

LITERARY REVIEW ON ETIOPATHOGENESIS OF SHLEEPAD WITH REFERANCE TO ELEPHANTIASIS

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Article Received on
10 January 2018,

Revised on 30 Jan. 2018,
Accepted on 20 Feb. 2018,

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20184-11297

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the holistic science which deals with the states of life which includes both preventive and curative aspects of human being. There are many conditions which affects the healthy condition, among them an unhygienic and unclean domain is also responsible for it. In current era, industrialization, and urbanization, stagnant water etc. are one of the major cause for it. These are responsible for the manifestation of contagious disease. One such a group of disease includes filariasis and elephantiasis. Ayurvedahas described it under the “*shleepada*”. The following article “Discerning *shleepada* sampraprti with special reference to elephantiasis is reviewed through Ayurveda classis as well as modern medical science in the causation and the genesis of the *roga shleepada* with reference to elephantiasis.

KEYWORD: Ayurveda, the holistic science which *shleepada* with reference to elephantiasis.

INTRODUCTION

Shleepada means a swelling that slowly spreads to the leg, along with fever and severe pain starting from the groins. However some others are of the opinion that it can occur even in the hands, ears, eyes, penis, lips, and nose.^[1] *Shleepada* can be grossly correlate with the lymphatic filariasis progressing to elephantiasis. As per the contemporary science, it comes

under infectious disease. It is caused by *W.bancrofti*, *B.malayi*, or *B.timori*. The thread like adult parasites reside in lymphatic channels or lymph nodes.^[2] This disease manifests with the symptoms of painful swelling in the arms, legs, breasts and genitals.^[3]

Nirukti

The word *shleepada* has been derived from two words-“*shlish*” refers to elephant and the “*pada*” refers to foot. Another meaning is “*shila*” refers to stone, so the meaning is stone like hard foot or a foot is resembling the foot of elephant.^[4]

Definition

The disease in which the deranged *vayu*, *pitta* and *kapha*, taking a downward course, are lodged in the thighs, knee joints, legs and the inguinal regions and spread to the feet in course of time and gradually give rise to a swelling therein, is called *shleepada*.^[5]

Nidana

In Ayurveda treatise, it is mentioned that water of Rivers which originates from *pariyaatra* (western vindhya range), *Vindhya*, *Sahya*, *mahendra* mountains (north range of western ghat) and *Himalaya* which is responsible for manifestation of *shleepada*.^{[6],[7]} This disease elephantiasis mostly occurs in places where water is logged for long and which are cold in all seasons.^[8] This stagnant water can be comprehended as a *dushtajala* and it is *kapha pittakarguna*.^[9] Lymphatic filariasis is transmitted through mosquito bites. Climate is an important factor in the epidemiology of filariasis. Regions which are damp and moist and have stagnant water all year round afford a good breeding ground for the mosquitoes. Their longevity and also determines the development of the parasite in the insect vector. so, predisposing factor of *shleepada* as well as lymphatic filariasis and elephantiasis appear to be same.^[10] lymphatic filariasis is caused by *w.bancrofti*, *B.malayi*, or *B.timori*.^[11]

Samprapti

As per the nidana, stagnant water and cold climate is considered as a dushita jala and it is mainly responsible for vitiation of kapha dosha. Kapha is predominance among all three kind types of shleepada as heaviness and extensiveness are not possible without the involvement of kapha.^[12] Kapha is ashrayee to rasa dhatu. So kapha dushti first influence the prakruta karma of rasa. Pitta is also vitiated due to sneha samaana guna of kapha, or kapha-pittakar quality of dushita jala.^[13] Pitta is ashrayee to rakta dhatu, along with snehadi gunas of kapha undergo dushti of the rakta dhatu. Kapha is also ashrayee to mamsa and due to

samana guna of mamsa dhatu, so it also vitiates mamsa dhatu. So, initially, pathogenesis happens because of kapha along with pitta and later with the vata dosha.

Purvaroop and Rupa

According to modern science, Lymphatic filariasis involves asymptomatic, acute and chronic condition. The majority of infections are asymptomatic, showing no external signs of infection. These asymptomatic infections still cause damage to the lymphatic system and the kidneys and later the body's immune system. After that patient possesses the symptoms like lymphedema (tissue swelling). Lymphatic filariasis develops into chronic conditions it leads to elephantiasis (skin / tissue swelling) of limbs and hydrocele.^[14]

In Ayurvedic classical treatise, no description is available regarding the *purva roopa* of shleepada. There are mainly three types of *shleepada* are described with the classical signs and symptoms. *Shweta*(white and pale colored swelling), *snigdha* (glossy), *manda vedan*(slightly painfull), *bharika*(heavy), *mahaagrathika*(contain large nodules), *kantakairupaachitam*(studded over with crops of papillae and *sthira* (hard) are the symptoms of *kaphaj shleepada*.^[15] Later, due to *samana sneha guna*, *kapha* vitiates the *pitta dosha*, *pitta* is *ahrayee* of *rakta*. So the vitiation of *pitta dosha* also influence the vitiation of *rakta dhatu* and manifests the symptoms like *peeta sankasham*(yellow discoloration), *daha*(burning sensation), *jwara*(fever) which are mild in nature.^[16] Now, Initial stage of lymphatic filariasis is asymptomatic, acute and inflammatory. As per sign and symptoms this stage can be comprehended with *kaphaj* and *pittaj* shleepada. After that, Lymphatic filariasis develops into chronic conditions it leads to lymphedema (tissue swelling) or elephantiasis (skin / tissue swelling) of limbs and hydrocele. *Vataja* shleepada can be comprehended with reference to Elephantiasis with the characteristic features like *krushnam* (hyperkeratosis), *ruksha*(dry), *sphutiam* (fissures of skin), *teevrarujam*(severe pain), *animittarujam* (pain without reason) along with *jwara*(fever).^[17] Therefore, *kaphaja* and *pittaj* shleepada can be considered as initial stage of the lymphatic filariasis and the chronic stage of lymphatic filariasis as an elephantiasis can be considered as the *vataja* shleepada.

Sadyasadyatwa and Updrava

When the filarial swelling which has grown like an anthill(*valmika*), is studded with thorny projection(*kantak*), is a year old and is particularly large in size(*mahat*), is being incurable.^[18] Also when the disease is produced due to the use of kapha-enhancing food(*aharaviharjatapumsa*) and daily regimen in a patient of *kaphaj* constitution (*kapha*

prakriti) and the lesion has a discharge (*sastrava*), very much elevated (*saankura*), has the features of all the dosha (*sarvalinga*) and is associated with an itching sensation and predominance of *kapha*, it is incurable.^[19] and has to be rejected for intervention. This features indicates advanced stage of lymphatic filariasis manifesting the hyperkeratinisation and in-folding of the skin. Here *straava* can be comprehended as a complication of elephantiasis where there is obstruction of the local lymphatic or there systemic lymphatic like the retroperitoneal lymph vessels. Obstruction of retroperitoneal lymphatic increases the renal lymphatic pressure. This leads to the rupture of the renal lymphatic and results in the passage of milky urine and is termed as chyluria.^[20] These all features can be understood as a chronic case of lymphatic filariasis as well as elephantiasis.

CONCLUSION

Shleepad is *kapha Pradhan tridoshaj vyadhi* where there is abnormal enlargement of different body parts like limbs, ears, eyes, penis, lips, and nose. In contemporary science it coincides with the pathogenesis and manifestation of lymphatic filariasis to the advanced stage of elephantiasis. Acharya has described the various *nidana* which can be considered as the predisposing factor for shleepada. As per the modern science these predisposing factors are *w.bancrofti, B.malayi, or B.timori*.

In ayurvedic treatise, prodromal symptoms of shleepada are not described. On the basis of *lakshana* of shleepada and asymptomatic and acute stage of lymphatic filariasis can be comprehended as *kaphaja* and *piitaja* types of shleepada. And the chronic stage or elephantiasis can be comprehended as *vataja* shleepada. The complication phase mentioned in classics, such as *valmika, straava* etc. can be taken as the stage of chylous weeping, hyperkeratinisation and in-folding of the skin. Hence, for arresting the progression of a disease, knowledge of *samprapti* and *avastha* of the disease is the key. Hence, it helps in developing an insight and drawing decision for a clinician to execute a timely and fruitful intervention.

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