



Review on Lakshan / Rupa (Clinical Features) of Amavata (Rheumatoid Arthritis)

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Abstract:

Amavata as a special disease entity in *Ayurveda* is first mentioned by *Acharya Madhavakar*. *Ama* (biotoxin) and *Vata* (biophysical force or kinetics) are playing an important role in the *samprapti* (pathogenesis) and *lakshan/rupa* (clinical features) of *Amavata*. According to its clinical manifestations and pathogenesis *Amavata* is very closely resemble with the Rheumatoid arthritis. The *lakshan* (clinical features) of *Amavata* is more clearly and specifically described in *Madhavidana*. *Samanya Lakshana* or general clinical features are *Angamarda* (bodyache or malaise), *Aruchi* (anorexia), *Trishna* (thirst), *Alasya* (laziness/lethargy), *Gaurava* (heaviness of body), *Jwara* (fever), *Apaka* (indigestion), *Angashunata* (oedema of deferent parts of body including joints). *Pratyatma Lakshana* or cardinal clinical features of *Amavata* are *Sandhi Shula* (Joint-pain), *Sandhi Shotha* (Joint-swelling), *Sandhi tabdhata* (Stiffness of joint), *Sandhi Sparshasahyata* (Tenderness over joint).

Key words: *Amavata*, Rheumatoid arthritis, *lakshan/ rupa*, clinical features.

Introduction:

Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic, progressive autoimmune arthropathy and characterized by bilateral symmetrical involvement of joints with some systemic clinical manifestations¹. *Acharya Madhavakar* mentioned first the *Amavata* as a special disease entity in *Ayurveda* and where *Ama* (biotoxin) and *Vata*

(biophysical force or kinetics) are taking an important role in the *samprapti* (pathogenesis) of *Amavata*.² *Amavata* is very closely resemble with the Rheumatoid arthritis according to its clinical manifestations and pathogenesis. As per the Ayurvedic concept *Ama* is considered the root cause of the maximum number of diseases. *Ama* and *Vata* play major role in this disease to manifest the *lakshan* (clinical features). The entity *Amavata* and its *lakshan* (clinical features) are available since the period of *Charaka* in different context. The *lakshan* (clinical features) of *Amavata* is more clearly and specifically described in *Madhavidana*.

Ama:

Faulty metabolism in the level of tissue and cell and faulty digestive mechanism at the level of G.I.T. i.e. termed as *Mandagni* (poor digestive capacity). It is mainly responsible for the genesis of *Ama*. The term *Ama* means unripe and partially digested food that is unwholesome to the body³. It is a product due to defect in digestion and or metabolism and it is directly related with the state of *Agni* (digestion or metabolism capacity). Hence it is an important causative factor for the pathogenesis of the most of the diseases and predominant cause of *Amavata*.

Etymology of Ama:

The word *Ama* is derived from the 'Am' *Dhatu* with the suffix 'A' according to *Vachaspathyam*. It means improper or partially digested matter⁴. The word *Ama* is derived as combination of 'Am' *Dhatu* with 'Nich' *Pratyaya* forms the word *Ama* which means the substance subjected to digestion according *Amarkosha* and it damages or it is harmful to the different of *Srotasa* (channel) is known as *Ama*⁵.

Vata or Vayu:

In living human body *Vata* or *Vayu* is the chief functional component and according to its normal or abnormal condition it gives rise to good and bad consequences in the body. All the activities of the living body especially voluntary and involuntary movements are performed under the control of *Vata* dosha. *Vata* dosha is another important pathogenic factor for *Amavata*. In *Amavata*, mainly *sandhishula* (joint pain), *sandhisotha* (joint swelling) and *sandhigraha* (stiffness of joint) lead to the restricted movements of the multiple joints specially wrist and finger joints and patients become crippled gradually due to vitiation of *Vata* with *Ama*. Besides that other functions of *Vata* are also disturbed in *Amavata*.

Etymology of Vata or Vayu :

"*Vati Iti Vayu*" sloka means which has got movement, is known as *Vayu* (*Vachaspathyam*, *Shabdakalpadruma*)⁶. The term 'Vata' is derived from root 'Va *Gatigandhanayoh*' which means to move, to enthuse, to make known and become of according to *Amarkosha*, *Shabdastoma Mahanidhi*.⁷ In different classics it is also referred by synonyms like *Anila*, *Marut*, *Pavana* etc.

Rupa/Lakshana (Clinical features) of Amavata (Rheumatoid arthritis):

Madhavakara, *Bhavamishra*, and others have described the *Rupa/Lakshana* (Clinical features) of *Amavata* (Rheumatoid arthritis) clearly.⁸ It can be classified under following headings:

I. Pratyatma Lakshana (Cardinal Clinical Features):

- (a) *Sandhi Shula* (Joint-pain): The severe joint pain simulating *Vrishchika Damshavata* that means scorpion bite like pain is the most characteristic feature. The most commonly involved joints are the joints of hands, legs, head, ankle, lowback, knee, and hip.⁹
- (b) *Sandhi Shotha* (Joint-swelling): Swelling in to the joint is the result of *Srotorodha* (obstruction in channels) in the joint caused by the accumulation of *Ama* and vitiated *Kapha*.¹⁰

(c) *Sandhi Stabdhatā*(Stiffness of joint): Joint stiffness in *Amavata* patient is caused by the affliction of the joint by *Samavata*.¹¹

(d) *Sandhi Sparshasahyata*(Tenderness over joint): Joint tenderness due to inflammation into joint.

II. *SamanyaLakshana* (General Clinical Features):

- (a) *Angamarda* (bodyache or malaise)
- (b) *Aruchi* (anorexia)
- (c) *Trishna* (thirst)
- (d) *Alasya* (laziness/lethargy)
- (e) *Gaurava* (heaviness of body)
- (f) *Jwara* (fever)
- (g) *Apaka* (indigestion)
- (h) *Angashunata* (Oedema of deferent parts of body including joints)

III. *DoshanubandhaLakshana* (Clinical features according to *Dosha* predominance) :

- (a) *Vatanubandha* - *Ruka* (pain)
- (b) *Pittanubandha*- *Daha* (burning sensation), *Raga* (redness of affected joints)
- (c) *Kaphanubandha*- *Stimita* (lack of mobility), *Guruta* (heaviness), *Kandu* (itching)
- (d) *VataPittanubandha*- *Ruka*(pain), *Daha* (burning sensation), *Raga*(redness of affected joints)
- (e) *VataKaphanubandha* - *Ruka* (pain), *Stimita* (lack of mobility),*Guruta* (heaviness), *Kandu* (itching)
- (f) *KaphaPittanubandha*- *Stimita* (lack of mobility), *Guruta* (heaviness), *Kandu* (itching), *Daha*(burning sensation), *Raga*(redness of affected joints)
- (g) *Sannipataja*- Symptoms for all three doshas

IV. *PravriddhavasthaLakshana* (Clinical features in aggravated condition):

- (a) *Agnidaurbalya* (lack of digestive capacity)
- (b) *Praseka* (excessive salivation)
- (c) *Aruchi* (anorexia)
- (d) *Gaurava* (heaviness of body)
- (e) *Vairasya* (improper taste sensation)
- (f) *Ruja* and *shotha* in *Hasta*, *Pada*, *Shiro*, *Gulpha*, *Trika*, *Janu*, *UruSandhi* (pain and swelling in hands, legs, head, ankle, lowback, knee, hip joints)
- (g) *Vrishchikadamshavatavedana* (scorpion bite like pain)
- (h) *Utsahahani* (lack of enthusiasm)
- (i) *Kukshikathinya* (tightness in abdomen)
- (j) *Kukshishula* (pain in abdomen)
- (k) *Vibandha* or *Vidvibaddhata* (constipation)
- (l) *Antrakujana*(borborygmi)
- (m) *Anaha* (bowel and urine not clear)
- (n) *Chhardi*(vomiting)
- (o) *Hridgraha*(pain in precordial region):
- (p) *Jadyata*(less physical activity or stiffness of the body or immobility)
- (q) *Bhrama*(vertigo): It is due to vitiation of *vayu*, *pitta* and *raja*.
- (r) *Murchcha* (lack of sensory & motor functions):
- (s) *Nidra-viparyaya* (disturbed sleep):
- (t) *Daha*(burning sensation) It is due to vitiation of *Pitta*

(u) *Bahumutrata*(polyuria)

Criteria to Diagnose Rheumatoid Arthritis:

As per American Rheumatism Association (1988) the following criteria has been laid down¹²:

- 1) Morning stiffness
 - 2) Arthritis of three or more joints areas
 - 3) Arthritis of hand joints
 - 4) Symmetrical arthritis
 - 5) Rheumatoid nodules
 - 6) Rheumatoid factors
 - 7) Radiological changes
- a) Here first four criteria should be present for 6 weeks or more.
b) Diagnosis of Rheumatoid Arthritis is made with four or more criteria.

Discussion:

Amavata has been nomenclature on the basis of two predominant pathological factors i.e. *Ama* and *Vata* having their important role in *Nidana* (etiology), *Rupa/Lakshan* (clinical features) and *Chikitsa* (treatment). Digestive mechanism at the level of G.I.T. and metabolism in the tissue and cellular level are hampered due to *Mandagni* and it is largely responsible for the formation of *Ama*. Vitiating of *Vata* is another important causative factor for *Amavata*. Both *Ama* and *Vata* are important responsible factors for manifestation of *Rupa/Lakshan* (clinical features) of *Amavata*. According to clinical manifestation and pathogenesis *Amavata* is more similar to Rheumatoid arthritis. *Pratyatma Lakshana* or cardinal clinical features of *Amavata* are *Sandhi Shula*(Joint-pain), *SandhiShotha*(Joint-swelling), *Sandhi Stabdhatta*(Stiffness of joint), *Sandhi Sparshasahyata*(Tenderness over joint). These cardinal features due to affection of joints mainly with *Ama* and vitiated *vatadosha*. *Samanya Lakshana* or general clinical features of *Amavata* are *Angamarda* (bodyache or malaise), *Aruchi*(anorexia), *Trishna* (thirst), *Alasya* (laziness/lethargy), *Gaurava* (heaviness of body), *Jwara* (fever), *Apaka* (indigestion), *Angashunata* (Oedema of deferent parts of body including joints). *Angamarda* is occurred due to vitiation of *rasadhatu* and *vyanvayu* with *ama*. *Aruchi* is due to vitiation of *bodhakkapha* with *ama*. *Trishna* is manifested due to *udakvahasrotodusti* with *ama*. *Alasya* is occurred due to aggravation of *tama* and vitiated *kapha* with *ama*. *Gaurava* is occurred due to vitiation of *kapha*.

Jwara is manifested due to *rasadusti* with *ama*. *Apaka* is due to *mandagni* and *Angashunata* is occurred due to *srotorodha* with *ama* and *vimarggaman* of vitiated *vayu*, *pitta*, *rakta* and *kapha*.

According to *Doshanubandha* (*Dosha* predominance) *Lakshana/Rupa*(clinical features)of *Amavata* are manifested as *Vatanubandha*, *Pittanubandha*, *Kaphanubandha*, *Vata Pittanubandha*, *VataKaphanubandha*, *Kapha Pittanubandha* and *Sannipataja*. *Pravriddhavastha Lakshana* (Clinical features in aggravated condition) of *Amavata* are *Agnidaurbalya* (lack of digestive capacity), *Praseka* (excessive salivation), *Aruchi* (anorexia), *Gaurava* (heaviness of body), *Vairasya* (improper taste sensation), *Ruja* and *shotha* in *Hasta*, *Pada*, *Shiro*, *Gulpha*, *Trika*, *Janu*, *UruSandhi* (pain and swelling in hands, legs, head, ankle, lowback, knee, hip joints), *Vrishchikadamshavatavedana* (scorpion bite like pain), *Utsahahani* (lack of enthusiasm), *Kukshikathinya* (tightness in abdomen), *Kukshishula* (pain in abdomen), *Vibandha* or *Vidvibaddhatta* (constipation), *Antrakujana*(borborygmi), *Anaha* (bowel and urine not clear), *Chhardi*(vomiting), *Hridgraha*(pain in precordial region), *Jadyata* (less physical activity or stiffness of the body or immobility), *Bhrama*(vertigo), *Murchcha* (lack of sensory & motor functions), *Nidra-viparyaya* (disturbed sleep), *Daha*(burning sensation), *Bahumutrata*(polyuria). *Agnidaurbalya* is occurred due to *mandagni*, *Praseka* is due to *Rasavaha* and *UdakavahaSrotodushti* with *ama*. *Aruchi* is occurred due to vitiation of *bodhakkapha* with *ama*. *Gaurava* is manifested due to vitiation of *kapha* with *ama*. *Vairasya* is

due to *samarasa* and vitiated *bodhakaKapha* with *ama.Ruja* and *Shotha* in *Hasta, Pada, Shiro, Gulpha, Trika, Janu, UruSandhi* is occurred due to vitiation of *vayu, kapha* and *srotorodha* with *ama*. *Vrishchikadamshavatavedana* is occurred due to presence of *ama* at the site of pain. *Utsahahaniis* due to insufficient nutrition of *dhatu* and decrease of *raja*. *Kukshikathinya* is due to vitiated *samana* and *apanavayu* along with the *ama*. *Kukshishula* is occurred due to *srotorodhawithama* causes obstruction to normal movement of vitiated *samana* and *apanavayu*. *Vibandha or Vidvibaddhatais* due to vitiation of *apanavaya*. *Antrakujana* is due to movement of vitiated *vaya* in the intestine. *Anahais* manifested due to stagnation of vitiated *vayu* in to abdomen. *Chhardiis* due to continuous formation of *dosha* leading to excitation of *Amashaya* with vitiated *vayu*. *Hridgrahais* occurred due to *rasavahasrotodushti* and vitiation of *vayu* and *avalambakakapha*. *Jadyata* is due to *ama* and vitiation of *vyanvayu*. *Bhramais* manifested due to vitiation of *vayu, pitta* and *raja*. *Murchcha* is due to vitiation of *vatadidoshas* with *ama* and so functions of *indriyas* are disturbed. *Nidra-viparyaya* is occurred due to vitiation of *vayu and kapha*. *Dahais* due to vitiation of *Pitta*. *Bahumutrata* occurs to excrete excess *kleda* from the body and *kleda* (waste material) is increased in to body in *Amavata*.

Conclusion:

Ama (biotoxin) and *Vata* (biophysical force or kinetics) both are important causative factors for *samprapti* (pathogenesis) and *lakshan/rupa* (clinical features) of *Amavata* (Rheumatoid arthritis). On the basis of clinical features and pathogenesis *Amavata* is more similar to Rheumatoid arthritis. *Pratyatma Lakshana* or cardinal clinical features of *Amavata* are *Sandhi Shula* (Joint-pain), *SandhiShotha* (Joint-swelling), *SandhiStabdhata* (Stiffness of joint), *SandhiSparshasahyata* (Tenderness over joint).

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