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Understanding Pain (shool) through Ayurvedic Literature - A Diagnostic tool

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Abstract:

Aim: Understanding Pain (shool) through Ayurvedic Diagnostics. **Objective:** To study about different types of shool mentioned in our ayurvedic literature. **Material & methods:** Review of ayurvedic literature, research papers, works and articles, Internet.

Discussion: Pain is a common experience that affects people all over the world. It serves as a warning sign that something is wrong in the body. According to Ayurveda, a traditional system of medicine, Vata Dosha is often the main cause of pain. Ayurveda understands pain based on three main principles: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. These principles help explain how pain occurs and how it can be treated. There are different types of pain, including:

- Sharp, piercing pain - Bursting pain - Intense, overwhelming pain - Burning pain - Sucking or draining pain - Churning pain - Cutting pain - Vibratory or pulsating pain

The combination of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha can affect the type and severity of pain. For example, Vata and Kapha together can cause dull aches, while Vata and Pitta together can cause burning sensations. Modern medicine often treats pain with anti-inflammatory drugs, which can have serious side effects, such as stomach problems and kidney damage. In contrast, Ayurvedic treatments focus on, Cleaning out the body's channels, Strengthening the immune system, Supporting the body's natural healing abilities. When done correctly, Ayurvedic treatments can be effective without causing any negative side effects. This literary review supports that Ayurvedic principles provide an in-depth, natural, and personalized way of diagnosing and managing pain, which can be beneficial as a complementary approach in pain management today.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Types of shool, Pain, Vata dosha.

Introduction:

The main goal of Ayurveda is to keep people healthy, as stated in the phrase "Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam"^[1]. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being^[2]. The International Association for the Study of

Pain defines pain as an unpleasant feeling that can be linked to injury or damage^[3]. Pain is a personal experience that can vary from person to person.

In Ayurvedic medicine, "Shoola" refers to pain, which can be a standalone condition or a symptom of another disease. The ancient doctor Sushruta described Shoola as abdominal pain^[4] and noted that it can be a complication of other conditions. Shoola can refer to different types of pain, such as, Ear pain (Karna Shoola), Headache (Shira Shoola), Eye pain (Netra Shoola). Shoola can be either a primary symptom or a secondary effect of another disorder.

Discussion:- Assessing Pain :-

Pain should be evaluated based on: Duration (how long it lasts),Severity (how bad it is), Location (where it hurts),Character (what it feels like, e.g., sharp, throbbing, or crushing),Relieving or aggravating factors, Accompanying symptoms, Distribution of pain

In children, pain can be assessed by :-

Crying voice, Posture, Movement, Response, Color.

Ayurvedic Understanding of Pain :- Ayurvedic texts discuss pain in various sections, but there isn't a single chapter dedicated to it. According to Ayurveda, pain is often linked to an imbalance of the Vata dosha. Acharya Sushruta said, "Vatadrute nasti rujaa"^[5], meaning pain doesn't occur without Vata involvement.

Causes of Pain^[6] :- Vata imbalance can be caused by factors like Excessive sex,Lack of sleep, Inappropriate therapy,Excessive physical activity, Stress, Grief, Worries, Injury to vital areas

Symptoms of Vata Imbalance^[7] :-Vitiated Vata dosha can lead to symptoms like Contraction, Stiffness, Horripilation, Irrelevant talk, Stiffness of hands, back, and head, Lameness, Atrophy, Insomnia, Destruction of fetus, semen, and periods, Twitching sensation, Numbness, Splitting pain, Pricking pain, Excruciating pain, Convulsions, Unconsciousness, Excess tiredness.

Classification:

Types of Pain / Shoola according to Ayurveda:1) By Sushrutacharya (11 types of shoola)^[8]:- Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Sannipataja Parsva Shoola, Kukshi Shoola, Hrit Shoola, Vasti Shoola, Mootra Shoola, Vit Shoola, Avipaka /Annadosaja Shoola. (Gulma upadrava Shoola-Su.Ut.42/68-69)
2) By Madhava nidankara (8 types of Shoola)^[9]: Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Vata-pittaja, Vata-kaphaja, Pitta-kaphaja, Sannipataja, Amaja Parinama Shoola and Annadrava Shoola are special types of Shoola closely resemble with peptic ulcers and have strong relationships with the food intake.

In all these types, Vata is the predominant causative factor.

Types of shool	Nature of shool	Aggrevating factors
Vataj	Sharp, piercing pain	Cold weather, evening, during digestion, windy places .

Pittaj	Burning sensation pain	Midday, midnight, during digestion, rainy season.
Kafaj	Dull, aching pain	Mornings, sunrise, Shishira and Vasanta seasons, after eating
Sannipataj	Severe, intense pain	Persistent and severe at all times .

Site of Aggravated vata dosha	Nature of pain
Koshta (Abdominal Region)	Pain in abdomen and flanks (Udarshool, Parshva shoola)
Sarvang (Entire Body)	Twitching sensation, breaking pain, and joint cracking sensation (Gatra sphurana, Bhanjana, Vedana, Paritascha sphutana)
Guda (Rectal Region)	Colic pain, perianal pain (Gudagata shoola)
Amashaya (Stomach)	Pain in cardiac region, umbilicus, and sides of chest and abdomen (Hrut nabhi parshva udara ruk).
Pakvashaya (Large Intestine)	Colic pain, lower back pain (Pakvashaya gata shoola, Trika vedanam)

Dhatugata vata prakop lakshane ^[10] :-

Site	Nature of pain
Skin (Twakagata)	Pricking pain, joint pain signaling (Tudyate, Parva ruk).
Blood (Raktagata)	Acute pain covering a larger area (Teevra ruja)
Muscles/Fat (Mamsagata/Medogata)	Pain like being beaten, exertional pain (Dandmushtihata, Shramitatyartha)
Bones/Marrow	Cracking pain in bones and joints,

(Asthimajjagata)	piercing pain, constant pain (Asthi bheda, Parvanama sandhi shoola, Satata ruk)
Veins (Siragata)	Mild pain, emaciation, throbbing pain (Manda ruk, Shushyate spandayate)
Tendons/Ligaments (Snayugata)	Neuralgic pain in feet, shoulders, etc. (Khalli).
Joints (Sandhigata)	Pain during extension and contraction of joints (Prasarana aakunchana pravriti vedana)

Nature of pain in occluded Vata dosha ^[11]:-

Avarana(occluded vata dosha)	Nature of pain
Pitta & Kaphavrutta vata ^[12]	Colic pain with burning or heaviness, or cold sensation.
Blood (Raktavrutta vata) ^[13]	Excessive pain, burning sensation, and skin pathologies in a larger area
Bones (Asthivrutta vata) ^[14]	Pain like being pricked with needles
Marrow (Majjavrutta vata) ^[15]	Pariveshtanam (twisting pain), Shoola (colic pain).
Food (Annnavrutta vata) ^[16]	Kuksha ruk jeerne (pain in pelvic region after intake of food and alleviation after digestion of food).
Waste (Purishavrutta vata) ^[17]	Parikartana (gripping pain), Shroni Vankshana Prastha Ruk (pain in hips, groin, back), kukshi shool.

Conclusion:

Ayurveda, an ancient holistic system of medicine, provides a thorough understanding of pain (Shoola) by examining the imbalance of Doshas, particularly Vata aggravation. In contrast to conventional medicine's focus on symptom relief, Ayurveda explores the root cause and classification of pain based on its origin, characteristics, location, and related factors. The extensive categorization of Shoola in traditional texts highlights the meticulous observation and comprehensive

approach of ancient scholars. Pain is perceived as a complex phenomenon resulting from various Dosha and tissue involvements, blockages, and systemic imbalances.

The Ayurvedic approach to understanding pain involves detailed analysis, enabling personalized treatment plans tailored to the specific nature and origin of the pain. Therefore, managing pain from an Ayurvedic perspective requires a deep understanding of Vata pathophysiology and its interactions with other bodily components. This review suggests that Ayurvedic principles offer a natural and individualized approach to diagnosing and managing pain, which can be a valuable complementary method in modern pain management. This literary review supports that Ayurvedic principles provide an in-depth, natural and personalized way of diagnosing and managing pain.

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