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A COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF *MAMSAGATA VATA* WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FIBROMYALGIA: AN *AYURVEDIC* PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Fibromyalgia is a chronic pain condition characterized by diffuse musculoskeletal discomfort, fatigue, irregular sleep, and cognitive impairment. In *Ayurveda*, this clinical presentation is most closely associated with *Maṃsagata Vata (Maṃsasrita Vata)*, where vitiated *Vata* localizes in the *Maṃsa Dhatu* (muscle tissue). *Ayurvedic* treatment modalities, such as dietary and lifestyle management, *Shaman Chikitsa*, and *Panchkarma* have shown potential for managing symptoms effectively by pacifying *Vata* and nourishing *Dhatus*. Modern medicine produces symptomatic relief, but a definitive cure is remaining temporary. The clinical similarity suggests that *Ayurvedic* principles may provide valuable insights into the management of fibromyalgia.

KEYWORDS: Fibromyalgia, *Maṃsagata Vata*, *Mamsa Dhatu*, *Ayurveda*, *Panchkarma*, *Rasyana*.

INTRODUCTION

In modern medicine, Fibromyalgia has been defined as a central sensitization syndrome or pain syndrome. It is characterized by widespread chronic muscular pain, fatigue, and disturbed sleep along with cognitive dysfunction. Despite significant biomedical research, its exact aetiology is still unknown, which makes diagnosis and management difficult. Although fibromyalgia may occur at any age, including adolescence, but it is more common as people age, increasing at 7% in women over 70. There is a major female predominance of about 10:1. Psychosocial distress can be caused by several life events, such as marital disharmony, alcoholism in the family, injury or assault, low income, and self-reported abuse of children are risk factors.[1] The condition has been recorded across a wide range of racial and cultural groups. Conventional treatments provide symptomatic relief but rarely address the underlying cause or improve the quality of life. On the other side, *Maṃsagata Vata* refers to a specific condition wherein *Vata Dosha* is vitiated and localizes within *Maṃsa Dhatu* (muscular tissue)[2], develops symptoms similar to fibromyalgia, such as stiffness, pain, weakness, and difficulty in movement. The *Ayurvedic* understanding attributes the pathophysiology to *Vata* vitiation, often aggravated by an unhealthy lifestyle, diet, and mental stress. A comparative analysis was conducted by mapping pathophysiological and clinical resemblances between fibromyalgia and *Maṃsagata Vata*, which proposes a holistic Ayurvedic diagnostic and therapeutic framework. This research provides a qualitative review based on classical *Ayurvedic* texts, as well as current biomedical literature and diagnostic criteria, including the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) guidelines for the diagnosis of fibromyalgia. A comparative review of both conditions indicates significant overlaps, supporting the study of fibromyalgia through an *Ayurvedic* perspective.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To emphasize and discuss the concept of *Mamsagata Vata* with special reference to fibromyalgia, considering the available ancient literature.
2. An elaborate study on *Mamsagata Vata* with special reference to fibromyalgia to make it more accessible in making the diagnosis of the disease and, thus the applying of treatment principles in the right direction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

References are compiled from *Ayurvedic* classics along with their available commentaries and contemporary literature, and then analysed to develop appropriate perspectives to meet the aim of this research. Especially *Charak* and other *Samhita Grantha*, modern medical textbooks, scientific publication, and research papers.

AYURVEDIC CONCEPT OF *MAṂSAGATA VATA*

Vata, one of the *Tridoṣhas*, governs all movements in the body and mind. When vitiated, it leads to a group of

disorders called as *Vata-Vyadhi*. *Mamsagata Vata* is one among the 80 types of *Vata-Vyadhi* described in classical texts.[2] *Maṃsagata Vata* is defined as a condition in which vitiated *Vata Dosha* enters and localizes in the *Maṃsa Dhatu*, leading to multiple clinical symptoms.[3]

"गुर्वङ्गं तुद्यतेऽत्यर्थं दण्डमुष्टिहतं यथा । सरुक् श्रमितमत्यर्थं ……" (Madhava Nidana 22/17)

***Nidana* (Etiological Factors):** *Ayurveda* suggest that, *Maṃsagata Vata* is caused by ailments that exacerbate *Vata* and affect muscle tissue. These include the excessive consumption of *Ruksha* (dry), *Sheeta* (cold), and *Laghu* (light) food; *Ativyayama* (excessive exertion)**;** *Vegadharana* (suppressing natural urges)**;** *Manasika Nidana* (mental stress and anxiety).[4] *Maṃsagata Vata* is classified as *Vata Nanatmaja Vyadhi*. Therefore, the common aggravating factors correlated with *Vatavyadhi* could be relevant for understanding the occurrence of *Maṃsagata Vata*.

***Samprapti* (Pathogenesis)**

The *Samprapti* of *Vatavyadhi* can occur in two ways. When the *Vata* vitiation develops due to *Dhatukshaya* or *Margavarodha*, then it results in *Vatavyadhi.*[5] *Nidana Sevana* aggravates *Vata Dosha*. Its vitiated form accumulates in the *Maṃsa Dhatu* (muscular tissue), leading to obstruction of *Srotas*. As a result, *Vata* loses its normal function (*Gati*), which causes stiffness (*Stambha*), heaviness (*Gaurava*), pain (Ruja), and loss of function (*Karma-Hani*).[2,3]

Table No.1: Flow chart for *Samprapti* of *Maṃsagata Vata.*

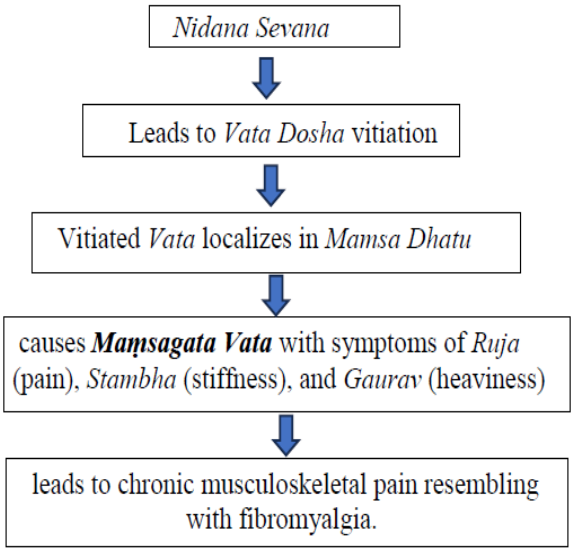

Table No. 2: Samprapti Ghataka of Maṃsagata Vata.

Dosha:	*Vata Dosha (Vitiated)*
Dushya:	*Maṃsa Dhatu*
Srotas:	*Mamsavaha Srotas*
Srotodushti:	*Sanga, Vimarga Gamana, Atipravritti*[6].
Adhisthana:	*Mamsa, Sarva Sarira*
Udbhavasthana:	*Pakwashaya*
Vyadhi Swabhav:	*Jirna* (Chronic in nature)

***Lakshana* (Clinical Features):** *Mamsagata Vata*, being a *Vatavyadhi*, is characterized by *Bahu Maṃsa Shoola* (generalized muscular pain), *Sthambha* (stiffness), *Gaurav* (heaviness), *Daurbalya* (fatigue/weakness), *Spandana* (twitching sensation), *Sparsha Asahyata* (tenderness to touch), *Dandamustihatam Yatha* (as if struck by a rod or fist), and *Karma-Hani* (impaired motor functions).[2,3] The intensity of affection varies based on the presentation of etiological factors, including the anatomical position, and duration along with the strength of *Dosha Dushya Sammurchana*.

Table No. 3: Showing the *Lakshana* of *Maṃsagata Vata* explained in different treatises.

S. No.	Symptoms	C.S.[2]	S.S.[7]	A.H.[8]	A.S.[9]	M.N.[3]	Y.R.[10]
1.	*Stambha*	+	-	+	+	+	+
2.	*Shoola*	+	+	+	+	+	+
3.	*Shoṣh*	+	-	+	-	+	-
4.	*Maṃsa Vinasa*	-	-	-	-	+	-
5.	*Anga Guravta*	+	-	+	+	+	-
6.	*Sarvangam tudyata (pricking pain)*	+	-	-	-	+	+
7.	*Dandamustihatam Yatha*	+	-	+	+	+	+
8.	*Stimitam* (rigid or heaviness)	-	-	-	-	-	+
9.	*Granthi*	-	+	+	+	-	-
10.	*Bhrama*	-	-	-	+	-	-
11.	*Shramit Artham*	+	-	+	-	+	-
12.	*Aswapana (unhealthy sleep)*	-	-	-	-	+	-

***Bheda* (Classification):** Though classical texts don't directly classify *Maṃsagata Vata* into subtypes, modern commentators differentiate it based on chronicity and complications. *Kapha Dosha* or *Meda Dhatu* may also be involved secondarily, leading to *Avarana* (occlusion) type symptoms. Due to the predominancy of the *Dosha, Mamsagata Vata* can be classified in the following manner.

- *Nirama Maṃsagata Vata*– Pure *Vata* dominance (pain, stiffness with dryness in various parts of the body like skin, eyes etc.)
- *Saama Maṃsagata Vata*– Associated with *Ama* (inflammatory features)
- *Meda Avarita Maṃsagata Vata*- Seen in obese individuals (more frequent and severe pain with heaviness).

Diagnostic Approach in *Ayurveda*: In *Ayurveda* the diagnosis of *Mamsagata Vata* is based on both clinical examination and the patient's history. On the basis of *Roga Pariksha, Trividha Pariksha* (*Darshana, Sparshana,* and *Prashna*) can be done along with *Dashavidha Pariksha* for *Rogi* assessment, which includes *Prakriti, Sattva, Satmya*, etc. to evaluate the disease. Important findings during examination reveal clinical features of *Mamsa* and *Meda Dushti* along with *Vata Vriddhi*.

***Chikitsa Siddhanta* (Treatment Principles):** The general principles of vitiated *Vata Dosha* management should be applied to *Mamsagata Vata* with the evaluation of *Dushya, Prakruti, Vaya, Linga, Bala, Satwa,* and *Satmya*. Treatment for *Mamsagata Vata* includes various measures depending on diverse clinical entities, stages, and related complaints. The treatment also includes the *Vata Shamak Aahara- Vihara, Shodhana, Samana, and Rasayana Chikitsa*.

1. *Vata Shamak* and *Pathya Ahara-Vihara*

Vata possesses qualities such as *Rukṣha (dry), Sheeta (cold), Laghu* (light), and *Chala* (mobile).[11] *Vata* pacification is achieved by foods and lifestyle practices that have opposing properties, *i.e., Snigdha* (unctuous), *Uṣhṇa* (warm), and *Guru* (heavy). *Vata-Shamak Ahara* (diet) includes warm, oily, and nourishing food items such as *Ghee*, cow's milk, meat soups (especially from *Anupa* and *Audaka* animals like *Matsya* (fish), *Kukkuta* (chicken), *Aja* and *Avi Mansa* (goat and sheep meat))[12], *Rakta Shali / Shali / Shashtika (rice), Godhuma (wheat), Bajra (pearl millet), Kulatha (horse gram), Masha (black gram), Mudga (green gram), Ikshu, Guda (jaggery), Sita, Khanda, and Sharkara (type of sugar),* and well-cooked food with ghee or oil helps to pacify aggravated *Vata.* Foods that are dry, cold, raw, fermented, or overly spicy are considered *Vata* provoking and should be avoided. *Vata-Shamak Vihara* (lifestyle) involves practices like regular *Abhyanga* (oil massage), *Sukh-Ushna Parisheka* (lukewarm water to be poured over the body), *Snehika-Gandusha* (oil pulling) *Mrudu Shayya* (use of soft sitter), *Swedana* (sudation), *Agni Sheka* (hot fermentation), *Brahmacharya, Hemanta Ritucharya Palana,* maintaining warmth, adequate sleep, and avoiding excessive physical exertion-emotional stress, exposure to cold, and irregular routines. Suppression of natural urges, excessive talking, late nights, and fasting are also aggravated factors. Regularity in daily habits, rest, emotional calm, and gentle exercises such as *yoga (Ardha Shakti Vyayama), Pranayama (Anulom/Viloma),* and meditation are recommended. These measures help in restoring *Vata* balance, nourishing *Dhatu,* and improving the quality of life in different types of *Vata Vyadhi*.

2. *Sodhana chikitsa*

- *External Snehana* (external oleation): *Abhyanga* with medicated and warm oils, such as *Mahanarayana Taila, Dhanvantari Taila, Vishagarbha Taila*, and *Bala Taila.* They can be used to strengthen the muscles and to reduce vitiated *Vata Dosha.*
- *Swedana* (sudation): It can be used to pacify the vitiated *Vata Dosha* and to relieve pain, and stiffness and to improve circulation of the affected site. Such as *Nadi Sweda, Patra Pinda Sweda* can be used.
- *Basti* (medicated enema): *Anuvasana Basti* with *Eranda Taila or Dashamool Taila, Niruha Basti* with herbal decoction of *Dashamool, Rasna, Shunthi,* etc. can be administered through the rectum to balance vitiated *Vata Dosha*.
- If the vitiated *Vata Dosha* is located in muscles and fat tissue, then purgation therapy and *Bandha* (bandaging) can be used for the management.
- According to *Acharya Sushruta,* use of *Raktamokshana* is beneficial in vitiated *Mamsagata Vata.*[13]

3. *Shaman chikitsa* (*Vata* alleviating medicines)

- The combination of *Shilajit* and *Guggulu's Yoga* is beneficial in the management of *Mamsagata Vata.*
- *Guggulu Yoga,* like *Yogaraja Guggulu, Vatari Guggulu, Mahayograj Guggulu, Trayodashang Guggulu, Punarnava Guggulu* and *Rasanadi Guggulu* can be used due to its anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties.
- *Rasna Saptaka Kwatha, Maharasanadi Kwatha, Punarnvasthak Kwatha*, and *Dashmoola Kwath* can be used to balance the vitiated *Vata Dosha* in *Mamsagata Vata.*
- *Sudarshanghan Vati, Vishtinduk Vati, Vishmushti Vati, Agnitundi Vati,* and *Shilajit Vati* can be used.
- *Ekangveer Ras, Vatakulantak Ras, Sameerpannag Ras,* and *Shilajitvadi Loha* can be used.
- *Rasayana* Therapy*:* Rejuvenative herbs to strengthen *Mamsa Dhatu* and enhance *Ojas,* like *Ashwagandha, Bala, Shatavari, Amalaki, Shilajit,* and *Guduchi,* can be used.

4. *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*[14,15,16]

Satvavajaya Chikitsa addresses the *Manas* (mind), *Sattva* (mental strength), and the *Tridoṣha* (*Vata, Pitta, Kapha*)

interactions that affect mental health. It includes medicinal, behavioural, spiritual, and dietary regimens for restoring mental harmony.

- Counselling, moral teaching, meditation, and spiritual discourses can be used.
- Use of *Medhya Rasayanas* such *as Brahmi, Mandukaparni, Shankhapushpi*, and *Vacha* can be used to balance the *Doṣha* and to support the mental health.
- *Yoga*, meditation, and *Pranayama* can also enhance mental health.

5. *Apathya*[17] *Ahara- Vihara*

Apathya refers to unwholesome food and life style that are incompatible with an individual's constitution (prakriti), disease, season, or time of day. Consumption of *Apathya* such as excessive use of *Sheeta- Laghu-Rruksha Ahara* and *Tikta- Katu- Kashaya Rasa, Dagdha-Avani Jaata Shali* and other varieties of *Vrihi Dhanya* (rice matured in *Varsha Ritu*), *Yava* (barley). *Kodarva* (Kado millet), *Jwar / Yavanala* (great millet) *Chanaka* (chickpea), *Adhaki* (pigeon pea), *Masuri* (lentil), *Rajmaha* (cow pea), *Satina* (pea), *Jangala Mansa* (dry land forests animals) and *Shushka Mansa* (dry meat) *Madhu* (honey), preserved and hard food aggravate the normal condition of *Vata Dosha.* Unwholesome life style include *Vegadharana* (forcible withholding of natural urge), *Nisha Jagarana* (awakening during night), *Ati-Vyayama* (excessive exercise) *Ati- Shrama/Sahasa* (Excessive physical activity), *Ati-Vyavaya* (Excessive sexual activities), *Diwaswapna* (Sleeping at day), *Ati-chakramana or plawan* (Excessive walking or swimming), Sitting or sleeping on hard or irregular floor, *Ati-Chinta* (Excessive thinking), *Ati-Shoka* (Excessive stress), *Bhaya* (Fear), *Krodha* (Anger), which further vitiate the *Vata Dosha* and create disturbance in *Dhatu* equilibrium.

So, we can consider that, a well monitored regimen based on *Pathya-Apathya* principles offers a supportive framework in the *Ayurvedic* management of *Maṃsagata Vata*, to promote better therapeutic outcomes and long-term relief.

FIBROMYALGIA IN CONTEMPORARY MEDICINE

Fibromyalgia[18] is a chronic disorder defined by generalized musculoskeletal pain and fatigue, along with cognitive and sleep disturbances. Despite intensive investigation, no structural, inflammatory, metabolic or endocrine abnormality has been identified.

Pathophysiology: The cause of fibromyalgia is not well understood. However, two abnormalities which may be associated have been established frequently.[1]

- Sleep abnormality: Delta waves are a sign of significant non-rapid eye movement (non-REM) sleep, typically occurring in the first few hours. Fibromyalgia patients exhibit lower delta sleep, which distinct from the pattern observed in depression. Fibromyalgia is classified as a non-restorative sleep disorder, as deprivation of delta sleep but not REM sleep leads to symptoms and indications.
- Abnormal peripheral and central pain processing: Fibromyalgia patients tend to unusually elevated levels of two chemicals, known as substance P and glutamate. Substance P has been proposed to transmit pain signals to the brain, while glutamate sends chemical impulses throughout the body. By having such elevated levels of substance P and glutamate, can amplify pain impulses to and from the brain.

Symptoms

The usual symptoms of fibromyalgia are pain at multiple tender points, marked fatigability and disability, early morning stiffness with numbness and tingling sensation on fingers and poor sleep quality. The Cognitive symptoms such as the loss of concentration, forgetfulness, disorientation and tension headache may be associated. Other additional symptoms are variable bowel habit (irritable bowel syndrome) with or without colicky abdominal pain included bloating, bladder fullness, nocturnal frequency and hyperacusis, dyspareunia, discomfort when touched (Allodynia).

Diagnostic Criteria for fibromyalgia: At least history of 3 months of widespread pain that is bilateral, above and below the waist should be present. These specific area of body with pain and tenderness known as tender point. There are 18 tender points, found in 9 paired locations on both sides of the body. Pain criteria can be assessed by.[19]

- Widespread Pain Index (WPI): a tool used to assess the extent of pain in individuals in context of fibromyalgia. It specifically measures the number of painful body regions out of possible 19, providing a score that ranges from 0 to 19 (ACR 2010 and 2016 revisions).
- Symptom Severity Scale (SSS): The symptom severity scale in fibromyalgia is a measure of symptom severity, used in conjunction with the WPI to access the presence and severity of fibromyalgia. The total SSS score from 0 to 12.

Routine blood tests and imaging show no abnormalities, but it's vital to scan for other conditions. The differential diagnosis includes polymyalgia rheumatica, spondylarthritis, inflammatory myopathy, systemic inflammatory arthropathies, and hypothyroidism.

Treatment: Low dose amitriptyline (10-75 mg at night), may be beneficial by promoting delta sleep and decreasing the spinal cord wind-up. Limited evidence supports the usage of serotonin-noradrenaline (nor-epinephrine) re-uptake inhibitors (SNRIs) such as duloxetine, tramadol, and gabapentin, as well as the anticonvulsants pregabalin.[20] Drugs like duloxetine or milnacipran, which have both analgesic and anti-

depressant/anxiolytic properties, may be the best first choice for individuals who suffer pain related to fatigue, anxiety, or depression.[21] But these drugs have numerous adverse effects, particularly, long term usage of Amitriptyline might result in drowsiness, mental disorientation, weakness, sweating, and increased appetite. Tramadol causes dizziness, nausea, drowsiness, dry mouth, and sweating; Duloxetine causes agitation, insomnia, and an increase in blood pressure; and Fluoxetine causes agitation and dermatological responses. Pregabalin causes rashes, allergic reactions, and impaired focus, while gabapentin causes mild drowsiness, fatigue, light headedness, and unsteadiness.[22]

DISCUSSION

Fibromyalgia is a chronic illness that causes widespread musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, sleep difficulties, and tender points across the body. Its exact aetiology remains unclear, it is widely believed to involve abnormal central pain processing, neuroendocrine disturbances, and psychosocial stress.

In *Ayurveda*, these clinical features closely resemble the classical description of *Maṃsagata Vata* (also referred to as *Maṃsasrita Vata*), a subtype of *Vatavyadhi* where aggravated *Vata* gets localized in the *Maṃsa Dhatu* (muscle tissue). The involvement of vitiated *Vata* in the *Maṃsa Dhatu* produces symptoms such as *Shoola* (pain), *Stabdhaṭa* (stiffness), *Spandana* (twitching), *Sotha* (swelling), and *Gatra Gaurava* (heaviness), which carry a resemblance to the clinical manifestation of fibromyalgia. Additionally, associated features like *Nidranasa* (insomnia), *Daurbalya* (weakness), and *Manodaurbalya* (mental exhaustion) also align with the systemic manifestations of fibromyalgia.

Table No. 4: Clinical Correlation of *Mamsagata Vata* with Fibromyalgia.

S.no.	Fibromyalgia Symptoms	*Maṃsagata Vata* Symptoms
1.	Widespread muscular pain	*Bahu Maṃsa Shoola*
2.	Morning stiffness	*Sthambha*
3.	Tenderness to touch	*Sparsha Asahyata*
4.	Fatigue	*Daurbalya, Gaurava*
5.	Psychological issues	*Manovaha Srotodushti Lakshana*
6.	Poor sleep quality	*Nidra-alpata*

Furthermore, in both condition, stress, anxiety, poor lifestyle, and lack of restorative sleep are major aggravating factors. *Ayurveda* emphasizes *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (lifestyle), and *Manasika Hetu* (psychological state) in the manifestation and progression of *Maṃsagata Vata*. Similarly, modern medicine acknowledges that psychological stress and disordered sleep are factors to fibromyalgia's pathology and chronicity. From a therapeutic point of view, contemporary medicine manages fibromyalgia with analgesics, antidepressants, physical therapy, and cognitive-behavioural therapy.[23] However, these often provide only partial or symptomatic relief. On the other hand, *Ayurveda* approaches *Maṃsagata Vata* with a holistic way with aiming to restore *Dosha* balance**,** improve digestion and metabolism**,** rejuvenate the tissues through *Rasayana* therapy. Therapies like *Snehana* (oleation)**,** *Swedana* (sudation)**,** *Basti* (medicated enemas), and use of *Vata*-pacifying herbs such as *Dashamoola*, *Eranda*, and *Guggulu* can be effective in alleviating symptoms and addressing the root cause. Another important factor is the understanding of sleep and mental health in both conditions**.** Poor sleep is a cause and consequence of fibromyalgia. *Ayurveda* places strong emphasis on restoring *Nidra* (sleep) and *Manasika Bala* (mental strength) through lifestyle correction, dietary discipline, and use of *Medhya Rasayana* (nootropic and adaptogenic herbs). In *Caraka Saṃhita*[24] specifically mentions, *Murdhataila (Shirodhara)* and *Nasya* as principal interventions in *Vataja Nidranasa*, indicating their central role in management. *Nasya* is described as a primary gateway to the Siras.[25] By delivering medicated oil or *Ghee* through the nasal route, it nourishes the supraclavicular region, particularly the *Mastishka*, *Indriyas*, and *Manovaha Srotas*. Oils like *Brahmi Tail*, *Ksheerabala Tail*, and *Anu Tail* are *Medhya*, *Vata*-pacifying, and have proven anxiolytic and sedative effects in contemporary studies, correlating with improved sleep quality. From a modern neurophysiological perspective, gentle and rhythmic tactile stimulation over the forehead may modulate hypothalamic activity, enhance parasympathetic dominance, and regulate melatonin secretion, contributing to improved sleep initiation and maintenance.

Emphasis on *Vata* pacification, muscle tissue nourishment, and mental health leads to symptomatic relief and improved quality of life. However, *Ayurveda* offers a more holistic and individualized approach, focusing on *Dosha-Dhatu-Mala* balance, as well as mental health and digestion (*Agni*).

CONCLUSION

When fibromyalgia is viewed through the *Ayurvedic* lens of *Maṃsagata Vata*, it allows for a more individualized and integrative approach to care. A comparative approach to understanding both may enhance diagnostic intervention with therapeutic outcomes. Another side, Ayurvedic management of *Maṃsagata Vata* includes *Snehana*, *Swedana*, *Vata-Shamak* formulations, *Panchakarma* and *Rasayana* therapies with concept of

three pillars of life principles[26]- *Ahara (Vata- Shamaka* diet), Nidra (restoring sleep), and *Brahmacarya* (regulated conduct), aiming at both symptom relief and tissue nourishment. By systematically restoring these therapies, Ayurveda addresses the root cause of *Vata* vitiation, enhances *Dhatu Bala*, and improves overall quality of life in Fibromyalgia patients.

While further clinical studies are required to validate specific Ayurvedic treatments, this traditional framework holds promise for enhancing the understanding and management of a condition that modern medicine still struggles to fully explain.

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