



CONCEPT OF VRANASHOPHA IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Acharya Sushruta was well aware about importance of vranashopha (stages of abscess formation), vrana (wound) and their management in surgical practice. The vranashopha is described as earlier phase of vrana. Sushruta has mentioned detail description of inflammatory swelling under the heading of vranashopha which has 3 progressive stages. These are amawastha (just early stage of inflammatory process), pachyamanawastha (true inflammatory stage) and pakwawastha (suppurative stage) respectively. Further acharya described six types of vranashopha as; vattika, paittika, kaphaja, shonita, sannipattaja, agantuja. He described their description according to color, consistency, pain and other symptoms. Acharya Sushruta perceived that the process of the pathogenesis has a definite sequential pattern, distributed over six occasions for treatment called shatkriyakala. Sixty procedures for management of vranashopha (inflammatory swellings) and vrana (abscess or wound) was told by Sushruta. Out of these first eleven from apatarpana to virechana were mentioned for vranashopha specially and rest of other forty eight procedures were truly for vrana only. It is very important to know all about vranashopha as treatment in this stage can prevent hazardous complications occur by infected wound.

Keywords: Sushruta, vranashopha, vrana, inflammatory, shatkriyakala.

INTRODUCTION

Shotha, shvayathu and shopha are three terms that denote an unnatural elevation of a part or whole of the body. Shotha (Swelling) as a clinical entity was very well known from the samhita period of Ayurvedic literature itself. Detailed description of shotha along with classification, symptomatology, complication and management is traceable to Charaka samhita. The surgical aspects about shopha (inflammatory swelling) and vrana (wound) drew more attention by Acharya Sushruta. Acharya Sushruta has defined shopha as localised swelling in a part of body involving the skin and the underlying flesh which may be even or uneven, massive and knotty in consistency. Again he cautions that differentiation should be made from other clinical entities as glandular enlargements, abscesses etc. which are also associated with a swelling.¹ Shopha described by Sushruta is analogous to inflammatory swelling in many respects. Shopha is antecedent phase of vrana (wound) as it is similar to inflammatory process which leads to formation of an abscess. It can be clinically noticed as boil, furunculosis, cellulitis, erysipelas etc. Acharya Madhava for first time introduced the new entity of vranashopha as inflammation as a separate chapter. According to Charaka when vitiated vata comes in contact with vitiated rakta, pitta and kapha, it brings them to the periphery then the srotas (channels) get obstructed to develop shotha in and around the skin and the flesh but it is not limited to part of body.²

Classification of shopha

Sushruta's diagnosis was based on clinical observation of shopha (inflammatory swelling) during those days. He mentioned six kind of examination that includes using of all five senses and interrogation.³ Acharya Sushruta mentioned six types of shopha as vattika, paittika, kaphaja, shonita, sannipattaja, agantuja⁴ (Table 1).

Aetiopathogenesis of shopha

As it is well known that the imbalanced state of doshas lead to pathogenesis of diseases. Aetiopathogenesis of shopha is much resembled to inflammation in modern medical science.

Inflammation is defined as local response of living tissue to any injury caused by any agent. Acharya Sushruta perceived that the pathogenesis of shopha has a definite sequential pattern, distributed over six occasions for treatment called shatkriya kala.⁵ These are respectively as:

- Sanchaya (cummulation of physiological active doshas)
- Prakopa (excitation of the previously cumulative and imbalanced doshas)
- Prasara (overflowing i.e. excited doshas leave their original site)
- Sthana samasraya (localisation of the wandering imbalance doshas at a site)
- Vyakti bhava (manifestation of doshas in form of disease with sign and symptom)
- Bheda awastha (definite termination of the pathological lesion i.e. abscess)

Pus formation (suppuration) according to Ayurveda

Pus formation results from dhatumala paka and dosha dushya summurchana. Invariably all the three doshas are vitiated due to the prakopaka nidana and they have specific role on the pathology of pus formation. The prakupita vata dosha is responsible for the factor of pain induced at the site of lesion. The nidana which has irritated the pitta dosha makes it undergo vidagdha or amlibhava (sourness), thus vidagdha pitta which has got the amla rasa is again the factor which further increases pitta and vitiates the rakta dosha in a vicious cycle. It directly disintegrates (pachana) the damaged tissue. Thus the paka is presided by the prakupita pitta dosha. The digested liquid portion of the tissues and other materials belong to the prakupita kapha dosha. The pus formed is accordingly pale, yellow, viscid and less hot, thus entire process with varying degree of intensity is influenced by all three doshas simultaneously.⁶

Stages of vranashopha

Acharya Sushruta has described three stages of vranashopha. These are:

Amawastha: Stage of unripe abscess (early inflammation)

This stage results from the fight between the vitiated doshas and the defending dushyas (dhatus), here in this stage kapha dosha may be prominent due to which a swelling produced.⁷ (Figure 7)

- Warmth (little hot)
- Normal skin colouration
- A feeling of coldness
- Induration
- Dull pain
- Mild inflammation

Pachyamanawastha: Stage of ripening abscess (inflammatory stage)

If the vitiated doshas are further allowed to produced more exaggerated phase in which the prakupit pitta will act upon the dushya to produce disintegration. This stage produced symptoms like as:⁸ (Figure 8)

- Pinprick like pain and other different kind of pain like bitten, piercing, burning etc.
- With pain like that of a scorpion sting, the patient obtains no relief in standing, sitting or lying down postures. The swelling goes on increasing like a full bladder.
- Discolouration of the skin, an increase of the swelling, pyrexia, a burning sensation, thirst and anorexia are the sign of a ripening of abscess or called pachyamanawastha.

Pakwawastha: Stage of riped abscess (suppuration)

Further in related to dosha dushya sammurchana the dhatus are affected and burnt. There is an attempt for absorption (shoshana by vayu) due to which following sign and symptoms are produced as:⁹ (Figure 9)

- Subsidence of pain
- Appearance of pallor
- Localisation of in duration

- Appearance of wrinkles, cracking of skin
- Pitting on pressure of fingers and its filling up again on release of the pressure
- Feeling the liquid pus within as the movements of water within the bladder, when it is pressed on one side pressure is felt on other side this is called fluctuation.
- Subsidence of constitutional symptoms occurs.

Management of vranashopha

The vranashopha should be managed in early stage to avoid suppuration and more tissue harm as described in stages of shatkriyakala. There are different kind of management is required in different stages of shopha like in early stage (amawastha) only rubbing (vimlapana), oleation (oil massage), application of medicated paste (alepa), poultice (upanaha) are needed for treatment while in suppurative stage (pakwawastha) surgical procedure like incision (bhedana) etc. are needed for treatment. Acharya Sushruta described seven pillars for the management of inflammatory lesion (vranashopha) which are mentioned in Table 2.¹⁰

DISCUSSION

Concept of Ayurveda about vranashopha was widely explained by different acharyas but Sushruta's concept is appropriate for diagnosis and treatment as surgical aspect. Diagnosis according to three progressive stages is very beneficial for treating the vranashopha. Sushruta explained "if the doshas are eliminated in stage of accumulation itself, they do not progress to the further stages of pathogenesis, otherwise in the later stages they would become more and more potent (harmful).¹¹ This means treatment of inflammation should be done in early stage before it converting into an abscess. Although, sixty procedures for management of vranashopha (inflammatory swellings) and vrana (abscess or wound) were explained by Sushruta but these all sixty were grossly included in seven pillars of management.

Table 1: Types of shopha and their characters

Type of shopha	Colour	Consistency	Pain
1.Vattika (Figure 1)	Blackish or reddish	Indurated or soft	Fleeting and pricking
2.Paittika (Figure 2)	Yellow or angry red	Soft and quick spreading	Burning
3.Kaphaj (Figure 3)	Pale or white	Indurated, greasy, cold, slow to spread	Mild pain an itching
4.Shonita (Figure 4)	Very black	As paittika	As paittika
5.Sannipataja (Figure 5)	Mixed of all doshas	-	-
6.Agantuja (Figure 6)	Lohita (red)	As pitta and shonita	As pitta and shonita

Table 2: Seven pillars of management of vranashopha

1.	Vimlapana	Light massage or rubbing (to increase the circulation)
2.	Avasechana	Elimination therapy including bloodletting (for the removal of toxins)
3.	Upanaha	Poultice
4.	Patana	Operative procedures
5.	Shodhana	Antiseptic measures (detoxification)
6.	Ropana	Healing measures
7.	Vaikritapaha	To restore normalcy to the scar



Figure 1: Vattika shopha



Figure 2: Paittika shopha



Figure 3: Kaphaj shopha



Figure 4: Raktaj shopha



Figure 5: Sannipataj shopha



Figure 6: Agantuja shopha



Figure 7: Amavastha of vranashopha



Figure 8: Pachyamanavastha of vranashopha




Figure 9: Pakwavastha of vranashopha

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