

AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC HEADACHE – A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Shiraha is the uttamanga because it abodes prana and all indriyas. Shirashoola is a symptom that is seen in so many diseases but shirashoola is also an independent disease. Tension type headache is the most prevalent type of headache having prevalence of about 52%. Tension type headache mostly resembles with vaatika shirashoola. In this case study, with the help of causes, aggravating factor, relieving factor we have diagnosed that patient was having vata-pittaja type of shirashoola. By utilizing therapeutic measures prescribed by the classics in the context of Vatika shirashoola, patient got significant relief. Treatment given to her was vata-pitta shamaka and rakta prasada.

Key words: Shirashoola; Tension type headache; Vata pitta shamaka chikitsa; Glioma.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurvedic science claims that, there are one hundred and seven Marmas (vital spots) located in the body. Affliction of any one of these produces excruciating pain because of the specific association of consciousness in these parts.^[1] Amongst these vital spots, Hrudaya (heart), Basti (urinary bladder), Shiraha (head) are the most important because these organs constitute the very basic substratum of body.^[1] In a living being, the head is the substratum of elan vitae (Prana) and all the sense faculties (Indriya). So it occupies the first place amongst the vital organs of the body (Uttamanga).^[2] Head is the abode (Ashraya) of senses, sensory channels and channels carrying elan vitae as the sun is the abode of its rays.^[3] Serious injury to this vital organ causes destruction of the body since the destruction of substratum (Aashraya) leads to the destruction of the suprastratum (Aashrit). Partial injury (Upaghata) to these vital organs leads to affliction by serious disease. Therefore the vital organ like head should be specially protected from the external injury and affliction by Vayu.^[4] Injury to head gives rise to many diseases as elan vitae of human beings is located in the head. Therefore, efforts should always be made to protect this vital organ.^[5] Acharya Charaka have described five types of Shiroroga, whereas Acharya Sushruta, Bhavaprakasha, Yogaratnakara have classified eleven types of Shiroroga.^[6] Shirashoola also mentioned as synonym of Shiroroga. Charaka has mentioned Shiroruk as separate disease among eighty types of Vatavyadhis.^[7]

Headache is the most prevalent neurological disorder and among the most frequent symptoms seen in general practice.^[8] 50% of the general population have headaches during any given year, and more than 90% report a lifetime history of headache. Tension type headache is more common with a lifetime prevalence of about 52%.^[8] There are so many reasons for headache and Glioma is one of

them. A glioma is a type of tumour that starts in the glial cells of the brain or the spine. A brain glioma can cause headache, vomiting, seizures and cranial nerve disorders as a result of increased intracranial pressure. The exact cause of glioma is not known. Treatment of glioma is combined approach using surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy.^[9]

Acharya Charaka have been explained that there are specific causes for the disease Shirashoola (Headache). Indulgence of these hetu (causative factors) causes aggravation of Vata, Pitta, Kapha dosha and vitiation of Raktadhatu.^[10] As per ayurvedic science, we have already seen the importance of Shiraha (Head) and headache is most commonly seen. Hence for Shirashoola (Headache) one should definitely opt for Ayurvedic Chikitsa (Treatment). Considering the previously mentioned concern, we are trying to present a case study of Shirashoola which was treated by Ayurvedic chikitsa. In this case, Shirashoola was Vata-Pittaja types and was treated by chikitsa which was Vata-Pitta shamaka and Raktagami.

Case Description

A female patient of age 43 yrs old came to out-patient department, [OPD No.: 18] complaining severe headache from last 8 months, nature of headache was so severe and persistent that it disturbs her routine work. She got relief in symptoms up to some extent when tight bandage is applied over the head. There is no any significant past history and family history related to headache. She felt heaviness of head during cold weather. She has taken allopathic treatment regularly for 4 months. She has done MRI Brain, by which she was provisionally diagnosed as having Glioma. By taking allopathic treatment she did not get desirable effect, so she came for Ayurvedic treatment. Her general and systemic examinations were within normal limits. Patient has history of Chikungunya before 15 years. She has undergone Lower Segment

Caesarean Section twice her first child is 27 yrs old and second child is 22 yrs old. She has surgical history of Tubal ligation before 16 yrs. Her menstrual cycle was regular and she didn't have any complaints regarding to menstruation. She worked as a jeweller for 25 years and now she has stopped her work as a jeweller from last 4 yrs. Patient doesn't have any kind of addiction.

Working as a jeweller, she used to vigil during the night and wakes up early in the morning, which was unable to complete her sleep (Alpanidra). Jeweller is one who has to do his work very precisely with lots of concentration, as the patient worked like this for so long that cause excessive utilisation of sense faculty (Indriya Atiyoga). Due to her work she used to suppress her natural urge for hunger and urination frequently (Kshudha vega dharana and Mutra vega dharana). She had a habit of taking sips of water frequently during her meals (Atyambupana). Mostly she used to eat stale food for her breakfast (Paryushit anna) and leafy vegetables for her meals frequently (Patrashaaka). Due to her personal problems she was always under some mental stress and concerned about her problems (Chinta).

Diagnosis

Acharya Charaka mentioned specific causes for Shiroroga. Indulgence of hetus causes aggravation of Vata, Pitta, Kapha dosha resulting in vitiation of Raktadhatu in the head and causes Shiroroga.^[10] Indulgence of hetus like alpanidra (less sleep), kshudhavegadharan (suppress the sneezing), mutra vegadharan (suppress the urine), indriyaatiyoga (over usage of sense organs), patrashaakasevana (over intake of green leafy vegetables), paryushit anna sevana (intake of spoiled food, atyambupaana (drinking water excessively), chinta (over thinking) which are of Laghu (small), Ruksha (dry), Ushna (hot) guna which are similar to vata and pitta dosha. As said by Acharyas, by Samanya vishesha Siddhanta those qualities of causes aggravate vata and

pitta doshas independently (Swatantra Dosha prakopa) as these two doshas also have very similar qualities like above mentioned causes.^[11] Patient was complaining that her headache got triggered in the cold weather and she got mild relief after applying tight bandage. By those causative factors, aggravating factor and relieving factor, it is cleared that in this case study aggravation of vata and pitta dosha was happen. Those aggravated doshas causes vitiation of Raktadhatu localised in the head (Shirasth). Signs and symptoms of this patient are similar to vataja and pittaja shirashoola. By studying all those factors we have diagnosed that in this case, shirashoola is of vata-pittajatype.^[12]

Assessment

Assessed her pain by VAS method (Visual Analogue Score).

On 1st day: 10 out of 10
On 10th day: 8 out of 10
On 20th day: 8 out of 10
On 30th day: 3 out of 10
On 40th day: 1 out of 10

By assessment, it is clear that patient got significant relief for her headache by this Ayurvedic treatment which has been taken for 40 days regularly.

Treatment given

1. Sthanika Snehana Swedana – Shirapradeshi - for 40 days.
2. Shirodhara - Yashtimadhu siddha ksheera – for 40 days.
3. Nasya with Balabilwasiddha ksheera ghrutam– for 40 days.
4. Dhuma pana – Ashwagandhadi dhuma varti – for 40 days.
5. Matrabasti – Guduchi Shatavari siddha ksheera – for 40 days.
6. Snehapaan – Dadimadi ghruta 40 ml twice daily with kosha jala (Shamana matra) – for 40 days.

7. Pathya shadanga kashaya 20 ml twice daily – for 40 days.
8. Godanti bhasma 250 mg thrice daily with kosha jala – 40 days.
9. Tb. Abhra loha 250 mg twice daily with kosha jala – for 40 days.
10. Sukshma Mahalakshmvilas rasa (Triturated) 125 mg thrice daily – for 30 days.
11. Shirashoolaadi vajra rasa 1 tab. SOS.

DISCUSSION

Acharya Vagbhata stated that the base of man is head while whole body is just like its branches as it is abode (Ashraya) of the elan vitae (Prana) and all the sense faculties (Indriya). Therefore efforts should be always made to protect this vital organ.^[13] As per epidemiological study, prevalence of tension type headache is about 52% which is large in number.^[8] Hence for the disease like Shirashoola (Headache) it is important to know the pathophysiology and concepts for treatment as per Ayurvedic science.

Indulgence of hetus (causes) aggravates vata and pitta dosha independently (swatantradosha prakopa).^[11] Abhishyandi (secretory) aahara causes mobilization of doshas from koshta to shakha i.e. from abdomen to head in this case.^[14] Atiyoga (overuse) of indriyas (sense organs) causes indriya vikruti (deformity of sense organs), so deformity of head takes place in this case.^[15] Aggravated vata and pitta causes vitiation of raktadhatu which is located in the head.^[10] Acharya Charaka mentioned that in case of affliction of head, vataghna chikitsa should be done like snehana (oleation), swedana (sudation therapy), upanaha (sudation therapy), snehapana (oral administration of ghrita / oil), nasya (instil medication through nostrils), peedana, dhuma (herbal smoke). Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhata also stated that in case of Vataja shirashoola, one has to treat it like a Vatavyadhi.^[16]

This patient was treated with above mentioned medicines. Sthanika snehana swedana (Local Oleation and Fomentation) at shirapradesha (Head) was used to pacify locally aggravated vatadosha (Sthanika vataprakopa). Shirodhara is one of type of Murdhni taila (oil application on head). Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhata indicated Shirodhara in the treatment of Vataja Shirashoola.^[17] As the Shirodhara is Vyadhi pratyani chikitsa, in this case, Shirodhara was done by preparing milk with yashtimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) which makes it more Vata-Pittaghna. Acharya Charaka explained that, the expert physician should administer Nasya karma because the nose is the gateway of the head. The inhalation therapy given through the nasal passage spread into the different parts of the head, and cures diseases located there.^[18] Here we had used Bala (*Sida cordifolia*), bilwa (*Aegle marmelos*), siddha ksheera ghrutam for nasya karma, in which milk was prepared with Bala and Bilwa churna (powder) and clarified butter was added into it. This preparation is Vata-Pittaghna and used as a Bruhana (strength). Dhumapana (Medicinal smoking) used to clarify mind, throat and sense organ, causes lightness of head, and elimination of doshas.^[19] In this case, Ashwagandhadi dhumpaana was given which is snaihika type of Dhumapana. Snaihika dhumpaana causes libation of sense organ (Tarpana). Basti (Enema) is the most significant treatment for elimination Vatadosha. Head is one of the vital organ (Marma) which has to be protected from aggravated vayu because elan vitae (Prana) is dependant on this vayu and vayu is best treated by basti (enema). Therefore Basti is safeguard therapy for vital organ like shiraha.^[20] Matrasti is one of the type of Basti (enema) which can be given on regular basis.^[21] Here Matrasti was given in the form of milk prepared by Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) and Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*) churna. This kind of Matrasti is Vatapittaghna and Rakta prasada.

Patient had taken Dadimadi Ghruta 40 ml twice daily with lukewarm water before meals (Shamana matra). This oleation therapy alleviates aggravated vayu and disintegrates the adhered morbid material which means stucked inside.^[22] Dadimadi ghruta is effective in Pittaja and Raktaja diseases and accelerates Agni. Pathya shadanga Kwatha was given to her in the dose 20 ml twice daily before meals, this kwatha is Shirashoolaghna.^[23] Godanti bhasma 250 mg was taken thrice daily with lukewarm water. Godanti bhasma acts as pittaghna. Tab Abhra loha was given 250 mg twice daily with lukewarm water, this kalpa is Rakta vardhaka, vaatpittaghna and kshayaghna. Mahalakshmvilas rasa was given 125 mg thrice daily with lukewarm water in triturated form for 30 days. This kalpa itself is a shakti vardhaka, vatapittaghna and kshaya roga nivaraka and trituration process makes it more potent. After 30 days of previous kalpa, Shirashoolaadi vajra rasa which is Sarvshirashoola nashaka as stated in the Bhaishajya ratnawali^[24] was given to her and asked her to use it only if there was unbearable headache. And she doesn't have to take a single tablet then after.

Chikitsa upakrama (line of treatment) given by acharyas is seems to be very effective for shirashoola (headache). This treatment was basically Vata-Pittanashaka, Rakta prasadaka. Patient got significant relief by Ayurvedic treatment. No adverse effects were reported with the above Ayurvedic drugs.

CONCLUSION

The Ayurvedic therapeutic techniques and medication offers good relief in tension type headache on utilisation of therapeutic measures prescribed by the classics in the context of vatika shirashoola. Gross study of hetu (causes), samaprapti (pathophysiology) is very important, because Ayurvedic sciences claims that every person have his own unique constitution. Hence there are so many variations in pathophysiology by person to

person. By knowing the exact pathophysiology one can be able to diagnose and treat the case in correct manner. In this case, treatment was vatapitta shamaka and rakta prasadaka. Patient got significant relief and no any adverse effects were seen during the treatment.

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