

Concept of Shotha W.S.R to Arishta Lakshana

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a branch of science of healing which encompasses the scriptures of acharyas like Susruta, Caraka, Vagbhata etc. Its supreme objective is “swasthasya swasthya rakshanam aathurasya vikaara prashamanam” which means that Ayurveda helps the world for maintaining the health of a healthy person as well as it helps for the curing of the disease. While stating like this also acharyas have mentioned certain conditions like arishta lakshanas which are the non-treatable condition due to the bad prognosis of the disease in order to maintain the righteousness of the physician. In this background an attempt to understand the condition called shotha which is having other terms such as shwayathu, utsedha, samhata etc with special reference to arishta lakshana with the help of nidana panchaka.

KEYWORDS: Shotha, arishta lakshana

INTRODUCTION

The word shotha is derived from the root word shu gathou+baahulakatdhan⁽¹⁾, means which spreads fast. There are different types of shotha according to different acharyas and different circumstances like one type based on udhsedha samanayaat⁽²⁾, two types pakwa and apakwa shopha⁽³⁾ and nija and aganthuja⁽⁴⁾, three types vata, pitta, kapha⁽⁵⁾, four types vata, pitta, kapha, aganthu⁽⁶⁾, seven type vata, pitta, kapha, vatapitta, pitta kapha, vata kapha, sannipata⁽⁷⁾ eight types above seven and aganthuja⁽⁸⁾. But shotha can be considered as a wide term covering local swelling to inflammation of internal organs such as bronchitis, pancreatitis etc. While explaining these kinds of shotha acharaya's have mentioned certain conditions of shotha which shouldn't be treated which are considered as arishta lakshana. Signs of imminent death and premonitory signs of sudden death are explained by the acharyas and in Caraka samhitha there is a specialised sthaana which deals with the arishta lakshana. In that the prognosis of disease and fatal signs are described on the basis of various description regarding swapna (dream), swara (voice), gandha (smell), prabha (luster), chaya (shadow), pratichaya (reflected shadow), rasa (taste), Sparsha (touch) etc. Both Charakacharya as well as

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Susruthacharya have mentioned how shotha can be related to arishta lakshana.

Relation between shopha and arishta lakshana:

Acharya Caraka have mention the arishta lakshana in shopha as following by considering the gender of the patient. Acharya says that if the swelling starts from the feet to all over the body in males then it is considered as arishta lakshana and if the swelling starts from the face and then if it is spreading all over the body then it is considered as arishta lakshana in females. Whereas if the swelling starts from the guhya bhaga that is from genital area and further if it is spreading then it is considered as arishta lakshana for both males and females⁽⁹⁾. For this Chakrapani is giving explanation in commentary based on gurutwa (heaviness) and laghutwa (lightness) of stree and purusha shareera. It is said that the adhobhaga is laghu for males and for females the urdhwa bhaga is considered as laghu and if the swelling is spreading from laghu bhaga to guru bhaga then it is considered as arishta lakshana⁽¹⁰⁾. While explaining sthanika shopa Charakacharya explains a condition called rohini where vata, pitta, and kapha kopa will occur together and get manifested over jihwamoola (root of

the tongue) and in this condition the patient will end up in death within three days⁽¹¹⁾.

According to Susruthacharya, there are six types of shopha according to seventeenth chapter amapakweshaneeya and further details about the nidanas the other lakshanas asadhya lakshana of shopha etc are dealt with shopha chikitsa from chikitsa sthaana twenty third chapter. In chikitsa sthana acharya is saying about kashta sadhya shotha and arishtavath shopha⁽¹²⁾. Here acharya says that shwayathu that is affecting sarva shareera and shwayathu that is affecting sareera madhya can be considered as kashta sadhya which means that the condition is difficult to treat⁽¹³⁾. On this the commentary is giving reason that it is difficult to cure the like in case of sannipata jwara because of virudhopakrama⁽¹⁴⁾. Then for arishtavat shopha acharya is saying that these are the swelling that is seen half part of the body⁽¹⁵⁾. Also under the arishtavat shopha Susruthacharya have mentioned that the swelling that is seen over the upper part of the body which is spreading downwards in women and the swelling that is seen in the lower part of the body which is spreading to the upper part of the body in males are considered as arishta lakshana⁽¹⁶⁾. Acharya also says that the shopha which is associated with hikka (hiccough), atisara (diarrhoea), kasa (cough), will also kill the person⁽¹⁷⁾.

According to modern science the pathogenesis of swelling is as follows. It is caused by the mechanism that interfere with normal fluid balance of plasma, interstitial fluid and lymph flow. The following mechanism may be operating singly or in combination to produce oedema⁽¹⁸⁾:

1. Decreased plasma oncotic pressure
2. Increased capillary hydrostatic pressure
3. Lymphatic obstruction
4. Tissue factors (increased oncotic pressure of interstitial fluid, and decreased tissue tension)
5. Increased capillary permeability
6. Sodium and water retention

We can see swelling as a feature that is occurring in end stage of life. Some of the conditions are left sided heart failure, right sided heart failure, kidney failure, liver failure, chronic ascites, AL amyloidosis etc. In general generalized swelling will occur in multiple organ failure because of the changes in the normal hemodynamics. In all the above conditions we can observe the appearance of swelling over the body either localised or generalised depending upon the condition which proves that whatever acharyas have mentioned as the arishta lakshana is true.

DISCUSSION

In a better way to understand the arishta lakshana that is told by the acharyas lets compare with some of the above said disease condition. In case of the right sided heart failure due to the backflow of blood from venacava to the underneath blood vessel there will be swelling over the lower extremities as well as the umbilical region along with the hypertrophy of the heart at the right side. This condition will cause at the end stage of the life and this can be correlated to the swelling that is seen in the lower limbs as well as hridayardha shopha as arishta lakshana by the acharyas. In case of left sided heart failure there will be back flow of blood from the pulmonary vein towards the lungs and there occurs congestion and swelling will arise over the upper parts of the body. This can be correlated as the arishta lakshana that is correlated to the upper part of the body and again there also we can expect hypertrophy of the heart and can be considered as hridayardha shopha which is said as a arishta lakshana by Susruthacharya. And in the above condition itself the patient may have clinical features with cough and swasa due to the congestion of the lungs and this also substantiates that the shopha that is associated with the hikka, swasa can be considered as arishta lakshana.

In case of generalised oedema multiple system failure may happen where the liver may also get affected. So if the liver is affected the protein production will be reduced and there will be a decrease in the oncotic pressure which will leads to the production of swelling all over the body and it may starts from the centre of the body because of the inflammatory reaction of liver there by leading to a condition called ascites where we can expect the swelling at the centre of the body. And all these changes will occur when the patient is nearing to the end stage. Acharya has said that if the swelling occurs in the middle of the body then it is kashta sadhya due to virudhopakrama. Since multiple organs are getting affected here treatment will be difficult and eventually the patient may land up in death.

CONCLUSION:

Diagnosis, prognosis and treatment are the core clinical skills fundamental to good practice of medicine. Prediction of prognosis by the lakshana is very relevant for both the physician as well as the patient. If the prognosis of the disease can be predicted it would be easy for the physician to treat the patient and from the patient aspect they can seek higher facility centre. In present era the prognosis is more focussed on the laboratory values. But now we understood how acharyas have keenly observed the prognosis of a disease with the help of lakshana only.

So here we understood that the proper understanding of nidana panchaka that is nidana, poorvarooopa, roopa, upashaya and samprapthi will help us to diagnose and to predict the prognosis as well as to treat a particular disease.

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