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Sthavara and Jangam visha in Ayurved a review

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Abstract:

Ayurveda a science of life has described all aspects of our lives. It addresses the preventive/health care, disease conditions and treatment to be followed. For this purpose it has mentioned eight limbs of Ayurveda. One of it is Dramshta – Agadatantra – Vishchikitsa. Agada Tantra—this branch deals with toxicology—explaining poisons, their effects, and treatment. In this, toxic substances - Visha are primarily classified into two broad categories - Sthavara Visha (inanimate poisons) and Jangama Visha (animate poisons). This classification is based on the source of the poison, whether it originates from a plant/mineral (non-living) or an animal (living). Here an attempt is to understand the nature, symptoms, and treatment of these poisons which is vital for Ayurvedic treatment protocol, particularly in emergencies involving poisoning, bites, or toxic exposure.

Keywords: Agadatantra – Vishchikits, Sthavara Visha, Jangama Visha

Intuction:

Ayurveda is rightly termed as life science. It has detailed multidimensional description of all aspects of human life. The *Prayojana* of Ayurveda is to maintain the health by prevention and treatment of diseased. To attain the four *Purshartha* one should have a healthy body and mind. In this context Ayurveda had described *Ashtanga* – eight limbs of Ayurveda. Among this *Ashtanga* *Agada – Visha Chikitsa* the study of toxicology is one limb. It addresses prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of poisonings caused by natural and artificial sources. In order to know the poisonous effects of the poison on human body one should know the origin and type of the poison – *Visha*. *Acharya Charaka* defined *Visha* as a substance having *Dasha* – ten properties - *Guna*, producing

eight stages – *Visha Vega*, having its origin from *Apa Mahabhuta*, with effects like *Agni Mahabhuta*, has origin in both animate and inanimate substances and should be treated with twenty-four treatment modalities. Here Ayurveda have mentioned it in detail.

In Ayurveda the *Visha* and classified on basis of its origin -

- *Sthavara Visha* (immobile): Poisons of plant or mineral origin (*Vatsanabha*, *Somala* etc.)
- *Jangama Visha* (mobile): Poisons of animal origin (*Sarpa Visha*, *Kita Luta Visha* etc.)

Each type has distinct characteristics, mechanisms of action, symptoms, and treatment protocols. This review provides an overview of their classification, pathogenesis, and management in the context of classical and contemporary understanding.

Some other type of classification according to the type of poison is,

- *Krtrima Visha* – Artificial or synthetic poisons (e.g., chemically processed)
- *Garavisha* – Chronic cumulative poison (e.g., long-term exposure to toxins or *Ama Visha*)
- *Dushivisha* – Latent or dormant poisons that cause delayed illness.

Sthāvara Viṣa (Plant and Mineral-Origin Poisons)

Sthavara means "immobile." These poisons originate from the plant kingdom (*Vanaspatika*) and inorganic sources (*Dhatu*, metals, minerals) are termed as *Sthavara Visha*. This are considered poisonous than its counterpart if not treated promptly. 55 types of *Sthavara Visha* are mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta*. These are further classified as *Mahavisha* and *Upavisha*. Some of the *Sthavara Visha* mentioned in texts are as follows;

- *Vatsanabha* (*Aconitum ferox*) – Contains alkaloids like aconitine; neurotoxic and cardiotoxic.
- *Dhattura* (*Datura metel*) – Contains tropane alkaloids; causes delirium, hallucination.
- *Snuhi* (*Euphorbia nerifolia*) – Irritant latex; causes blisters and ulceration.
- *Langali* (*Gloriosa superba*) – Highly toxic tuber; causes circulatory and renal issues.
- *Hingula* (*Cinnabar*) – Mercury compound; causes chronic toxicity.
- *Haratala* (*Orpiment*) – Arsenic compound; highly toxic if consumed.

The poisonous effects of *Sthavara Visha* are mentioned as *Visha Vega* by *Acharya Charaka*. Each *Dhatu* respectively gets affected by the *Visha Virya* and produce corresponding symptoms.

General Symptoms of *Sthavara Visha*

- Fever
- Hiccups
- Tingling in the teeth – *Danta Harsha*
- Throat obstruction – *Gala Graha*
- Frothy vomiting
- Loss of appetite

- Difficulty breathing - *Shwasa*
- Fainting – *Murccha*

Here the treatment of poison is done according to the twenty four *Upakrama* mentioned by *Acharya Charaka*. But in general we can undertake following steps,

- *Vamana* (induced emesis) and *Virechana* (purgation) to expel poison.
- Use of antidotal herbs like *Tikta rasa* (bitter herbs), e.g., Nimba, Kutaki etc.
- *Lepa* (topical applications) for contact poisoning.
- *Anjana* (collyrium) and *Nasya* (nasal drops) as needed.
- Supportive treatment for cardiac, respiratory, and neurological symptoms.

Jangama Visha:

Jangama Visha refers to poisons that originate from animals, including venomous bites and stings. Here *Acharya Sushruta* had mentioned sixteen *Jangama Visha Adhishthana* i.e. the sites where poison resides in the animal. The animals or insects which are poisonous or exhibit poisonous effects on bit or in their body secretions are collectively grouped under this type. These are *Sarpa* – snake, *Kita* – insects, *Luta*, *Alarka*, *Vruschik* etc. the poison of each acts on different systems of our body. Some act on circulatory system, respiratory system and nervous system. It also produces local signs and symptoms on the site of bite.

The snake bite causes different effects depending on the type of snake. This may include circulatory - respiratory – nervous system symptoms. The *Kita Dansha* exhibit symptoms like, *Kandu*, *Visarpa*, *Daha*, *Apaki* etc. the *Luta Visha* shows *Shopha*, *Nanavarna Pitika*, *Shwasa*, *Daha*, *Hikka*, *Shiro graha* etc. Likewise poisonous animals and insects show corresponding signs and symptoms. In general the symptoms can be summarized as;

- Pain and swelling at the site of bite/sting
- Fang or puncture marks
- Difficulty breathing, swallowing, or speaking
- Paralysis or muscle weakness
- Bleeding, hypotension (in viper bites)
- Convulsions or coma (neurotoxic venoms)
- Death due to respiratory or cardiovascular failure

Ayurveda Management Principles:

The management of *Visha*, whether *Sthavara* or *Jangama*, follows the principles of *Agada Tantra*, which includes *Apakarshana* (removal of poison), *Prativisha* (antidotes), and *Vyapatpatti Nivaranam* (prevention of complications).

Apakarshana (Elimination of Poison)

- *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis)

- *Virechana* (purgation)
- *Nasya* (nasal administration)
- *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting)
- *Pralepa* (external application) for stings and bites

Prativisha (Antidotes and Counteractions)

- Herbal antidotes such as *Haridra*, *Shirish*, *Nimba*, *Guduchi*
- Specific *Agada* (antidotal formulations):
 - *Vishaghna Agada*
 - *Bilwadi Agada*
 - *Dhashanga Agada*
 - *Dushivishari Agada*
 - *Jatyadi Ghrita*
 - *Kusthadi Agada*

Vyapatpatti Nivaranam (Preventive and Supportive Care)

- Maintaining *Dosha* balance
- Avoiding aggravating factors like heat, physical exertion
- Monitoring vital signs and symptoms regularly
- *Rasayana* (rejuvenation therapy) post-recovery

Conclusion:

The Ayurvedic classification of poisons into *Sthavara* and *Jangama Visha* provides a systematic approach to understanding toxic exposures. By knowing the sources, symptoms, and appropriate treatment modalities, we can effectively manage the toxicological conditions. However, in the case of acute poisoning, a synergistic approach integrating Ayurveda with modern emergency medicine can be lifesaving. Also making the use of classical *Agada* preparations the routine protocol for poisoning along with modern medical intervention is the need of hour.

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