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Pharyngitis in Ayurveda, acritical review

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Abstract:

Pharyngitis, an inflammation of the throat, is commonly caused by viral or bacterial infections, leading to symptoms such as sore throat, difficulty swallowing, fever, and swollen lymph nodes. Ayurveda views pharyngitis as an imbalance in the body's Dosha (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha), which can disrupt the normal functioning of the throat and respiratory system. Due to intake of stale oily food stuffs and cold drinks, junk foods etc. and increasing pollution levels, this disease is more recurrent now a days than earlier. As per Ayurveda classics the condition has close similarity with the disease Galagraha. A holistic approach to the treatment of pharyngitis with Ayurveda principles and medication is the context of present study.

Keywords: Pharyngitis, Galagraha, Dosha.

Introduction:

In present day scenario, there is a surge in common infective diseases like sore throat and associated symptoms like fever, malaise etc. Post pandemic has seen a shift in all aspect of human life. Health is one of the aspect which is been affected largely. The change in lifestyle and increased susceptibility had resulted in low immunity of individuals. This had resulted in recurrent and resistant throat infections. Pharyngitis is one such disorder that is commonly encountered in clinics. Pharyngitis is the inflammation of the pharynx, which is the back part of the throat. It is commonly referred to as a sore throat and can be caused by various factors, including viral or bacterial infections, allergens, and irritants. The inflammatory changes in pharynx are associated with other symptoms like body ache, headache, fever etc. though this are treated with antibiotic and anti viral therapies, but there is high rate of recurrence and resistance. Here the *Ayurveda* treatment modality based on its principles can deliver promising results.

Pharyngitis can be compared with a disease *Galagraha* mentioned in *Ayurveda* literature by *Acharya Charaka*. This disease mainly occurs due to vitiation of *kaphadosha* which recites in

Mukha (Gala) pradesh causing *shotha* (inflammation) of *Gala Pradesh*. Here the imbalance of *Dosha* along with *Sthan Vaigunya* results in occurrence of disease. In Ayurveda classics *Galagraha* is referred as symptom of other disorders, or a reflection of throat condition and not a disease. Thus here the causative factors prevailed in today's conditions and the symptoms related to throat discomfort are been studied.

Nidana in contemporary science –

Bacterial infections – Commonly affected by streptococcus Group of bacteria.

Allergies – Dust pollen, pet dander etc., can also create sore throat in association to allergic reaction.

Dryness created by dehydration or due to mouth breathing in cases of chronic nasal congestion.

Irritants- The factors which makes the soreness of throat likely, tobacco, betel leaf, chewing, spicy food, alcohol consumption etc.,

Strain to the muscles of throat by over using for prolonged duration.

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) – a disease in related to digestive system in which the acid in stomach reflux through the Oesophagus.

Other associated symptoms

Pain and burning sensation in throat

Difficulty in swallowing

Hoarseness of voice, difficulty in talking

Fever

Bodayache

Headache

Cough with nasal congestion

Ayurveda line of management in Pharyngitis –

According to principles of Ayurveda, there is vitiation of *Dosha* – *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. These *Dosha* exhibits the signs and symptoms accordingly,

Vata – *Shool*, *Todvatvedna*, difficulty in swallowing

Pitta – inflammation, redness, burning sensation

Kapha – itching, swelling at throat region

As we treat the *Gala Pradesh* – it includes the organs and anatomical structures as larynx, pharynx, tonsils etc. here the treatment of all structures are involved as we consider the vitiation of *Dosha* and involved *Dhatu* and the presenting symptoms. Various procedures and medication which can be useful are as follows;

Kavala – Gandusha

Acharya had mentioned *Kavala* and *Gandush* in *Dinacharya* (daily routines) and is considered essential for maintaining oral and overall health. *Kavala* involves swishing a small

amount of oil (like sesame or coconut) around the mouth and then spitting it out after a few minutes. *Gandusha*, on the other hand, requires the mouth to be completely filled with oil or a medicinal decoction, held without movement until salivation increases or slight discomfort is felt, then expelled. Here in inflammatory conditions of *Gala* – or sore throat, following medications can be used for *Kavala* and ***Gandusha***

- *Koshna LavanaJal* – for *Kavala* and *Gandusha*
- *Triphala Kwath* - for *Kavala* and *Gandusha*
- *Erimedadi Tail* - for *Kavala* and *Gandusha*
- *Neem Kalka* – for *Kavala*
- Coconut oil/ sesame oil - for *Kavala* and *Gandusha*

By practicing this process one or twice in a day, the vitiation of *Pitta* and *Kapha* is pacified and the underlying symptoms are relived.

Dhoompana

Dhoomapana is an *Ayurvedic* practice involving the inhalation of medicinal smoke. It is a therapeutic form of ***nasya*** (nasal therapy) used to cleanse the head and respiratory passages to balance the *dosha*—especially ***Kapha*** and ***Vata***. The process typically involves burning specific herbs or medicated substances and gently inhaling the smoke through the nose and exhaling through the mouth. There are three main types, *Prayogika* (daily or regular use for health maintenance), *Snaihika* (medicated smoke after oil treatments), and *Vairechanika* (stronger detoxifying version used therapeutically).

Pratisarana

Pratisarana is a local therapeutic procedure in *Ayurveda* used in the management of *Gala Roga* (diseases of the throat). It involves rubbing or applying medicinal powders or pastes onto the affected region inside the oral cavity or throat. In *Gala Roga*, especially conditions like tonsillitis, pharyngitis, or throat ulcers, *pratisarana* helps reduce inflammation, pain, and microbial load. It eases the vitiation of *Dosha* locally and thereby reduces the symptoms. The commonly used drugs include *Triphala*, *Yashtimadhu*, and *Saindhava*. The mechanical action stimulates local circulation and facilitates healing, while the drugs exert antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and soothing effects.

Medications

Single drugs which can be used are;

Yashtimadhu, *Tripahala*, *Kankshi*, *Taila* – Coconut, sesame, *saindhava*, *Khurasniowa* etc.

Drug formulations which can be used are;

Mahalaxmivials rasa, *lavangadi Vati*, *Khadiradi Vati*, *Nag Guti*, *Arogyavardhinivati*, *Sootshakhara rasa*, *Laghusootshekhara rasa*, *Sarivadi Vati*, *Tribhuvankirti rasa*, *Erimedadi Tila*, *Triphala Kwath*, *Sukshma Triphala* etc.

Inference:

The vitiation of primarily *Kapha* and *Pitta Dosha* which exhibits *Gala Sthana* symptoms are all included in *Gala Graha*. Pharyngitis is one such symptom. The inflammation and swelling in the throat arise from *Kapha-Pitta prakopa*, leading to symptoms like *shotha* (swelling), *ruk* (pain), *kandu* (itching), and *ushnata* (burning sensation) in the throat region. Many a times these conditions are resistant in type and show prolonged symptoms in patients. Here in perspective of Ayurveda the management involves both *Shamana* (palliative) and *Shodhana* (purification) therapies. The therapeutics include *Yashtimadhukashaya*, *Triphalalkwatha* for gargling, *Pratisarana* (local application of herbal powders), *Dhoomapana* (medicated smoke inhalation), and *Nasya* (nasal drops) in chronic cases. Warm, soothing diet and lifestyle adjustments are also emphasized. Thus *Ayurvedic* management addresses the root cause through *dosha* balance, local healing, and immunity enhancement, providing a holistic and sustainable approach to pharyngitis.

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