



AYURVEDIC APPROACH ON CARBUNCLES AND ITS TREATMENT

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ABSTRACT

Carbuncle is a group of boils, which is caused by Methicilin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). If it is untreated, it may causes serious complications like sepsis and infections in other parts of the body. In Ayurveda, Carbuncles are said to be pidakas. These pidakas are one of the major complications of diabetes. Acharya susrutha explains carbuncles as 10 types. In this article we tried to manipulate the ayurvedic view on carbuncles, their types and the traditional medicines which are given to control it. This article may give a vital platform for the scholars who work on this topic.

KEY WORDS: Ayurveda, Carbuncles, Pidakas, Traditional medicine, MRSA, Medicinal plants and Boils.



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INTRODUCTION

There are many traditional systems of medicine in the world, each with different associated philosophies and cultural origins. Ayurveda is one of the ancient systems of India. The origin of Ayurveda is traced back to four books of knowledge called Vedas. Rigveda, Samveda, Yajurveda and Atharveda (4500 to 1600 B.C.). The information on health care was subsequently developed by many Ayurvedic practitioners and finally compiled into three important books known in Ayurveda as the senior triad (vriddha traya), Charak Samhita, Sushrut Samhita and Ashtang Hridaya Samhita.¹ The subsequent three books that are commentaries on the senior triads are known as the junior triad (laghu traya), Madhava-nidana, Sarangdhar Samhita and Bhavaprakash Nighantu. These books contain basic concepts of health and disease, disease management, anatomy and physiology, hygiene, materia medica, pharmacology and therapeutics, herbal formulations, pharmacy, and synthesis of herbo-mineral formulas². In Ayurveda all the diseases are diagnosed on the basis of Vatha, Pitha and Kapha by means of naadi¹. Diseases are classified according to organ systems and functions. Specialties such as internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, gynecology, obstetrics, eye, ear, nose and throat diseases, geriatrics, eugenics and aphrodisiacs, psychiatry, pharmacology toxicology and pharmacy are clearly delineated and discussed in detail in Ayurveda³. Ayurvedic medicine is oriented toward prevention, health maintenance and treatment. Ayurvedic therapies generally provide relief without such adverse effects even after prolonged administration⁴. Ayurvedic herbs and formulas often have a wide spectrum of therapeutic activity⁵. According to the concepts of Ayurveda, good health is based on the equilibrium of dosha (humor), agni (digestive fire), dhatu (seven body tissues: lymph, blood, muscle, adipose tissue, bone, bone marrow, semen), and mala (feces, urine, and other waste products). Furthermore, in Ayurveda there is clear-cut emphasis on maintaining physical, mental and spiritual well-being as part of good health⁶.

Diabetes mellitus, a chronic metabolic disorder caused by insulin deficiency and /or insulin resistance is considered as one of the major health problems^{7,8}. Carbuncle is one of the main complications of Diabetes mellitus. A carbuncle is a red, swollen and painful cluster of boils that are connected to each other by a small collection of pus called a boil under the skin. Boils develop commonly since infected hair follicles of bacteria. *Staphylococcus aureus* usually infect hair follicles. It normally exist on certain parts of the body and causes infections through a wound. Swelling of hair follicles in the skin may lead to the infection Boils and carbuncles are the universal complications of diabetes. Carbuncles may form at moist parts of the body. A boil initiates as red, painful inflammation. Usually within 24 hours, the inflammation fills with pus and takes on around emergence with a yellow-white tilt. It may lead to swelling of lymph nodes around boils usually in neck armpit or groin. The boil may be tender to touch or quite painful. The boils that gather to form carbuncles usually set off as red, painful bumps, fills with pus and develop white or yellow tips that weep, ooze or crust, over a period of several days many treated carbuncles rupture, discharging a creamy white or pink fluid. Superficial carbuncles are those have multiple openings on the skin's surface less likely to leave a deep scar. Scar, fever, fatigue, Swelling are the usual symptoms of carbuncles.

Risk factors and complications of carbuncles

Obesity, Poor hygiene, chronic skin conditions, Diabetes, kidney and Liver disease. MRSA escapes into bloodstream and infects other organs, bones of the body and it may lead to sepsis if it is left untreated. Chills, spiking fever, increase in heart rate are the common symptoms of it. Cautions to be considered at the time of carbuncles such as

- One should not squeeze or irritate a carbuncle, which increases the risk of complications and severe scarring.
- Warm compresses may promote the drainage and healing.

- Gently soak the carbuncle in warm water or apply a clean warm moist wash cloth for 20mins several times / day.
- Similarly cover the carbuncle with a clean dry cloth and gently apply a heating pad or hot water bottle for 20mins several times a day.
- After each use, wash the clothes with hot water and dries at high temp.
- Washing the carbuncles and covering the area with a sterile bandage may also promote drainage and healing and help to prevent spreading.
- It's important to thoroughly wash your hands after touching a carbuncle.⁹

CARBUNCLES IN AYURVEDIC VIEW

It is the common complication of diabetic mellitus. Due to long persisting of dosha imbalance, the body gets deteriorated owing to vitiated Medho dhathu (adipose tissue) and Kleda (metabolic waste). Aggravated doshas exhibit their symptoms in the surface of the skin. They are usually elevated or discoloured. It may be present in muscles, joints and vital parts of the body such as groin, kidney, heart, head and face.

Types of carbuncles in according to Acharya susruta

- Sharavika: Sharava - disc. The carbuncles will be convex in the margins and concave in the centre similar to sharava.
- Sarshapika: Sarshapa- mustard. Here the boils appear like mustard in its size and shape, similar to white mustard.
- Kacchapika: Kacchapa-tortoise. Here we see the carbuncles which are elevated like the shell of the tortoise with rough surface and with burning sensation.
- Jalini: Jala-mesh. Looks like network of fiber occur on the even surface of the skin followed by severe burning sensation.
- Vinata: Sunken or bent inside. Large, deep rooted pidakas which are painful,

moist and seen only in back and abdomen. Generally these are blue colored which occupies in large areas.

- Putrini: Here the blisters are separated in the large surface area where small multiple blisters are seen the middle.
- Masurika: Masura-Lentils, here blister appears like lentils.
- Alaji: Red or white colored vesicles, appear as if they are ready to rupture along with severe pain.
- Vidari: Here the carbuncles appear like the shape of vidari.
- Vidradhi: Features of abscess will be seen here.

Sadhyaasadyatvam: (Curability) of carbuncles In Acharya Susruta view

Sharavika, kacchapika, jalini, putrini and vidradhi are difficult to cure.

Sarshapika, Masurika, Alaji, Vinata, Vidradhi are easy to cure.

Carbuncles which are associated with severe burning sensation spread all around with red or black colour possessing the complications like thirst, hallucinations, fever.

Complications

Severe thirst, Kasa (chronic cough), Mamsarodha (infraction in vital organs), Mamsa sankocha (Gangrene), Jwara (fever), Visarpa (erysepelas), Mada (in toxification), Moha (fainting) and Hikka (hiccough).

Management of prameha pidakas are

1. Control the prameha.
2. Matured pidakas have to be subjected to incision and drained well.
3. If it is immature, Rakthamokshanam bloodletting or leech therapy has to be done.
4. Purification supposed to be done according to the predominance of the doshas.
5. Then the medicines should be administered orally.

Medicinal plants used to treat prameha pidakas (Diabetic Carbuncles)

S.No	Vernacular Name in India	Botanical Name	Family	Extracts of the plant parts used
1.	Nimbu	<i>Azadiracta indica</i>	Meliaceae	All parts
2.	Kshirini	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>	Apocynaceae	Root leaves and stem
3.	khair	<i>Accacia catechu</i>	Fabaceae	Bark
4.	Guduchi	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>	Menispermaceae	Leaf
5.	Guggul	<i>Commifora mukul</i>	Burseraceae	All parts
6.	Manjishta	<i>Rubia cardifolia</i>	Rubiaceae	Root
7.	Nisoth	<i>Operculina turpethum</i>	Convolvulaceae	Stem and root
8.	Nahi	<i>Enicostemma littorale</i>	Gentianeaceae	All parts
9.	Parwal	<i>Trichosanthes dioica</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Fruits
10.	Haritaki	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Combretaceae	Seed

CONCLUSION

Diabetic patients used to suffer due to carbuncles. In case if the diabetic patient undergoes any wound, boil or skin ulcer, immediate treatment is requisite. It is curable at the early stage; if it is not treated it may perhaps lead to carbuncle. Gangrene formation is one of the most crucial complications of diabetic carbuncle. Medications have to be taken under doctor supervision. The above mentioned medicinal plants are capable of controlling and curing prameha pidakas. Some of the plants are not proved scientifically, more research work have to be done on these plants and prameha

pidakas. This article may give a platform to the budding researchers to work in carbuncle.

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