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CONCEPTUAL VIEW OF GRIDHRASI AND TREATMENT ACCORDING TO PANCHKARMA

¹ Dr Ashish Mishra & ² Dr. Mansoor Ahmad

¹Associate professor, Department of Panchkarma, Jeevan Jyoti Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Aligarh, U.P.

²Associate professor, Department of Kriyasharira, Mahaveer Ayurvedic Medical College, Meerut, U.P.

ABSTRACT

Sciatica (Gridhrasi) is one of the most severe and disabling neurological illnesses. Gridhrasi's cardinal signs and symptoms are Ruka (pain), Toda (pricking feeling), Stambha (stiffness), and Muhuspandana (twitching) in the Sphika (Gluteal Region), Kati (Waist), Prishtha (Low Back), Uru (Thigh), Janu (Knee), Jangha (Calf), and Pada (Foot), respectively, and Sakthikshep. In modern parlance, the above characteristics can be equated with the condition Sciatica syndrome, which occurs due to spinal nerve irritation and is characterized by pain in the sciatic nerve distribution that begins in the buttock and radiates downwards to the posterior aspect of the thigh, calf, and the outer border of the foot. It is classified as one of the Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi (diseases produced only by Vata Dosha vitiation), with the vitiated Vata Dosha manifesting as low back discomfort radiating to the lower limbs, followed by stiffness and a pricking sort of pain. The purpose of this article is to explore the Ayurvedic ancient texts and illustrate the many therapeutic options accessible. Ayurvedic treatment aims to restore balance by correcting the underlying functional disequilibrium. Gridhrasi Ayurvedic remedies focus on restoring the exacerbated Vata or Vata-Kapha to a condition of equilibrium and hence to health.

Key-words – Gridhrasi, Sciatica, Vata, Kapha, Ayurveda, Panchakarma.

Introduction

Our muscles, joints, and bones are put under tension inadvertently as a result of our hectic lifestyles. This tension can build up gradually and have a catastrophic impact on the body, such as a sudden fall or a spinal misalignment leading in low back pain. Millions of individuals worldwide suffer from low back pain (LBP), both acute and chronic.¹ Sciatica is caused by a herniated disk impinging on the L4, L5, or S1 nerve and presents as unilateral neuropathic pain spreading from the gluteal area down the posterolateral leg to the foot. Sciatica affects 2% to 40% of the world's population. Acute conditions frequently progress to chronic diseases, while chronic problems can be aggravated by acute exacerbations. 'Sciatica' is a benign condition defined by modern science as discomfort that begins in the lumbar area and spreads down the back of one lower limb to the ankle and sometimes the foot. Intrinsic illness or abnormalities of the surrounding meninges and bones might influence the spinal cord and spinal root.

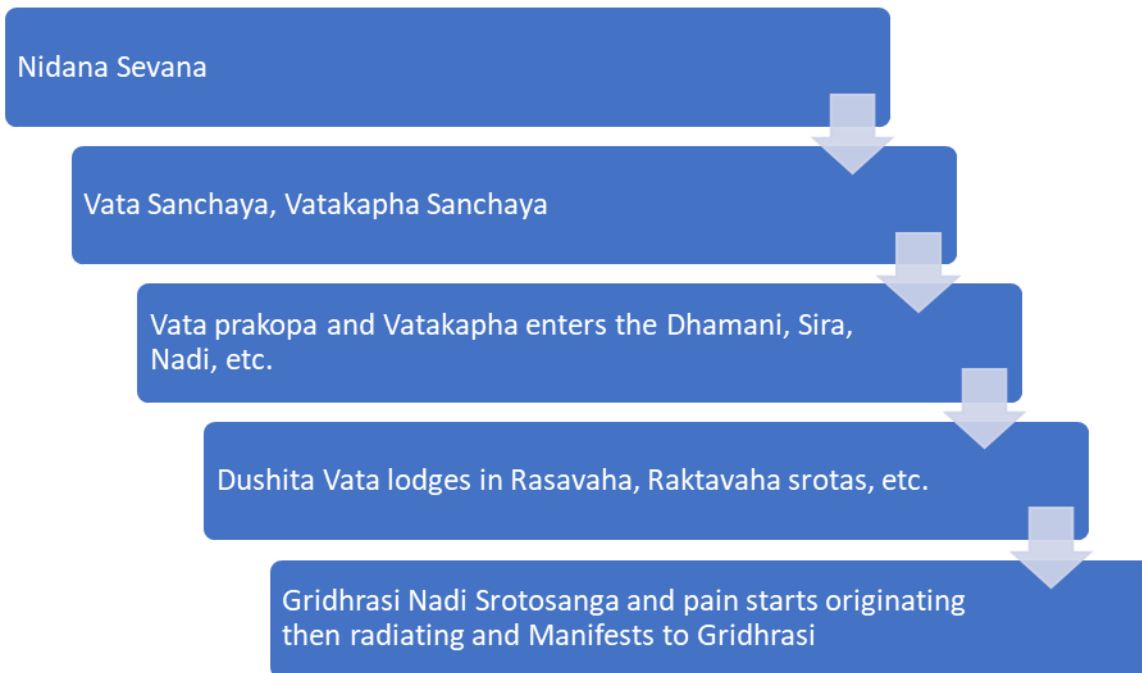
Gridhrasi is one of 80 varieties of Nanatmaja Vatavyadhi. Gridhrasi is divided into two kinds: Vataja and Vatakaphaja. Ruka (pain), Toda (pricking feeling), and Stambha and Muhuspandana (twitching) in the Sphika (Gluteal Region), Kati (Waist), Prishtha (Low Back), Uru (Thigh), Janu (Knee), Jangha (Calf) are the characteristics of

Vataja Gridhrasi. In Vatakaphaja Gridhrasi, due to Kaphaanubandh, Arochaka (Anorexia), Tandra (Stupor) and Gaurava (Heaviness) are found as associated symptoms.^{2,3}

Nidana

Gridhrasi's exact nidana has not been stated. So the elements indicated as causing Vata vyadhis are called nidana, and it has been attempted to explain how they cause the sickness. Actually, there isn't much of a distinction between nidana and vatavyadhis. The main distinction in all vatavyadhis is in samprapti. The Vata prakopaka karanas are nearly identical, with the sole distinction being the samprapti vishesa of vitiated dosha.^{4,5} Although Charaka and Bhavaprakasha explicitly highlighted the reasons of Vata vyadhi, the causes of Vata vyadhi have not been fully explained in Sushruta samhita, Astanga Sangraha, and Astanga Hridaya, etc. However, the causal causes of induced Vata dosha are available in the literature. Gridhrasi is a nanatmaja kind of Vata sickness, hence the causes of Gridhrasi may also be regarded vata provoking circumstances.⁶

Samprapti (Pathogenesis)



Purvarupa of Gridhrasi

As Gridhrasi is one of the 80 types of Vatavyadhi, the minor symptoms present before the manifestations of this disease may be taken as purvarupa.^{7,8}

Rupa of Gridhrasi

The pain began with Sphik and spread to Kati, Pristha, and Uru. Gridhrasi's cardinal symptoms are Janu, Jangha, and Pada, in that order. Ruk and Toda are the two major terms used to describe the agony. Stambha and Muhuspanandana have also been mentioned by Charak. The cardinal sign, according to Shusruta and Vagbhatta, is sakthikshepanigraha. According to Charaka, the symptoms of Gridhrasi are as follows.^{9,10}

- ❖ In Vataja type
 - Ruk (Pain)
 - Toda (Pricking sensation)
 - Stambha (Stiffness)
 - Muhuspanandana (Tingling sensations)
- ❖ In Vata-Kaphaja type
 - Tandra (Stupor)
 - Gaurava (Heaviness)
 - Arochaka (Anorexia)

Pain -This is a common symptom of Gridhrasi, and it is believed that the pain begins in the hip and progresses to the kati (waist), Pristha (back), Uru (thigh), Janu (knee), Jangha (calf), and Pada (foot). Obviously, this discomfort is there, as is the area covered by the sciatic nerve.

Pricking pain - This is a symptom reported by Charaka and Madhava. Toda is a pricking pain felt along the sciatic nerve distribution.

Stambha (Stiffness) - Charaka mentions the stambha felt in the afflicted region of the Gridhrasi sufferer. This is a sensation of lightness or stiffness in the leg. Because of the discomfort in the nerve distribution, the person attempts to move as little as possible. As a result the muscles of the leg become rigid and the stambha is experienced.¹¹

Spandana (Twitching): This can also be described as a pulsing or throbbing sensation. This is caused by muscle twitching. This can occur in the buttock, thigh, legs, or even the tiny muscle of the foot, and is usually in the muscle supplied by the sciatic nerve.

Sakthikshepana Shusruta has mentioned this symptom, Nigrahanti. In response to the aforesaid ailment, Dalhana suggests that the kandara that prevents limb mobility is known as Gridhrasi. This is another symptom of the afflicted leg's reduced movement. The term kshepa refers to prasarana or expansion. The patient must maintain the leg flexed since the discomfort will be worse in an extended posture.

Dehasyapi pravakrata: Madhava defined the symptom as discomfort that causes lateral and forward bending of the body. Gridhrasi's patient maintains a flexed leg and attempts to walk without much leg extension. As a result, his entire body is inclined to the injured side, giving him a bending or limping posture. The gait is likewise standard.

Management of Gridhrasi (Sciatica)

The treatment of Sciatica is a challenge for the modern medicine and surgery. The treatment option for Sciatica in present time includes.

- Conservative treatment
- Epidural steroid injection
- Peri-radicular infiltration
- Surgical treatment

In Ayurvedic texts, various types of treatment are described for Gridhrasi.¹²⁻¹⁸

1. Nidana Parivarjana (Avoid the causative factors)
2. Snehana (Oleation therapy)
3. Swedana (Sweating therapy)
4. Virechana (Purgation therapy)
5. Basti Karma (Medicated enema therapy)
6. Raktamokshana (Bloodletting)
7. AgniKarma (Thermal cautery)
8. Shamana (Palliative therapy)

- **Nidana Parivarjana** - The primary method of an Ayurvedic therapy is to identify the underlying cause of sickness. This is the

first and most important concept to follow in the treatment of any disease. Nidana parivarjana slows the course of illness by limiting Dosha vitiation. Because Gridhrasi is classified as one of the eighty Nanatmaja Vata Vyadhies, the general causes of Vata vyadhi are also believed to be the causes of Gridhrasi. Rukshahara (Dry food), Sheetaahara (Cold food), Alpahara, Ativyayam (Excessive exercise), Langana (Fasting), Vegadharana (Suppression of natural cravings), Shrama (Excessive labor), Chinta (Stress), Shoka (Grief), (Injury), and other Samhitas include Vata prakopaka Hetus.

- **Snehana (Oleation therapy)** - In the case of Gridhrasi, snehana or oleation treatment is utilized both externally and internally. Externally, Snehana might take the shape of Abhyanga, Pizhichhil, Avagaha, Parisheka, and so on. If Kapha Dosha is implicated in the pathogenesis, as in the case of Vata kaphaja Gridhrasi, Snehana Chikitsa should be avoided since it tends to aggravate the Kapha Dosha imbalance.

- **Swedana (Sweating therapy)** - The cardinal symptoms of Gridhrasi include Shula (pain) and Stambha (stiffness) in the lower limbs, which are best addressed by the Sweden Chikitsa. Swedana also aids in the liquefaction of the Dosha by clearing the Srotas or correcting the Margavarana. Swedana techniques such as Avagaha Sweda, Pizhiccil, Nadisweda, Patrapinda Sweda, Pinda Sweda, and Upanaha Sweda can be conducted efficiently in patients of Gridhrasi but in Vata kaphaja Gridhrasi, Valuka Sweda is a better option for evident reasons.

- **Virechana (Purgation therapy)** - Virechana has an important role in Gridhrasi. If the vitiated Doshas are more

severe and no relief is obtained with Snehana or Swedana, only Mridu Virechana is recommended for the Dosha shodhana. Snehana and Swedana delivered them to Kotha, and Mridu Virechana can readily deduce them. Trivruttha, Eranda, Aragvadhya, and other names are used for this purpose. Virechana eliminates the maladravyas, raises Agni, cleanses the srotas and Dhatus, and destroys the vyadhi. Though it is particularly useful in Pittapradhana and Raktapradoshaja Vyadhies, it is also beneficial in Vatavyadhies since it performs systemic Dosha cleansing and influences the whole Dhatu pariposhan karma. Virechana's activity is not restricted to a single spot; it affects the entire body. Charaka Samhita mentions Mridu Virechana in Vata Vyadhi. The oral dosage of Eranda Sneha (castor oil) with milk is appropriate for Virechana.

➤ **Basti Karma (Medicated enema therapy)**

- The principal site of Vata Dosha is Pakwashaya. Gridhrasi does have a vitiated Vyana Vata. As a result, Basti is extremely beneficial in calming Vata. Basti is prescribed for people who suffer incapacity, extremity stiffness, organ discomfort, and bone fractures. Gridhrasi individuals have severe constipation, lack of appetite, and other symptoms. As Basti remains in pakwashaya, the pelvises and organs below the umbilicus benefit from the virya of the Basti dravyas, which is disseminated throughout the body. It sucks out Doshas from head to toe, much as the sun, albeit miles away, drains water from the earth's vegetation. No other chikitsa is as capable as Basti of tolerating and regulating Vata's energy. When performed deliberately and properly, Niruha Basti cleanses mala, Tridoshas, and Saptadhatus, drives away Dosha

Sanchaya from the entire body, improves Agni, intelligence, life span, and slows the aging process. Basti Sneha is utilized in Anuvasana. Nothing is as effective in eradicating Vata as Taila, which destroys Rukshata with its Snigdha Guna and Vata with its Guru and Usna Gunas, respectively. As water put into the root nourishes the entire tree and flowers, oil poured into the anus nourishes the entire body, and so on.

It is also stated that Basti Chikitsa is the "Ardha Chikitsa" of Vata . According to these findings, basti is the most significant Panchakarma in the treatment of Gridhrasi. Apart from Basti, no other Chikitsa has the ability to soothe and regulate the Vata power.

- Niruha Basti: Erandamuladi Niruha and Dashamuladi Niruha are the best choices.
- Anuvasanabasti: Anuvasana Basti using Vatahara Tailas like Bala Taila, Mulaka Taila, Ksheerabala Taila, Prasarani Taila etc. are beneficial.

In Gridhrasi, Vata specifically Apana and Vyana Vayu Dushti is found. Basti stays at Pakwashaya and starts its action from there. Pakwashaya is the natural abode of Vayu. Basti conquers the vitiated Vata is its Prakruta Sthana by which Vata dwelling in other parts of the body is automatically conquered. Basti removes Malasanghata and thus maintains the Anulomagati of Apana Vayu which helps to pacify the symptoms of Gridhrasi. Basti Chikitsa decreases the ketoacid and pyruvic acid levels due to which Vit. B synthesis increases. This Vit. B restricts the demyelination process of the nerves and helps in regeneration. One theory proposes that the Virya of Basti Dravyas spreads through A.N.S. and expels out vitiated Doshas from the body. This signifies its action on the nervous system.

This undoubtedly proves the efficacy of Basti therapy in the management of Gridhrasi.

- **Raktamokshana (Bloodletting)** - It is a treatment for blood cleaning and purification. Raktamokshana is Sanskrit for "let the blood out." To lower the amount of hazardous compounds in the blood, the blood is evacuated from the body. Ayurvedic texts recommend using Shringa, Jalauka (leech application), Alabu (Gourd), Prachhana (Scarification), and Siravyadha (Venepuncture). Gridhrasi Charaka taught Siravyadha at the Antara-Kandara-Gulpha location, and Acharya Sushruta recommended Siravyadha four Angula above or four Angula below the knee joint.
- **Agnikarma (Thermal Cautery)** - Various Acharya discussed Agnikarma in Gridhrasi management. Agnikarma is recommended in the care of Sira, Snayu, Asthi, and Sandhigata Vyadhi, according to Sushruta and Vagbhatta, and Gridhrasi is one of these Samprapti's ailments (pathogenesis).
- **Shamana (Palliative treatment)** -This therapy is used to treat vitiated Dosha Shamana. They go by the names Aushadhi and Ahara.
- **Shamanoushadhi** - These are internal medications used to treat sickness. Several pharmaceutical compositions are discussed in several texts in the context of Chikitsa.

Some of the Formulations

- ❖ Churna - Ajamodaadi Churna, Abhayaadi Churna, Krishnadi Churna, Rasnaadi Churna.
- ❖ Kalka and Lepa - Maha Nimba Kalka, Rasona Kalka, Swalpa Rasona, Vaatahara Pradeh

- ❖ Kashaaya and Arishta - Panchamoola Kashaaya, Maha Rasnaadi Kashaaya, Erandamoola, Balarishtha, Dashamoolarishtha.
- ❖ Ghrita and Taila - Bala Taila, Eranda Taila, Vajjigandhadi Taila, Saindhavaadya Taila, Maashaadi Taila, Mahaabalaadi Taila, Naraayana Taila, Vishnu Taila and Ghrita, Vijaya Bhairava Taila, Datturaadi Taila.
- ❖ Guggulu and Rasayogas - Rasna Guggulu, Trayodasanga Guggulu, Yogaraaja Guggulu, Mahayogaraaja Guggulu, Pathyaadi Guggulu, Vataari Rasa, Vatagajankusa Rasa, Vatarakshasa Rasa.

Conclusions

Gridhrasi may be equated with the condition Sciatica syndrome in modern parlance, which occurs due to spinal nerve irritation and is characterized by pain in the sciatic nerve distribution that begins in the buttock and radiates downwards to the posterior aspect of the thigh, calf, and the outer border of the foot. Gridhrasi contains Vata, especially Apana and Vyana Vayu Dushti. Basti remains in Pakwashaya and begins its action there. Vayu's natural habitat is Pakwashaya. Basti conquers vitiated Vata in its Prakruta Sthana, which inevitably conquers Vata in other regions of the body. Basti eliminates Malasanghata and hence preserves the Anulomagati of Apana Vayu, which helps to alleviate Gridhrasi symptoms.

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