Role of Ayurveda in the Management of Arsha (Haemorrhoids) – A Review

Heena Devi*

*Deptt.of ShalyaTantra, R.G.G.P.G Ayu.College& Hospital Paprola, HP, India

ABSTRACT

Arsha (Piles) is an extremely common problem reported since thousands of years with a prevalence rate that is highest among all the ano-rectal disorders. In modern medical science, many procedures are described for management of haemorrhoids, of which haemorrhoidectomy is commonly preferred by surgeons, but after sometime of excision there is great possibility of reappearance of the disease. But in Ayurveda fourfold management of Arsha has been indicated eg. Bhashaja, Kshar Karma, Agnikarma and Shastra Karma according to chronicity and presentation of the disease. Among these Bhashaj Chikitsa and Kshar Karmas show wonderful results in management of Arsha.

Arsha (Haemorrhoids) is an engorged condition of the haemorrhoidal venous plexus along with abnormally displaced enlarged anal cushion, characterized by inflamed or prolapsed pile mass, bleeding per rectum and some discharge from the anus. The term ‘Haemorrhoids’ is popularly used for pathological varicosity of the haemorrhoidal veins due to increased pressure that may result from chronic constipation or diarrhoea, straining during defaecation or pregnancy etc. In classics of Ayurveda, it has been explained that this disease kills the afflicted like an enemy, hence it is coined as Arsha. The disease is initiated with Agnimandya (Improper digestion) due to improper food habits and lifestyles. However, haemorrhoids can re-occur even after proper management hence it is mentioned as one among Ashtamahagada.

KEYWORDS

Arsha, Bhashaja, Kshar, Agnikarma, Shastra Karma
INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has existed as an unbroken tradition for thousands of years catering health, based on unique principles. Ayurveda plays a vital role in curing Arsha (Hemorrhoids) without surgical intervention. There are many herbal drugs that have Arshoghna property. Many treatment modalities are explained in Ayurvedic classics for the management of Arsha. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned this disorder in the Ashta Mahagada (Eight grave diseases)\(^1\). Arsha occurs in Guda region, which is undoubtedly a Marma (vital part). Manifestation of the disease occurs due to many factors e.g. improper diet intake, prolonged standing or sitting, faulty habits of defaecation etc. which results in derangement of Jatharagni leading to vitiation of Tridosha, mainly Vata Dosha. These vitiated Doshas get localized in Guda Vali and Pradhana Dhamani which further vitiates Twak, Mansa, and Meda Dhatus due to Annavahasrotdushti leads to development of Arsha\(^2\). The word Arsha pertains to a disease occurring in Guda or anorectal region. It tortures the patient and may create hinderance in the function of anorectal region.

Importance of Guda: The importance of Guda can be viewed in the terms of the following facts:

- *Guda is a sadhyapranaharamarma* means the vital organ of the body to which any damage will cause death\(^3\).
- *Guda is a srotas*\(^4\).
- *Guda* is categorized under *karmendriya* group and the function designated to it, is defecation and releasing of flatus\(^5\).
- *Gudais one of ‘Pranayatana’. Pranaytana* is enlisted because its proper action is very important for functioning of body\(^6\).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To review the literature of Arsha in Ayurvedic texts.
- To collect the information regarding the drugs mentioned as Arshoghna and to find out various methods for management of Arsha.

Classification of Arsha (Piles)-

1. **On the basis of the origin**\(^7\):
   1. Sahaja (Hereditary)
   2. Janmottarakalaja (Acquired)

2. **On the basis of the character of bleeding**\(^8\):
   1. Ardra (Sravi) - Bleeding piles due to vitiation of Rakta and Pitta Dosha.
   2. Shushka- Non bleeding piles due to vitiation of Vata and Kapha Dosha.

3. **On the basis of site**\(^9\):
   1. Bahya (samvarani)
   2. Abhyantara (visarjini, pravahani)

The common clinical features are loss of appetite, pain in the anal region, difficulty in passing the stools, oedema of the body, anxiety, headache, vomiting and inactivity, bleeding per rectum, backache and emaciation, etc.

Management of Arsha (Therapeutic)–

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned four-fold treatment for Arshas - Drug therapy (Bheshaja karma), surgical therapy (Shastra karma), Chemical cauterization (Kshara karma) and Cauterization (Agni Karma); on the basis of Dosha involvement and the stage of Arshas. However, the basic management principle for every disease in Ayurveda is to avoid the causative factor, which helps either in breaking etio-pathogenesis at basic level of the disease. Sushruta, the Father of Indian surgery had a deep clinical understanding of this subject. According to doshas following treatment is given-

1) Vatarsha - Snehana, Swedana, Yamana, Virechana, Asthapana and Anuvasana Basti
2) Pittarsha - Virechana
3) Kaphjarsha - Aharadravyamixed with Shunthi and Kulatha.
4) Raktarsha - Shamana
5) Sannipatikarsha - mixed treatment of all Dosha

1. Bheshaja Chikitsa (Medical management): First of all Bheshaja Chikitsa is described in management of Arsha.

Table 1 Internal Medicines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rasashadhi</th>
<th>Choorna</th>
<th>Asava/Arista</th>
<th>Gud/Vatika</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arsha-kuthara</td>
<td>Lavannoathamadi</td>
<td>Abhyarishta</td>
<td>SuranPutpaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NityoditRas</td>
<td>Chooran</td>
<td>Dantyarishta</td>
<td>BahusalaGud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ChakrakuthARas</td>
<td>NargrodhradiChoorna</td>
<td>Duralabharishta</td>
<td>Kankayangutika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KesarChoorna</td>
<td>Drakshasava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samangadichoorna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Measures:

Similarly there are many preparations which are to be used locally. Most of these preparations are helpful in eliminating the painful or troublesome manifestations of Arsha as mentioned in table no.2

Table 2 Types of Preparations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abhyanga</th>
<th>Medicated oil processed with chitraka, yyaksharabilva etc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swedna</td>
<td>Swedna with Vijayapinda, Rasoonpinda etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avagahan</td>
<td>Avagahan with Triphla, Arka, Agnimanth, Kanji etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basti</td>
<td>ChitrakadiTailabasti, KasissadiTailabasti, YastimadhuTaila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhoopna</td>
<td>DhoopanawithVidanga, Devdaru, Pippali, Ghee etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lepa</td>
<td>Haridrachurnaprapalepa, pippalyadiprapalepa, snuhiksheermixedharidrachurnapalepa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Systemic measures:
The systemic medicines act by improving appetite, regularize bowel habits, astringent action on blood vessels and maintain agni and doshas in equilibrium.
Acharya Charaka has stressed that Jathragni to be kept in normal status. He describes there is nothing equal to Takraprayoga in the treatment of Arsha.

Ksharakarma (Potential Cauterizing Application)
*Kshara* is a caustic chemical, alkaline in nature obtained from the ashes of medicinal plants. It is the superior most among the sharp and subsidiary treatments because of performing Chhedana (excision), Bhedana (Incision), Lekhana (Scraping) and Shamana of the Tridosha disorders. It is versatile, because it can be used in such places that are difficult to approach by ordinary measures. It can be administered both internally and externally.
The description of Kshara have also been mentioned in detail in the Brihattrai Samhitas (i.e. Charaka, Sushruta, Vagbhatta).

Ksharasutra (Surgical ligature):
The Kshara sutra is a Para surgical measure capable to perform excision slowly by virtue of its mechanical pressure and chemical action. Acharya Sushruta advised Ksharsootrain Nadivrana and Bhaganda. But Chakradutta has given reference of Kshara sutra preparation by smearing repeatedly the latex of Snuhi and Haridra powder in the treatment of Arshas.

Agni karma (Thermal therapy):
Agni karma is an important Para surgical measure. Agni Karma is said to be superior karma due to non-recurrence of diseases. It can be useful in such diseases which are incurable even by Drugs, Instruments and Kshara. It is used extensively in the surgical practice in modified form by way of electric heat cautery and freezing.

Pathy-apathya of Arsha:

Pathya:  
Different leafy Vegetables prepared in Ghee, Yavagu, Mutton soups, Pomegranate, Butter milk etc, carePathya for Arsha patient.

1. **Anna Varga:** Godhuma, Yava, Rakthashali, Shastika, Kulattha, Priyangu.
2. **Shaka Varga:** Surana, Nimba, Patola, Vartaka, Punarnava, Shigru, Balamuli.
3. **Ksheera Varga** Aja Ksheera, Takra.
4. **Phala Varga**: Amalaki, Kapittha.
5. **Ahara Upavarga:** Palandu, Nagara, Maricha.
6. **Mansa:** Mruga Mansa.

Apathya:  
Fishes, Oilcakes and the food stuffs made of rice, Bilva, Fibrous root of Lotus etc. are Apathya for the Arsha patients.

1. **Ahara** – ViruddhaAhara, VishtambhiAhara, GuruAhara, Anupa Mansa, Dushta Udaka etc. etiological factors.
2. **Vihara** – Vegavarodha (Suppression of natural urges), Atti Stri sanga (Over indulgence
in sex), *Utkatasana* (defective sitting posture), *Prishtha Yana* (riding), bathing in the sun, improper management of *Vamana* and *Basti* etc.
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