



UNDERSTANDING AMAVATA: A COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Amavata is a severe and chronic disorder with roots in Ayurvedic medicine. Its impact, particularly on the joints and musculoskeletal system, makes it highly debilitating. Research on Amavata has gained traction due to its significance in traditional medicine and the increasing interest in holistic health practices. By bridging ancient knowledge with modern scientific insights, we can better understand its causes, symptoms, and treatments.

What is Amavata?

Amavata is a term used in Ayurveda to describe a disease caused by the accumulation of "Ama" (toxins) and an imbalance in "Vata" dosha. Often compared to rheumatoid arthritis in modern medicine, Amavata primarily affects the joints but can also impact other bodily systems. It's classified as a type of joint disorder rooted in improper digestion and poor metabolic function.

Amavata is composed of two words, Ama & Vata. Ama means incomplete digestion of food which result in incomplete/impure formation of Annarasa, circulate in body & reach to target cell where it produces pathology like heaviness in body, loss of strength, drowsiness, aggravation of Vata & improper elimination of waste product, Body ache, not desire to take food, thirst, fever, incomplete digestion of food is the symptoms of Amavata. When disease grow in intensity it become difficult to cure, as well as involved joints of hands, feet, head, ankles, knees & produces pain, swelling, stiffness & tenderness in affected joints. Amavata is the particular type of disease which is mentioned in Ayurveda since the period of Madhavkara (16th century A.D.) under the category of Vata .Kaphaja disorders. Nidanans of Amavata narrated by Madhavkara are Viruddhahara, Viruddhachesta, Mandagni, and Exercise after Snigdharahar etc. Amavata is one of the challenging disease for the clinicians due to its chronicity, incurability, complications and morbidity. The allopathic treatment provides the symptomatic relief but the underlined pathology remain untreated due to absence of effective therapy and also giving rise to manyside effects, toxic symptoms and adverse reactions also more serious complications like organic lesions. The treatment procedure described are Langhan, Swedan, Tikta-katu dravyas , Deepana, Virechan, Basti etc.

Historical Context

The origins of Amavata can be traced back to ancient Ayurvedic texts like Charaka Samhita and Madhava Nidana. These foundational writings describe Amavata as a result of poor digestion leading to the production of Ama, a sticky, toxic byproduct of undigested food. This Ama, in combination with aggravated Vata, lodges in the joints and tissues, leading to pain, swelling, and stiffness. Ayurveda views Amavata not just as a physical ailment but as a condition influenced by diet, lifestyle, and mental well-being.

In Present era People are so busy in their success rate & life style. They show more interest in own health, but due to busy life schedule they are unable to make a healthy life. The things that trouble most of people are faulty Dietary habit & not to follow daily seasonal regimen. Frequent indulgence of such factors leads to altered status of Jatharagni as well as Dhatvagni. Impaired status of Agni leads to develop various kinds of diseases.^[1] Causative factor for various kinds of disease is mandagni.^[2] In 21st century Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) has been more common & distressing among all joints problem. About 0.8% of world population is affected by RA. Females are three times more affected than male. It is a chronic inflammatory joint disease with multi system involvement. The onset is usually during 4th& 5th decade of life; however people of any age group can be affecting in any climate. Rheumatoid arthritis make the affected person unfit for an independent life. RA is a serious disease condition, it very rarely show complete cure. Factor producing rheumatoid arthritis include infectious triggers, genetic predisposition & autoimmune response. Insidious onset with fatigue, anorexia, weakness and acute onset with rapid development of polyarthritis accompanied with constitutional symptoms

includes fever, lymphadenopathy & splenomegaly. Joints involvement is usually symmetrical. It is characterized by pain, swelling, tenderness & painful limitation of movements. Generalized stiffness may occur but morning stiffness lasting more than one hour is a characteristic feature. The metacarpophalangeal & proximal inter phalangeal joints of the hands, wrists, knees & metatarsophalangeal & proximal inter phalangeal joints of the feet are the most common joints involved,^[3] even in modern medical science with extreme advancement in diagnostic approach, only symptomatic relief and no permanent cure is given. It is a challenging disease for the physicians and medical field. Till today in modern science, there is no effective medicine for this disease. All that modern medicine used DMARD, steroids and NSAID frequently which have negative impact on immune system and gives only temporary relief. However, till date no satisfactory modern medical management has been developed for this problem. Hence the management of this disease is merely insufficient in other systems of medicine and patients are continuously looking with a hope towards Ayurveda to overcome this challenge. Hence for Ayurvedic scholar it is a challenging disease, so it becomes duty of scholars to work on various aspect of this disease. Amavata can be correlated with Rheumatoid Arthritis due to same presentation of disease. It is the disease of Madhyam rogamarg. Asthi and Sandhi are the chief site for the manifestation of cardinal symptoms like Sandhishool, Shandhishoth and Sandhigraha etc. All the three Doshas take part in the pathogenesis of disease but Ama and vitiated Vata play the dominant role.

Symptoms and Diagnosis

Amavata presents with a distinctive set of symptoms, making it easier to identify. Key symptoms include.

- Severe joint pain, often in multiple joints.
- Swelling and redness in the affected areas.
- Loss of appetite and fatigue.
- Stiffness, especially in the morning.
- Digestive issues like bloating or constipation.

Diagnosis traditionally involves a detailed assessment of a person's medical history, dietary habits, and digestion. Ayurvedic practitioners analyze the pulse, skin, tongue, and stool to confirm the presence of Ama and dosha imbalance.

Definition of Ama

These are the various definitions of Ama that are present in different classics. Few of them are given below.

1. ऊष्मणोऽल्पबलत्वन धातमाद्यमपि तिम^[7]

Because of the hypofunctioning of Ushma (Agni), the first Dhatu 'Rasa' cannot be well digested, instead, the Anna Rasa ferments or becomes putrefied (Dusta) while staying in the Amashaya. This Rasa is termed as Ama. Ama Svarupa.^[8]

The above features can be divided into the following heads.

- A. Properties that can be felt by touch.
 - a. Dravatva.
 - b. Pichchilatva.
 - c. Snigdhatatva.
 - B. Properties which can be perceived by eyes
 - a. Tantumatva
 - b. Avipakvata
 - c. Asamyuktata
 - d. Anekavarnayuktata
 - e. Pichchilata\
 - C. Properties which can be perceived by smell:
 - a. Durgandha
 - D. Properties which can be known by questioning:
 - a. Guruta
 - b. Avipakvata
- Sama Dosh

1. आमन तन मम्पक्ता दोषा दग्गाश्च दिषताः। मामा इत्गपिदशगन्त ग ि सोतास्तदद्गवाः।^[9]

- Dosh and Dushya when mixed with Ama are defined as Sama and disease produced by these
- are termed as Sama disease.
- To know the pathological state of Ama in the body, the characteristic of Doshas in
- Samavastha & Niramavastha should be well known. Samadosha and their symptoms are
- stated as samavastha.
- Process of Ama Formation
- Ama formation in body take place by two ways.
 - Acute Ama formation^[10]
 - Gradual Ama formation^[11]
- Acute Ama formation is described in Trividh Kukshiya Vimana which is responsible for
- manifestation of disease like; Alasaka and Visuchika.
- While Gradual Ama formation is responsible for manifestation of systemic disease like
- Amavata.

Pathophysiology of Amavata

Amavata results from a cascade of biological and physiological disruptions. Understanding its mechanisms is essential for developing effective treatments.

Role of Doshas

In Ayurveda, health depends on the balance of three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Amavata arises when Vata becomes excessive and combines with Ama. This union obstructs natural pathways, leading to inflammation and pain. Pitta dosha may also play a secondary role, especially in cases with aggravated heat or redness in the joints. Kapha can contribute to stiffness and heaviness, further complicating the condition.

Impact on the Body

Amavata primarily targets the musculoskeletal system. It often starts with mild joint discomfort but can progress to

severe pain, deformities, and reduced mobility. Chronic inflammation can weaken surrounding muscles and ligaments. Beyond the joints, Ama disrupts digestion, weakens immunity, and may even contribute to heart complications in advanced cases. The overlapping symptoms with autoimmune diseases point toward its systemic impact on overall health.

Treatment Approaches for Amavata

Treating Amavata involves both addressing the root cause and alleviating symptoms. Ayurveda focuses on removing Ama, balancing doshas, and relieving pain, while modern medicine emphasizes inflammation management.

Ayurvedic Remedies

Ayurvedic treatment aims to detoxify the body and restore balance. Common approaches include:

- **Herbs:** Remedies like Ashwagandha, Guggulu, and Shallaki are staples for reducing inflammation and strengthening joints.
- **Dietary Adjustments:** A light, easily digestible diet supports healthy digestion and prevents Ama formation. Avoiding heavy and oily foods is key.
- **Panchakarma Therapy:** Detoxification treatments such as Virechana (purgation) and Basti (enemas) help remove toxins and pacify Vata.
- **Lifestyle Changes:** Gentle yoga, meditation, and maintaining a regular sleep schedule are encouraged to promote balance and reduce stress.

Line of Treatment

Langhana: First is the Langhana which helps in load shedding on Agni and production of Ama is decrease. **Deepana:** The use of Deepana Dravya which helps in improving status of Agni and enhancing its action. **Pachana:** Pachana Dravyas help in digestion of already produced Ama. **Amavata Etymology** The word Ama and Vata unite to form the term Amavata. This signifies the role of pathogenesis of Ama and Vata in the disease.^[12] Ama is produced due to indigestion and along with Vata it is a well-known disease entity.^[13]

Definition

गतपत्किपतावन्तिकिमिन्धचवयकौ | स ्तब्ध ि करुतो

तात्रमामवाताः म उच्यते ||^[14] Simultaneously, vitiated Ama and Vata when lodge in the Trika-Sandh leading to Stabdhat of that body part this condition is known as Amavata. **Nidana of Amavata** According to Madhava Nidana specific etiological factor of Amavata as follows.^[15]

- Viruddhahara
- Viruddhachesta
- Mandagni
- Nishchalata

Any type of exertion immediately after taking Snigdha Ahara are the main causative factor responsible for production of Amavata.

Viruddha Ahara

Definition

उत्ल्लशग दोषान्न हसत द्रव्य गल्लतममामताः | विरुद्ध तिद्ध धातना र्चतगनीकतगा िस्थतम ||^[16]

- The Ahar dravyas which provoke Dosha but can't eliminate from body are called Viruddha Ahar and it is opposite to Sapta Datu.
- These are Dhatushaithilyakara and Doshaprakopaka. Acharya Charaka coined term Ahita for Viruddhaahar
- Viruddha Ahara is one of the most important factor responsible for Amavata.

Types of Viruddha Ahara is monitored in Charaka Samhita as follows^[18]

- Desha Viruddha (place)
- Kaal Viruddha (Time)
- Agniviruddha (digestion power)
- Matra Viruddha (dose)
- Satmya Viruddha (suitability)
- Dosha Viruddha (against of Dosha)
- Sanskara Viruddha (processing)
- Virya Viruddha (Active principles)
- Kostha Viruddha (bowels)
- Avastha Viruddha (state of health)
- Krama Viruddha (order)
- Parihara Viruddha (contra indication)
- Upachara Viruddha (Prescription)
- Paka Viruddha (cooking)
- Samyoga Viruddha (combination)
- Hrita Viruddha (palatability)
- Sampat Viruddha (richness of quality)
- Vidhi Viruddha (rules of eating)

Modern Medical Interventions

In contemporary medicine, Amavata is often managed as rheumatoid arthritis. Treatments focus on controlling inflammation and preventing joint damage.

- **Anti-Inflammatory Drugs:** Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and corticosteroids offer pain relief and reduce swelling.
- **Disease-Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs (DMARDs):** These help slow disease progression and protect joint structures.
- **Physical Therapy:** Exercises improve flexibility and strengthen muscles supporting the joints.
- **Surgical Interventions:** In severe cases, joint replacement or repair surgery may be necessary.

Though effective, modern treatments often focus more on symptom control rather than addressing underlying causes. Combining medical interventions with Ayurveda could offer more comprehensive care.

Research and Future Directions

Recent studies have shed light on Amavata's mechanisms and potential new treatments. Exploring these areas could pave the way for improved management strategies.

Current Studies

Research comparing Ayurvedic treatments and conventional medicine shows promising results. For example:

- Studies indicate that herbs like Boswellia and Turmeric significantly reduce inflammation and joint pain.
- Panchakarma therapies have been found effective in detoxifying the body, improving digestion, and relieving stiffness.
- Clinical trials assessing Ayurvedic dietary interventions show reduced Ama levels and marked symptom improvement in patients.

Potential Innovations

Blending traditional and modern approaches could yield breakthroughs. For instance:

- Developing herbal formulations that integrate with existing medical drugs to enhance efficacy.
- Exploring the microbiome's role in Ama formation and identifying ways to modify gut health.
- Using AI and biotechnology to identify biomarkers unique to Amavata, aiding earlier diagnosis and treatment customization.

Such innovations highlight the untapped potential of merging ancient wisdom with cutting-edge science.

CONCLUSION

Amavata is a complex condition that challenges both patients and healthcare providers. By understanding its causes and symptoms, we can treat it more effectively. Ayurveda's emphasis on root causes and holistic care pairs well with modern medicine's precision. Integrating these two systems offers hope for managing Amavata more comprehensively. As research advances, we may uncover even better methods to address this condition, improving the quality of life for countless individuals.

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