Ayurveda Kayachikitsa towards the management of joint pain: a review

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ABSTRACT

Joint pain is one of the very common problems amongst the elderly age population. Clinically it is characterized by shula, shotha and prassaraana-aakunchanayo pravruttiacha vedana. Ayurveda described various treatment modalities for the management of joint pain such as; snehana, swedan, upanaaha, lepe and herbal medicine. Kayachikitsa is branch which deal with use of ayurveda drugs for the management of various diseases. This branch also recommended use of different natural medicine for the treatment of joint pain. Guggulu (Comiphora mukul) is most common drug used in Amavata; disease of joint pain. Similarly various herbal formulation of Ashwagandha, Rasna, Sunthi, Pippali, Gokshura and Trivrut are also recommended in diseases of joint pain. Present article summarized role of herbal medicine in joint pain.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Kayachikitsa, Joint Pain, Shula, Vedana.

INTRODUCTION

Rheumatic arthritis (Ama Vata) and osteoarthritis (Sandhigat Vata) are the diseases which involve severe joint pain due to the cartilage destruction and inflammation. The vitiated pitta results joint inflammation while aggravated vata plays important role in overall cascade of joint pain. The malnutrition, injury, infection, congenital reasons and ageing etc. are some etiological factors associated with joint pain. As per ayurveda when Agni not working properly then toxins or ama produced which accumulate along with vitiated vata, this further leads Ama Vata1-4. Consumption of excessively cold, dry, bitter and pungent foods, irregular pattern of life style, excessive travelling, stress, lack of sleep, traumatic event and genetic factors may be considered responsible for Vata aggravation. The aggravated Vata along with Ama move into the shrotas and affect most vulnerable part of body such as joints. This cascade resulted deterioration of the soft tissues in the joints and bones. Similarly aggravated Ama block channels and reduces supply of nutrients to the joints leads to malnutrition, these all together resulted joint inflammation, stiffness, swelling and pain3-6.

Ayurveda the natural way of treatment recommended many traditional herbal formulations for the management of diseases related to joint pain. These drugs help to reduce inflammation, swelling, tenderness and stiffness of joint. The herbal medicine also possesses ability to pacify aggravated Vata and ama. Ayurveda also suggested some rasayana formulation to nourish joint tissues and Ojas. The ayurveda medicine not only helps to pacify ama & doshas but also boost functioning of agni hence thus reduces joint pain in early stages.

In joint vyana vayu is considered responsible for joint motion while apana vayu is responsible for health of bones. Therefore we can say that disturbed motion is a function of vyana vayu while joint damage is related to apana vitiation. Sleshaka kapha also considered responsible for synovial fluids; vitiation of sleshaka resulted excess fluid and thus swelling in the joint4-8.
Samprapti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Etiological triggering</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accumulation of Ama/ vitiation of Pitta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ama combined with aggravated Vata and Pitta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitiated ama and vata block shrotas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This causes depleted Ojas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autoimmune adversity/nutritional insufficiency/inflammatory responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint pain or disease which having predominant symptoms of joint pain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHIKITSA OF JOINT PAIN AS PER AYURVEDA

The basic line of treatment involves balancing of vitiated factors such as; normalizing agni, ama and vata. Herbs which possess analgesics and anti-inflammatory properties are used most commonly in the management of diseases related to joint pain6-7. The basic line of treatment for diseases related to joint pain such as, amavata includes langhanam, swedanam, tiktam, deepana, katu drugs and sodhana procedure7-10:

- **Formulation** such as Rasnasaptaka kashayam, Maharasnadi kashayam, Dhanwantara kashayam and Sahacharadi kashayam offers beneficial effect in joint pain.
- **Ksheera bala taila, Narayana taila, Gandha taila** and Maha narayana taila offers lubrication of joints and strengthening of cartilage, muscles, ligaments and bones.
- **Niruha** (decoction-based) vastis are recommended; herbal medicines dashmoola and guduchi commonly employed in niruha vastis which offer beneficial effect in joint pain.

**Herbs/formulation helps in joint pain:**

- Castor Oil
- Guggul
- Guduchi
- Nirgundi
- Turmeric
- Ashwagandha
- Shatavari
- Triphala
- Dashmool
- Shallaki
- Eucalyptus
- Devadaru

**Castor Oil (Eranda, Ricinus communis):**

Castor oil possesses astringent rasa, warm virya and pungent vipaka, it also offers purgative and analgesic action. It helps to normalize aggravated pitta and kapha, best for treating vata disease. Application of oils to the painful joints helps to aggravate inflammatory diseases.

**Guggul (Commiphora mukul):**

Guggul possess anti-inflammatory, dipana and pachana properties therefore help to reduce ama, vata and kapha. Guggul also help to lose weight which decreases extra burden to joint thus reduces pain. It also offers antimicrobial and analgesic properties which help to achieve symptomatic relief in joint pain.

**Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia):**

Guduchi pacifies all doshas, offers anti-inflammatory and analgesic effect. This herbs act as prophylactic anti-infective agent thus reduces chances of joint diseases associated with infections. Guduchi offers relief in joint pain associated with pitta-type arthritis.

**Nirgundi (Vitex negundo):**

Nirgundi has a bitter, astringent and pungent rasa and warm virya. It is light and rough, best for the kapha dosha but also pacify vata. It offers anti-inflammatory and analgesic effect in arthritis, nerve pains and back pains.
Nirgundi is most common herbs used in joints; it reduces swelling, control inflammatory response, offers antioxidant properties and hot potency of Nirgundi boost joints and muscles.

**Turmeric (Curcuma longa):**

Turmeric possesses bitter rasa and warm virya; it having light and rough quality. Turmeric acts as an antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory agent, thus helps to reduce pathogenesis and symptoms of joint pain. It inhibits production of prostaglandin thus calm down inflammatory cascade and also stimulates production of cortisol which relieves arthritis symptoms.

**Ashwagandha**

Ashwagandha has anti-inflammatory properties, help to calm vata and nourishes muscle and bone tissues. Ashwagandha possess adaptogen action and relief pain caused by the stiffening and constant stress of joints and muscles.

**Shatavari**

Shatavari offer highly beneficial healing qualities and anti-inflammatory properties which help to reduce symptoms of joint pain and enhance joint flexibility.

**Triphala**

Triphala has anti-inflammatory (breshtha shothaghna) effects and helps in healing process, it provides nutrients which strengthen bones and detoxify toxins (uric acid) which may cause inflammation. These all effect of Triphala provides great relief in gout, arthritis and other problems related to joint pain.

**Licorice (Glycyrrhiza Glabra):**

Mulethi or licorice offers beneficial effects in joint pain since it provides lubricating effect which supports joints tissues and improves flexibility. The reduction in joint pain is very significant during movement after the use of Mulethi.

**Dashmool**

Dashmool is a combination of roots of various herbs including; pataala, gambhari, brihati and shalparni. It offers effective anti-inflammatory response and treats Vata Roga. Its anti-oxidant, analgesic and sedative properties also help to achieve symptomatic relief in joint pain.

**Shallaki**

Shallaki herb provides strength to joints, relieve joint pain, diminish swelling, increases mobility and pacify dosha which are responsible for joint disease.

**Eucalyptus**

Eucalyptus oil offers relief in arthritis, the tannins present in plant material help to reduce swelling and stiffness of joints. The aroma of oil offers calming effects and relieves joints pain.

**Devadaru**

It having Shothahara & vedana sthapan properties, therefore indicated in jeerna sandhivata & Amavata.

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**Table 1: Some ayurveda formulation recommended in disease related to joint pain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Formulation</th>
<th>Properties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Punarnavadi guggulu</td>
<td>Shreshtha shothaghna, Asthiposhak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shiva gutika</td>
<td>Rasayana Guna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dashamula qwath</td>
<td>Shreshtha shothaghna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dashamula taila</td>
<td>Alleviate vata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Punarnava mandoor</td>
<td>Asthiposhak, osteoprotective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Role of medicine in joint pain pathogenesis:**

- Control deterioration of the cartilage and sub-chondral bone.
- Herbs help to pacify Vata and Kapha doshas, lessen srotavarodha, relieves pain, swelling, heaviness, stiffness and tenderness of joint.
- Use of Tikta-Katu Aushadis promotes agni, srotoshodana, reduces kapha and produces lightness in body.
- Deepana and Pachana medicines prevent formation of ama and nourish dhatu.
- Herbal medicine not only restores nutrition to diseased cartilage cells but also help to repair damage cartilage.
- Herbal drugs help to improve synovial fluid viscosity & concentration and strengthens bones; brumhanam effect.
REFERENCES


