

Role of *Pathya Apathya* in general and w.s.r. *Vatarakta*

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Abstract

Ayurveda is the life science with prime goal of promotion of health and prevention of disease in healthy individuals and alleviation of disease in unhealthy. For promotion of health in healthy individuals, *Aacharya Charaka* has described a quad of chapters which emphasizes on following specific dietary and day regimen to remain healthy and for prevention of diseases. The dietary and day regimen which is healthy for *Srotas* (channels) and pleasant to mind is called as *Pathya* or wholesome. Further *Aacharya* have described *Pathya* or wholesome for *Swastha* (healthy) according to *Desha* (habitat), *Ritu* (season) and *Ok* (habit). These days due to rapid modernization and altered lifestyle in the form of dietary habits and day regimen prevalence of diseases with metabolic and functional impairment like *Madhumeha*, *Stholya* (obesity), joint disorders is greatly increased. Among joint disorders *Vatarakta* (gout) is the disease which involves both metabolic and functional impairment. *Vatarakta* is characterized by pain, stiffness, itching, burning sensation, altered coloration over joint space and especially involves small joints of hands and feet. It is mainly caused by *Mithya Ahara Vihar* that is irregular or unwholesome diet and regimen in prone individuals. In *Ayurveda* the first line of treatment for disease is prevention of causative factors. These causative factors are unwholesome for the disease and can aggravate the condition. Hence, it is necessary to understand and avoidance of causative factors or *Apathya*. The treatment of disease is mainly of three types' *Yuktivyapashrya*, *Devavyapashraya* and *Sattvavjaya*. *Yuktivyapashra Chikitsa* mainly depends on medicine and prescribed diet and day regimen. Hence for diseased conditions *Aacharya* have described *Rog Satmya* or wholesome diet and day regimen. Here an effort is made to understand *Pathya – Apathya* in maintenance of health and specific *Pathya -Apathya* for management of *Vatarakta*.

Keywords

Pathya, Apathya, Vatarakta, Satmya, Yuktivyapashrya



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INTRODUCTION

Health is the physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being of an individual¹. The health of an individual depends solely on one's diet and life style. Rapid modernisation, increased consumption of various fast foods and baked items, stressful and sedentary lifestyle have led to impairment in the digestion and metabolism of *Ahara* or food. This impairment at various levels has made individuals more prone or vulnerable to various metabolic disorders and various functional impairments. Among various functional impairments *Vatarakta* is a—common presentation characterised by severe pain, tenderness and inflammation in the joint space, hindered joint mobility, stiffness and discolouration of skin of the joint. *Vatarakta* is a complex disorder caused by vitiation of *Vata* and *Rakta*. It is said to be *Agnimaruttulya* explaining it as difficult to treat and its rapid progressive nature. Hence, all the three measures *Aushadh*, *Aahar* and *Vihar* are to be considered more promptly for complete resolution of disease and consideration of *Pathya Ahar* and *Vihar* for its prevention in the susceptible individuals.

Ayurveda emphasizes on prevention of diseases in healthy and health promotion in diseased¹ by use of specific diet regimen and abhey. For diseased persons *Ayurveda* gives equal importance to avoidance of disease causing foods and abhey or activities in addition to drugs and therapies of the disease. For healthy individuals *Aacharya's* have mentioned various measures like *Nidana Parivarjana* (i.e., avoidance of causative and precipitating factors of diseases), *Samsodhana* in *Dosha Prakopa Kala* (seasonal biopurification), *Ritucharya Palana* (use of various palliative remedies as per seasonal variation) to avoid occurrence of many diseases. And for diseased specific diet and lifestyle plans are always specified or prescribed along with drugs and therapies so as to facilitate restoration of bio humeral balance and health status.

Aushadh, *Aahar* and *Vihar* are three main pillars of *Ayurveda* i.e., equal importance is given to dietary and lifestyle in treatment of disease along with medicine and therapies. Along with various medicinal preparations *Aacharya* described *Pathya* and *Apathya* for the diseases. The drugs and regimen which do not adversely affect the *Srotamsi* of the body and which are pleasant to one's mind and soul are called as *Pathya* or



wholesome². Opposite to it the regimen or drugs which adversely affect *Srotamsi* or channels of the body and are not pleasant to soul or mind are called as *Apathya*³. The purpose of taking wholesome and avoidance of unwholesome is to maintain normal health and alleviate various disorders. *Vatarakta* is a complex disease involving *Dhushti* in various *Srotamsi*. So hereby an effort is made to understand *Pathya Apathya* in general and w.s.r. to *Vatarakta*.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study the role of *Pathya- Apathya* in general health
- 2) To study the *Pathya –Apathya* for *Vatarakta*

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Hereby various information regarding *Pathya Apathya* and *Vatarakta* has been collected from various classical texts, journals and internet sources. Discussion and conclusion are drawn on the basis of the compiled information.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda is the eternal science with an objective to maintain the health of a healthy

individual and cure of diseases of a patient. *Aacharya* have described intake of food, sleep and observance of *Brahmacarya* as the basic three supports of life. Being supported by these three well regulated factors of life, the body is endowed with strength, complexion and growth and continues up till the full span of life⁴. As these are beneficial for health that is why all the three supports are required to be well regulated. Importance of *Ahaar* is also mentioned in the context of *Yuktivyapashrya* (therapy based on reasoning, physical propriety) *Chikitsa* and administration of proper diet is given equal importance to that of *Aushadh*. *Aahar* can be further understood as the *Pathya* and *Apathya*. The *Pathya* is the one which keeps person healthy, maintains normal body functions, leads to proper functioning of the organs, nourishes the mood and intellect, prevents diseases and at the same time corrects the irregularities that may occur in the body. *Pathya Patho Enpetam* i.e., the drugs and regimen which do not affect adversely the *Patha* or *Srotas* are called as *Pathya*. This *Pathya* cannot be accepted as general for all in absolute terms. As the regimen in fact change their qualities depending on the dosage, season, and method of preparation, habitat and



combination with other useful and harmful drugs. So the natural qualities of drugs and regimen both are required to be well ascertained before the administration of the requisite therapy in order to achieve the direct effect. As it is said to be *Manasi Priyam* so the psychological aspect is also to be taken into consideration essentially, the determination of wholesomeness also includes personal liking of the patients. A given diet or drug will not be effective if it is taken unwillingly by the individual perforce; it will be more effective only when the individuals has a feeling that by taking it he will be able to maintain his normal health.

Pathya can also be understood as *Satmya*⁵. *Aacharya Charaka* has mentioned four times of *Satmya*⁶ like *Ritu Satmya* or seasonal homologation, *Vyadhi Satmya* or *Upshaya*, *Ok Satmya* and *Desha Satmya*. For the maintenance of health it is necessary that a perfect balance is established with regard to the various forces acting and counteracting on the body. If there is excessive deficiency in any respect anywhere, it has got to be neutralized. Supposing a place is excessively cool, the body would constantly need some extraneous heat to maintain itself against the excessive cold of the place. That is one

should follow a regular regimen to counteract the unbalancing forces of one's habitat. This principle also holds well with regard to the various diseases. For example, if a disease occurred due to the vitiation of *Vata*, then the diets, drugs and regimen are to be habituated in such a manner that they counteract the effects of the former. In the same way homologation should be followed according to seasonal variation. The most accurate definition for wholesome and unwholesome is as the food articles which maintain the equilibrium of *Dhatus* and help in eliminating the disturbance in their equilibrium are to be regarded as wholesome; otherwise they are unwholesome.

Vatarakta–*Vatarakta*⁷ is the disease where simultaneously *Vata* and *Rakta* both are vitiated and vitiated *Vata* obstructs the *Raktavaha Srotas*. *Vatarakta* manifests in hands, feet, fingers, toes initially and later spreads in the entire body. It begins in distal phalanges in hand and feet and thereafter spreads to all the joints. Due to subtleness and pervasiveness of *Vayu* and liquidity, fluidity of blood the vitiated *Dosha* spread by means of *Raktavaha Srotas* in the whole body, gets obstructed in joints and being agitated, these get localised due to tortuous



shape of joints. Provoked *Dosha* are supposed to produce diseases due to *Sroto Dushti* and *Dosha Dushya Sammurchana*. In *Vatarakta* main *Srotas* vitiated are the *Raktavaha*, *Asthivaha* and *Majjavaha Srotas* and *Dushya* vitiated is *Rakta*. Site of *Dosha Dushya Sammurchana* is *Asthi Sandhi*.

Cause or Hetu of Vatarakta-

*Rakta Prakopaka Hetu*⁸-

Excessive intake of saline, sour, pungent, alkaline, unctuous, hot and uncooked foods; intake of putrified or dry meat of aquatic or marshy land inhabiting animals; excessive intake of *Tilpishta*, *Kulatha*, *Masa*, *Nishpava*, leafy vegetable etc. meat and sugar-cane; excessive intake of curd, *Aranala (Kanji)*, *Sauvira* (sour preparation of dehusked barley, etc.), *Shukta* (vinegar), butter-milk, alcohol and wine; intake of *Viruddh* (mutually opposite) ahar; intake of food before the previous meal is digested (*adhyashan*); resorting of anger in excess; sleeping during day time and remaining awake at night.

Vata Prakopaka Hetu-

Abhighata, *Asuddhi* (omission of the purification of the body, or omission of seasonal biopurification); excessive intake of astringent, pungent, bitter and unctuous ingredients; intake of less food or abstinence

from food, riding over horse, camel or the vehicle drawn by them; resorting of *Jalkrida* (aquatic games), swimming etc. *Ati Chankramana*, suppression of natural urges aggravates the *Vata Dosha*.

All these *Hetu* in people who are *Sukumar* and their *Rakta* is vitiated by above said *Hetu*, *Sevana* of these *Vata Prakopak Nidan* leads to manifestation of *Vatarakta*.

*Apathyafor Vatarakta*⁹-

Sleep during daytime, exposure to heat, exercise, sexual intercourse, intake of pungent, hot, heavy, *Abhisyandi*, *Amla* and *Lavana Rasa Pradhan* food items should be avoided.

*Pathya for Vatarakta*¹⁰-

For the patients suffering from *Vatarakta* *Aacharya* described many foods as wholesome such as cereals like old barley, wheat, *Nivara*, *Shali* and *Shastika* qualities of rice; *Mamsarasa* of *Vishkir* (gallinaceous) and *Praduda* (pecker) birds; soups of various pulses like *Adhaki*, *Chanaka*, *Mudga*, *Masur* and *Makushtha* with ghee in rich quantity; *Harit Shak* (green leafy vegetables) like *Sunishnak*, *Shatavari*, *Vetragra*, *Vastuka*, *Upodika* sizzled with *Ghrita* and *Mamsarasa*; and *Godugdha*, *Ajadugdha* and *Mahishi Dugdha* (i.e. milks of cow, goat and buffalo).

Importance of *Pathya* and *Apathya*- The body as well as diseases are caused by food; wholesome and unwholesome of food are responsible for happiness and misery respectively. The person who always avoid the intake of unwholesome food are held in high esteems by saints.¹¹ Wholesome food is said to be one of the major cause for the growth of living beings and the unwholesome food for the growth of diseases.

avoided with the other medicinal intervention. *Ahar Dravya* like *Shali*, *Shastika*, *Yava*, *Mudga*, *Shatavari* etc. are *Pathya* for *Vatarakta* and these help in breakdown of *Samprapti* of *Vatarakta*, hence should be included in diet with medicinal intervention.

CONCLUSION

Observance of *Pathya* is necessary for maintenance of health in healthy individuals and for prevention of disease in diseased individuals. *Pathya Palan* helps in alleviating the diseased condition by helping in breakdown of pathogenesis. Observance of *Apathya* leads to accumulation of *Dosha* which further lead to *Dosha* aggravation and hence is a cause of disease. Hence proper observation of *Pathya* and *Apathya* is equally important in diseased as well as in healthy individuals.

Ushan, *Tikshan Ahar*, *Viruddha Ahar*, *Kutatha*, *Nishpav*, *Anupaand* *Jaliya* *Mansarasa* etc. are *Apathya* and causative factors for *Vatarakta*, hence these should be



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