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**A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF SHODHANA CHIKITSA IN SHEETAPITTA WITH
SEPECIAL REFERNCE URTICARIA**

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ABSTRACT

Sheetapitta is one of the important and most common allergic skin disease described in Ayurveda. Vata and Kapha are two “Doshas”, which are primarily disturbed in this disease. This in turn is associated with Pitta resulting in Tridosha vitiation leading to redness, wheals and itching on the skin. Mandala (round patch) Urticaria (Wheals), Kandu (itching), Toda (Pricking pain) are the main signs and symptoms along with Chardi (vomiting), Jwara (fever) and Daha (burning sensation) are the associated symptoms of Sheetapitta. It can be correlated to various types of Urticaria in modern parlance. In Ayurveda signs and symptoms of Sheetapitta, Udarda, Kotha are very much similar with minimal difference. Apathya Ahara (improper food), Virudha Ahara (incompatible food) along with pitta-kapha vitiating food and regimen are prime causes of Sheetapitta. As Sheetapitta is one of the Santarpanaja Vyadhi (disease due to excessive intake of heavy food), purificatory line of management is having utmost importance. Vamana (Emesis), Virechana (Purgation) and Raktamokshana (Blood Letting) are main purificatory management as

Sheetapitta is a Pitta Pradhana Tridosha condition. It is Yukthi of the physician which principle is best suited for particular individual as per the Doshic predominance and state of the disease. This paper intends to critically review the various modalities of purificatory management in Sheetapitta.

Keywords: Sheetpitta, Kotha, Udarda, Urticaria, Tridosha, Dosha, Ama

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, allergic manifestation is mentioned under the concept of Satmya-Asatmya (compatible-non compatible). It manifests due to exposure to Asatmya Ahara Vihara and contact with different allergens [1]. Exposure to cold air Vata and Kapha Doshas get vitiated in the body and being mixed with vitiated Pitta Dosha and spreads all over the body lodges in the superficial layer of the skin and produces wheals with intense Kandu(itching) and Toda (pricking sensation). This condition is known as ‘Sheetapitta’ [2]. Apathya Ahara, i.e. Increased and frequent use of Snigdha (unctuous), Guru (heavy to digest), Ushna (Hot food), Pichhila (Slimy food), Katu (Pungent), Amla (Sour), Lavana (salt) taste in food, Viruddhahara etc. result in weakness in body tissues, which causes sensitization toward allergens as well as antibodies and produce various types of allergic diseases, like Sheetapitta. Allergy is one of four forms of hypersensitivity and is formally called as type I (or Immediate) hypersensitivity. Urticaria is one of the dermatological

condition characterized by sudden eruptions of itchy wheals which may appear on any part of the skin and mucous membranes. Individual lesions as a rule do not last longer than a few minutes to a few hours and disappear without leaving any trace [3]. An episode of Urticaria (hives) can start as itching, followed by swollen red wheals. The Itching may be mild to severe. Excess use of alcohol beverages, exercise and emotional stress may worsen the itching. Urticaria affects around 20% of people at some point in their lifetime. The discomfort and distress caused by Urticaria can lead to serious impairment of quality of life. Our Ancient Acharya’s has mentioned several classical Ayurvedic formulations for the cure of Urticaria. Ayurveda provides detailed information about toxins, their management and methods of purging these poisons out of the body.

Review of Sheetapitta Management-

In Ayurvedic texts, the Sheetapitta, Udarda & Kothathese three disorders are described almost similar but having few

different characters and different causative factors. Shitapitta and Udarda are synonyms of each other described by Madhavakara. He quoted that Sheetapitta having Vataja dominancy while Udarada having Kaphaja dominancy and also mentioned specific characters of Udarada [4]. Some commentators are of the view about the fact that Udarda and Sheetapitta are one and the same [5].

In Sheetapitta context, it is mentioned that the aggravation of Vata and Kapha when individual is exposure to cold breeze, cold food, cold climate and being mixed with vitiated Pitta and subsequently Tridosha spread internally and externally and results in Sheetapitta [6].

Chakradutta has clearly described the palliative treatment of these diseases giving importance to movement of vitiated Doshas. He has advised that the individuals suffering from Sheetapitta can be given either cold or warm food and drinks with due consideration to nature of vitiated Doshas to confirm about the vitiated Doshas [7]. Bhavaprakasha has described purificatory, palliative and topical treatments for Sheetapitta [8]. The text Yogaratnakara has described Krimihara (wormicidal) drugs to treat Sheetapitta [9]. The text Bhashajya Ratnavali has mentioned that patient suffering from Kotha should

adopt line of treatment prescribed for Kushtha (skin diseases), Amlapitta (Hyperacidity), Udarda (Urticaria) [10]. Diet and regimen mentioned for these is same which can be included as a part of treatment [11].

The basic principles of treatment according to Ayurveda is maintaining the equilibrium of the Tridosha and this can be achieved by following measures:

1. Nidana Parivarjana (Avoiding the etiological factors)
2. Samsodhana (Purificatory Measures)
3. Samshamana (Conservative Measures)
4. Pathyapathya (Diet and Regimen)

The main intention of this article to critical evaluation of the Samshodhana therapy (purificatory measures) for the treatment of Sheetapitta, so we will give the importance for the same.

Nidana Parivarjana (Avoiding the Etiological factors)

It is the first and foremost principle of treatment in every disease. Physician should recognize the causative factors as well as doshic involvement of the prevailing disease and advise the patients to avoid such causative factors and Dosha vitiating diet and regimen to reduce the repeated relapses of the particular disease. If the person will follow this first principle of treatment then further principles like purificatory and

conservative line of management will be easy to adopt then success rate will be maximum.

In Sheetapitta as main Doshas of involvement for the onset of the disease are Kapha and Pitta, the person should avoid the Kapha-Pitta vitiating Ahara and Vihara (diet and regimen) which are already mentioned in the texts.

Shodhana (purificatory measures)

Among purificatory measures Vamana (Emesis) and Virechana (Purgation) are given utmost importance in the management of Sheetapitta [12]. Purificatory measures are useful in providing a preventive and curative protection to the body and makes the body extra receptive to the efficacious qualities of drug formulations. Avoidance of relapsing of the disease can be possible by repeated purification as per the severity of the disease and strength of the individual.

Vamana Karma (Emesis therapy)-

The place of Vamana in the total scheme of the Panchakarma therapy is of fundamental importance. It rectifies all the Doshas in general and Kapha Dosha in particular. The specific yoga mentioned for the purpose of Vamana is decoction prepared out of Patola, Nimba and Vasa [13]. Shivadas Sen in his commentary on Chakradutta advocated adding a little quantity of the drug

Madanapippali Churna to this yoga. Some of the texts have indicated instant emesis by the above mentioned preparation in Sheetapitta. The text Vrinda Vaidyaka has mentioned another formulation is Koshta specified for the purpose of Vamana i.e. decoction prepared out of Bhunimba, Vasa, Patola, Katuki, Triphala, Chandana and Nimba. Vamana is having specific action by clearing the Ama and Kapha Dosha from the body and reduce the itching and wheals in Sheetapitta.

The pre procedural Snehana (Oleation) and Swedana (sudation) makes the mobilization of vitiated Dosha from Shakha (tissue) to Koshta (Lumen). The emetic drug Madanaphala has hot in potency, Tikshna (Piercing), Sukshma (very minute), pervasiveness, Vikashi Guna (quality which destroys the joint structure) and it reaches the target immediately. Madanaphala further liquefies the Dosha and liquid accumulated in stomach is spewed from oral route to complete the Dosha accumulation. The Madanaphala for Vamana with a milk medium is effective to eliminate the Kapha Dosha in terms of inducing antihistaminic effect [14].

The therapeutic emesis is a safe Ayurveda Panchakarma protocol to eliminate Kapha accumulated either by pathological

condition or dietetic mismanagement from stomach. After emetic procedure Kapha Dosha will be clear from the body and reduction of main symptoms of Sheetapitta like, itching, wheals, heaviness in the body, Vomiting tendency. Specifically Vamana karma should be performed in Vasanta Rutu and it is highly beneficial for volunteers of Kapha and Kapha-Pitta constitution and patients suffering from Kapha disorders and associated Pitta disorders or diseases originating or settled in the place of Kapha [15].

The drugs contained in emetic medicines due to their pervasiveness quality the drug escape the normal digestion by Jatharagni and reaches to the minute channels of the body and starts acting immediately. Sukshma (minute) quality helps to reaches them up to minute channels. The Doshas are digested and became able to trickle by the Ushna Guna (hot quality) and then are detached from the channels because of Tikshna and Vyavayi (Pervasiveness) Guna. It is the Sara Guna (mobility quality) which helps the detached Doshas to reach the Koshtha from where these are to expelled out. Prabhava (non -specific effect) of emetic drug eliminates the Doshas out by the oral route. Vamanopaga Dravyas (emetic drugs)

helps to Vamana Dravya to act more effectively [16].

Virechana Karma (Purgation therapy)

Virechana Karma is one of the Panchakarma therapies which is mainly indicated in Pittaja disorders. It also does pacify Vatadosha, hence it helps in decrease Vata disorders. Decoction prepared out of Triphala mixed with Guggulu and Pippali is best for treating Sheetapitta [17].

Virechana breaks the pathogenesis i.e. pacify Vata-Pitta and reducing main symptoms like wheals, pricking pain, hotness over skin patches.

In Sheetapitta Vata and Kapha is vitiated along with Pitta. The vitiated Kapha merges with the Pitta and vitiated Vata makes Vimarga Gamana (spreads all over) in skin. Virechana is a treatment for Pitta, pitta associated Doshas, Kapha associated Doshas and also for migrated Kapha Dosha to seat of Pitta. Similarly, Virechana is even beneficial for Vata Dosha. Thus we can say that it is beneficial in malfunctions of various channels like Rasavaha (lymphatic channels), Raktavaha (circulatory channels), Mamsavaha (channels carrying muscular tissues), Asthivaha (channels carrying Bone tissues), Majjavaha (channels carrying Bone marrow) & Shukravaha (channels carrying Sperm and semen), Purishavaha (channels

carrying faeces), Mutravaha Srothas (channels carrying Genito-urinary system), Swedavahasrotha (channels carrying sweat) also. In Sheetapitta, there is derangement of Tridoshas and specially derangement of Rasavaha, Raktavaha and Swedavaha Strotas. Hence Virechana can be effective in Sheetapitta by expulsion of vitiated Pitta Pradhana Tridosha from the body [18].

A case study was done on Chronic Idiopathic Urticaria (CIU) with Virechana karma was found very effective in providing immediate relief in the signs and symptoms with strict dietary protocol along with internal medicines and life style changes are essential to prevent the recurrences and also to get the sustained relief after undergoing Virechana karma [19].

An observational study was conducted on Virechana effect of Eranda Taila and study concluded that complete remission in symptoms was observed in patients with mild intensity, whereas in moderate and severe intensity cases there was reduction in the recurrence rate and severity of the disease. This proves the result of Eranda Taila Virechana is very much effective in Sheetapitta [20].

Rakta Mokshana (Blood Letting)

Rakta Mokshana by application of leech or Siravedhana (venesection) as

described in Ayurveda by Acharya Sushruta is a novel approach. It is best purificatory measures for blood related diseases. As there is conspicuous vitiation of blood in Sheetapitta, so Siravedhana is indicated. Rakta Mokshana is a remedy when aggravated Vata is lodged in the Twak, Rakta and Mamsa. Rakta Mokshana procedure will be very much effective after taking of Mahatiktaka Ghrita [21].

Samprapthi Vighatana of Sheetapitta by Raktamokshana Karma

According to Acharya Sushruta, treatment principles of skin diseases which are due to derangement of blood by vitiated Dosha or lodging of vitiated Doshas in blood the following treatment principles should be adopted like, Samshodhana (Purification), Alepana (Topical ointments), Kashayapana (taking of medicated decoctions) and Shonita Avasechana (blood-letting) [22].

In another context Acharya Bagbhatta has also described that Raktamokshana is the main principle of treatment for Raktagatha Roga like Twak Dosha, Granthi, Shophya and other Shonithajanya Roga (blood related diseases) [23].

Rakta Mokshana is ponder as half of the all treatments and due to Asraya- Asrayibhava, it acts on Pitta Dosha too. By bloodletting, Srotoshodhana (clearing of channels) is

achieved which further helps in abatement of skin diseases. Various skin diseases are due to vitiation of blood and vitiation of Tridoshas and Chirkari Vyadhi (chronic disease) by nature. Rakta Mokshana gives best effect in various skin diseases by expelling the morbid, vitiated Dosha and Dhatu. But the effect of therapy is not only by expelling the vitiated blood but Raktamokashana also emits some enzymes in the wound. So Rakta Mokshana has also provided normalization and improvement of capillary as well as collateral blood circulation, expressed anti-inflammatory effect, Immune stimulation and Immune-modulating effect and early wound healing effect. All of this reaction may be effect of such salivary enzymes like Hirudin anticoagulant effect with diuretics, antibiotic action, Colin prevent blood coagulation, Eglin, antitrypsin hyaluronidase, anti-thrombin and anti-chymotrypsin etc. Rakta Mokshana are the perfect solution for many skin diseases [24].

Bloodletting therapy may potentially be effective for disease activity control in chronic urticaria, with a very low degree of quality of the evidence. Bloodletting therapy might be safe for treating patients with chronic urticaria, according to the current limited evidence [25].

Rakta Mokshana by Siravedhana karma (venesection) is highly effective in management of urticaria which is clear by various research works. A similar study of blood-letting therapy on other allergic skin condition relieves the main signs and symptoms of the allergic skin disease.

Siravedhana Karma provides better relief in the symptoms of Vicharchika (an allergic skin condition) like Pidika and Daha which were statistically highly significant ($P<0.001$) and significant ($P<0.01$), respectively. However, all other signs and symptoms were improved, but were statistically insignificant. Papules and burning sensation are Pitta predominant with involvement of Rakta Dosha. Due to removal of blood which is seat of Pitta, these symptoms were relieved by Siravedhana. Siravedhana done with taking of medicated ghee and Abhyanga (oil massage) for three days may give better result. It is a purification procedure and Poorvakarma (pre-procedure) is required before Siravedhana Karma [26].

Chronic Urticaria (CU) is a prevalent and relevant dermatological problem that affects human health. Many patients and some dermatologists are unsatisfactory for the therapeutic pathways. Cupping therapy (CT) is an important therapy in the world

medical practice. Currently, there are some clinical trials to confirm the efficacy and safety of CT for CU. However, there is not an SR (systemic reviews) related to CT for CU has been published in the world. Whether it can be a new choice in clinical treatment, this SR will summarize current evidence on the effectiveness and safety of CT for CU. This review will help clinicians make better decisions [27].

CONCLUSION

Sheetapitta being a common and tortuous disease needs effective treatment. Assessment of vitiated Doshas and treatment targets to main vitiated Dosha is main principle of treatment of all the diseases and also in Sheetapitta along with avoidance of etiological factors. If strength of disease and strength of patients are proper then priority should be given to purificatory management. After proper examination of constitution of the patients, causative factors, predominant Dosha, digestive capacity of the person, state of the individual patients and disease, purificatory treatments can be planned. The chance of relapsation of the disease is very minimal if purification procedures have been done in proper classical method. As it is rightly told by Acharya Charaka “*Jeetah Samshodhaneir Ye Tu Na Tesham Punarudbhavah.*” [28]

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