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A Historical Review of Amavata

Narendra Narware^{1*}, Pradipkumar Suryawanshi² and Sasmita Tripathy³

¹Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, Shri Narayan Prasad Awasthi Govt. Ayurved College Raipur, Chhattisgarh India

²Govt. Ayurved College Bilashpur, Chhattisgarh, India

³Shri Narayan Prasad Awasthi Govt. Ayurved College Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India

ABSTRACT

Amavata is a systemic disease. In the present era it is the most common disease that affects all races. Women are affected more often than men. Amavata has been named taking into two predominant pathological factors as Ama and Vata. Amavata has been described since ancient times which can be classified into Vedic kala, Samhita kala, Samgraha kala and Adhunka kala for its historical review purpose. One of the oldest records of the disease is a brief description in the Rigveda. This roughly dates back to 1500 B.C. Indian physician Madhava wrote a full description of Amavata. Presently Ayurvedic authors have correlated the disease Amavata with Rheumatoid arthritis on the basis of clinical features and pathogens. It is due to derangement of Agni like Jatharagni Dhatavagni and Bhutagni etc. because production of Ama and it plays a major role in the manifestation of the disease. It is also considered the root cause of the maximum number of diseases as per the Ayurvedic concept. That primarily causes joint inflammation, pain, loss of function, eventual joint destruction, and deformity, mainly in the small joints. The aetiology of the disease is still unknown.

KEYWORDS

Amavata, Historical review of Amavata, Rheumatoid Arthritis



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INTRODUCTION

Amavata is one of the crippling diseases causing the maximum loss of human power. It is not only a disorder of the locomotor system but is also a systemic disease and is named after its chief pathogenic consistency. Which are *Ama* and *Vata*. The main causative factor *Ama* is caused due to malfunction of the digestive and metabolic mechanisms. *Ama* and *Vata* are chiefly pathogenic factors. *Kapha* and *Pitta* are also invariably involved in its *Samprapti* especially *Shleshak kapha* in the *Amavata*. This produces joint pain and swelling with tenderness. This disease is mainly due to derangement of *Agni* that is *Jatharagni*, *Dhatavagni* and *Bhutagni*, etc. resulting in the production of *Ama*. *Amavata* has been available since the period of *Charaka* in different contexts. *Amavata* has been described since ancient times which can be classified into *Vedic kala*, *Samhita kala*, *Samgraha kala* and *Adhunik kala*.

Historical Review:-

Historical aspect of *Amavata* is considered first for better understanding.

History is a subject, which accurately clarifies the event of the past. While searching for the historical background of *Amavata*, there is reference in *Vedic* or *Ayurveda* classics; one has to look into

different periods of history in both *Ayurveda* classics and modern science.

Historical Interpretation

- ❖ *Vedic Kala* (6000 B.C-4000 B.C)
- ❖ *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata Kala* (3000 B.C-1500 B.C)
- ❖ *Pauranic Kala* (3000 B.C-1500 B.C)
- ❖ *Samhita Kala* (200 B.C-1200 B.C)
- ❖ *Samgraha Kala* (7th A.D-16th A.D)
- ❖ *Madhya Kala*
- ❖ *Adhunik Kala* (After 16th A.D)
- ❖ **Vedic Kala:-** The main source of knowledge in this field, remain the *Vedas*. The divine books of knowledge *Vedas* are four in number such as *Rigveda*, *Samveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*. First *Veda* is *Rigveda* and *Ayurveda* is called *Upaveda* of *Atharvaveda*. To a great extent, *Ayurveda* is related to *Atharvaveda*. According to *Rigveda* human beings were affected by *Vata Vyadhi*. So *Vayu* is requested to bring the medicines for the eradication of said disease. Similarly *Vayu* is represented as *Amrtanidhi* 10/186/1.

References regarding *Amavata* are: -

1. **Rigveda:-** It is the oldest and most important *Veda* amongst all the four *Vedas*. -*Amavata* is not mentioned clearly but the description of disease like *Vikriti* of *Asthi* and *sandhi* clearly show their existence during that era.



-Although description of *Ama* has been used in various forms like “*Amayath*” 19/114/41 and “*Amavata*” 10/86/231 but no clear reference about *Amavata* is found in *Rigveda*.

-Another reference regarding removal of disease from *Anga-Anga*, *Parva-Parva*, *Loma-Loma* is found in *Rigveda*¹. (*Rigveda*10/163/6)

-Also another reference regarding removal of disease from *Griva*, *Stambha*, *Ushnisha* (*dhamni*) and *Sandhi* is found in the following verse. This is *Adhishtan* of *Amavata*². (*Rigveda* 10/163/2)

2.Yajurveda: - Classification of *Vata* is available in *Yajurveda* (1:20) but no description related to *Amavata* has been given. In 23rd chapter of *Yajurveda*, they have described *Prana*, *Apana*, and *Vyana* *Vayu* haven of drugs namely *Ambe*, *Ambeke*, *Ambapalike*³. (23 Chapter 1324/18)

-Various drugs are also mentioned in this *Veda* like *Vibhitaki* and *Guggullu* which we use in disease like *Amavata* presently.

3. Samveda: - No reference regarding *Amavata* has been found.

4.Atharvaveda: -The origin of Ayurveda is attributed to Atharvaveda, where several diseases with their treatment has been mentioned and various contexts of Ayurveda and so Ayurveda is called Upaveda of Atharvaveda.

There is no clear cut reference about *Amavata* but treatment of *parva* and *loma* diseases is available in Atharvaveda. This is closely related to *Amavata*⁴. (*Atharvaveda* 2/9/1)

There is description of “*Dashvriksha Virudha*” which is used in *Grahi Roga* and the meaning of *Grahi Roga* is “*Parvasu Jagrah*” that is to say description of the disease located in *Sandhi*. This is closely related with *Amavata*⁵. (*Atharvaveda* 2/33/7)

There is a description of methodology by *kashyap* which is said to treat disease located in *Parva*, *Loma* and all over the body and described some medicines like- *Guggullu*, *Vishwabheshja* and *Trivrita*. This is used for treatment of *Amavata*.

There is no explicit mention of the word *Amavata*; it is similar to -

Aamay -*Atharva Piplad* (19/15/5)

Amayam-*Atharva Piplad* (19/55/7)

Hence there is no description of the name of disease in the *Veda*. Explicitly but description of some related medicine is available.

❖ **Pauranikakala:** - From *Ayurveda* point of view, out of 18 *Purana*'s *Garuda purana* and *Agni purana* are of great significance. In both *Purana*'s no reference has been found regarding the disease *Amavata* but there is a separate chapter of *Vata* (AP 285/40) in *Agni purana*. Some



description of *Sandhigata Vata*, *Majjagata Vata* and *Sarvanga Vata* has been found.

The benefits of *Rasna*, *Guduchi*, *Eranda*, *Devdaru* and *Mahaushadha* for *Asthigata Amavata*, *Sandhigata Amavata*, *Majjagata Amavata* and *Sarvanga Amavata* have been mentioned here.

Use of *Jirneyava*, *Godhuma*, *Shalichawala*, *Jangalamasarasa*, *Mudga*, *Amalaka*, *Kharjura*, *Mridvika*, *Badara*, *Madhu*, *Sarpi*, *Vaya*, *Sakra*, *Nimba*, *Parapati*, *Vrisha* and *Takrarishta* has mentioned in *Agni purana* for *VataVyadhi*⁷. (AP 279/25-26)

❖ **Samhita kala:** -The period in which the *Ayurveda samhita* has been written is named as *Samhita kala*. The main classical texts of this era are *Charka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* as well as other *Samhita* like *Kashyap Samhita*, *Bhela Samhita*, *Chakradatta Samhita*, *Harita Samhita* and other *Samhita*'s. It was the golden age of *Ayurveda* literature.

● **Charka Samhita:** - The first *Samhita* of *bruhatrayi* is *Charka Samhita*. The *Agniveshatantra* re-edited by *Acharya Charaka* and destroyed part of his *samhita* was re-edited by *Dridhabala* in the main available text. He was one of the principal contributors to *Ayurveda*, a system of medicine and lifestyle developed in Ancient India. *Charaka samhita* is one of the oldest and most important ancient *samhita*.

Acharya Charaka has described *Ama* at four different places but no direct reference is available regarding *Amavata*.

1. Therapeutic use of *Kansa Haritaki Cha.Chi* 12/52 under *Shotha Chikitsadhikara* has been given⁸.

2. Therapeutic use of *Vishaladi Phanta Cha. Chi* 16/62 under *Pandurogadhikara* has been given⁹.

3. *Avarana* of *Vata* by *Ama* and its treatment is mentioned in *Cha. Chi.* 28/195 under *Vatavyadhirogadhikara* has been given¹⁰.

4. Treatment of *Amapachan* explained by *Charka* in *Grahani Chikitsa* 15/98 is almost similar to that of *Amavata Chikitsa* described by other *Acharya*¹¹.

● **Sushruta Samhita:** - *Acharya Sushruta* has described *Ama* in *Visuchika Pratishedha Adhyaya* in the *Uttara Tantra*. It is mentioned here that *Ama* produces disease and pain wherever it is located in the body.

The place in which *Ama* is present and gives rise to pain that place itself should be considered especially as origin of diseases caused by the doses and that should be determined by the presence of own symptoms of *Ama* in that place¹². (Su.U.T.56/10)

● **Bhela Samhita:** -*Acharya Bhela* mentioned *Ama* in a chapter of “*Ath Ama*



Pradoshiya Adhyay” and *Pradoshjanya Vyadhi* which seems like that of *Amavata*. They described creation of *Ama* in the body¹³. (Bhe.Sa.Su.10/1-2)

Decoction of *Sunthi*, *Prativisha* and *Musta* are assimilation of *Ama*¹⁴. (Bhe.Sa.Su.10/17)

Powder of *Musta*, *Hingu*, *Trikatu*, *Patha*, *Vatsa*, *Haritaki* and *Prativisa* as well as *Chitraka* are the destruction of *Ama*¹⁵. (Bhe.Sa.Su.10/18)

• **Kashyap Samhita:** -

No reference regarding *Amavata* has been found in this *Samhita*.

• **Harita Samhita:** - *Harita Samhita* is one of the classical works on *Ayurveda* medicine, which is written in between 6th to 7th century AD. This book is written in a conversation module, and the conversation was between *Maharishi Atreya* and *Acharya Harita*. *Acharya Harita* has proposed his own new concepts in his texts. The 3rd *sthana*, 24th chapter deals with a detailed description of *Amavata*¹⁷ including etiopathogenesis, symptomatology, classification, prognosis, treatment and dietary regimen. A full chapter on *Amavata* has been described by *Harita* in *Tritiya Sthana* of chapter-21 and in this chapter there is explanation about type of *Amavata* as *Sarvangi*, *Pakvi*, *Gulmi*, *Sneha* and *Vishthambhi*, but available *Harita Samhita*

is controversial text, so it is difficult to say it is of *Samhita* period or not.

❖ **Sangraha Kala:** - *Acharya vriddhvagbhata* is one of the most influential classical writers of *Astanga Samgraha* and *Ashtangahridaya*, which is written by *Vagbhata*, they are two main texts of this time.

• **Ashtanga Samgraha:** - Though there is no reference of *Amavata* as a separate disease entity in *Astanga Hridaya* but treatment of *Amavata* has mentioned in the Chapter of *Vatashonitachikitsitam* in *chikitsa Sthana*.

• When increase *Kapha* obstructed channels (*srotas*) resulting *Vata* gets aggravated. then *Snehana* (oleation) and *Brihana* (stoutening therapy) should not be administered first, the method of treatment prescribed for *Aadya Vata* (*Amavata*) should be done first and then that of *gout*, oleation therapy and measures to purify the blood¹⁷. (*A.S.Chi.24/28-29*)

By adopting sudation, fasting, thinning methods and digestive therapies when the *Ama* condition changes into *Nirama* then treatment such as applying dry pastes and fermentation should be done to subdue *Vata*¹⁸. (*A.S.Chi.24/33*)

• **Ashtanga Hridaya:** - There are no clear reference regarding *Amavata* as a disease but *Amavata* term has been found on



Nidanam Sthana in the Chapter of *Vatashonita Adhyaya*¹⁹ and their symptoms similar like *Amavata*. (A.H.Ni.16/29-30)

Therapeutic use of *Amritadi Churna* in *A.H. Chi* 17/40 under *Shvayathu Chikitsa* has been given but not mentioned for *Amavata*²⁰.

❖ **Madhya Kala:-**

● **Madhava Nidana:** -*Madhava* was a 7th century or early 8th century Indian physician who wrote the *Roga-vinischaya*, also known as the *Madhava Nidana*, which soon assumed a position of authority. In the 79 chapters of this book, he lists diseases along with their causes, symptoms and complications. He also included a chapter 25 on *Amavata*. But has not described its treatment. He has given a statement on it. After *Madhava* almost all the author have included *Amavata* as a separate disease entity in their texts

● **Chakradatta:** - *Chakradatta* was a 15th century Indian physician. Some treatment therapy mentioned in *Chakradattachapter-25* based on easily available medicinal plants, are enlisted. He was first author to given *Chikitsa Sutra* of *Amavata* in chapter of *Amavata chikitsa*.

● **Sharngadhara Samhita:** - *Sharngadhara Samhita* is a classical text book of *Laghutrayi*. He is assigned to the early part of 14th century A.D. Four types of

Amavata are mentioned such as-*Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja* and *Sannipataja*.

● **Yoga Ratnakar:-***Yogaratnakar* is one of the renowned treatises on Indian medicine. It is an extract of Indian medicine discussed in several books ranging from ancient period to later part of the 17th century AD. He has described *Amavata* in the last Chapter of *Purvardha Khanda*.

● **Yoga Tarangini:** -*Yoga Tarangini* was a 18th century Indian physician. He has a full description of *Amavata* in Chapter number 42.

● **Yogasara:-***Yogasara* was a 16th century Indian physician. Compiled by *Daksa*. No reference regarding *Amavata* has been found.

● **Vrihat Yogatarangini:** -*Timalla Bhatta* (17th century AD) has mentioned *Amavata* on Taranga 93rd in his *Vrihat Yogatarangini*.

● **Bhava Prakash:** -He has mentioned *Amavata* in Chapter 26.

● **Bhaishajya Ratnavali:** - *Bhaishajya Ratnavali* is a book of *Ayurveda*. Its creator is *Govindadas*. It is not known exactly when and where it was composed. But the first publication was from *Kolkata* in 18 century. He has the description of *Amavata* along with management of disease in chapter number 36th.



❖ **Adhunika Kala:** - It is from the 19th century onwards.

● **Kaviraj Ganannath Sen:** - He has described *Amavata* as *Rasavata* in *Adhunika Kala* and Compared to *Rasavata* with Rheumatoid arthritis.

● **Modern review:** -The disease *Amavata* can be correlated with Rheumatoid arthritis owing to similarity of clinical presentation. In 1956 A.D. The American Association of Rheumatism laid down the criteria for the classification of rheumatoid arthritis which was revised in 1987 (Arnett. F.C. Edworthy. S. M. Bloch D.A. et al 1988).

In 1992 Panayi, Lanchbury and Kingsley introduced the importance of the T.cells in initiating and maintaining the chronic synovitis of rheumatoid arthritis (Arthritis & Rheumatism). One established fact is that the commencement of description of diseases has been done by Hippocrates in 600B.C.

- The first clinical description was given by Arteus in 100 A.D.

- The word Rheumatism and name of joint disease as Arthritis coined by Galen in 199A.D. Classifying it as a separate disease to Rheumatic arthritis in the 19th Century.

-Rheumatoid arthritis was not named until 1859. When physician Archobal Garrod adopted the term, he had discovered the excess uric acid in the blood of patients with

gout and this enabled the differential diagnosis with RA.

-In 1940-discovery of IgM rheumatoid factor by Rose and waller was the first immunological concept and clue of pathogenesis of RA.

DISCUSSION

Amavata has been named taking into two predominant pathological factors as *Ama* and *Vata*. *Amavata* has been described since ancient times which can be classified into *Vedic kala*, *Samhita kala*, *Samgraha kala* and *Adhunik kala* for its historical review purpose. The entity *Amavata* is available since the period of *Charka* as a reference in the context of various treatments. Madhavakar was described (700 AD) first time in details of this disease. He devoted a full chapter (25th) of *Amavata* in his treatise *Madhava Nidanam* with etiopathogenesis, signs, symptoms, complications and prognosis.

CONCLUSION

Thus in short it can be concluded that critical analysis of the medical importance of *Ama* begins from *Samhita* period, thereafter *Madhavakar* has established it as an independent disease after having understood the speciality of the disease. *Chakradatta* later on described the line of



treatment and *Bhavaprakasha* elaborated it further, which can be seen fully developed in *Bhaishajya Ratnavali* and modern era the description of the disease was initiated by Hippocrates (600 B.C.) in the realm of medical science. But in the right perspective the first clinical description was given by Arteus (100 A.D.). Rheumatism was coined by Galen (199 A.D.) W.H.O. has also referred to the word Arthritis to indicate joint disorders.



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