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Review on the disease *Shwasa* and its management in Ayurvedic literature

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ABSTRACT

Tamaka Shwasa is a very broad term which includes many more diseases where dyspnoea is predominant symptom. But still we can correlate Bronchial Asthma to *Tamaka Shwasa*, because out of the remaining four, three are incurable and the fourth one is *Kshudra Shwasa* developed due excessive labour or taking excessive *Ruksh Ahara* and which is easily curable. In its early onset it is easily curable but in chronic cases it is difficult to treat. Respiration is the evident feature of life which is carried out by *Prana Vayu*. This sole sign of life is affected in this disease, *Tamaka Shwasa*, causing an impediment to the respiratory function. Ayurveda is the best way to effectively and safely manage the condition without inducing any drug dependency where various *Shodhana* procedures and use of internal medication not only detoxifies the body but also provides nutrition and increases the elasticity of lung tissue and develops natural immunity of the body.

Key words: *Shwasa, Tamaka Shwasa, Bronchial Asthma.*

INTRODUCTION

Tamaka Shwasa^[1] is a disease in which patient experience severe symptoms of respiratory distress with extreme weakness, fatigue and mental glooming. The name of *Tamaka Shwasa* is due to the fact that, the symptoms or attack of this disease precipitates at night and also during the time of attack, the breathing difficulty is so severe that patient feels entering into the darkness (*Tama Pravesh*). Both the *Vata* and *Kapha*^[2] have been considered to be the chief *Doshas* involved in the pathogenesis of *Tamaka Shwasa*. The

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current management of *Tamaka Shwasa* (bronchial asthma) by modern medicine is only providing short term symptomatic relief but does not provide any long-term relief to the patient. On the other hand, prolonged term symptomatic relief but does not provide any long-term relief. Proper breathing is essential for good health. Breathing brings both oxygen and the vitality to every cell in the body. Shortness of breath, cough are those common health complains which everyone experience throughout their life with different magnitude. Such complains are found in every age group. In Ayurvedic text, the clinical entity described with cardinal feature of difficulty in breathing is *Shwasa Roga*. There are five types of *Shwasa Roga* described in Ayurveda. *Tamaka Shwasa*^[3] is one of the types of *Shwasa*.

Pachakarma procedures and use of internal medication detoxifies the body, provides nutrition and increases the elasticity of lung tissue. It also develops natural immunity of the body thus decreasing episodic recurrence of the disease.

SHWASA

It is a condition marked by recurrent attacks of paroxysmal dyspnoea, with wheezing, due to

spasmodic contraction of bronchi, inflammation or allergy. It is called as *Shwasa* a condition where number of respirations per minute increases and there is difficulty in respiration.

Etiology

Long continued inhalation of dust, poisonous smoke, dry wind, pollens, chemical dyes, colours, petrol fumes, working in a very cold and damp atmosphere, can result in asthma, dry cold and heavy food like cheese, stale meat fermented foods, aerated cold drinks, fish and other sea foods can cause asthma.

Various debilitating diseases like heart disease kidney disease brain disease may be causative factors. Depletion of the body's resource from excessive purification by purificatory procedures and severe weakness due to loss of plasma, blood and *Ojus* also result in asthma.

Pathogenesis

Vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha*, low digestive fire resulting in the production of *Ama*^[4] and weakness of respiratory channel are the main factors. The disease originates in stomach and manifests in the respiratory channel. *Prana* and *Udana* types of *Vata* are vitiated.

Aggravated *Vata* enters weak *Pranavaha Srotas* and dislodges *Avalambaka Kapha* from there. Hence bronchioles become very hard and rough and get constricted.

At the same time if there is excess formation of *Kapha* and *Ama* in intestines, *Avalambaka Kapha* also becomes slimy and sticky. This causes obstruction in the *Pranavaha Srotas* and resulting into *Shwasa*.

Types

Ayurveda has classified this disease into 5 types;

1. *Tamaka Shwasa*
2. *Urdhwa Shwasa*
3. *Chinna Shwasa*
4. *Maha Shwasa*
5. *Kshudra Shwasa*

Of these types *Tamaka* can be labelled as bronchial asthma, while *Maha*, *China* and *Urdhwa* are different types of dyspnoea that are complications of other

diseases. *Kshudra* is a minor type due to over eating and drinking.

Symptoms

Tamaka Shwasa

1. Stage of attack (*Vegavastha*)

When the attack starts the person gasps for breath, accompanied by a wheezing sound with cough, as the expiration becomes longer than the inspiration. During the attack, the respiratory rate increases from normal 18 to 20 per minute to 40 to 50 per minute. The respiration is very difficult and there is sensation of suffocation in the chest. The patients due to severe paroxysm faints, coughs and brings out small sputum with difficulty. He suffers from hoarseness of voice and cannot speak easily. He feels comfortable while sitting and in learning front posture. There is perspiration on the forehead with dry mouth and severe pain in the chest and throat.

2. *Avegavastha*

When the attack subsides, there is slight cough and pain in the chest and abdomen. Weakness and breathlessness also remain after the acute attack. If this condition is associated with fever and unconsciousness it is known as *Pratamaka*, while if it is associated with darkness in front of the eyes and subsides quickly by cold things, is called as *Santamaka*.

Maha Shwasa, Urdhwa Shwasa, Chinna Shwasa^[5]

These are very serious conditions and they often develop as the complication of some other disease.

In *Maha Shwasa* there is obstruction to the air passage and hence loud sound can be heard when the patient is breathing. He loses all sorts of knowledge and has rolling eyes with abnormal face and eyes. There is retention of urine and faeces. This is fatal condition.

In *Urdhwa Shwasa* the patient has difficulty in breathing, his air passages are full of mucous and there is pain in the chest with dry mouth and the patient becomes restless. He faints often and becomes unconscious and finally dies.

In *Chinna Shwasa* the respiration is with difficulty and there is pain in all vital parts of the body. There is burning sensation in pelvis, eyes rolling, perspiration, redness in eyes, dryness in mouth and delirium.

Treatment

1. *Nidana Parivarjana*
2. *Snehana* and *Swedana*
3. *Vamana Karma*
4. *Dhoomapana*
5. *Nasya Prayoga*

Other treatment principles

Treatment aiming towards single *Dosha* must not be performed i.e., *Vatakaraka*, *Kapha Nashaka* or *Vatashamaka* and *Kaphakaraka*. However in indispensable condition to implement one amongst the above four, it is mostly superior to go for *Vatashamaka Upakrama*. In case of *Vatanubandhi Shwasa*, the *Ghrita* prepared with *Mamsa* of *Jangala Prani* like *Shasha*, *Rakta* of *Shalaka* and has to be administered with *Pippali Churna*.

In case of *Vata-Pittanubandhi Shwasa*, *Shali Odana* should be given followed by this *Suvarchala Swarasa* or *Trikatu* along with *Dugdha* or *Ghrita* has to be administered as *Anupana*. In case of *Kapha Pittanubandha*, *Shirisha Pushpa Swarasa* or *Saptaparna Pushpa* or *Patra Swarasa* mixed with *Pippali Churna* and *Madhu* has to be administered. When *Shwasa* is associated with symptoms such as *Swara Ksheena*, *Atisaara*, *Raktapitta* and *Daha*, medicaments possessing *Madhura Rasa*, *Sheeta Virya* and *Snigdha* qualities should be adopted. In these patients *Swedana* is contraindicated. If at all required, *Swedana* should be performed over *Uras* and *Kantha Pradesha* using *Koshna Sneha (Parisheka)*.

In *Shwasa* which is associated with *Nava Jwara* or *Amadosha* one should go for *Ruksha Sweda* and *Langhana* or *Vamana* with salt water should be performed.

In acute attack, oleation and sudation should always be performed. For external oleation, apply warm

mixture of sesame oil with rock salt to the chest. For local sudation with the vapour coming out of the tube.

In dry type of asthmatic attack due to *Vata* vitiation the patient should be asked to take 5ml warm water or honey repeatedly. Some important herbs are *Kantkari*, *Vasa*, *Talispatra* etc.

In *Shwasa* predominant with *Kapha Dosha*;

- *Rasa Sindoor*
- *Puranchandra Rasa*
- *Shwasa Chintamani Rasa*
- *Swarna Bhupati Rasa*.

Rasayana treatment (Apunarbhava Chikitsa)

To avoid recurrence of the disease, and to give strength to the respiratory channel, proper rejuvenative treatment is useful.

Vata Type

A special type of rejuvenating method called unit increase and unit decrease should be used. This is known as *Vardhamana Rasayana*.

Kapha Type

Use of black pepper unit increase and unit decrease method.

Use of mixture of *Talisadi* powder 1 gm + mica oxide 10 mg with deer horn oxide 10 mg twice a day for one month to prevent recurrence. Avoid cold and refrigerated foods and dairy, fried substance, too sweet and too salty substance.

Pathya

Virechana, *Swedana*, *Dhumapana*, *Prachrdana*, *Daha Karma* (cauterization) with *Pradepta Louha* - in *Vaksha Pradesha* over both the *Parshwa*, on middle fingers of hands and on *Kantha Kupa*. *Shuka Dhanya*, *Purana Shashitka Shaali* and *Rakta Shaali*, *Yava (Hordeum vulgare)* and *Godhuma (Triticum aestivum)*, *Shami Dhanya*, *Kulatha (Dolichus biflorus)*, *Mamsa of Shasha*, *Hibhuka*, *Tittira*, *Lava*, *Daksha*, *Shuka*, *Dhanwa Mruga* and *Dwija*. *Shakha Varga - Vastuka (Chenopodium album)*, *Tanduliyaka (Amaranthus*

tricolor), *Patola* (*Trichosanthes cucumerina*), *Vartaka* (*Solanum melongena*) and *Jeevanti* (*Leptidenia reticulata*). *Phala Varga* - *Draksha* (*Vitis vinifera*), *Bimbi Phala* (*Coccinia indica*) and *Matulunga* (*Citrus deumana*), *Harita Varga* - *Lashuna* (*Allium sativum*), *Mulaka* (*Raphanthes sativus*) and *Jambira* (*Citrus medica*). *Madhya Varga* - *Sura* (a type of wine). *Gorasa Varga* - *Purana Sarpi*, *Aja* - *Ksheera* and *Sarpi*. *Kanthakari* (*Solanum xanthocarpum*), *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Sukshma Ela* (*Elataria cardamomum*), *Pushkaramula* (*Innula racemosa*), *Trikatu*, *Ushna Jala*, *Gomutra*.

Apathya

Kriya Karma Nasya, *Basti* and *Raktasrava Ahara Masha* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), *Nishpava* (*Vigna unguiculata*), *Sarshapa* (*Brassica juncea*), *Kanda*, *Anupa Mamsa*, *Matsya*, *Ahara* which is *Shleshmakari*, *Tailabhrushta*, *Vidhahi Bhojana*, *Purvavata Annapaana*, *Mesha* - *Ksheera* and *Sarpi*, *Dushtambu*, *Annapaana* which are *Ruksha*, *Sheetala* and *Guru Vihara Vegadhara* of *Mutra*, *Udgara*, *Chardi*, *Trushna* and *Kasa*, *Renava* (dust), *Surya Pada*, *Adhwagamana*, *Bharagamana*, *Gramyadharma*, *Purva Vata Sevana* and *Shrama*.

DISCUSSION

It is evident that types of *Shwasa Roga* in Ayurveda have been described on observing the breathing pattern, pathological changes and clinical features. On this ground, *Tamaka Shwasa* can be nearly corresponds with Bronchial Asthma. *Ghurghurshabda*, *Kanthodhwansa*, *Parshvashoola*, *Meghambushita Pragvatah* *Shleshmachabhivardhate*, *Slesmani Vimokshante Mahuratum Sukham* and *Vishushkashyate* are cardinal features found in Bronchial asthma. *Pinasa* (coryza or allergic rhinitis) is usually found as an associated feature with Bronchial asthma. Clinical features like *Pramoha*, *Lalata Sweda*, *Muhuschiva Avadhmyate*, *Bhrusum Artiman* are related to acute exacerbation of bronchial asthma. *Pratamaka Shwasa* is triggered by environmental allergens and seasonal variation. On the basis of disease pattern, *Pratamaka Shwasa* corresponds to

allergic asthma with super added seasonal viral or bacterial infection. Besides this, *Santamaka Shwasa* is said to be aggravated by *Tama* or darkness or during night.

CONCLUSION

Dyspnoea or difficulty in breathing due to respiratory diseases is related to *Shwasa Roga*. It is evident that *Tamaka Shwasa* is a disease of respiratory tract. Formation of *Ama* plays an important role in the pathology of *Tamaka Shwasa*. Along with *Pranavaha Srotas*, *Udakavaha* and *Annavaha Srotas* are also involved in the pathogenesis of *Tamaka Shwasa*. On the clinical grounds, *Tamaka Shwasa* very much corresponds to a disease known as Bronchial Asthma.

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