

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF VATAJA SHIRASHOOLA WITH TENSION TYPE HEADACHE

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ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda*, Shiras is considered as the *Uttamanga*, as it is the seat of *prana* and *indriyas*. Shiroroga is a broad term that indicates mainly shirashoola. Various Ayurvedic Acharyas have explained about shirorogas and their nidana, lakshana and chikitsa. This shows the importance of it as a separate disease entity. Headache is the most common reason for seeking medical help. Tension type headache accounts for nearly 90% of all the headaches. An attempt has been made to correlate and understand *Vataja Shira shoola* with Tension type headache along the principles of *Ayurveda* and the treatment modalities of it.

KEYWORDS: Shirashoola, Vataja Shira shoola, Stress, Tension type headache

INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurveda*, Shiras is considered as the *Uttamanga*, as it is the seat of *prana* and *indriyas*.¹ Among the *urdhwa jatrugatha vikaras*, *shiroroga* is having an important place. Acharya Charaka explains that the term *Shiroroga* represents *Shirashoola*.² Ayurvedic classics have given detailed explanation and classification of *Shirashoola*. Even though all the *Shirorogas* are *tridoshaja*, it has been classified based up on the predominant *dosha*.³ Among them *vataja shirashoola* is most frequently seen because of the *vata prakopaka nidanas* like *uchabhashana*, *vegadharana*, *bhaya*, *shoka* etc are more prevalent in the current era due to life style modification.

Headache is the most common reason for seeking medical help. The prevalence of tension type headache has varied widely. Tension type headache accounts for nearly 90% of all the headaches,⁴

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To compare *vataja shirashoola* and tension type headache.

Shira shoola

In *Ayurveda*, *Shirahshoola* is the main symptom as well as synonyms of various *shiro-roga*. It is a separate disease entity which has symptoms and pathology as per the *Doshika* involvement. Acharya Sushruta describes 11 types of *Shirahshoola* which are according to the involvement of *Kapha*, *Pitta*, *Vata* and *Rakta* individually as well as combined⁵. *Madhukosha* explains that all the painful conditions of head involve *tridoshas*, mainly *vata*, but the classification is done based on the predominant *dosha*.

Vataja shirashoola

Shiro Roga which occurs due to the *vataprapakopaka nidanas* with intense pain in the head, neck and the regions surrounding it is termed as *vataja shira shoola*.

The possible causative factors⁶ or triggers for *vataja shirashoola* may be

- *Ati- uchaibhasya* (Excessive- loud talking),
- *Vegadharana* (suppressing natural urges),

- *Ratrijagarana* (night arousal),
- *Upavasa* (Excessive Fasting),
- *Shoka* (Stress, Tension etc).

The vitiated *dosha* get accumulated in the *shiras* and causing severe pain in head which is more in the night time. *Acharya Vagbhata* has added the affecting site and nature of pain of *vataja shirashoola*.⁷

- There will be severe pricking and cutting type pain in the temporal region.
- The person feels as if the *bhru* (frontal region) and *lalata* (forehead) *pradesha* is falling.
- Pain and rigidity of neck and nape of neck.
- Pulsation in the *shiras* of head.

Chikitsa

Nidana Parivarjana

According to the treatment point of view, the etiological factors which produce headache should be avoided. Commonly rest, avoiding stress, avoiding the holding of urges, controlling the mind is very helpful. Also other *Aaharaja* and *Viharaja Hetus* should be avoided.

According to *Acharya Susrutha*, all the *vatavyadhi* treatments can be followed.⁸

Bahyaupakramas

- *Snehana, Swedana*
- *Shiroabhyanga*
- *parisheka and upanaha* with *vatahara drugs*.
- *Nasya* with *vatahara taila*
- *Shirobasti*

Abhyantharakarmas :

- *Snehapana,*
- *Anuvasana and Niruha Basti* etc.

Pathya⁹

Use of *Ghrita, Taila, Jangalamamsa rasa, Mudga, masha, kulatha*etc fried with ghee, *patola, amalaki, dadima, narikela* etc.

Apathya

Vegadharana (suppression of natural urges), *virudhaahara sevana* (intake of incompatible food), *divaswapna* (day time

sleep), *dantakashta* (brushing of teeth) and swimming.

Definition of Headache

Head ache is one of the most common, and yet the most difficult clinical problem encountered by the physician. Though the term ‘headache’ can mean pain anywhere in the head, it is usually confined to pain arising in the region of cranial vault¹⁰. Most often headache is a symptomatic expression of some minor ailment, mental tension or fatigue, and in majority of cases the cause is non neurological.

Cause of Headache:¹¹

- Psychosomatic Headache.
- Intracranial and Local extra-cranial.
- Cranial neuritis and neuralgia.
- General or Systemic causes.
- Referred pain
- Psychogenic.
- Tension

Tension type headache (TTH)

This is the most common type of head ache and is experienced at some time by the majority of the population in some form.

Pathogenesis

The mechanism of TTH is poorly understood, although it has long been regarded as a headache with muscular origins. It may be stress-related or associated with musculoskeletal problems in the neck. Emotional strain or anxiety is a common precipitant to tension type headache.¹²

TTH has distinct sub-types.¹³

- Infrequent episodic tension type head ache
- Frequent episodic tension type head ache
- Chronic tension type head ache
- Probable tension type head ache

Clinical features¹⁴

As experienced by very large numbers of people, episodic TTH occurs, like migraine, in attack-like episodes. These usually last no

more than a few hours, but can persist for several days.

Chronic TTH, one of the chronic daily headache syndromes, is less common than episodic TTH but present most of the time: it can be unremitting over long periods. This variant of TTH is much more disabling. Headache in either case is usually mild or moderate and generalized, though it can be one-sided. It is described as pressure or tightness, like a band around the head, sometimes spreading into or from the neck. It lacks the specific features and associated symptoms of migraine.

Management¹⁵

- Careful assessment followed by discussion and explanation of the underlying pathology is beneficial.
- Physiotherapy with muscle relaxation and stress management.
- Low dose of amitriptyline (10mg) may be necessary.

DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic texts describe *shirashoola* as an independent disease entity rather than a symptom as '*shiroroga*'. Among them *vatajashirashoola* is most frequently seen due to the causative factors like *Uchcha* and *Atibhashana*, *Ratri Jagarana*, *Vega Sandharana*, *Bhaya*, *Shoka* etc. due to the busy life style of current era all human beings are usually adopting most of these *nidanas*.

Among the *Nidanas*, *Manastaapa* is having an important role. *Manasika nidanas* like *bhaya*, *shoka*, *trasa* etc along with other *nidanas* will result in *vataprakopa* and hence leading to the *vatajashirashoola*.

The *Manasikabhavas* like *Chinta*, *Shoka*, *Bhaya* etc. Causes *Jatharagnimandya*. Due to *Jatharagni-mandya*, *Apakva Annarasa* is formed (*Ama*), *MalarupiKapha* is increased in amount and goes to *Rasa-Rakta Samvahana* and also reach in *Shiras*. Their *Sanga* occurs due to *Khavaigunya*, because this *Chinta*, *Shoka* etc. causes *Khavaigunya*

in *Manovaha Srotas* due to *Raja* and *Tamaguna* increase, which is situated in *Shiras*. It leads to *Vata Prakopa* and causes *Vataja Shirashoola*.¹⁶

In the modern era, stress is a common problem due to the personal and societal burdens, damaged quality of life, financial problems etc. Stress is major triggering factor listed most often by the headache sufferers. Emotional strain or anxiety is a common precipitant to Tension Type Headache.

Correlation between samprapti of Vataja Shirashoola and Pathophysiological mechanism of tension headache

In the *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) of *Vataja Shirashoola*, *Vata* takes important role.

We can correlate the *Vata* with tension also. Because tension means bodily tension and mental tension. Bodily tension means muscle tension i.e. contraction of muscle which is a pathology in development of TTH. Mental tension means high thinking. So we can correlate the *Vata* with tension also.¹⁶

Correlation between the Symptoms of Vatika Shirah shula & tension type of Headache

Rupa of Vataja Shirah shoola	Symptoms of TTH
<i>Animittaruja</i>	Obscure origin
<i>Shankhanistoda</i> , <i>Bhru Madhya</i> , <i>Lalata involvement</i>	Typically involve entire head commonly, temporal, occipital and bilateral region.
<i>BhavantiTivranishi</i>	Moderately severe in evening time.
<i>Sandhimokshana vatPida</i>	Local tenderness over the skull vault

CONCLUSION

1. *Shiras* considered as *uttamanga* because it is the seat for *prana* and *indriyas*. So *rogas* affecting *shiras* should be treated with immediate concern.

2. *Shiroroga* term used by ayurvedic classics mainly represent *shirashoola*.
3. Even though it involves *tridoshas*, it is classified further based on the *dosha* predominance.
4. Among them *vataja shirashoola* is most commonly seen due to the broad causative factors.
5. Psychogenic factors triggering *vatajashirashoola* are *shoka*, *bhaya*, *trasa* etc.
6. Tension head ache is having stress as the main causative factor.
7. So the *nidana*, *lakshana* and *upashaya* of *vataja shirashoola* resembles tension type head ache.
8. So tension head ache is a condition which can be taken under the heading of *vatajashirashoola*.

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