

**ROLE OF RUKSHA SWEDANA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF
AAMVATA W.S.R. TO RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS**

**Dr. Sangita Devi*¹, Dr. Nimisha Mishra², (Dr.) Punita Pandey³ and
Prof. (Dr.) D.K. Goyal⁴**

¹P.G. Scholar, P.G. Dept. of Kayachikitsa, Gurukul Campus, U.A.U. Haridwar.

²Associate Professor, Dept. of Rognidana Evam Vikriti Vigyan, Gurukul Campus, U.A.U.
Haridwar.

³Professor, P.G. Dept. of Kayachikitsa, Gurukul Campus, U.A.U. Haridwar.

⁴H.O.D., P.G. Dept. of Kayachikitsa, Gurukul Campus, U.A.U. Haridwar.

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***Corresponding Author**

Dr. Sangita Devi

P.G. Scholar, P.G. Dept. of
Kayachikitsa, Gurukul
Campus, U.A.U. Haridwar.

ABSTRACT

Today Rheumatoid Arthritis has become a leading cause of disability. It is long term autoimmune inflammatory disorder that primarily affects joints. According to Arthritis Foundation, Rheumatoid Arthritis is second most common type of arthritis and is widely prevalent throughout the world. In India the prevalence has been estimated 0.7 percent. Onset of Rheumatoid Arthritis is most frequent during middle age and women are affected 2.5 times as frequently as men. The symptoms of 'Aamavata' mentioned in *Ayurveda* keep resemblance with that of Rheumatoid Arthritis. The pathology of *Aamvata* starts with long term incidence of 'mandagni' in body which leads to

formation of 'Aama'. This *Aama* gets mix with vitiated *Vata* and enters *trika region* or *sandhis* (joints), leading to stiffness of body. Such condition is known as 'Aamavata'. Understanding the pathology is very first step towards treatment of any disease. As both *Aama* and *Vayu* are involved in the pathogenesis of *Aamvata*, it is necessary to understand *Aama* properly. All the symptoms of *Aama* like heaviness in body, weakness, lethargies, indigestion etc. can be seen very clearly in diseased person. Thus the treatment principle must include two facts – Changing 'aama' status into 'nirama' and pacification of *vata*. 'Ruksha Swedana' can be considered as ideal method of treatment in such situation due its *aamashoshana* and *vatashamana* properties. In context of same, randomized trials can be performed to get promising clinical results of *Ruksha swedana* in *Aamavata*. The present

study of 'Aamavata' is an effort to understand the 'samprapti' and to explore various modes of treatments accordingly.

KEYWORDS: *Aamashoshana, Vatashamana, Samprapti.*

INTRODUCTION

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is the common persistent inflammatory arthritis, occurring throughout the world and in all ethnic groups. The prevalence is lowest in black Africans and Chinese, and highest in Pima Indians. In Caucasians, it is 1.0 – 1.5% with a female to male ratio of 3:1^[1]. In India the prevalence has been estimated 0.7 percent. The typical presentation is with pain, joint swelling and stiffness affecting the small joints of hands, feet and wrists. Large joint involvement, systemic symptoms and extra-articular features may also occur.

Aamvata is a disease of joints explained in *Ayurvedic* texts, symptoms of which keep resemblance with that of Rheumatoid Arthritis. The pathology of *Aamvata* starts with long term incidence of 'mandagni' in body. *Agni* (digestive fire) when functions properly, responsible for complete digestion of food. But when this process of digestion gets hampered due to *mandagni* (weak digestive fire), formation of 'Aama' takes place. Initially this event happens in GIT. But when this incidence of *mandagni* stays for long, 'aama' gets lodged in various parts of body. This accumulation of *aama* may occur in joints due to 'kha-vaigunya'. *Vata* can be considered to be the responsible factor for this *kha-vaiguniya* in joints. So it can be concluded that when *aama* mix with vitiated *vata* and enters *trika* region or *sandhis* (joints) leads to stiffness of body, such condition is known as *Aamvata*.

Aacharya madhav firstly described *aamvata* and its common characteristics in 25th chapter as follows-

- *Aangamarda* (pain in body)
- *Aruchi* (anorexia)
- *Trushna* (thirst)
- *Aalasya* (letharginess)
- *Gaurav* (heaviness in the body)
- *Jwara* (pyrexia)
- *Avipaka* (indigestion)
- *Anga-shoonata* (swelling in the body)

Etiopathogenesis

In *Ayurveda* the root cause of all the disorder is considered to be '*nidan sewan*'. *Aacharya madhavakar* has mentioned specific *nidanas* for *aamvata* i.e *viruddha ahara sewana*, *viruddha cheshta*, *mandagni*, and doing exercise immediately after consuming *snigdha ahara*. After long term consumption of all these *nidanas*, functional *agni* gets hampered in the body, and thus production of *aama* takes place. Such *aam* gets lodged in *sandhis* along with vitiated *vata dosha* and *aamvata* is developed.

Modern Medical Science advocates for both genetic and environmental factors to be involved in the pathogenesis of Rheumatoid arthritis. Although it is also thought that RA may be triggered by an infectious agent in a genetically susceptibility host, a specific pathogen has not been identified yet.

Ruksha Swedana

Aacharya Chakradatta was first to describe the line of treatment in detail for *Aamvata*. Use of *tikta*, *deepana* and *katu drugs*, *Langhana*, *Swedana*, *Virechan*, *Snehapan*, and *Saindhvadi anuvasana* as well as *ksharabasti* are advised for treatment of *aamvata*.

Swedan is the process by which perspiration is produced in the body using various methods. It is procedure which relieves stiffness, heaviness and coldness of the body and produces sweating. Based on the method of *swedana* administered, there are two types of *swedana* i.e, *saagni* and *niraagni sweda*.. Further according to *doshas*, they are of two types – *snigdha* and *ruksha*.

Ruksha sweda like *baluka sweda* can be used in *kaphaja* disorder as well as in the diseases originated out of *aama*, especially in *aamvata*. Both *Aama* and *vata* are opposite in their properties except *sheeta guna*. *Baluka sweda* is *ruksha* and *ushna* in nature. It pacifies *sheeta guna* of both *aama* and *vata* by its *ushna guna*; *kleda* and *sneha shoshana* by its *ruksha guna*. It does *pachankriya* i.e *pachana* of *aam* and also regulation of *vayu*. It removes stiffness of joints and alleviates pain. In *Aamvata*, *stambha*, *gaurava*, and *shula* are chief symptoms; *swedana* gives relief in all these symptoms and helpful in the treatment of *aamvata*.

Acharya Charaka, while explaining properties of *swedana*, says that *swedana karma* is really helpful in removing *sankocha* (*restricted movements/contractures*) and *supti* (numbness) from the body; also helps in generalized disorders due to its *srotoshodhana guna*. *Aamvata*

affects the whole body and have *updravas* like *sankocha*, *khanja*, *supti* etc. So *swedana* is really very helpful treatment in *Aamvata*.

CONCLUSION

As the *samprapti* of disease *aamvata* includes vitiation of both *vata* and *aama*, thus treatment should be accordingly in line to achieve the state of *samprapti-vighatana*. *Ruksha swedana* is best mode of treatment in reversing the serial of *samprapti*. It is responsible for srotoshodhana, *aam shoshna* and *vata shamana* due to its combined *ruksha* and *ushna gunas*. Thus it can be used as a safe and cost effective treatment in patients suffering from *aamvata*.

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