

AYURVEDIC REVIEW OF ARDHABHEDAKA W.S.R. TO MIGRAINE

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ABSTRACT

Migraine is a common neurological disorder characterized by recurring, severe headaches, often accompanied by symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and sensitivity to light and sound. The pain is typically throbbing in nature, usually affecting one side of the head, and can last from a few hours to several days. Some individuals experience an aura, which includes visual disturbances or sensory changes before the onset of the headache. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 14% of the global population is affected by migraines, with a female-to-male prevalence ratio of 3:1. In Ayurved texts, there are several types of *shirorogas* described by Acharyas. Amongst them, the clinical features of *Ardhavybhedak* are very similar to migraine.

KEYWORDS: Migraine, *Shirorogas*, *Ardhavybhedak*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine, is founded on the principle that true health arises from a harmonious balance of the body, mind, and spirit. The term 'Ayurveda' translates to "the science of life," emphasizing its holistic approach to well-being.

प्राणाः प्राणभृतां यत्र श्रिताः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च
यदुत्तमाङ्गमाङ्गानां शिरस्तदभिधीयते^[1]

In Ayurveda, *Shir* (the head) is considered a vital and supreme part of the body where life force and sensory functions reside. All the sense organs and the channels that carry vital and sensory impulses originate from the *Shir*; much like rays emanating from the sun. Therefore, it is essential to take proper care of the *Shir*. *Shir* is the main site of *Prana Vayu*, which governs breathing, mental functions, and sensory perception; *Alochaka Pitta*, responsible for vision and insight; and *Tarapaka Kapha*, which nourishes and protects the brain and nerves. Ayurveda emphasizes that a balanced mind is crucial for maintaining good health, as mental disturbances are believed to manifest as physical ailments.

Ancient *Acharyas* have extensively described *Shiroroga*, with *Shirshoola* being the main symptom. In many cases, they have even considered *Shirshoola* as a synonym for *Shiroroga*. A clear classification of different types of

Shirorogas is available, where headaches are the primary feature.

In *Ayurvedic* texts, almost all *Acharyas* have mentioned *Ardhavybhedak* as a significant type of *Shiroroga*. *Acharya Sushruta* has classified *Shiroroga* into 11 types, including *Ardhavybhedak*.^[2]

According to *Acharya Charaka*^[3] and *Madhavacharya*^[4], it is *vata kaphaja roga*. According to *Acharya Sushruta*^[5] it is *Tridoshaja roga*. According to *Acharya Vagbhatta*^[6], it is *Vataja roga*.

Ardhavybhedak can be scientifically correlated with migraine due to its primary characteristic of "half-sided headache." This feature is also described by the commentator *Chakrapani* as "*Ardhamastaka Vedana*," emphasizing pain affecting one side of the head.

Migraine is a common neurological disorder characterized by recurrent, severe headaches that can last for hours or even days. The pain is typically throbbing, often affecting one side of the head, and is accompanied by symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and heightened sensitivity to light and sound. Some individuals experience an aura before the headache begins, which includes visual disturbances like flashing lights or blind spots, as well as sensory changes such as tingling sensations in the face or limbs. Migraines are classified into different types based on their symptoms and

frequency. The most common type is migraine without aura, where a headache occurs without any warning signs. Migraine with aura includes neurological symptoms preceding the headache. Chronic migraine is diagnosed when headaches occur on 15 or more days per month. Other forms include menstrual migraines, which are linked to hormonal changes in women, vestibular migraines that cause dizziness and balance issues, and hemiplegic migraines that result in temporary weakness on one side of the body. The exact cause of migraines is not fully understood, but they are believed to result from a combination of genetic, neurological, and environmental factors. Changes in brain function, neurotransmitter imbalances—particularly serotonin—and hormonal fluctuations play a significant role. The pathophysiology of migraine involves abnormal brain activity, leading to cortical spreading depression (CSD), which affects nerve signaling and triggers inflammation in blood vessels. The activation of the trigeminovascular system further contributes to pain perception and migraine progression. Migraines can be triggered by various internal and external factors. Common dietary triggers include caffeine, alcohol, processed foods, and irregular eating patterns. Environmental factors such as bright lights, loud noises, and strong smells can also provoke an attack. Hormonal changes, particularly in women during menstruation, pregnancy, or menopause, are significant triggers. Stress, sleep disturbances, and sudden weather changes, including fluctuations in temperature and humidity, can also lead to migraine episodes.^[7,8]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the present study is to review a conceptual study on the disease *Ardhavybhedak* w.s.r. to migraine.

NIDANA- Nidana plays an important role in the manifestation of disease. The knowledge of *Nidana* is important to understand the *samprapti* and *sadhya-asadhyata* of disease. In *Ardhavybhedak* both independent and specific *Nidana* have been stated by different Acharyas. These *Nidana* of *Ardhavybhedak* is classified as *Aharaja*, *Viharaja*, *Manasika*, and *Anyana Nidana* in the available literature.^[9,10]

1. Aaharaja Nidana (Dietary causes)

- *Rukshashana* (Having food which has a dry property)
- *Atyashana* (To eat excessively)
- *Adhyashana* (To have meal before digestion of previous meal)
- *Madhya* (Alcohol) *Sevana*
- *Guru Aharaja* (Heavy Food)
- *Amla Ahara* (sour Food)
- *Harita Dravya Sevana* (Rhizomes)
- *Ati-Sheet Ambusevana* (Excessive cold-water intake)
- *Dushta Ama* (Vitiated Ama)

2. Viharaja Nidana (Habitual and occupational causes)

- *Vegadharana* (Suppression of natural urges)
- *Divaswapana* (Day sleep)
- *Ratrijagrana* (overnight awakening)
- *Uccha Bhasya* (Speaking loudly)
- *Avashyaya* (Frost)
- *Purvivata* (Exposure to eastern wind)
- *Atimathuna* (Excess sexual indulgence)
- *Asatmya gandha* (Undesirable smell)
- *Aaghata* (Head injury)
- *Raja* (Exposure to dust)
- *Hima* (Exposure to snowfall)
- *Dhuma* (Exposure to smoke)
- *Atapa* (Exposure to sun and heat)
- *Shiroabhighata* (Head injury)
- *Rodana* (lamentation)
- *Ashruvega nigraha* (Suppression of tears)
- *Ayas* (Physical overexertion)
- *Vyayam* (Having excessive exercises)
- *Meghagama* (Advent of cloud)
- *Deshaviparyaya* (regimen contrary to locality)
- *Kalaviparyaya* (regimen contrary to season)
- *Utsveda* (Excess of sudation)
- *Krimi* (Worms)
- *Upadhanadvesa* (Avoidance of pillow)
- *Abhyangadvesa* (Aversion of massage)
- *Pratetekshana* (Constant seeing)
- *Utsedha* (Swelling)

3. Mansika Nidana

- *Manasa Santapa* (Mental stress)

4. PURVARUPA

- There is no specific *purvarupa* mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classics for *Ardhavybhedak*.
- Vaidya Vinod explains the *Purvarupa* as restricted movements while extending and flexing the head, along with heaviness in the head, which may be present in *kapha* dominant *Shriroroga*.

5. RUPA

According to Acharya Charaka

There will be severe pain in half of the head, affecting particularly the neck, eyebrows, temporal region, ear, eye, and forehead. The pain is like being cut by sharp objects or piercing in nature.^[11]

According to Acharya Sushruta

There will be severe pain such as splitting, pricking, and churning in one half of the head associated with giddiness. These features appear fortnight or ten days, or any time.^[12]

According to Acharya Vagbhata

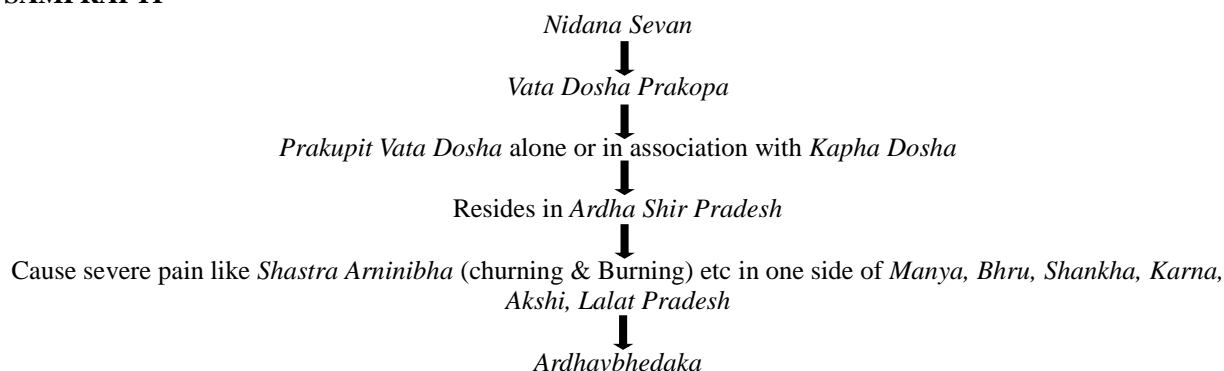
Pain appearing in half of the head is called *Ardhavybhedaka*; it develops either at intervals of a

fortnight or a month, subsides by itself, but if not treated, it will increase and destroy *Nayan* and *Shravan*.^[13]

According to Acharya Bhel

Shankhamoola Darana (Tearing pain in temporal regions), *Gandashotha* (Swelling over Zygomatic area), and *Chakshu-Virajyata* (Redness of Eyes).^[14]

6. SAMPRAPTI



Flow Diagram: Samprapti as per Acharya Charaka^[15]

This flowchart explains the *Samprapti* of *Ardhavbhedaka*. Due to *Nidana Sevana*, *Vata Dosha* aggravates or combines with *Kapha Dosha*, leading to an imbalance. This imbalance settles on one side of the head (*Ardha Shir Pradesh*), causing severe pain. The pain is described as piercing, burning, and churning, affecting areas like the forehead, temples, eyebrows, eyes, ears, and neck. This results in *Ardhavbhedaka*, which is characterized by intense unilateral headaches.

CHIKITSA

A. Nidana Parivarjana (Avoidance of causative factors)

Nidana Parivarjana is the first and most important step in treating *Ardhavbhedaka*. The factors that cause *Ardhavbhedaka* should be avoided.

B Shodhana Chikitsa (Detoxification Therapies) & Panchakarma Procedure

1. Shirovirechana Karma (Nasya Karma)

In the *Nasya karma* administration of medicated oils, powders, and juice through the nostrils, which are considered the gateway to the brain (*Shiras Dwar*).

Taila Ghrita- Shadbindu taila, Anu taila, Dasmoala Taila, Goghrita, Kumkumadi Ghrit, Kushthadi Ghrita etc.^[16, 17]

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned specific *Avapid Nasya* – *Shirishphala, Vashmoolakarpur, Madhuka* with *madhu*, and *Manahshila* with *madhu* and *Chandan*.^[18]

2. Virechana Karma (Purgation therapy)^[19]

It is a highly effective detoxification therapy for *Ardhavbhedaka* as it helps in eliminating excess *Pitta*, balancing *Vata*, purifying the blood, and improving digestion.

3. Basti Karma (Medicated enema)^[19]

Acharaya Charaka has recommended *Anuvasana Basti* and *Niruha Basti* as effective treatment of *Ardhavbhedaka*, which help pacify the aggravated *Vata Dosha* in the *Pakvashaya*.

4. Shirobasti^[19]

In *Shirobasti*, a cranial pouch or cuff around the head is prepared and medicated oil is filled into this pouch for about 1 *Muhurta* (48 minutes). In *Ardhavbhedaka Vata* or *Vatakaphanasaka* medicated oils like *Dashmoola taila* and four types of *Sneha*, viz. *Ghrita, Taila, Vasa, Majja* etc. are used.

5. Upnaha (Poultice)^[19]

The poultice made from *Vatanashaka* drugs like *Dashmoola*, cottonseed, mustard seed, and hot milk, wrapped in a cloth and bandaged around the head, helps reduce *Vata*, relieve migraine pain, and improve circulation.

C. Shamana chikitsa

Rasa Aushadhi- *shiroshuladi vajra rasa, laxmivilas rasa, Mahalaxmi vilasa rasa*.^[20]

Kashayam- *Pathyadi kwatha, Dashmoola kwatha*.^[21]

Ghritapana- *Mahamayur Ghrita*.^[22]

Shirolepa

- *Kumkuma Ghrita lepa, Sarivadi lepa*.^[23]
- Process *Krishna marich* powder with *bhringraja swarasa* and using it with *bhringraja swarasa* during attack.^[24]
- Mixture of *Krishna tila, jatamansi* powder, *saindhava*, and honey.^[25]

Shiro-Abhyanga- *Prapondrikadi Taila, Dashmoola Taila*.^[26]

PATHYA-APATHY^[27]**• PATHYA**

Chikitsa upakrama	Swedana, Nasya, Dhumpna, Virechana, Lepa, Vamana, Langhana, Upanaha, Raktamokshana, Shirobasti, Agnikarma.
Diet	Consuming old Ghrita, Shali, Shashtikshali, Yusha Milk, Dhavamansa,
Vegetables	Patolam, Shigru, Vastuka, Karvellak
Fruits	Amlaki, Dadima, Matulunga, Lemon, Mango, Grapes, Coconut
Liquid diet	Milk, Oil, Coconut water, Kanji, Takra,
Medicines	Pathya, Kushtha, Bhiringraja, Kumari, Musta, Ushira, Karpura, Gandhasar

• APATHYA

Vegadharanam	Sneezing, Yawning, Micturition, Sleep, Lacrimation, Stool excretion.
Unwholesome diet	Virudhdh ahara, impure water, curd, lassi, cold drinks, water of the rivers of Sahyadri, Vindhya and Kapha producing diet.
Apathya vihara	Teeth-brushing (Dantadhavanam), Divaswapna, Anjana

DISCUSSION

According to the International Headache Society (IHS), migraine is considered a highly disabling neurological disease, often ranking as the leading cause of disability among people under 50 years old, with a significant impact on quality of life due to its recurrent nature and ability to interfere with daily activities; essentially, the IHS recognizes migraine as a major contributor to global disability burdens.^[28]

Ardhavabhedhaka is mainly caused due to simultaneous imbalance in the *Tridoshas*, namely *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha dosha*. Vitiated *vata dosha* affects the *pitta* and *kapha dosha*. Most *Nidanas* indicate a predominance of *Vata Dosha*, which becomes vitiated due to excessive intake of dry food, overeating, or consuming food on a loaded stomach. The appropriate quantity of food should align with one's digestive capacity. Even light food, when consumed in excess, can lead to *Agnimandhya*, resulting in the formation of *Amarasa*, which obstructs the channels and disturbs all three *Doshas*. Additionally, exposure to *Purva Vayu* (eastern wind) causes constriction of blood vessels due to the *Sheeta Guna* of *Vata*, leading to headaches. Suppression of natural urges disrupts *Vata's* normal movement, while excessive indulgence in sexual activity weakens *Dhatu*s. Various types of pain, such as *Toda* and *Bheda*, indicate the *Vishama Swabhava* of *Vata Dosha*.

The first and most essential step in treatment is *Nidana Parivarjana*- eliminating the causative factors. Avoiding dietary, lifestyle and environmental triggers can prevent disease progression. Both physical and mental factors play a critical role in migraine pathology. *Ayurveda*, through its treatment principles, offers a holistic approach to eliminate *Ardhavabhedhaka* from its root.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda, as a preventive and curative life science, emphasizes the concept of *Nidanparivarjan* and strives to maintain the balance of *Tridosha*, *Saptadhatu*, and *Trimala* through *Agnichikitsa*. When applied to migraine, this approach offers a multidimensional treatment strategy, addressing *Rasavaha Strotodushti Chikitsa*,

Vidagdha Rakta, and *Pitta Chikitsa*. Thus, *Ayurveda* not only aids in curing the disease but also adapts the treatment to the individual's specific condition.

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