphasize on Ayurvedic concepts and principals while performing Ayurvedic treatment of any disease. This article is written to pass this message to Ayurveda scholar and to increase their faith in Ayurveda.

2. CASE REPORT

2.1. Case History

A 56 years male patient, sales person by profession, visited to Kayachikitsa outpatient department with following complaints from 15 days.

- Severe low back pain radiating from buttock to thigh, calf and foot of left leg
- Numbness / heaviness in entire left leg
- Restricted movement of left leg
- Difficulty in walking
- Anorexia (Aruchi)

He had taken primary treatment with NSAIDs, muscle relaxants and steroids but symptoms were not relieved completely, hence visited to our hospital in order to get Ayurvedic treatment. On reviewing history, it was found that he was traveling daily about 70 - 80 km on bike on uneven roads, had irregular timings of meal, used to eat cold (shit) - dry (ruksha) or oily food, cold drinks. He had irregular bowel habits mostly constipation was observed. SLR (Straight Leg Raising) test was performed which was positive for 50°. X- Ray photograph showed no major abnormalities but some signs of inflammation. Hence patient was diagnosed to have Grudhrasi.

2.2. Samprapti ghataka (factors involved in pathogenesis)

- **Doshha - Vata dominant kapha**
- **Dushya - Asthi, Rasa, Mamsa (Snayu), Rakta (Kandara)**
- **Strotodushti - Asthivaha, Rasavaha, Raktavaha (Kandara), Mamsavaha, Annavaha, purishvaha**
- **Mala - Apan vayu, Purisha**

2.3. Treatment given

2.3.1. Shamana chikitsa

- Tab. Ekangveera rasa 500 mg TDS\(^{16}\)
- Tab. Kaishor guggul 500 mg TDS\(^{17}\)
- Liq. Dashmularishta 20 ml TDS\(^{18}\)

All above formulations are given in Apan Kala\(^ {19} \) (before meal) with warm water as vyadhi is located in territory of Apan vayu.\(^ {20} \) Shanman chikitsa was continued for 15 days.

2.3.2. Sthanika chikitsa

- **Sthanik (local) abhyanga (oil massage) with Sahachar oil**\(^ {21} \)
- **Nadisweda** (hot fomentation with steam by tube) at the affected part (Nadisweda was performed with steam generated from decoction of Dashamula, Nirgundi and Erandapatra.)

2.3.2. Shodhan chikitsa

Tiktaksheer basti\(^ {22} \) (medicated enema) is done with milk fortified by five bitter plants- panchatikata (Nimba, Patol, Guduchi, Vasa, Kantakari) and Ashwagandha ghrut in quantity of
150 ml after meal for 10 days continuously.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of therapy are summarized in Table No 1. The patient showed 50% relief in radicular pain after 10 days of treatment. The symptoms like restricted movement and numbness / heaviness showed 75 % relief while Aruchi / anorexia was absent after 10 days of treatment. SLR test which was positive at 50° on beginning of treatment improved up to 75° after 10 days. On completion of treatment on day 15, there was slight radicular pain but all other symptoms were relieved completely. SLR was negative on day 15.

Tab. Panchatikta ghrut guggul 500 mg TDS, Tab. Abhadi guggul 500 mg BD, and Praval pishti (powder) 250 mg BD with milk is prescribed to patient as Rasayan (Rejuvenating) treatment for next 15 days. On follow up after 30 days patient showed no recurrence of any symptom was observed.

Hetu (etiology), samprapti (pathogenesis) and clinical features indicated disease Grudhrasi of left leg. There was Vata predominance with associated Kapha dosha. Vitiated Vata and Kapha dosha were brought to normal state by ushna, tikshna, vatanuloman and vatakapha shaman properties of Ekangveer rasa, Kaishor guggul and Dashmularishta. Kaishor guggul. Anulomana was achieved by ingredients like Triphala and Nishottara which helped to bring Vata in its normal direction. Inflammation at spine, intervertebral disc and paraspinal muscles was decreased by Guduchi and other ingredients of Kaishor guggul. Muscle spasm was relieved by decreasing pain by ingredients of Ekangveer rasa. Aruchi (anorexia) which was due to Agnimandya was relieved by ushna-tikshna, deepan, pachan drugs in Ekangveer rasa and Dashmularishta. Restricted movements due to sankoch (constriction and stiffness) of Snayu and kandara was relieved by massage with sahachar oil and hot fomentation by Nadisweda. Snayu kandara rakta dushti was brought to normal with snehan swedan and Tiktaksheer basti. Tiktaksheer basti has brought vata to its normal state and has given strength to Asthi and Snayu in turn to spine, intervertebral discs and paraspinal muscles.

Grudhrasi is disease of vata predominance, situated in madhyam marga and involving asthi, sandhi, snayu, kandara, majja, mamsa, rakta, rasa dhatu and their strotas. In this patient above samprapti ghataka were present along with association of kapha dosha and disturbance in annavaha - purishavaha strotas was present. Hence, treatment was done with vatashaman, deepan – pachana medicines to break samprapti. All the formulations used in this treatment brought vitiated vata and kapha dosha to normal state with their properties. After relief in symptoms drugs like panchatikta ghrut guggul, praval pishti and abhadi guggul given to strengthen body tissues involved in disease which prevent recurrence of disease and symptoms.

Ayurvedic treatment is helpful in most of the cases of Grudhrasi / sciatica. But in some cases, where etiological factor for sciatica is tumor, hematoma at spine, herniation or rupture of intervertebral discs causing entrapment and compression of nerve roots. In such cases surgical intervention is necessary. This case study is one of the protocols used in our daily OPD with positive outcome in the treatment of Grudhrasi. More such cases with different etiological factors should be treated with this protocol to confirm its benefits on large scale.

4. CONCLUSION

While treating any patient of Grudhrasi, samprapti ghataka must be taken into consideration and hence same treatment to all patients of Grudhrasi will not be effective. It was observed that Ayurvedic treatment of any disease done after proper understanding of samprapti and samprapti ghataka always gives fruitful results. Many such cases together will provide clear evidences.

REFERENCES

1. Stafford MA, Peng P, Hill DA. Sciatica: A review of history, epidemiology, pathogene-


18. Ibidem 17, P. 646-650


TABLES

Table 1: Assessment of treatment outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Symptom / signs</th>
<th>Day 0</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Day 10</th>
<th>Day 15</th>
<th>Day 30</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Radicular pain</td>
<td>+++++</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Restricted movements</td>
<td>+++++</td>
<td>++++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Numbness / heaviness</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aruchi / anorexia</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SLR TEST</td>
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<td>75°</td>
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