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A Critical Review on Understanding *Vatarakta*

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ABSTRACT

Vatarakta is a chronic, progressive disorder present in the society caused due to *mithya ahara*, *vihara* and sedentary lifestyle. *Vatarakta* as the name suggest is the vitiation of *vata dosha* and *rakta dhatu*. In this condition the normal flow of *vata* is obstructed by *rakta*. The disease is initially limited to the *uttana dhatu* leading to *uttana vatarakta* but later on involves the *gambhira dhatu* giving rise to *gambhira vatarakta*. *Vatarakta* is a broad term when viewed under the lens of contemporary science ranges from autoimmune connective tissue disorders to metabolic disorders. The treatment should not only aim on *samprapti vighatana* but also on lifestyle modification in the present era. The present study aims to give a sight of critical review on the disease *Vatarakta*.

Key Words *Vatarakta Mithya Ahara, Vihara*

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INTRODUCTION

Vatarakta is a progressive disorder due to multiple causes which involves various metabolic or biochemical disturbance, the effects of stress and the allergic states¹. Due to increasing industrialization, urbanization, environmental pollution, sedentary lifestyle and improper dietary habits, incidence of *Vatarakta* is increasing in last few decades. The word *Vatarakta* comprises of two words which include *vata* and *rakta*. In this condition *vata dosha* and *dushya rakta* are vitiated simultaneously². It is called so because of *rakta*'s saturation with *vata* and its predominance by the same. *Adhyavata*, *Khudavata* and *Vatabalasa* are the synonyms

used in literature to refer the illness *Vatarakta* based on its clinical occurrence, anatomical site and the severity of the disease respectively³. Due to the involvement of both *vata* and *rakta* there is severity in the presentation of the symptoms of this condition which is *sheegrakari* and *yapya* to treat. This presentation of the disease is due to the *guna* of *vata* and *rakta* which have similar properties as that of *vayu* and *agni* i.e they mutually synergise the effect of each other. *Sushruta* describes this condition under the chapter *Vatavyadhi* while *Charaka* and *Vagbhata* assign a separate chapter to this disease. Though it involves *vata* and *rakta*, due to its vitiating factor *vata* it is mentioned under *Vatavyadhi*. But other acharyas designate a separate chapter due to

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its specific aetiology and pathogenesis involved in this condition. *NIDANA*⁴[Table 1]

Table 1 *Nidana of Vatarakta*

<i>Ahara</i> ja Nidana	<i>Vihara</i> ja Nidana	<i>Acc To Prakruti</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Amla, katu, lavana, kshara</i> ▪ <i>Snigdha, ushna</i> ▪ <i>Klinna and shushka bhojana</i> ▪ <i>Ambuja and anupa mamsa</i> ▪ <i>Pinyaka, moolaka, kulatha, masha, nishpava</i> ▪ <i>Dadhi, aranala, sauveera, sukta, takra, sura</i> ▪ <i>Viruddhahara, adhyasana</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Abhighata</i> ▪ <i>Asuddhi</i> ▪ <i>Divasvapna</i> ▪ <i>Ratrijagarana</i> ▪ <i>Ambukreeda</i> ▪ <i>Plavana</i> ▪ <i>Langhana</i> ▪ <i>Vyavaya</i> ▪ <i>Vega nigraha</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Sukumara</i> ▪ <i>Sthoulya</i> ▪ <i>Avyayama persons</i>

1. Lavana, amla, katu, kshara

These *rasas* and *gunas* of the *ahara* possess *agni mahabhoota* predominantly which does *rakta dushti* and *vata vriddhi*.

2. Snigdha, ushna ahara

It leads to *agnidushti* and *pitta vidagdatha*.

3. Klinna and shushka bhojana

Intake of these type of *ahara* is against *ahara vidhi vidana* which leads to *agnimandya* which further does *rakta dushti*.

4. Ambuja and anupa mamsa

It possesses *abhishyandi* guna which leads to *rakta dushti* and *santarpanjanya vyadhi*.

5. Pinyaka, moolaka, kulatha, masha, nishpava

Excessive intake of these leads to *pitta dushti* along with *kapha dosha*.

6. Dadhi, aranala, sauveera, sukta, takra, sura, asava

These are entitled under *amla varga dravya* which have *vidahi* guna. Excessive consumption leads to *rakta dushti* and *pitta vriddhi*.

7. Viruddhahara, Adhyasana

These are improper method of consumption of food which will lead to *ajeerna*. *Ajeerna* is one of

the contributing factor in the pathogenesis of *Vatarakta*.

8. Krodha, divaswapna, prajagara

These all are *mithyaviharajanya nidanas* which lead to *dosha dushti*. Excessive *krodha* leads to *pitta dushti* and *agni dushti* which in turn forms *ama*. *Divaswapna* and *ratrijagarana* does *agnimandya*.

9. Sukumara and achankramanasheela

Individuals who are habituated to sedentary and luxurious lifestyle will lead to *rakta dushti*.

10. Ashuddha and abhighata

If an individual doesn't undergo seasonal *shodhana* and if traumatic injury occurs it will lead to *rakta dushti*.

SAMPRAPTI

Acharya Charaka and *Vagbhata* has explained etiopathogenesis in detail. *Vatarakta* is also considered as *avarana* *vatavyadhi*. In order to understand the pathogenesis of *Vatarakta* one should understand the concept of *avarana*. *Vata dosha* possesses *chala* guna which helps in entering it into *sukshma srotas*. *Rakta* is considered as *jeevana* because it does *dharana* of the *shareera*. By the etiological factors *vata* and *rakta* gets vitiated on its own. Then *dooshita*

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rakta does avarana of dooshita *vata dosha* in turn leads to more aggravation of *vata* which causes sanga of *rakta* dhatu and in later stages it does vimargagamana which further vitiates other dhatus and causes *Vatarakta*.

SAMPRAPTI GHATAKA

Dosha - Vata

Dushya – Uttana: Rasa, *Rakta*, Mamsa

Gambhira: Rasa, *rakta*, mamsa, medas, asthi and majja

Srotasa – Rasavaha, *Raktavaha*, Asthivaha

Agni – Vishmagni

Udhhavasthana – Pakwashaya

Vyaktasthana – Twaka, Snayu, Sandhi

Srotodushti – Sanga, Siragranthi

RUPA [Table 2 & 3]

Table 2 Lakshanas based on dosha predominance

VATADHIKA	PITTADHIKA	KAPHADHIKA	RAKTADHIKA
- Sirayama	- Vidaha	- Staimitya	- Staimitya
- Sula	- Vedhana	- Gourava	- Gourava
- Spurana	- Murcha	- Snehatawa	- Snehatawa
- Toda	- Sweda	- Supthi	- Supthi
- Shothasya karshnyam	- Thrishna	- Manda ruja	- Manda ruja
- roukshyam	- Mada	- Kandu	- Kandu
- Shyavata vriddi hani	- Brama	- Swetata	- Swetata
- Dhamani anguli sandhi	- Paka	- Sheetata	- Sheetata
- sankocha	- Raga	- Sopha	- Sopha
- Angagraha	- Bheda	- Stabdatwa	- Stabdatwa
- Atiruk	- Sosha		
- Stambana	- Ugra daha		
- Sheeta pradhvesha	- Atiushnatwam		
- Sparshodwigna Bheda	- Sophasya		
- Prashosha	- mridutwam		
- Swapa	- Sammoha		
- Sheetanupashaya			

Table 3 Lakshanas based on types of Vatarakta

UTTANA VATARAKTA	GAMBHIRA VATARAKTA
- Kandu	- Svayatu stabdhata
- Daha	- Svayatu kathinya
- Ruja	- Bhrishartha
- Ayama	- Shyavatha
- Toda Spurana	- Tamra twak
- Kunchana	- Daha
- Syava twak	- Toda
- Rakta twak	- Sphurana
- Bheda	- Paka and Ruja
- Gourava	- Vidaha

Roga Marga- Madhyama

STHANA OF VATARAKTA⁹

The sthana of *Vatarakta* is Kara (hands), Pada (feet), Anguli (fingers) and Sarva Sandhi (all joints). Initially it starts at Hasta-Pada Moolgata Sandhi (roots of hand and feet joints) and then spreads all over the body.

PURVARUPA

Sveda bahulya or svedabhava, karshnyat, sparsagnata, kshathe athiruk Sandhi saithilyam, alasyam, sadhanamangam, pidakodgamam, vaivarnya and mandalotpathi in twak, nisthoda, spurana, bheda, gurutwa, supthi in janu, jangha, uru, kati, amsa, hasta, padaanga and sandhi.

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- Suptata	- Vatasandyasthi majjasuchindanniva
	- Kanjatwa, pangutwa and adhika purvaruk

UPADRAVA

Acharya *Sushruta*, *Charaka* has enumerated the upadrasvas but *Vagbhata* has not enlisted them.[Table – 4]

Table 4 Upadrasvas according to different acharyas

Acharya <i>Sushruta</i> ⁵	Acharya <i>Charaka</i> ⁶
- Prana	- Aswapna
- kshaya	- Arochaka
- Mamsa	- Shwasa
- kshaya	- Mamsa kotha
- Pipasa	- Shirograha
- Jwara	- Moorcha
- Moorcha	- Mada
- Shwasa	- Ruk
- Kasa	- Trishna
- Sthambha	- Jwara
- Arochaka	- Moha
	- Pravepaka
	- Hikka
	- Pangulya
	- Visarpa
	- Paka
	- Toda
	- Bhrama
	- Klama
	- Anguli vakrata
	- Sphota
	- Daha
	- Marmagraha
	- Arbuda

SADHYASADHYATA⁷

- Ekadoshaja and naveena – Sadhya
- Dwidoshaja – Yapya
- Tridoshaja and upadravayukta – Asadhya

Acharya *Charaka* has also opined other criteria for considering the condition as asadhya which have lakshanas like *Samprasavi* (profuse discharge from the ulcer), *Vivarna* (discoloration), *Stabhdha* (stiffness), *Arbudakrita* (tumour like lesion), *Sankocha* (constriction) and *Indriyatapa* (damage to the senses). Even if there is *Moha* (mental confusion) alone, then also the disease is considered as incurable⁸.

CHIKITSA

A] SAMANYA CHIKITSA

- **RAKTAMOKSHANA:** Acharya *Charaka* has mentioned *raktamokshana* with *shringa*, *jalouska*, *suchi*, *alabu* and *pracchana* or *siravyadha* after considering the vitiation of the *doshas* and the strength of the patient.
- **VIRECHANA:** After proper *snehana*, *mridu virechana* should be given with *sneha dravya* or *rooksha dravya*. After *virechana Anuvasana basti* and *Niruha basti* should be given.

B] VISHISHTA CHIKITSA

I. Based on the site of the origin[Table-5]

Table 5 *Vishishta chikitsa* according to types of *Vatarakta*

<i>Uttana Vatarakta</i>	<i>Gambhira Vatarakta</i>
Pralepa	Virechana
Abhyanga	Asthapana basti
Parisheka	Snehapana
Avagaha	

II. Based on the predominance of dosha

1. **Vatadhika:** Pana, abhyanga and basti with combination of four snehas and upanaha to the affected areas according to *Charaka*. Purana ghritha pana is recommended by both *Vagbhata* and *Sushruta*. If the disease affects the joints of the legs only then *Asthapana basti* followed by *Anuvasana basti* should be given.
2. **Pittadhika:** Virechana, pana with ghritha and ksheera, parisheka, basti and sheeta lepa. Same treatment is followed in *Raktadhika Vatarakta*.

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3. **Kaphadhika:** Mridu vamana, avoiding excessive snehana, parisheka, upavasa, and ushna lepa.

SHODHANA CHIKITSA

1. VIRECHANA

After proper Snehana, Mridu Virechana with Snigdha or Ruksha dravyas according to the condition, should be advised to the patient¹⁰. Acharya Charaka has mentioned the use of Eranda Taila with milk in Bahudosshavastha¹¹, Abhaya Kashaya or Ghritabhrishta Trivrita Churna with Ksheera or Draksha Rasa decoction of Kashmarya, Trivrita, Draksha and Parushaka with saindhava and madhu for virechana karma¹².

2. RAKTAMOKSHANA

Acharya Charaka, Sushruta, Vagbhatta have mentioned Raktamokshana in Vatarakta. The

predominant pathology of Vatarakta is the avarana of rakta arga which causes the accumulation of the dushitha rakta. Hence this treatment modality is considered as the main treatment of Vatarakta. It should be done with the help of Shringa, Jalauka, Suchi, Alabu, Prachhana and Siravyadha¹³.

3. BASTI

Acharya Charaka has mentioned that there is no treatment available as efficient as Basti. The Mala should be eliminated by administrating Ksheera Basti mixed with ghrita¹⁴.

SHAMANA CHIKITSA

After the completion of the shodhana chikitsa, shamana chikitsa is essential to subjugate the doshas that may still be in a vitiated condition. Yogas mentioned in the classics are enlisted below.[Table-6]

Table 6 Yogas mentioned in classics

Kashaya	Choornas	Arista and Asavas	Taila	Ghrta yogas
Manjishtadi	Saddharana choorna	Punarnavasa	Pinda taila	Sravanyadi ghrita
Rasnerandadi	Rasnasaptaka	Amritarista	Dhanwantaram taila	Bala ghrita
Kokilaksha	ashta choorna	Balaritsta	Amrtadya taila	Parusaka ghrita
Rasnapanchaka	Hinguvachadi		Satapaka bala taila	Jivaniya ghrita
Amruthothara	choorna			
Vasaguduchyadi				
Lepas	Guggulu yogas	Rasa yogas	Rasayana yogas	
Jadamayadi lepa	Kaisora guggulu	Vatavidhwamsini rasa	Amalaki dasamoola rasayana	
Kottamchukkadi lepa	Mahayogaraja guggulu	Yogendra rasa	Kushmanda rasayana	
Manjishtadi lepa	Amritadi guggulu		Amritaprasavaleha	

DISCUSSION

The leading cause of Vatarakta is apathya ahara sevana & lifestyle in present era. Margavarana in this condition leads to the manifestation of disease. Shodhana, shamana and bahiparimarjana chikitsa are aimed to rectify the margavarana. Raktamokshana is the first line of treatment in both uttana and gambhira vatarakta.

Ksheera basti mentioned by Charaka is the efficient treatment which does snaihika virechana. Rasayana chikitsa should be employed as the disease is progressive and chronic in condition which helps in dhatu poshana. Acharya Charaka mentioned pathya apathya of vatarakta which plays important role in prevention of this condition.

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CONCLUSION

In present era due to the *mithya ahara, vihara* and sedentary lifestyle *Vatarakta* has become one of the most common conditions seen in day to day life. It is very important to understand the

pathogenesis and stage of this condition to treat it effectively. In contemporary science it can be considered as hyperuricemia, hypertension, vascular diseases. The treatment modalities mentioned by acharyas are effective in *Vatarakta*.

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