Review Article
Sandhivata-an Ayurveda Approach
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Abstract
Many years have passed man still searching for permanent cure of diseases which prevailed thousands years back or certain diseases which are of recent origin but yet to reach the goal. Further, with changes in life style and cultivation of new diet habits diseases like arthritis, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, etc have increased in alarming rate. Among these, arthritis (joint diseases) affects more than 1800 million people in India, may be one in every family. Among various types of arthritis, Sandhivata (osteo arthritis) is most common and stands second most prevalent disease after diabetes. Especially in India, high incidence of Sandhivata is due to genetic predisposition, obesity, sedentary lifestyle and poor diet. Further increase in elderly population due to increased life expectancy, has also added to increase in its prevalence. One in ten patients attending the OPD of Ayurveda hospitals is suffering from Sandhivata of knee, shoulder, heel, lumbar and cervical region, seeking for permanent cure of it.
According to Ayurveda, Sandhivata is caused due to disturbed Vata in association with other factors and mainly afflicts the Vata or Kapha dominant individuals. A holistic approach with changing of diet and life style, certain internal medication and Panchakarma procedures may give promising results in such conditions with minimal side affects especially of recent origin. This article aims at introducing to the philosophy of Sandhivata mentioned in Ayurveda with its management.

Keywords: Mutrakricchra, Karanjadi Kvatha, Rasayana, Lower urinary tract infections

Introduction:
Three balanced Dosha viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha are responsible for maintaining the physiology of human body. Any prolonged and significant change in diet, dietetic habits, faulty life style, changes in seasons and environment, psychological stress or physical injury disturbs these Dosha and thus triggers a sequence of changes which may produce disease. The same principle can be applied for the pathogenesis of disorders of joints (Sandhi).
Sandhi (joint) basically means a union, but in the present context, the union of two or more bone is Sandhi especially the movable joints which help for movements. In a normal joint in addition to the bones, other structures like coating of the bones with cartilage, a synovial capsule, synovial fluid, tendons and ligaments also take part. An example has been given in classic to easily understand the importance of Sandhi for human beings. Just imagine the structure of raft. The strong wooden planks, which are used to make raft can be compared to strong bones of the body and the ropes used to tie these planks so that the wooden logs can move together and can bear weight may be compared to ligaments (Snayu) and tendons (Kandara) and the resultant of this union is same as joint of the human body. But in human body, in addition to these structures, Shlemadhara Kala (synovial membrane) containing of Shleshaka Kapha is also present in most of the movable joints which helps for the lubrication of the joints during movements; same as oiling of the parts of machineries. Because of this membrane and fluid, friction is avoided during the movements. So in brief it can be said that whenever there is any type of Sandhi gata (joint) disorder there may be involvement of either of these factors and depending on it the symptom may be produced.
Though there are more than 100 types of arthritis but in Ayurveda they can be broadly classified under three broad heading of Sandhivata, Amavata and Vatarakta. Among these Sandhigatavata is dominantly due to Vata involvement while remaining two are due to the association of other factors like Ama, Rakta and thus management of these conditions vary.
Among these Sandhivata is one of the commonest arthritis seen in today’s era which is termed as Sandhiva in general language or osteo-arthritis in allopathic parlance. Before few years it was considered as a disorder related to aging but due to faulty diet, sedentary life style, minimum physical strain, increasing body fat and other favorable factors Sandhivata has become disease of all age. This type of arthritis is commonly seen in large and weight bearing joints especially in Vata Prakriti or obese persons and its prevalence increases with advancing age as Vata becomes prominent in the advance age causing degeneration and poor nourishment of the Sandhi and Asthi.
As name suggests, provoked Vata is the main culprit of this disease, which produce changes in Sandhi especially reduction in Shleshaka Kapha and later erosion of bone and cartilage. These changes result in friction between the bones of affected joint resulting...
in joint pain (figure 2). Later due to involvement of other structures of Sandhii the features may change as in some of the patients there may be swelling around the affected joint or permanent deformity which may change the shape of involved joint.

**Causes of Sandhivata:**
Excessive, improper or violent physical exercises like too much of labor work of lifting heavy articles, or making excessive use of joint as in certain occupations like brass workers, extensive walking or running, or falling or trauma or any physical injury to the joint, act as one of the important cause for Sandhivata. Similarly not at all doing physical exercises may increase fat in the body or reduce circulation in the joint and thus can also act as the cause of this disease. In short balanced exercise with proper rest may help to avoid Sandhivata.

Further, deficiency of diet which is must for the nourishment of Rasa or Asthi Dahtu like oil or fat containing i.e. edible oils or Ghee, butter, milk etc also causes Sandhivata. Due to the fashion of slim and trim look, people have started taking low calorie diet avoiding of all fat content in their diet or are taking less or limited food articles, or are doing too much of fasting. These all factors also trigger Vata. In addition, irregular dietetic habits like eating food on improper time or interval or varying the diet amount constantly may also provoke Vata.

Second group of patients which also suffer from Sandhivata is obese people, where all causative factors opposite to above mentioned conditions prevails and due to extra burden on weight bearing joint, the pathogenesis of Sandhivata starts.

In other group, Sandhivata may be produced as secondary disease like many patients of Psoriasis may suffer psoriatic arthritis or patients of uncontrolled type 2 diabetes mellitus may also develop joint pains.

**Characteristics of Sandhivata (Osteoarthritis):**
Pain in the joint is the characteristics of any joint disease, but when this pain has specially started with aging or after fall or trauma, pain becomes more severe on moving the affected joint and gets relieved at rest is usually confirmation of Sandhivata. In some patients the pain may also be associated with slight to moderate swelling of the joint which is not painful to touch and this swelling gives the feel of bag filled with air. Moving the joints may also produce cracking. Reduced joint space in radiological findings confirms Sandhivata. The commonest joints which get involved are knee, shoulder, heel, ankle, hip, low back and neck followed by the fingers of hand and foot (Figure 3).

**Management of Sandhivata:**
Ayurveda believes in treating the person instead treating the disease alone. Hence, single line of treatment cannot be applied to all patients of Sandhivata. Further, stopping of causative factor and following of certain dos and don’ts also make a part of management of the disease. Keeping these general principles in mind an approach is made to treat a case of Sandhivata, which can be basically classified as:

(a) Avoiding of all causes that have triggered Sandhivata

(b) Guggulu is one of the choices of drug for the patients of arthritis as it is claimed to be painkiller, anti inflammatory and also weight reducing agent. Thus either plain Shuddha Guggulu or its preparation like Yogaraja Guggulu, Maha Yogaraja Guggulu is given to the patients usually in form of pills.

(c) Kwatha preparations like Dashamoola Kwatha, Erandamoola Kwatha the most potent Vata hara herbs in Ayurveda can be taken but with precaution that Dashmoola in some patient may produce gastritis, diarrhea or white discharge in female.

(d) Single drugs like powder of Shallaki, Bala, Rasna, Guduchi, Ashvagandha, Pippali Moolla, Shunthi can also be taken twice or thrice daily both as preventive or treatment purpose.

(e) Natural calcium contents like Pravala Panchamritta, Godanti Bhasma, Shukti Bhasma, Kapardika Bhasma, Kukkutanda Tvaka Bhasma are also sometimes added in the treatment of Sandhivata, especially when the condition is associated with osteoporosis or osteopenia like in women during menopause.

(f) Oral taking of medicated Ghee like Dashmoolaa Ghee, Ashvandha Ghee, Panchatikta Guggulu Ghiro is also advisable in certain cases where Vata dominant pathogenesis is associated.

(g) Meticulous use of Rasa Aushadhi (herbo mineral preparations) like Vata Vidvansa rasa, Ekangavira rasa, Brihat Vatachintamani rasa, Yogendra rasa, Vatari rasa in advanced cases of Sandivata can be done.

(h) Local treatment of the affected joint is of equal importance in Sandhivata and judicious use of it gives miraculous result in many cases like
- Applying of warm paste of Dashanga, Dhatura leaves, Arka leaves, Nirgundi leaves or powder of Shunthi with cow’s urine on affected joint or heating with warm brick especially in cases of heel pain.
- Local massage with medicated luke warm oil like Tila Taila prepared with Lasuna or Karpura, or application of Mahanarayana Taila, Bala taila for at least 5 to 10 minutes followed by local heating with hot water bag, or pouring of luke warm water is also helpful; or pouring of Luke warm oil like Dhara on the affected joints is also done.

(i) Localized Basti like Janu basti (figure 4) or Kati Basti (figure 5) i.e. after applying a border like structure around the affected joint warm oil can be poured and kept for slight long period on the joint area is also one of the popular local procedure.
Pancha Karma Procedures like a course of Basti of 15 to 30 days like Kala Basti or Karma Basti or daily administration of Matra Basti or Ksheer basti like panchatikta Ksheer Basti is also advised in chronic cases of Sandhi Vata especially Katigatavata. In certain conditions where there involvement of joints of neck and upper back a course of Nasya can also be given.

Rasayana therapy: as Sandhivata is aliment coming with degenerative changes and vitiation of Vata, proper care before initiation of disease by taking of Rasayana drugs like Shatavari, Ashvagandha can be prevented or postponed. Further, to get faster relief Rasayana drugs can be taken along with the treatment of Sandhigata Vata.

Pathya (Dos’) for the patients of Sandhivata:
- Light physical exercises like slow walking, jogging, swimming, or running
- Yoga Asanas like chakrasana, dhanurasana,gomukhasana, bhujangasana, pawanmuktasana & matsyasana etc
- Daily massage of the body followed by light exercises
- Take calcium supplement diets like milk, curd , butter milk, butter
- Take proper amount of Ghee and oil in food
- Including in vegetables like Lauki, Patola, Shigru, Adraka, Rasona, Haridra
- Take powder of Shunthi, Mareecha, Methi and Saupha (fennel) in equal parts before & after meal with warm water
- To stay relax and avoid worries and stress
- Avoid physical injury or fall

Apathya (Don’ts) for the patients of Sandhivata:
- Excessive, jerky or violent movements of body or joints
- Too much of physical exercises
- Too much of fasting, or irregular diet habits
- Taking of less oil or Ghee contents in the food
- Night awakening or day sleep
- Too much of heavy and oily food prepared from Udada, Chana, kidney beans, peas, potatoes, tomatoes, cauliflower, ladyfingers, brinjal should be avoided
- Sour and fermented food items like bakery items
- Sour butter milk, curd or too much of heavy milk
- Too much worries, anxiety, stress

Ayurveda has preached of healthy way of eating and living. Key to health as said in classic is to know yourself and your Prakriti and accordingly plan your diet and way of living. This is door to happy, healthy and long living. But being a human, to strictly follow these principles is impossible and in walks of life somewhere everyone in their life suffers from joint pain. Noticing it in very first stage and getting alarmed for forthcoming disease, may help us to prevent the Sandhivata. Inculcating habit of doing daily massage followed by sufficient exercise may create a society free from Sandhivata.

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