A Review on Concept of Pain with Its Management: An Ayurvedic Approach

Dr. Archana Choudhary
M.D. Scholar, Department of Roga Nidan & Vikriti Vigyan, Pr. Khushil Sharma Government Ayurveda College & Institute Bhopal (M.P.)
Email address: dr.archanachoudhary92@gmail.com, cont no 8770457180

Abstract—Each individual learns the meaning of pain through experiences related to injury or suffering in early life. It is estimated that one in five people suffer from moderate to severe chronic pain and one in three are unable or less able to maintain an independent lifestyle due to their pain. It has multiple, serious, sequelae including depression, inability to work, disrupted social relationships and often suicidal thoughts. In a world where everyone is looking for means and medicines to minimize and kill pain Ayurveda can be a ray of hope to understand its actual concept and provide new direction for its management. Ayurveda describes pain as the premonitory sign as well as symptoms of many diseases under different terminologies viz. Vedana, shool, ruja. Diagnosing the disease at the initial level on the basis of cause, location and pathogenesis of pain a physician can prevent disease to be at its full fledge form and thus breaking the samprapti before disease progression and then plan its management accordingly. In the context of analgesics Vedanasthapa hymn, Parshwa shool, Hridyadhana mahakshaya. Shool prashmana, Vatahara drugs etc. have been mentioned which when used in today’s practice can provide an appropriate substitution for modern analgesics.

Keywords— Vedana, Shool, Analgesics, Pain, Ruja, Samprapti.

I. INTRODUCTION

Understanding pain is very essential as it is universally understood as a signal of disease and the most common symptom bringing patient to physician’s attention. Pain is described as an unpleasant sensation localized to a part of the body. The quality, time, course and location of the patient’s pain and that of tenderness provide an important diagnostic clue and are used to evaluate the treatment response. One of the most widely used categories of medicines is analgesic or pain killer which are being used at every instance but are having their own limitations and side effects which can’t be neglected.

In Ayurveda the sensation or feeling of severe sorrowness is described as vedana; Ruja is a term for severe pain and shool for colicky pain. All of these words describes pain but with a different perception. There are some other terminologies as well indicating towards the types of pain. So it can be said that concept of pain has been deeply elaborated in Ayurvedic classics, the only need is to bring them into light and implementing it to improve the general health care.

In the Classical texts a number of diseases have been mentioned in which Vedana, Shool, Ruja or other terms indicating the characteristics pain have been mentioned (Table 1).

Pathogenesis of Pain

Ayurveda explains Vata aggravation as the main causative factor of all types of pain. According to Ayurvedic theory pain cannot occur if Vata dosha is not involved in it but the Pitta and Kapha doshas are also involved as well and can be illustrated with the help of avaran principle.

Shool roga has been described in Ayurvedic literatures, as painful abdominal diseases. It has been defined as pain as if nail is being pierced in and mainly four types of shool are mentioned. On the basis of doshas; sites of pain are Vatik Shool in Basti, Pittak Shool in Nabhi, Kaphaja Shool in Hridaya, Parshwa, Kukshi. (Table 2) Biliary colic and pain due to duodenal ulcer are the main examples of paitik shool.

Table 1. Characteristic pain in different diseases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diseases</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vataja gulma</td>
<td>Toda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kritibha</td>
<td>Teerva vedana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakana kusitha</td>
<td>Teerva vedana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosthashritta vata</td>
<td>Parshwashool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gidagata vata</td>
<td>Udarshool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amashayagata vata</td>
<td>Hridaya nabhi parshwa udar ruka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakwashayagat vata</td>
<td>Udar shool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twakgata vata</td>
<td>Parwa ruka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raktagata vata</td>
<td>Teerva ruja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majaa ashlingata vata</td>
<td>Satala ruka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siragata vata</td>
<td>Sarva sharer manda ruka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandhigata vata</td>
<td>Prasaran akunchan pravritta vedana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaphavritta vata</td>
<td>Sarva Sharr shool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majavritta vata</td>
<td>Sarva Sharir shool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aamvata</td>
<td>Vrischik danshvat vedana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Types of shool and their features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Vataja Shool</th>
<th>Pitta Ja Shool</th>
<th>Kaphaja Shool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time of onset</td>
<td>After digestion, during evening</td>
<td>During digestion, mid noon and mid night</td>
<td>Just after meal, morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Pricking and piercing</td>
<td>Burning</td>
<td>With heaviness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravating factor</td>
<td>Cold and rainy weather</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>Cold season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>Fluctuating</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Less as compared to other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shool has been named as according to different parts of body viz. Shira shool, karna shool, vrikka shool, Basti shool, Parshwa shool, Hrid shool, Sandhi and Asthi Shool. Pathogenesis of some of the Shool roga have been mentioned clearly in the ayurvedic literatures. (Table 3) Suryavarta

among eleven types of Shira shool is due to tridosha vitiati
and pain intensity increases or decreases according to Sun’s
position and pathology of other Shoolas are also mentioned
such as karna shool, Parshwa shool, Hrid shool etc.

Management of Pain:

In Ayurveda term analgesic drug is coined as
Vedanasthapak which is defined as the drug that relieves pain
and bring back the body at rest. The analgesics defined in
Ayurveda are scattered and have been enlisted under different
categories such as Angamardaprasmmana, Nidrarakar, Madak.
Acharya Sushruta has described about Madya (liquors),
Bhanga (Cannabis sativa) etc. Basically three types of pain
killers are mentioned viz. Local analgesics, central, analgesics,
and many other herbs are mentioned along with some
Shool parashaman drug, to sit or location and doshic predominance.

Several medicaments are mentioned for the purpose of the
local analgesics such as Pradeha, Pralepa etc. Some drugs
are mentioned which act on central nervous system or have the
pharmacological properties to serve as analgesic –

- Agru (Aquilaria agallocha)
- Shatatpushpa (Anathum sowa)
- Parseek yavani (Hyoszymus niger)
- Kadamb (Antheonophalus indicus)
- Shal (Shorea robusta)
- Gandha prasarini (Paederia foetida)
- Latakasturi (Hibiscus abelmoschus)
- Shalmali (Salmalia malabarica) etc.

Angamarda prashaman drugs are used to relieve body pain
and includes-

- Shalparni (Desmodium gangeticum)
- Prishnaparni (Uararia picta)
- Brihati (Solanum indicum)
- Eranda (Ricinus communis)
- Chanda (Santalum album)
- Ella (Ellateria cardamomum)
- Madhuyashhi (Glycyrrhiza glabra)
- Khas (Salmalia malabarica)
- Kantakari (Solanum xanthocarpum).

Vatanashak drugs are the most important in relieving pain
as the Vata entity is responsible for the pain and its sensation
according to Ayurveda. These includes a wide variety of drugs
such as – Bala (Sida cordifolia) and its other types;
Meshashringi(Gymnema sylvestre), Kapikachhu (Mucuna
prurita), Agnimantha (Premna mucronata), Gaduchi
(Tinospora cordifolia), Punarnava (Boerhavia diffusa). There
are number of drugs mentioned in Ayurveda having analgesic
properties. Apart from the above mentioned Vidarigandhadi
gana, Shool parashaman drug, Shramahara, Maduk gana, 
Dashmoola etc. are best effective in pain management.

In the world of Ayurveda Snehan is considered a very
rewarding form of therapy for treating pain and many kinds of
ailments. Snehan helps relieve pain, tames Vata and treats
muscle and joint stiffness, mobilizes toxins, maximizes
circulation and relaxes overall body. Nasya karma has been
mentioned for the relief in Shira shool. Blood letting therapies
(raktamokshan) is indicated in many painful ocular diseases.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Literature search was conducted through classical texts
along with the references of retrieved article to gather as much
information regarding relevant topic.

III. DISCUSSION

The search for ideal analgesic agents is still on, despite
introduction of numerous new drugs over the last century. In
Ayurveda many treatment strategies are mentioned that can be
utilized to alleviate pain in certain condition. Pain has been
expressed with various terms such as Shool, Raja, Vedana, 
Bheda, Todu etc. and has been classified and named according
to site or location and doshic predominance. Angamarda gana,
Shool prashaman gana, Vedana sthapana gana, Dashmula,
and many other herbs are mentioned along with some
therapies like Snehan, Raktamokshan, Nasya etc. which may
be prescribed in the treatment of mild, moderate and severe
pain.

IV. CONCLUSION

The goal of pain therapies is to relieve pain whenever
possible for which the identifying its root cause is essential.
There is no physiological imaging or laboratory tests that can
identify and measure pain. Pain is what patient says it is.
Pathological process never occurs in isolation and consequently
more than one mechanism may be present and

Dr. Archana Choudhary, “A review on concept of pain with its management: An ayurvedic approach,” International Research Journal of 
Pharmacy and Medical Sciences (IRJPMS), Volume 1, Issue 6, pp. 31-33, 2018.
more than one type of pain may be detected in single patient. There are well recognized pain disorders that are not easily classifiable. Our understanding of their underlying mechanism is still rudimentary. A number of headaches and recurrent abdominal pain are the area for research work to be done.

REFERENCES