

Critical Analysis of Shodhana and Shamana Chikitsa of Sheetapitta in Ayurveda

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Abstract

Sheetapitta is a Skin condition mentioned by Acharya Madhavakara. Its Signs and Symptoms closely resemble those of Urticaria. Sheetapitta is a Tridoshaja janya vikara. In Ayurvedic science, conditions such as Shitapitta, Udard, and Kotha are considered Skin disorders similar to urticaria in modern science, sharing comparable symptoms and causes. Shitapitta is primarily caused by Virudhahara Sevan (incompatible dietary habits) and Doshaprakopaaka hetu (imbalanced doshas). It involves a combination of Vata and Kapha Doshas with an aggravated Pitta Dosha, leading to symptoms like inflammation resembling Varati Damshta Samsthana Shotha, Kandu Bahula, Toda Bahula, Chardi, Jvara, and Vidaha. Urticaria is known to impact approximately 20% of individuals at some stage in their lives. In modern science there is vast treatment of urticaria and other allergic skin disorders but recurrence of disease is common in very much cases. Also prolonged use of steroids and antihistamines may lead to adverse effects. Sheetapitta is one of the Santarpana janya vyadhi, so purificatory line of treatment is having most important. Shodhana Chikitsa is important in treating Sheetapitta because it helps to eliminate aggravated Dosas. Vamana, Virechana and Raktamokshana are main purificatory methods as Sheetapitta is a Pitta pradhana tridoshaja vyadhi. Shamana Chikitsa can effectively control Shitapitta and enhance the patient's quality of life. In Sheetapitta by following Pathyapathya, recurrence can be prevented and the disease may be cured. It is yukti of the physician which principle is best suited for particular individual as per the Doshic predominance and state of the disease. This article intends to critical analysis on various modalities of purificatory and palliative management in Sheetapitta

Keywords: Sheetapitta, Shodhana Chikitsa, Samana Chikitsa, Urticaria

Introduction

In current scenario of Changing life pattern and sedentary lifestyle people do not follow the rules of Swasthavritta. Polluted environments, poor food habits, excessive workload and stress etc. have become main triggering factor for the manifestation of various diseases. Sheetapitta is one of the dermatological diseases characterized by sudden eruptions of itchy wheals which can appear on any part of the skin. Urticaria, commonly known as hives, typically results from an allergic reaction. In Ayurveda, a similar condition is Sheetapitta, as its symptoms closely resemble those of hives. Sheetapitta is derived from two words: Sheeta and Pitta. This condition occurs when the cold element dominates over the Pitta dosha. In Ayurveda, allergic manifestation is mentioned under the concept of Satmya-Asatmya, which

refers to the suitability or unsuitability of food and lifestyle. It manifests due to the consumption of incompatible food and lifestyle practices, as well as exposure to various poisonous substances.¹ Symptoms of allergic skin reaction is mentioned as kotha in Brihatrayi later on it is developed as separate disease under the title Sheetapitta-Udarda-Kotha by Madhavakar.² The proper references for Sheetapitta is not described in Brihatrayies but explanation about Udarda, Kotha, Utkotha are mentioned as a Vyadhi³ or Purvarupa⁴ or Lakshana.⁵ In Ayurvedic texts, Sheethapitta, Udarda and Kotha are described similarly, though they exhibit some distinct characteristics and have different causative factors. Sheetapitta and Udarda are considered synonyms, as described by Madhavakara. He quoted that Sheetapitta having Vatika dominancy while Udarda having Kaphaja dominancy.⁶ Acharya Charaka has not directly used a word Sheetapitta but words kotha, utkotha and udarda has mentioned at different places. Madhava Nidana explained detail Nidana Panchaka of 'Sheetapitta-Udarda-Kotha' he only mentioned Sheeta maruta sparsha as causative factor but Charaka Samhita we can find many causative factors.⁷

Aims and objectives

1. To study about Sheetapitta Vyadhi
2. To study the Shodhana and Shamana Chikitsa of Sheetapitta Vyadhi

Materials and methods

Classical Ayurvedic texts such as Charaka Samhita, Susruta Samhita, Bhavaprakasha, Madhava Nidana, Bhaishajya Ratnavali, provide valuable insights into understanding Sheetapitta Vyadhi and the Shodana and Samana Chikitsa in the management of Sheetapitta

Disease Review

In this article exploring Madhava Nidana to understand the manifestation of Sitapitta according to Nidana, Purvarupa, Rupa, Samprapti, Upashaya(Chikitsa). In the Chikitsa part, will elaborate on Shodana and Shamana perspective, as well as Pathya-Apathya.

Nidana (causes) शीतमारुतसंस्पर्शात् प्रदुष्टौ कफमारुतौ | पित्तेन सह सम्भूय बहिरन्तर्विसर्पतः Exposure to a very cold breeze leads to an increase in Kapha and Vata doshas, which when associated with Pitta, begin to travel externally in the skin and internally in the blood and other tissues, resulting in Shitapitta. **Purvarupa(premonitory symptoms)** पिपासारुचिहल्लासदेहसादाङ्गगौरवम् | रक्तलोचनता तेषां पूर्वरूपस्य लक्षणम् such as—pipasa (thirst) loss of appetite(aruchi), oppression in the chest, debility, feeling of heaviness of the body(anga gourava), & redness of the eyes⁸ **Sheetapitta, Udarda, Kotha** वरटीदृष्टसंस्थानः शोथः सञ्जायते बहिः सकण्डूस्तोदबहुलश्छर्दिज्वरविदाहवान् || उद्वर्दमिति तं विद्याच्छीतपित्तमथापरे | वाताधिकं शीतपित्तमुद्वर्दस्तु कफाधिकः Elevated patches, similar to those caused by a wasp sting, are accompanied by intense itching, pricking pain, vomiting, fever, and a burning sensation, which are characteristic features of Udarda. In Shitapitta, Vata predominates, whereas in Udarda, Kapha is the dominant dosha. सोत्सङ्गैश्च सरागैश्च कण्डूमद्भिश्च मण्डलैः | शैशिरः कफजो व्याधिरुद्वर्द इति कीर्तितः || Elevated, reddish, highly irritating, round patches caused by kapha during sisira rtu is also known udarda⁹ असम्यग्मनोदीर्णपित्तश्लेष्मान्निग्रहैः | मण्डलानि सकण्डूनि रागवन्ति बहूनि च | उत्कोठः सानुबन्धश्च कोठ इत्यभिधीयते || Incomplete emesis and other treatments, obstruction of the movement of pitta, kapha and anna lead on to the appearance of innumerable rashes, red in colour, highly itching and relapsing many times. This condition is known as kotha.¹⁰ **Samprapti-** The Nidana like Sparshana of Sheeta maruta, Vata and Kapha Doshas get vitiated in the body and being mixed with

Pitta Dosha spreads all over the body lodges in the external layer of the skin and produces a sort of reddish with intense itching and pricking sensation. This condition is known as Sheetapitta. Madhukosha commentary on madhava nidana said Sheetapitta as Tridoshaja vyadhi

Samprapti ghataka ¹¹

Dosha : Tridosha (vata, pitta, kapha)

Agni : Jatharagni Mandata

Doshagati : Vriddhi, Tiryak, Shakha gati

Vyadhimarga : Bahya roga marga

Dushya : Rasa, Rakta dhatu

Srotas : Rasavaha, Raktavaha srotas

Srotodushti prakara : Vimarga gamana

Udbhava sthana : Amashaya

Vyakti sthana : Twacha

Swabhava : Ashukari

Observations

Chikitsa of Sheetapitta

Shodhana and Shamana

In Charaka Vimana Sthana, it is stated that - Bhahu Doshavastha – Shodana, Madhya Doshavastha – Langhan, Pachana i.e Shaman, Hina Doshavastha – Langhana

Shodhana Chikitsa

Shodhana means purifications, when the body is accumulation with excessive Doshas, these Dosas eliminats by Shodana Karma. Prior to administration of Shodhana Karmas, assessment of Dosha, Desha, Kala, Aushada, Satmya, Satwa, Vaya and Bala, etc. is needed. Shodhana Chikitsa is to be done to a person having involvement of Bahu dosa, Balavan purusha, and when the disease is chronic stage. This treatment completely prevents the root cause of disease.

Shodhana Chikitsa as explained in Madhava Nidana, Bhavaprakasha, Bhaishajya Ratnavali

Sarshapa taila Abhyanga, Swedana with Ushnodaka

Vamana : Vamana Karma with Kashaya of Patola, Nimbi, Vasa (M.N, B.P.)

Vamana : Vamana Karma with Kashaya of Patola and Arista (Bha. Rt)

Virechana : Virechana is performed by Triphala, Guggulu, Pippali

Virechana : Trikatu Churna along with Madhu or Navakarshika Kashaya with Madhu¹²

Samana Chikitsa

Samana Chikitsa is a palliative care approach that employs medications, dietary guidelines, and advice to restore the body's balance and health. This treatment aims to pacify the body by balancing the three Doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. It is also effective in alleviating symptoms following an intense Shodhana Chikitsa session, where the effects of Samana Chikitsa help eliminate any remaining Doshas in the body. Through simple oral and external applications, as well as gentle detoxification, these remedies work to correct imbalances in Doshas, Agni, and Dhatus. Thus, Samana Chikitsa is beneficial

for mild or less severe diseases that don't have deep-rooted causes. It is also helpful when the goal is to first strengthen the patient before planning further treatment.

Shaman Chikitsa as explained in Charaka Samhita, Susruta Samhita, Madhava Nidana, Bhavaprakasha nighntu, Bhaishajya ratnavali, Yogaratnakara etc.

Acharya Charaka¹³ - Udarda Pashamana Mahakashaya, Katu taila, Mustadi Churna Udarda Prashamana Gana includes : Tinduka, Priyala, Badara, Khadira, Kadara, Saptaparna, Ashvakarna, Arjuna, Asana, Arimeda

Acharya Susruta¹⁴ - Eladi gana

Bhavaprakasha¹⁵ -

Triphala powder mixed with honey

Navakarshika Guggulu, Trikatu + Sharkara,

Yavani+ Vyosha+ Yavakshara,

Aardraka rasa + Puranaguda, Yavani + Guda,

Guda + Amalaki,

Nimba leaves mixed with Amalaki Churna and ghee alleviate Visphota, Krimi, Sitapitta, Udarda, Kotha and Kapha Diseases

Ardraka khanda : Its dose is one phala per day which is to be taken early in the morning. It is indicated in Sitapitta, Udarda, Kotha, Utkotha, Ksaya, Raktapitta, Kasa, Svasa, Aruchi, Vatagulma, Udavarta, Sotha, Kandu and Krimiroga. It improves appetite, enhances strength and vitality and nourishes the body.

Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa : External application of mustard oil followed by a wash with hot water are to be done External application of the paste of Sarsapa, Haridra, Cakramarda seeds, Tila seeds mixed with Mustard oil is advised

Chakradatta -Visarpokta amritadi kwatha, Agnimantamoola + ghrita

The dry, ripe Gambhari fruit, after being boiled with milk.

Yogaratnakara -Vardhamana pippali, Vardhamana lasuna prayoga

Bhaishajya Ratnavali -

In take of Navakarsika Guggulu with Triphala mixed with Honey

Powders of Siddhartha, rajani, kushta, prapunnada and tila should be mixed with mustard oil and made to a paste. Use of this recipe as unction is useful for Sitapitta

Decoction made of Madhuyasti, flowers of madhuka, rasna, red sandalwood, white sandalwood, nirgundi and pippali is helpful in alleviating Sitapitta

Decoction of Guduchi, Haridra, bark of Nimba and Duralabha. Drink the decoction adding some honey to it to get relief from Sitapitta

Add 6 gm. Of black pepper power to 12 ml. Quantity of cow Ghritam and consume the recipe during morning hours. This would cure Sitapitta

Get powder of Agnimantha root 3-6gm and consume it with 12gm Ghritam during morning hours

Mahatiktaka Ghritam should be consumed and Rakta Moksana should be performed

Haridra Khanda

Ingredients: Haridra, ghritam, milk, sugar, powders of sunthi, pippali, maricha, tvak, ela, patra, vidanga,

trivrit, triphala, kesara, musta and lauha bhasma¹⁶ Method of Administration : This should be administered in the dose of 6 gm every day Therapeutic Benefits : It is an excellent remedy for Kandu, Visphota, Dadru¹⁵

Bruhat Haridra Khanda

Ingredients: Haridra, nisotha, haritaki, raw sugar, water, daru haridra, musta, caraway seeds, ajamoda, bark of citraka, katuki, white cumin seeds, pippali, sunthi, cinnamon bark, cardamom, cassia leaves, vayavidanga, guduchi, adusa, kutaja, triphala, cavya, coriander seeds, lauha bhasma and abhraka bhasma¹⁷

Method of Administration : consume this medicine in doses of 6 gm. along with warm water

Therapeutic Benefits : This medicine is very helpful in curing Sitapitta, udarda, kotha, kandu, pama, vicarcika, jirnajwara, worm infections, pandu, sotha

Ardraka Khanda

Ingredients : kalka and juice of ginger, cow ghritam, cow milk, raw sugar, pippali, pippalimula, maricha, dried ginger, bark of citraka, vayavidanga, musta, nagakesara, cinnamon bark, cardamom cassia leaves and karcura¹⁸

Method of Administration : consume this medicine in dose of 6 gm. during morning hours, before and after taking meals

Therapeutic Benefits : Sitapitta, udarda, kotha, utkotha, rajayaksama, raktapitta, kasa, asthma, anorexia, vata gulma, udavarta, sotha, kandu

Sitapitta bhanjana rasa – Ingredients : purified Parada, purified Gandhaka, Kasisa, Tamra bhasma, juices of Bhringaraja and Sarphunka Method of administration : consume 250 mg. of this medicine along with raw sugar. The person who consumes this medicine should avoid bathing with cold water, vata sevan, awake during nights and taking cereals containing hot properties Therapeutic benefits: Sitapitta, Kushta, Vata rakta

Visveswara rasa – consume this medicine in doses of 1 gm along with honey. After consuming this medicine one should drink juice of kakamaci along with rock salt Shleshmapittantaka rasa

Madhava Nidana

The individual following wholesome diet, if takes Ajamoda along with Guda with in seven days, Udarda is subsided, even if it exists all over the body

Ajamoda or Trikatu is taken along with milk in case of Sheetapitta and Udarda, like wise, Vardhamana Pippali Rasayana or lashuna (kalka or ksheerapaka) can be given internally

Nimba patra churna if taken along with Ghrita or Dhatri Swarasa, it will subside visphota, kota, kshata, Sheetapitta, kandu and Raktapitta

Rasasarangraha

500 mg of Rasasindur has to be admixed with 3 g of Ajwain and 6 g Jaggery, blend thoroughly well. Prepare pills and desiccate in shade. This has to be taken orally in the dose of 125 mg

Siddhartha, Rajani, kushta, Tila all taken in equal portions and make paste in mustard oil and apply on to the affected part or whole body. It relieves the Sitapitta, Udarda and Kotha

Prepare a paste of Durva and Nisa and apply it to the body or affected area. It will give relief from Kandu, Pama, Krimi, Dadru and Sitapitta

The treatment prescribed in Kushta can also be employed with skillfully in the conditions like Sitapitta, Udarda and Kotha. Here the measures means emesis, purgation, bloodletting etc.

Pathya-Apathya:

The proper consumption of Pathya and Apathya plays an important role in the management of any disease. Pathya refers to that which is beneficial and suitable for the disease, while Apathya refers to that which is unsuitable and exacerbates the disease, leading to greater discomfort for the patient.

Pathya Ahara-Vihara : Vamana, Virechana, Lepa, Rakta mokshana, Old Sali rice, Meat soup of wild animals and birds, Yusa of mudga and Kulattha, Karkota, Karavellaka, fruits of Sobhanjana, leaves of Putika, soft leaves of Veta, Dadima phala, Triphala, honey, Ushnodaka, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya rasa. The above mentioned measures and edible materials, taken in proper amounts, are very helpful in treating a person suffering Sitapitta, Udarda and Kotha¹⁹

Apathya Ahara-Vihara : Products of milk, sugarcane, jaggery etc, fishes, aquatic animals, meat of animals living in marshy areas, fresh liquor, Chardi nigraha, Divaswapna, Virudhahara, Vyavaya, facing easterly or southern winds, bathing with cold water, Snigdha, Amla, Madhura dravyas, Guru annapana²⁰

Discussion

Shitapitta is considered a Tridoshaja Vyadhi, where the vitiation of Kapha and Vata leads to a spread throughout the body, both externally and internally, mixing with Pitta. Due to Nidaan Sevana (etiological factors), this disturbance of the Tridoshas results in the Dushti (pathogenesis) of Rasa and Rakta Dhatus. The disruption of Rasa Vaha and Rakta Vaha Srotas leads to symptoms such as Varati Damstavat Sotha (rash) and Kandu (itching) caused by Kapha, Shula (pain) associated with Vata, and Daha (burning sensation) caused by Pitta, all of which affect the sensitized skin. This condition can be compared to Urticaria (hives), which presents as red, raised, itchy spots or a rash triggered by allergens, as supported by modern research. Shodhana is aimed at purifying the body eliminating excess Doshas, while Samana focuses on balancing and pacifying the aggravated Pitta to alleviate symptoms and prevent further complications. Shodana is effective in managing Shitapitta, especially in cases of Bahudosha Avastha, when there are multiple Doshas involved, and chronic stage etc. Shitapitta is a condition described in the Bahudosha Lakshanas and it is characterized by symptoms such as Pitaka, Kota, Kandu, and its treatment involves various Shodhana therapies, depending on the predominant Dosha. In modern times, Shitapitta symptoms are frequently observed due to Vishamashana (irregular diet), which leads to Tridosha Prakopa (aggravation of the three doshas). Therefore, Shodhana therapy becomes essential for treating such conditions. These therapies are especially effective in addressing the Dosha imbalance, and their use helps prevent the recurrence of the disease. As a result, Shodhana treatments are highly recommended by physicians for managing skin ailments.

In Madhava Nidana, Bhavaprakasha Nighantu, and Bhaishajya Ratnavali, the treatment of Sheetapitta (a condition with skin eruptions) is explained in detail. However, it is not explained directly as a Sitapitta in Brihatrayi but similar symptoms can be seen in Udarda, Kotha as a differential diagnosis. Acharya Charaka only mentions Udarda Prashamana mahakashaya. Susruta mentions the use of Eladigana (a group of herbs). In Madhava Nidana, Bhavaprakasha Nighantu, and Bhaishajya Ratnavali, the same drugs are used for Vamana (emetic therapy) and Virechana (purgation), with Kashayas (decoctions) made from Patola (*Trichosanthes dioica*), Nimba (*Azadirachta indica*), and vasa (*adhatoda vasica*). For Virechana, is done with Triphala, Guggulu and Pippali (*Piper longum*), but in Bhaishajya Ratnavali, Vamana is performed using the decoction of Patola and Arishta. Samana Chikitsa is done when the disease is newly originated, with fewer signs and symptoms, and in a Laghudosa (mild) stage. Samana

drugs are more found in Bhaishajya Ratnavali. Samana Chikitsa is detailed in the Laghutrayi and not in the Brihatrayi. Raktamokshana (by application of leech or Siravedhana) is one of the purificatory method explained by Acharya Susruta. Raktamokshana is best for blood related disease. By bloodletting, Srotoshodana is achieved which further helps in abatement of skin disease. Various skin diseases are due to vitiation of blood and vitiation of Tridoshas and Chirakari Vyadhi by nature. Raktamokshana gives best effect in various skin disease by expelling the vitiated Dosha and Dhatu. Sheetapitta is Pitta Pradhana Tridoshaja Vyadhi so Raktamokshana is highly effective.

Conclusion

Sheetapitta is caused by exposure to Asatmya Ahara (inappropriate food) and Vihara (lifestyle). This exposure weakens the body's immunity, making it more susceptible to allergens, which can trigger allergic conditions like Sheetapitta. Shodhana and Samana Chikitsa is very effective for managing Sheetapitta. Shodhana Chikitsa especially in cases of Bahudoshavastha, when the patient has good strength and disease is in a chronic stage, is highly beneficial. In Shodhana Chikitsa mainly Vamana and Virechana and Raktamokshana are effective. Shaman Chikitsa is used in cases of Apladosavastha, where there are less Signs and Symptoms and when it is newly origin. Both approaches are essential for the effective management and treatment of Sheetapitta. In modern medicine, urticaria and other allergic skin disorders often reoccur. And long term use of Steroids and Antihistamines can lead to severe illness and adverse effects. Therefore, in Ayurveda, Shodhana Chikitsa is very effective in treating Sheetapitta by addressing the Root cause of the disease. Shodhana is used in combination with Samana to manage Sheetapitta, so both therapies highly effective.

In my study description of Sheetapitta more found in laghutrayis and Shodhana and Samana drugs are similar, when compared to Shodhana and Samana Chikitsa, description of Samana drugs are more

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