

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GRIDHRASI CHIKITSA

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Abstract

At the present era, the human society is leading a mechanical life with sedentary life style, precariously busy schedule, constant work without rest, night shift, alarming anxiety and stress in the work field, drastic changes in the environment etc. All these cause prevalence of Vatavyadhi (disorders due to vata dosha) in this modern era. Among the different Vata vyadhi (disorders due to vata), the most affected one is Gridhrasi (sciatica) which is characterized by low back ache radiating to one or both the lower limbs. In addition to the above mentioned causes, constant work schedule in improper sitting posture, travelling long distances by vehicles, lifting of heavy objects, trauma to low back region are the precipitating factors of Gridhrasi. The causes, signs and symptoms explained by different Acharyas have more relevance to the present situation. The presentation of Gridhrasi varies from person to person due to change in Nidana(causative factors), and Samprapti (pathogenesis). Close observation and thorough knowledge of our classics makes the diagnosis and treatment of Gridhrasi easier. So the present article tries to explain the Lakshana (symptoms) and treatment of Gridhrasi which will ensure a simpler and more effective treatment of the cases.

Key words: Vata vyadhi; Gridhrasi; Nidana; Samprapti; Lakshana; Treatment.

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INTRODUCTION

Gridhrasi is explained as one among the Vataja Nanatmaja Vikaras (disorders specific to Vata only).^[1] It is a condition in which the Kandara (muscle tendons) which is passing towards the fingers of the feet, through Parshni (the region below Gulpha - ankle joint)^[2] gets vitiated by Vata, causes inability to lift the lower limb.^{[3][4]} The word Gridhrasi originated from the root Gridhra which means the bird vulture. Due to pain, the gait of the patient will be similar to that of the vulture. The cardinal signs and symptoms of Gridhrasi are Ruk (persistent pain), Toda (pricking pain), Stambha (stiffness), and Muhu Muhu Spandana (intermittent twitching) in the regions of Sphik (waist), Kati prishta (low back), Uru (thigh), Janu (knee), Jamgha (calf) and Pada (foot) in the order^[5] and there will be restriction in lifting of the leg. There are two types of Gridhrasi - Vataja and Vatakaphaja.^[6] In Vatakaphaja Gridhrasi, along with these symptoms, additional symptoms like Tandra (drowsiness), Gouvara (heaviness), Arochaka (anorexia) will be there. In Vataja Gridhrasi, there will be more Toda (pricking pain), Dehasya Ativakrata (increase in normal curvature of spine), Sphurana (throbbing pain) and Stabdghata (stiffness) of Janu (knee), Jangha (calf), Uru (thigh), Sandhi (joints) and Suptata (numbness). In case of Vata Kaphaja type, Gourava (heaviness), Vahnimardava (loss of appetite), Tandra (drowsiness) Mukhpraseka (excessive salivation), Bhaktadwesa (aversion to food) will be more.^[7]

Nidana (causative factors)

Specific Nidana (causes) for Gridhrasi is not mentioned anywhere in our classics. So general Vatavyadhi Nidana could be taken. The ultimate cause for Vata Prakopa (aggravation of Vata) are Dhatukshaya (depletion of body tissues) and Avarana (clouding).^[8] Ahara (food items) which is Alpa (less in quantity), Sita (cold in

nature), Laghu (light) in nature, Vihara (activities) like Ativyayama (over exercise), Prajakara (sleepless nights), Atyadhwa (over walking), Ativyavaya (over sexual intercourse), Aticheshta (over works), Dukhasayya (rest in improper position), Dukha asana (sitting in improper pattern), Vegadharana (suppression of natural urges), Abhighata (attack), Marmaghata (injury to vital points), Seeghra yaana (travel in speedy manner) may be the specific Nidana for Gridhrasi.^[9]

Samprapti (pathogenesis)

The indulging in of the above mentioned Nidana (causative factors) may cause Vata Chaya (aggravation of Dosha in its own place) in Pakvashaya (large intestine) which is the main seat of Vata. On continuing the Nidana intake causes Vata Prakopa (more accumulation) in Pakwashaya (large intestine) itself and in later, the vitiated Vata gets Stana Samsraya (localizes) in Kandara (tendons of muscles) of Sakti (thigh) where a Khavaigunya (defective space in the body caused by past trauma) was already present due to Nidana Sevana (intake of causative factor). Simultaneously the Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana (interaction between Dosha and Dushya) takes place there in the form of vitiation of Rakta (blood), Mamsa (muscles), Medas (fat), Asthi (bone) and Majja (marrow), by the Vata. This in turn produces symptoms of Sakti Utshepa Nigraha (inability to raise the thighs) In case of Vatakaphaja type; there will be separate Nidana (causes) for Kapha Dushti also.

In practice, the presentations of pain of Gridhrasi may vary from individual to individual. There are a lot of clinical conditions which may cause Gridhrasi. Different Vata Gata conditions (eg. Mamsa Gata Vata, Asthi Gata Vata) and Avarana (clouding of Doshas) conditions can produce the symptoms of Gridhrasi. So let us

see some of the clinical conditions which can be pathology for Gridhrasi.

If Raktatavata (aggravated Vata in Rakta) is the underlying pathology, the person may be presented with Teevra Ruja (severe pain), Aruchi (anorexia), Swapa (numbness) and Tapa (increased temperature).^[11] If Anga Gourava (heaviness of body), Toda (pricking pain), Sthabdhata (stiffness) are more, it might have occurred due to Mamsagata vata (aggravated Vata in Mamsa).^[12] If Asthi gata Vata (aggravated Vata In Asthi) is the pathology, there will be more Sakthisula (pain in thigh) and Sandhisula (pain in joints).^[13] In Majja Gata Vata (aggravated Vata in Majja), Santatam Ruja (persistent pain –not relieved by rest) will be there. Gridhrasi is considered as a Snayugata Vata Vikara (aggravated Vata in Tendons).^[14] Gridhrasi can be manifested as a symptom where Guda Sthita Vata (aggravated vata localized in anal region) as pathology. In this condition, the patient can be presented with Malagraha (constipation), Jangha, Uru, Trika, Prishta Sula (pain in calf, thigh, lower back region) associated with Gridhrasi.^[16] In Pakwasaya Gata Vata condition (aggravated vata in large intestine), there may be symptoms like Malarodha (obstruction in passing bowel), Trika Graha (stiffness in sacral region), Prishta Graha (back region) and Kati Graha (low back region).^[17] Sometimes it may be due to Sira Gata Vata (aggravated vaa in sira), because Spandana (fasciculation) and Suptata (numbness) are seen in many patients with Gridhrasi.^[18]

As one of the Nidana (cause) for Vata Kopa (aggravation of Vata) is Avarana (clouding), certain Avaranaja conditions may be the cause behind Gridhrasi. Some patients may experience burning sensation of lower limb (Daha). Pitta Avarana by Vata may be the reason behind it.^[19] Gourava (heaviness), Saitya (coldness), Sula (pain), Ushna Kamata (desire to hot) is another type of presentation by some other patients. It may be due to

Kaphavruta Vata (cloudiness of vata by kapha).^[20] Daha (burning sensation) may be seen in Raktavruta Vata (cloudiness of vata by rakta) also.^[21] If in some patients hot application and massages will cause Upasaya (alleviate the symptoms), it is due to Asthi Majjavruta Vata.^[22]

Chikitsa (treatment)

As a Vatavyadhi (diseases due to vata), general treatment of Vata is applicable in Gridhrasi. The treatment principle of Gridhrasi is Siravyadha (venesection), Basti karma (enema therapy), and Agnikarma (cauterizaion).^[23]

Snehana (oleation therapy)

Snehana (oleation therapy) is the first and important treatment of all Kevala Vatika conditions (vitiatio of vata only).^[24] Snehana can be done externally as well as internally. Externally Snehana can be done as Abhyangadi (massage etc). Internally Sarpi (ghee), Majja (marrow), Vasa (animal fat), Taila (oil) can be used as Paana (oral administration) as well as Anuvasana (oil enema). In case of Kaphaja Gridhrasi, the first treatment choice is Rukshana (drying therapy) for pacifying Kapha and then only Snehana (oleaion) can be done. Internally Ghrita (ghee) and Taila pana (oil intake), Eranda Taila (castor oil) Prayoga are mentioned.^[25] Bala Taila, Mulaka Taila, SahacharaTaila are mentioned for Snehapana.^[26]

Swedana (sudation therapy)

Repeated Swedana (sudaion) is the most important treatment of Vatavyadhi.^[27] Swedana is good in reducing Soola (pain), Sthambha (stiffness), Gourava (heaviness),^[28] which are the cardinal features of Gridhrasi. Upanaha Sweda (fomentation by tying of medicine) is specially indicated for Gridhrasi.^[29]

Shodhana (purification)

Among Vamana (emesis) and Virechana (purgation), Virechana is the most important method of treatment in case of Gridhrasi. Prior to Basti Chikitsa (enema therapy), the patient should undergo Shodhana (purification therapy).^[30] As a Vata Vyadhi, Mridu Virechana (mild purgation) is ideal for Gridhrasi.^[31] Eranda Taila along with Gomutra is advised. Virechana (purgation) with Eranda taila along with milk is advised for Gridhrasi.^[32] Vamana (emesis) is advised for Gridhrasi.^[33] It is preferable in Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi.

Siravyadha (venesection)

The site of Siravyadha (venesection) is in between the Kandara (tendon) and Gulpha (ankle).^[34] The reason for Siravyadha (venesection) is that, in Gridhrasi, the Kandara (tendon) gets vitiated. Kandara is the upadhatu (secondary dhatu) of Rakta (blood). So Rakta may get vitiated in Gridhrasi. So in Gridhrasi associated with symptoms of Raktavruta Vata and Pittavruta Vata, Siravyadha is the main treatment. But in Dhatukshya Janya (due to depletion of dhatu) Gridhrasi, Raktamoksha (blood-letting) is contraindicated.^[35] If Gridhrasi has not subsided by any other treatment, then we can think of Siravyadha (venesection).^[36] The site of Siravyadha (venesection) is four Angula above or below Janu (knee).^[37] Two Angula above Kshipra Marma or four Angula above or below Janu (knee).^[38]

Basti (enema therapy)

Basti (enema) is another major treatment for Gridhrasi. Among Niruha (decoction enema) and Anuvasana (oil enema), the latter is more beneficial in Kevala Vatika (vata only), and Dhaukshayajanya Vatika (vata kopa due to depletion of dhatu) conditions as there is no remedy more beneficial than Taila for Vata.^[39] Sahacharadi Taila, Dhanwantharam Taila,

Mahanarayana Taila etc. are commonly used Tailas for Anuvasana (oil enema) in cases of Gridhrasi. In patients with Asthimajjagata Vata Lakshana, Anuvasanabasti (oil enema) is beneficial. The treatment principle of Asthimajjagata Vata is Bahya Abhyanthara Sneha.^[40] In cases of Mamsa Gata Vata Lakshana, Niruha Basti is the line of treatment.^[41] Among different Niruha Bastis, Eranda muladi Basti^[42] is commonly practiced in Gridhrasi. It is the best treatment in Kaphavruta Vata conditions. Sampakadi Niruha,^[43] Vaitharana Basti^[44] are also best for Gridhrasi. Gomutrak Basti (Basti with Gomutra) is the best in Vatakaphaja Gridhrasi, and in Gridhrasi associated with Daha (burning sensation), Ksheera Basti is beneficial.^[45] If Gridhrasi occurs due to Pakwasayasthita Vata (vata localized in large intestine) or Guda sthitavata (anal region), then treatment of Udavartha is enough.^[46] By doing Koshta Shodhana (purification therapy), the pain may subside. If lakshana (symptoms) of Asthi Majjagata Vata (vata located in asthi majja) is there, then Snehana (oleation) can be given both internally (Pana, and Basti) and externally (Abhyanga, Katibasti etc)

Agnikarma (cauterization)

The site of Agnikarma (cauterization) is the Snayu (tendon) which passes below the little toe of feet.^[47] Agnikarma is contraindicated if there is Daha (burning sensation), Vidaha (Pittavruta Vata, Raktavruta Vata). Agni karma can be done in conditions where Bhesaja (medicines), Kshara (extract of ashes), Sastrakarma (surgical operations) are failed.^[48] Agni Karma with Loha Salaka (metallic cautery) about two or four Angula around the Gulpha also can be done.^[49]

Upanaha (fomentation by tying of medicines)

In patients with severe pain and stiffness, Sukhoshna Upanaha with Gaadha Bandha

(firm bandage) is preferable.^[50] It is contra indicated if burning sensation is there.^[51]

Suptata (numbness) is the main complaint explained by most of the patients. It is a major symptom of Raktavruta Vata. The treatment is Raktamokshana (blood-letting) and Lepana (applying of medicated paste).^[52]

Samanoushadhi (alleviating drugs)

Dasamuladi kwatha, Sephalika Daladi kwatha, Panchamula Kashaya, Krishna Prayoga in Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi, Eranda Phala Payasa, Rasnadi Guggulu, Triyodasanga Guggulu, Saindhavadya Tailam, Rasnadi Kashaya, Ajamedadi Churna etc.^[53]

CONCLUSION

Gridhrasi is a Vatika Nanatmaja Vikara. It cannot be considered as a single disease. It is a symptom with certain specifications explained above. As the Nidana (cause) for vatakopa (aggrevaion of vata) can occur due to Dhatu kshya (depletion of tissue) and Avarana (clouding of doshas), Gridhrasi can occur due to both these reasons. Lakshana of Gridhrasi may vary from person to person due to variation in Samprapti. So the knowledge of correct Samprapti and Lakshana of each case helps in the treatment of cases accordingly. In kevala vatika (vata only) condition, Brimhana therapy (nourishing therapy) is enough while in Avarana conditions, treatment of Avarana should be done followed by that of kevalavatika condition. Depending upon the condition of the patient, the treatment can be planned.

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