



Review Article

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CONCEPT OF *HRIDROGA*

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Abstract

Hridroga is a one of *Marma*, which is the seat of many vital activities. According to *Ayurveda*, all heart diseases come under the broad classification of *Hridroga*. In view of the increasing incidence of cardiac disorders in the present times this aspect assumes added importance. In comparison to modern pathology and aetiology, *Ayurvedic* concept of *Hridroga* is different and difficult to understand, but *Ayurvedic* management of *Hridroga* is much effective and preventive. Among the five types of *Hridroga* described, in *Vatika Hridroga Ayurveda* seems to have conceived the disease entity that comes under Ischemic Heart Disease. It seems that a few of the presenting features based on this Acute/important/predominant nature have been described *Vatika Shotha* and *Shwasa*. If there is pain dominating heart disease is conceived as *Hridroga*. When oedema is found to be the main presenting feature it is kept under *Vatikashotha* and when Dyspnoea is the main symptom it is described as *Shwasa*.

Introduction

Ayurveda, the art of living and the science of life is serving the man kind since antiquity. Its origin dates back to *Veda* where it is probably available in the form of religious preaching. A major portion of *Ayurveda* is devoted to teach the human personnel, his way of life, behaviour in particular, both personal and social. As *Charaka* rightly points out *Ayurveda* seeks to quench / satisfy three basic needs of human beings: *Pranaishana* (Desire to live), *Dhanaishana* (Desire to earn) and *Paralokaishana* (Desire to perform virtuous acts to achieve emancipation). However, *Ayurveda* extends itself to accommodate prevention and cure of the diseases which are the major impediments to health, wellbeing and long life. The present write up is aimed exactly at that end endeavors to provide an insight into the concept of Hridroga based on the classical references and allied modern literature.

HRIDAYA

“HRI” means *Harati* (to receive from), “DA” means *Dadati* (to give), and “YA” means *Yagati* (to control).

All these functions are due to *Vayu*, specially *Prana* and *Vyanavayu*. *Prakrutvatadosha* is responsible for, well directed *Gati*, due to *Chalguna* of *Vata*. Also, *Hridaya* is *Sthana* of *Sadhak Pitta*, *Avalambakkapha*, *Oja* and *Mana*.

HRIDROGA

The terms *Hridyata*, *Hridroga*, *Hridayamaya* and *Hridaya Sula* have been used in *Vedas*. *Hridroga* existed among the human beings since the prehistoric times. Identity of *Hridroga* was established from the *Vedic* period.

Definition of heart diseases, aetiology, pathogenesis and management has been described in *Charak Samhita*. The earliest detailed description of *Hridroga* is available in *Charaka Samhita* followed by *Sushruta*. According to *Sushruta* any condition which produces disturbances in the heart is called as *Hridroga*. *Sushruta* has devoted a separate chapter to describe *Hridroga* (Ut. Ta. 42) and *Vagbhata* (As. Hri. Ni-5 and ci-6).

Besides, *Hritshoola* has been described separately in the 42nd chapter of *Uttara Tantra* of *Sushruta Samhita* entitled *Gulma Pratishedadyaya*. Various types of acute pains have

been described which occur either as complications of *Gulma* or appear independently. *Hridaya* is the one of the places for *Gulma* also similarly the diseases/syndromes marked by severe pain appear to have been described under *Hritshula*.

Acharya Jejjat interprets the word *Badha* as different characteristic of pain i.e. *NavavidhaPeeda*. Pain is predominant symptom of *Hridroga*.

Nidana

The Etiological factors of *Hridroga*, according to *Ayurveda*, as in the case of any other disease revolve around the type as well as mode of food intake and the way of living one's life. The following are three categories of factors:

- 1) *Aharaj* Dietetic factors *Usna, Guru, Kashaya, Tiktasevana, Advasana*
- 2) *Viharaj* Somatic factors *Shrama, Vegadharana, Abhigata, Ativirechana*
- 3) *Manasika* Psychological factors *Chinta, Bhava, Trasa, Mada*

Vagbhata states that the etiological factors of *Hridroga* are similar to that of *Gulma*.

Modern Medicine on the other hand, based on clinical and experimental evidence puts the blame on food containing large amounts of saturated fat, and cholesterol and cigarette smoking and stress and strains of modern sophisticated life. Ayurvedic classics refer to *Guru aahara*, but do not mention *Snigdhaahara* (high fat diet) among the causative factors. Instead, in the management, number of *Ghee* preparations is recommended.

Samprapti

"Dushayitarasamdoshahvigunahridayamgatahridibadamprakurvanti hridorgangaprakakshate" (Su. Ut. 43/4).

Ayurvedic texts distinctly explain the etiological factor of *Hridroga*. In the presence of the etiological factors the *doshas* get vitiated and get accumulated in *Hridaya*. Then vitiate *Rasa*, *Hridaya* being the seat of *Rasa*, and produce *Hridroga*. As *Hridaya* is the seat of *Rasa* it would be logical to accept that the vitiation of *Rasa* takes place after the vitiated *Doshas* reach *Hridaya*. But an interpretation like *"VigunaKupitaDoshahRasamDushayitvaHridayamGatah"* is also possible.

Modern science proves that most of causes mentioned by *Acharya Charaka* have direct or indirect role in pathogenesis of I.H.D. Precipitation of cardiac symptoms including Myocardial Infarction are very much under the influence of psychological stress.

Common symptoms of Hridroga:

General symptoms of *Hridroga* are mentioned by the *Charaka*. In the 26th chapter of *chikitsasthana*

“*VaivarnyamurchaJwaraKasaHikkaShwasasyavairasya Trisha pramohahChardhihKaphotkleshaRujoaruciscahridrogajahSyuhVividhahThathonye*”(ch.ci. 26/78)

- ***Murccha*** – fainting
- ***Vaivarnya***– discolouration of skin
- ***Jwara*** – fever
- ***Kasa*** – cough
- ***Hikka*** – hiccup
- ***Shvasa*** – Asthma
- ***Aasyavairasya***– bad taste in the mouth
- ***Trshna*** – morbid thirst
- ***Pramoha*** – unconsciousness
- ***Chardi***– vomiting
- ***Kapha utklesha***– Nausea
- ***Ruja*** – pain
- ***Aruchi*** – anorexia.

Bheda – Lakshna

Five types of *Hridrogas* - *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, *Sannipataka* and *Krimi*ja have been described by *Charaka* and *Vagbhata*. *Sushruta* has omitted *Tridoshaja* variety.

Chakrapani has said that the usage '*Hridrogaja*' refers to the signs and symptoms that appear in a person who has already been afflicted by the disease. Hence, he considers them as complications of *Hridroga*.

Vataja Hridroga

Hrutshunya bhava – Feeling of emptiness in the heart region,

Hrutdrava – tachycardia,

Sosha – atrophy of the cardiac muscles,

Bheda – pricking pain,

HrutStambha – heart- block and

Sammoha – unconsciousness

A keen observation uncovers the similarity of the symptoms of *Vataja Hridroga* with that of Ischemic Heart Disease known in modern medicine.

'Angina' is defined as an acute pain of cardiac origin related to inadequate blood supply. Felt over the left of chest or more commonly in the retrosternal region it can radiate to the neck, shoulders and even to the tip of the fingers.

In myocardial infarction (MI) on the other hand the pain is similar to Anginal pain but symbolizes the blockage of the blood vessels supplying to certain portion of the heart muscle. Infarction may be due to sudden occlusion or may follow simple ischemia.

The *Ayurvedic* view point on the location (*Hridistah, Hridibada*) and nature (*Bhojanecatyarthavedana, SulyateAtyartarm, Nirmatyate, Ayamyate*, etc) of pain are quite in accordance with the description of Angina available in texts of modern medicine. The general symptoms given in *Charaka Samhita* (*Varivarnya* etc) are quite similar with the symptoms of myocardial infarction.

Pittaja Hridroga

Jwara – fever

Daha- burning sensation

Trishna – excessive thirst

Murchha- unconsciousness

Santrasa – feeling of distress

Peetatah- yellow colour

Kaphaja Hridroga

Stabdham – bradycardia

Guru syatstimitam – heaviness and timidity of the heart,

Praseka – excessive salivation,

Jwara – fever,

Kasa – cough and

Santrasa – drowsiness

Sannipataja and Krimija Hridroga

Sushruta does not include *Sannipataja* among the four types he has described. *Charaka* also keeps *Krimija* as a complication of *Sannipataja* variety. While *Sannipataja* is stated to include only combined symptomatology, *Krimija* is said to have a different set of signs and symptoms. The pathogenesis is also separately explained.

It is said that the patient afflicted with *Krimija Hridroga*, if consume in excess, *Tila*, *Kshira* and *Guda*, ‘*Granthi*’ would be formed where colonization of *Krimija* would take place. The condition is said to have severe pain associated with pruritis. *Aruchi*, *Hrillasa*, *Syavanetrata*, *Tamahpravesha* are some associated symptoms.

Cardiac enlargement occurs in severe anaemia caused by *Anchylostoma*. Symptoms like severe pain in the chest, Nausea, Salivation (*Hrillasa*) Anorexia (*Aruchi*) confusion (*Tamahpravesha*) occur. Haemic murmur can also be heard. But the formation of ‘*Granthi*’ can hardly be explained. *Syavanetra* can lead to the confusion.

However, it is that the conceived the idea of *Krimi* producing a *Hridroga*. *Madhavakara*’s statement that *Krimiroga* is a *Nidanarthakararoga* to *Hridroga* only substantiates this view. Severe anemia though not included among the diseases of the heart is certainly among the causes of myocardial infarction.

Management

The management treatment according to *Gulma, Anatha, Kasa, Shwasa, Pandu* and *Halemaka* is advised besides the general therapeutic procedures. .

Vagbhata's statement that the etiological factors of *Hridroga* are similar to that of *Gulma* contributes only to the confusion. The fact that both are *Vatapradhana* only lends added support to this view. It is clear that under the disease entity named *Hridroga*.

Arjuna the drug mentioned by later *Ayurvedists* (like *Bhavamishra* etc.) for *Hridroga* has been found useful only in Myocardial ischaemia among the diseases of the heart.

Treatment of Hridroga

Acharya Charaka mentioned use of *SiddhaTaila* (oils), *Ghrita* (ghee), *Kwatha* (decoctions), *Churna* (powder), *Leha Kalpana* (semisolid preparations) along with *Snehana* (oleation), *Swedana*, *Vamana* (emetic therapy), *Virechana* (purgation therapy) and *Rasayan* therapy (rejuvenation therapy) in the management of *Hridroga*.

Most of the *Yogas* (therapeutic formulations) used in the clinical trials for treatment of *Hridroga* contains *Rasna* (*Pluchea lanceolata* DC.), *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula* Retz.), *Pippli* (*Piper longum* Linn.), *Shati* (*Hedychium spicatum* Ham-ex-Smith), *Pushkarmula* (*Inularacemosa* Hook. f.), *Matulunga* (*Citrus medica* L. var. *limonum*), *Arjuna* (*Terminalia arjuna* Roxb.), *Jaharamohara* (serpentine), *Guggulu* (*Commiphoramukul*), *Hingu* (*Ferula narthex*) and *Saindhava* (rock salt). These drugs commonly possess properties like *Vatahara*, *Strotoshodhana* (purification of microchannels), *Vedanastpana* (analgesic), *Anulomana* (Aperients a purging medicine; stimulates evacuation of the bowels), *Balya* (provide strength) and *Hridya* (cardiotonic).

Since the *Hridaya* is the main seat of *Kapha* the primary aim is to do *Langhana* (fasting) therapy followed by alleviation of all three *Doshas* on basis of their predominance.

Also *Panchakarma* modalities like *Vamana* (emetic therapy), *Virechana* (purgation therapy) and *Basti* (medicated enema therapy) is also indicated by *Acharya Sushruta*, *Acharya Charaka* emphasises on *Virechana karma* based on the various kinds of pain

occurring during the different stages of digestion. But special care should be taken while administering these *Panchakarma* therapies to avoid complications.

Some *Ayurvedic* formulations used in *Hridroga* are as follows:-

- *Rasa* - *Hridyarnavras*, *Hridyeshwarras*, *Vishveshwarras*, *Chintamaniras*, *Nagarjunaabhrras*, *Akikipishti/ bhasma*, *Mukta pishti*, *Pravalpishti*.
- *Vati* - *Prabhakar vati*, *Shankar vati*, *Hridroga vati*
- *Churna* - *Pushkarmulachurna*, *Arjuna churna*
- *Kwatha* - *ShunthiKwatha*, *PushkaradiKwatha*, *PathyadiKwatha*, *Parthaarishta*
- *Ghrita* - *ShvadanshtradiGhrita*, *TriushnadiGhrita*, *Arjuna Ghrita*, *BaladhyaGhrita*, *PunarnavaGhrita*

Conclusion

To conclude *Ayurvedic* concept of *Hridroga* is quite primitive as compared to modern medicine and it does not extend beyond Ischemic Heart Disease and to some extent congestive Heart Failure. In modern parallels I.H.D is the most common painful cardiac condition. While the description of *Vatika Hridroga* is clearly in accordance with that of Ischemic Heart Disease, combined symptomatology of *VatikaShotha* and *Shwasa* give a vague picture of congestive Heart Failure.

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