



GULMA- A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The basis or the main constitution of our body is made of tridoshas or the three fundamentals which ayurveda mentions in and out in all of their classical texts. Ayurveda explains three humors which perform all the physiological functions of our body, which includes- vata, pitta and kapha. Here 'vata' can be described as the self-generating and self-propagating force which is responsible for the conduct, regulation and integration of all vital functions of our body. Pitta is set to resemble fire as its functions mimic the same burning, digestion and transformation. Kapha on the other hand, represents the source of strength that resists disease and decay. Gulma is defined as a lump between cardiac region and pelvic region. Vitiated vata is an invariable causative factor for all types of gulma and there are other factors which affect the body along with the vata dosha. The disease cannot occur without the involvement of vata. The term gulma literally means 'a bush-an assemblage of creepers in a compact form' similar to which vayu remains in a compact form and appears as a solid lump in the disease. Gulma is a characterized by pain and the specific nature of pain serves as the main diagnostic factor. This conceptual study is based on review of all Samhithas (classical literature), research work and modern literature. A possible correlation on the causes of gulma according to modern lifestyle is also done. The main purpose of the study is to critically study and to analyse the disease gulma and to connect the cause of the disease to modern medical strings.

KEYWORDS: Gulma, Vata, pitta, kapha, lump.

INTRODUCTION

That which has a tuberous shape is a Gulma. This is the definition of gulma according to Acharya Charaka. Whereas on the other hand, Acharya Susrutha says that a Gulma is a mobile or stationary round shaped knotty lump located between the heart and the bladder which undergoes increase and decrease. From these definitions we can understand that gulma can be considered as an inflammation to some extent. The mythological origins of this disease date back to the sacrifice of the Daksha Prajapati where many such diseases first originated. It is said that as people were fleeing the Yagya due to the chaos caused by Lord Shiva's angry spirit Veerabhadra, Gulma spontaneously manifested in them as they rode, swam or flew away. But like all diseases of yore, this one too has its earthly bound etiologies which can be divided into dietetic, mental/psychological factors and external factors. Dietetic activities include the excessive intake of dry foods. People who usually restrict themselves to improper personal hygiene i.e. improper voiding or attending of natural urges which lead to further

complications, gulma being one of them. Psychological factors are generally that of fear and anxiety. Sometimes gulmas tend to manifest due to physical altercations and abuse caused upon the person who then develops it as a result of this external factor. Gulma can be correlated with that of an inflammatory response of the body because of the various similarities in its signs and symptoms. If we consider the 5 cardinal signs of inflammation:

1. Rubor (redness),
2. Calor (heat exuded by the affected area),
3. Tumor (swelling/ protuberance),
4. Dolor (pain and tenderness) and finally
5. Functio laesa (loss of functioning capacity of the affected area).

Site of manifestation of gulma

G.I tract is the abode of all types of gulma. While pittagulma and kaphagulma occur only in amashaya (stomach), vatagulma can also occur in other parts of koshta such as basti (bladder). If the gulma undergoes

suppuration while it is located in the koshta itself, it is called antarmargaja gulma (interior variety) and if the gulma grows and protrudes to the external surface, is called bahirmargaja gulma (external variety). The sites of manifestation of gulma are confined to five regions, namely- heart, umbilicus, bladder and lateral region. These can be interpreted as the regions of the abdomen corresponding to the location of these structures. The gulma being a granthi has different types of shapes such as elongated, round & broad.

Types of gulma

There are five types of gulma – vatagulma, pittagulma, shleshma gulma, nicayagulma and shonitagulma.

Causative factors of gulma

As vata is the primary dosha involved, gulma is basically a vataroga which occurs in koshta. Here, aggravation of vata can occur by two distinct mechanisms: i) by independent aggravation, and ii) due to affliction/blockage by other dosha. Vatika gulma is caused by independently aggravated vata in koshta. This aggravated vata can provoke kapha and pitta which are in their normal states, leading to various manifestations of vatika gulma. In paittika and kaphaja gulma, pitta and kapha respectively get aggravated independently by their own causative factors, and cause obstruction to vata. In sannipatika gulma, both kapha and pitta are independently aggravated, and they get provoked by vata to cause gulma.

Paka in gulma (suppuration)

According to Sushruta, gulma grows within itself like a bubble in water and does not undergo paka as it is devoid of mamsa and rakta, whereas, vidradhi which undergoes fast paka due to abundance of mamsa and rakta. Dalhana comments that this description applies only to vatika gulma. Other types of gulma which stay in rakta dhatu can undergo suppuration. Charaka samhita describes paka of gulma. According to Chakrapani, gulma which is not embedded in tissues does not get suppured, whereas the one that gets embedded in tissues becomes a vidradhi and can get suppured. Hence, when the lump undergoes suppuration, it is called vidradhi and if it doesn't undergo suppuration, then it is called gulma. According to,

Charaka - gulma is a mass predominant by pain only.

Sushruta - gulma is a mass lesion and pain.

Vagbhata - gulma is a mass preceded by pain.

Premonitory symptoms of gulma

The premonitory symptoms of gulma include, anorexia, indigestion, irregularity in power of digestion, incomplete digestion of food, over belching, vomiting, reduced urine and feces excretion, colic pain, intestinal gurgling, horripilation and weakness.

Vataja gulma

Aggravating factors: intake of dry and cold foods; administration of emesis or purgation without oleation;

intake of fresh water after heavy food intake; vomiting without manifested urge; suppression of manifested urge for passing of flatus, urine and stool.

Signs and symptoms – In vataja gulma, variation in location, signs and symptoms and pain is observed:

1. The location of gulma keeps changing, sometimes appearing in umbilicus and sometimes in the flanks.
2. Variable appearance - round, elongated, broad etc.
3. Variable degrees of pain
4. When the aggravated vata enters the GI tract, it becomes hard and round due to unctuousness and later gets localized in the heart/bladder/umbilicus.
5. The symptoms of the same includes colic pain, feeling as if ants are crawling on the legs, frequent appearance and disappearance of piercing, numbness, horripilation, fever, dryness of mouth, obstruction of pathways, affliction of spleen, gurgling of intestines, loss of power of digestion, malaise, swelling of inguinal lymph nodes, roughness and reddishness of skin, hair and nails.

Treatment

In all Vata predominant diseases, it is generally observed that we adopt a modality of treatment which generally tries to decrease its inherent dry property. Thereby it goes without saying that unctuous or oily medications should be prescribed. Oleation therapy acts as the preparatory treatment for the panchakarma treatments (5 bio purificatory methods mentioned in ayurveda). In this condition, oleation is done after which the person is exposed to fomentation (application of hot substances). The oleation given to a person also depends on the location of the gulma. If it is manifested above the umbilicus, the oleation is to be given orally (either along with food or in a raw state) and when it is in the colon or in any other part of the abdomen then this should be carried out by the means of both, unctuous enema and decoction enema. Care should be taken so as to not disturb the remaining doshas. Strict rules for diet should also apply to the person. According to the classics one should have meat of cock, peacock, partridges, and other birds like Krauncha and Vartaka (mentioned in the Ramayana). Various types of shali rice (*Oryza sativa*), wine named Vaaruni along with its supernatant is also recommended along with a hot diet which consists primarily of liquid foods. The easiest out of all the dietary rules mentioned is to consume water in which coriander seeds of coriander have been soaked for a while.

Pittaja gulma

Aggravating factors -Consumption of pungent, sour tastes, alkaline foods, foods which are hot, food producing burning sensation, anger, excess use of alcoholic drinks excess, exposure to sunlight, indigestion or due to injury and vitiation of blood.

Signs and symptoms – due to the vitiation of pitta, symptoms such as burning sensations in pelvic, heart and chest regions are felt. The aggravated vata produces

pains which were mentioned in vataja gulma. This type of gulma is manifested with symptoms such as; fever; giddiness, thirst, dryness of throat, yellowish discoloration of nails, skin, eyes, face; excessive sweating, dryness of mouth and palate, unconsciousness and diarrhoea.

Treatment

Medicines and treatments used here are predominantly of a laxative and purgatory nature. As the easiest way of clearing out Vitiated pitta is via medically induced purgation, this is adopted in their treatment line along with the use of milk as an enemata. The first mentions of surgical procedures and blood letting for such a disease can be found here. As the bodily humors and the doshas have a very intimate connection, blood gets easily vitiated whenever there is vitiation of pitta. Surgical treatment of only suppurated wounds is recommended. Dietrics specific to pitta tell us that the patient should consume different types of shali rice (*Oryza sativa*) along with animals inhabiting an acrid land (land having dry/cold property). Milk of both cows and goats, ghee, fruits like date (date palms), gooseberry and pomegranate are fit for consumption.

Kaphaja gulma

Aggravating factors– consuming food which are cold, hard to digest & snigdha (fatty), having no physical exercise, over eating, and sleeping during day time.

Signs and symptoms- the aggravated vata gets localized in a part of the alimentary canal and presents pain similar to vatika type of gulma and vitiated kapha produces fever, anorexia, indigestion, malaise, emesis, heaviness, and timidity. The gulma remains fixed and there is a feeling of numbness when aggravated in excess.

Treatment

The treatment of choice for kapha predominant diseases in general is emesis so the same modality is adopted here. Here, emesis is coupled with fasting in order to fix the digestive power of the patient. If gulma is associated with constipation then warm fomentation should be given to the patient after which the area of the mass should be massaged gently with the fingers in order for it to disappear completely. In some cases the mass is dislodged from its original site but it is still not dissolved. In order to enforce its complete resolution, the patient must be given purgation therapy or enema with dasamula drugs (collection of 10 roots). Kaphaja gulma is characterized by its deep root and therefore in some serious cases, minor surgical procedures like kshara karma (alkali substances) and agni karma (cauterization) is to be employed along with palliative therapy by alcoholic preparations. In all such cases, surgical procedures should be employed as last case scenarios when there is no resolution with any of the previously mentioned therapies. Diet for such a person consists of old cereals, corn, meat of arid living animals, horse gram, green gram, vegetables processed with black

pepper and ginger, soup of dried radish, pomegranate, asafoetida, buttermilk, oil and ghee. Alcoholic beverages such as varuni and madhvika should also be consumed if available.

Sannipatika Gulma

Gulma where tridosha are equally involved in causing the disease will show features like great pain, severe burning sensation, appearance of gulma as big and hard like stone, fatal in nature, it diminishes the strength of mind, body and digestive fire and it is incurable in nature. Due to extreme incurability, this gulma is called as nicaya gulma.

Raktaja Gulma

In the woman who suppress their natural urges due to dependence, ignorance or constant attendance to service of others, who indulge in food and regimen which aggravates vata soon after abortion, delivery or during menstruation, taking unwholesome diet just after delivery or who aborted foetus before completion of gestation, during ovulation period if a woman does fasting or takes dry food items or indulges in fear, then it results in vitiation of vata and obstructs the menstrual blood resulting in gulma along with pain and a burning sensation similar to pittaja gulma. Here, gulma does not behave like a foetus but its similarity of appearance makes the woman think psychologically and perform actions just as the activity of a woman during pregnancy. Scholars say that this gulma occurs in females due to obstruction of menstrual blood and this rakta gulma will be having ekapinda rupa (a solitary mass without any appendages as for foetus) with uniform quivering without any movements of body parts as in foetus. The quivering or pulsation occurs in a large interval along with pain. Since this happens only in females, it is considered as arthava rupa raktaja Gulma.

Treatment

Therapies mentioned in previous conditions, such as oleation, fomentation and purgation should be administered to the patient. After this, the physician should administer alkali of Palasha (*Butea monosprema*) tree mixed with ghee in appropriate dosage. If such elaborate treatments do not induce bleeding in the woman, then further procedures like yoni poorana should be employed (vaginal douching). As the cells present in the vagina are lipophilic (fat loving) therefore, medicines processed in ghee, oils etc should be used as this helps in the increased absorption of the medication. Medications such as oil cakes processed with alkali or latex, bile of pig or fish (cod liver oil) etc

After all of these therapies if bleeding is induced, the patient should be given gentle massage and fomentation along with sura (beer like alcoholic preparation). If bleeding doesn't stop, then hemostatic drugs that stop the excess flow of blood should be used.

DISCUSSION

The prime pathological event in gulma is the obstruction to the course of vata, which can be due to causes like inflammation, stricture, tumor etc. The disease is characterized by pain and palpable mass. But not all cases of gulma are associated with a palpable mass as some gulma never attain a palpable size, and others may not be palpable in its initial stages. How can we relate gulma to the present world? Gulma as such is not explained in any of the other medicinal systems, so explanation of the disease can be given only in ayurvedic terminologies. We have clearly discussed the aggravating factors of each type of gulma and relating them to present world regimen a few examples are listed below

1) Vataja gulma- balsamic vinegar, brussel sprouts, chia seeds, cornflakes, corn oil, unsalted fish, oyster, poppy seeds, prune, raspberry and chestnuts are some of the foods which might increase the risk of developing vataja gulma if consumed in excessive amounts.

2) Pittaja gulma – wasabi, tofu, jalapeno, avocados, basil, parsley, peppers, kale, celery, carbonated beverages, caffeine, peppermint and alcohol are the ones with increase in intake escalate the chances for developing pittaja gulma.

3) Kaphaja gulma- cheese, butter, chocolates, eggs, coconut oil, olive oil, olives, canola, avocados, flax seeds, soyabean, salmon, tuna fish, French fries, cakes, pies, cookies, crackers, doughnuts, pizza, fast foods containing ajinomoto and other baked goods which are absolutely palatable are the ones which cause excessive risk of kaphaja gulma.

4) Sannipataja gulma- due to the combined intake of all the above - mentioned food items will cause sannipataja gulma.

5) Raktaja gulma- raktaja gulma is mainly caused due to suppression of urges. Apart from this many food items can catalyze the process of development of raktaja gulma. Sugary foods such as doughnuts, chocolates, unpasteurised milk, seafood and raw meat after a miscarriage; consumption of alcohol, coffee, undercooked meat, egg, sprouts, cheeses and fish.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda is the only medical science which explains such a concept called gulma. As said above, gulma is a lump which presents itself between the cardiac and the pelvic areas of the human body which is invariably caused mainly by vata dosha along with the affliction of other doshas and blood. We have also seen the foods and regimen which lead to gulma. According to ayurveda mithyahara (wrong food intake practices) is one of the main causes of gulma. The only way by which we could possibly shun ourselves from acquiring gulma is by abstaining from the food and regimen which cause the aggravation of doshas. Vagbhatta has mentioned in his work about the regimen of food intake where he explains that, food should be taken only when the faeces and urine are excreted; when stomach becomes clear and when the doshas transversing in the right direction.

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