



A Classical Review on Siraja Granthi (Varicose Veins)

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ABSTRACT

In this changed lifestyle of human beings, he has become a victim of several diseases, amongst them one is Varicose Veins, which are caused due to long standing or sitting in chairs which causes extra load on veins to pump the blood against gravity towards the Heart, especially the veins of the legs. Finally the veins get fatigued that leads to dilation and cause Varicosity in veins. In Ayurveda Siraja granthi and Siragata vata rogas are explained which are synonyms with the modern system disease of varicose veins. Siraja granthi refers to a condition characterized by dilated, engorged veins that are painless and non-pulsating, in modern it's correlated with varicose veins.

Key words- Siraja granthi, Sira, Granthi, Varicose veins.

Introduction

On screening the various literatures of Ayurveda, there are less explanations available for *Siraja Granthi*. Among *Brihat Trayis*, *Sushruta* is a person who has given a few explanation about *Siraja Granthi*. *Vagbhata* has also explained regarding *Siraja Granthi*, which is almost same to *Sushruta*'s explanation. Some information regarding *Siragata Vata* are available in *Brihatrayi*'s, where the explanations are holding the parallel hand with varicose veins. In *Laghutrayi*'s, also, few references about *Siraja Granthi* are available and the descriptions are almost similar to *Sushruta*.

In the Concept of *Sira*, *Siravarnavibhakti* one among the chapter of *Sushruta Samhita Shareera sthana* contains detailed description on *Siras*. In this chapter, *Sushruta* mentions about seven hundred *Siras* these nourish the entire body. *Siras* are originated from *Nabhi* and from there these spreads upwards, downwards and side wards similar to spread of spikes from the central point of a wheel¹.

NIRUKTI & PARIBHASHA –

- *Sira*, '*Saranat Sirah*'. *Sira* is the tubular structure, where *Sarana* is performed. *Sarana* refers to flow of fluids, here fluids are *Rasa*, *Rakta* etc²

*'Siranaati sthula rijuaakaar ntahsushira Vataadi Vaha*³

According to *Astanga Sangraha* *Sira* is like thin rope, not much thick, hollow inside through which *Vata* etc. are transported.

- *Granthi* is so called *Grathana* because of its quality, i.e. the property of accumulation that means collection.

According to *Shabda Kalpa Dhruma*,⁴

- *Grath*- Curved or curled in nature. Formation of knot or twist like

Structure by the quality of curliness or coiling, rippling in action.

- *Grathitam*- To twist into ringlets.
- *Granthi*- Formation of knot like structure by the way of accumulation. It also means swelling and hardening of the vessels.

Different *Acharya* s explained *Granthi* in various *Prakarana* of their *Samhitas*.

- ❖ *Acharya Sushruta*⁵ – *Granthi Prakarana* of *Nidana Sthana* and *Chikitsa Sthana*
- ❖ *Acharya Vagbhata*⁶ – *Granthi Arbuda- Sleepada -Apachi- Nadi Vijnaniya* of *Uttara Tantra*
- ❖ *Acharya Charaka*⁷ – *Shotha Roga Prakarana* of *Chikitsa Sthana*

According to Acharya Sushruta,

Granthi is explained as a *Shophha* which is *Unnatha* (bulged) and *Vritta* (round), *Grathita* (hard) and its pathology is relating to the *Vatadi Dosha*'s and getting aggravated and vitiating and *Rakta Mamsa* which vitiates *Meda* with predominance of *Kapha*⁸

According to Vagbhata,

Granthi is a *Vritta* (round) and *Unnatha* (bulged) *Swayathu* (swelling) caused by *Malas (Dosha*'s) of which *Kapha* is the predominant one, invading the *Meda, Mamsa* and *Rakta*. Because of its nature *Grathana* (knotty/lump like), it is known as *Granthi*.⁹

According to Charaka,

Granthi occurs in particular part of the body because of vitiated *Vatadi Dosha*'s and produce accordingly *Lakshana*'s.

If surrounded by *Sira*, it pulsates.

If in *Mamsa*, it is large in size.

If it is of *Meda*, then it is painless and it is *Snigha* (unctuous) and mobile¹⁰.

Description of Siraja Granthi:

Among the *Samhita*'s, *Sushruta Samhita* stands first in describing *Siraja Granthi* with its etiology, pathology, prognosis and physical signs¹¹. *Acharya Vagbhata* in *Astanga Hridaya* has described the same thing with some modifications in physical signs¹². But it is *Vagbhata* who has gone a step further in narrating the treatment of this disease. In giving the features of the disease¹³. In giving the features of the disease, *Madhava Nidanakara*¹⁴ just follows *Acharya Sushruta*. *Acharya Vangasena*¹⁵ and *Acharya Bhavaprakasha*¹⁵ explain the same as in *Sushruta Samhita* including *Sadhya Asadhyatha*.

Nidana (Etiology)

The sole etiological factor precipitating *Siraja Granthi* according to *Sushruta Samhita*'s excessive exertion by a person who is weak and *krusha* (emaciate). However, it must be noted that *Acharya Sushruta* has not mentioned where, in which part of the body *Siraja Granthi* will be clinically manifested, although he says other vitiating factors of *Vata* also contributes much to the etiology¹⁶.

In *Astanga Hridaya*, it is mentioned that one who suddenly immerses or wash the lower limb in cold water after walking a long distance, or one who is fatigue after excessive exercise is likely to be affected by *Siraja Granthi*. Although he has not told the specific site of *Siraja Granthi*, by the description itself, one can assume that it is in the lower extremities¹⁷.

Factors affecting the *Vyana Vayu* will affect the *Sira* because *Vyana Vayu* circulates *Rasa*, eliminates *Sveda* and helps flow of blood, performs the five kind of action *Gati, Akshepana, Utkshepana, Nimesha* and *Unmesha*¹⁸.

Purvarupa¹⁹

Acharya Charaka explains the *Purvarupa* of *Shophaas Jwara, Dhavadhu* and *Aayama* of *Sira*.

Samprapti (Pathology)

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, the etiological factors play a role in the vitiation of *Vata* and this vitiated *Vata* directly affects the *Sira Prathana* (network of veins) by *Akshepa* and exposes them to *Samkochana* (constriction) and *Vishoshana* (drying up) *Sampeedana* (aching /squeezing type of pain), and produces *Granthi* which is elevated, quick developing and round²⁰. The same description in *Vangasena Samhita* also.²¹ *Acharya Vagbhata* further adds that the vitiated *Vata* playing main role, will invades the network of *Siras* along with *Rakta Dhatu*, causing *Sampeedana, Samkochana, Vakreekarana* (tortuosity/distortion) and *Vishoshana* of the *Sira* resulting in formation of *Granthi* which is non-pulsating and painless²².

The explanation given by *Acharya Charaka* has got a little difference that due to the *Nidana* not only *Vata* but also *Kapha, Rakta* and *Pitta* also get vitiated, which then enter the external blood vessels, get lodged there and produce obstruction and spreads to the nearby areas causing oedema.²³

According to *Acharya Bhoja*, when a weak person indulges in *Vata Prakopaka Nidanas*, *Vata* gets aggravated and invades *Sira* which is already *Durbala* and leads to *Prathitha Akshipana* and *Parisoshana* and result in painful *Sirajala*²⁴.

Lakshana's (Symptomatology)

The clinical picture given by *Acharya Sushruta* is far from adequate. He describes two varieties of *Siraja Granthi*-one which is painful and movable and explained it as *Krichra Sadya* (difficult to cure) and another which is painless, immovable, greatly enlarged and explained that if such *Granthi* is situated on *Marma Sthanas*, it should be rejected. According to him, *Siraja Granthi* presents as *Vritta* and *Unnatha*²⁵.

Acharya Vagbhata modifies the physical signs. His addition of *Vakreekarana* (tortuosity) makes the focus of the clinical picture clear. He also narrates that *Siraja Granthi* will be *Nishphura* (non-pulsatile) and *Neeruja* (painless) & he did not say as *Sushruta* have told that it will be *Vritta* (circular)²⁶.

Sadhya-Asadhyatha (Prognosis)

The description of prognosis itself demarcates a difference between the opinions of the two authors. *Sushruta Acharya* describes the painful variety as *Krichra Sadhya* (difficult to cure) and the painless variety that is bigger in size and presenting at *Marma Sthanas* as totally incurable²⁷.

*Acharya Bhavaprakasha*²⁸ and *Acharya Vangasena*²⁹ follow the same opinion of *Sushruta Samhita*.

³⁰*Vagbhata Acharya* too is keen on the selection of cases. He, along with the narration of this condition has told the treatment is indicated for cases which are “*Nava*” (fresh). So in this context the understanding of what is meant by *Nava* becomes important. *Vagbhata Acharya* has not claimed the disease as *Sukha Sadhya* (easily curable) or *Krichra Sadhya* (difficult to cure).

Chikitsa (Management)

No other author not given any treatment, except *Vagbhata* gives a clue for the treatment of *Siraja Granthi*.

Specific Management of *Siraja Granthi*³¹

Management described by *Acharya Vagbhata* mainly based on *Samprapti Vighatana*.

It is described in *Apachi-Arbuda-Granthi*, in the chapter of *Uttara Sthana* of *Astanga Hridaya*. It is indicated for *Nava* (fresh) cases.

- ❖ Internal administration of *Sahacharadi Taila*,
- ❖ *Upanaha* (poultice) with *Vatahara* drugs,
- ❖ *Basti Karma* (medicated enema) and
- ❖ *Siravyadha* (puncturing of the vein)

While explaining *Jalaukavacharana*, according to *Acharya Vagbhata*, it is highly beneficial even in case of *Avagada Doshas* and In *Granthi*³², *Raktamokshana* mentioned as the treatment for *Siragata Vata*³³ in our classics can also be considered here, as the *Samprapti* of both diseases being the same and varicosity of veins is definitely a *Siraja Vyadhi*. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, the *Lakshana*'s of *Siragata Vata* are *Shoola*, *Sira Akunjana* and *Sira Purana* and the treatment of *Sira Praapta Vata* is *Snehapana*, *Abhyanga*, *Upanaha*, *Mardhana*, *Alepana* and *Rakta Mokshana*.

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