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Review Article

Understanding of Kaṭīgraha (Low Back Ache) and its possible management modalities

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Abstract

Most of the individual have the experience of low back pain at some time or other in their life-time. This is one of the most common musculo-skeletal disorders. The pain affects the lower lumbar spine, lumbosacral area and sacroiliac joints. It is an unpleasant and discomfort condition, but not a desperate and serious problem. The commonest type of low back pain is caused by some kind of mechanical stress or damage within the back which gets better quickly. Abnormal posture, excessive stresses (physical and psychological), aging problems and mechanical damage may all contribute to low back pain. The brunt of the weight of entire body has to be borne by the spinal column so has to allow enormous degree of flexibility. This is ensured by a highly complex organization of various anatomical structures such as bones, discs, ligaments, tendons, nerves, blood vessels and strong muscles. Any one of these structures could be injured or affected by diseases or subjected to excessive stresses and strains, thus contributing pain in most mobile parts of the spine mainly to the neck and the lumbar region. The other major reason for this increase in the incidence seems to be related to the sedentary stressful modern life style. Kaṭī Graha is a common complaint encountered in every stratum of society, occupation and racial groups.

Keywords: Kaṭī Graha, musculo-skeletal disorders, Pain, sacroiliac joints

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INTRODUCTION

Kaṭī Graha is a common complaint encountered in every stratum of society, occupation and racial groups. It is widely prevalent in these days due to sedentary living habits and hazardous work patterns. Mechanical pain accounts for about 90% of back pain episodes in persons aged between 20 and 55 years^[i]. It forms one of the most frequent and disabling condition affecting adolescent girls, workers in their productive years thus resulting in loss of economic productivity^[ii]. There is greater role for prevention of this condition by correcting posture and alternate treatment modalities in the form of naturopathy, yoga and physiotherapy.

Other forms of treatments include local heat application, applying of counter irritants like pain balms or sprays. All the treatments mentioned so far act effectively in the management of acute back pain. But chronic low back pain is somewhat difficult problem to tackle. Management of this is a field of contradictory opinions because of difference in recommending preventive measures and an absence of clear-cut treatment principles.

Usual procedures employed in such cases are rest, medicines, physical therapy, immobilization of back with belts, braces, massage, traction, manipulative measures like chiro practices of osteopathy. In Ayurvedic literature we find references regarding Kaṭī śūla, Trika śūla^[iii], Trika vedana^[iv], Kaṭīgraha^[v] in which pain in the low back region forms the main symptom, depending upon the involved area. These are symptoms due to kupita Vāta in Pakvāśaya and Guda pradeśa^[vi]. The conventional treatments in Ayurveda includes abhyanga, different types of swedana, basti for varying periods along with internal medications aimed at controlling of kupita vāta. These methods are effective to control vāta and reducing pain.

Review of Literature

Kaṭī graha is another term used as a synonym of kaṭī śūla. The word kaṭī graha is originated from the union of two words viz., kaṭī and graha.

Kaṭī śūla means pain in low back:

In classics, there are some descriptions about the same symptoms, as the symptoms of kaṭīśūla are thrikaśūla, thrikagraha etc. According to Parishadhyam shabdharth shareeram, the one which is situated in between Uraha (Chest) and Nitamba (Buttocks) is called as Kaṭī.

Thus Kaṭī can be considered as Lion or Lumbas in other words; lower part of the back and sides between the ribs and the pelvis. The term kaṭī is considered as Hip, and Buttocks.

Kaṭī graha is another term used as a synonym of kaṭī śūla. The word kaṭī graha is originated from the union of two words viz., kaṭī and graham. The word kaṭī signifies the region of low back and the word graham means holding. Here in this context the most suitable meaning is grasping pain. So kaṭī graha means the grasping pain at the low back region.

Synonyms: In classics the term Kaṭī Graha has been explained by different names.

In Yoga Ratnakara under the heading of vāta vyadhi, it has been mentioned as kaṭī sandhigatha vāta, kaṭī vāta, trika śūla. Hence, these can be considered as the synonyms of Kaṭī śūla. Other authors have mentioned the synonyms of Kaṭī śūla such as – Śronibhedana, Prūṣṭa graham Kaṭī sthamba, Kaṭī sandhigatha pīda, Kaṭī pīda, Kaṭī bhagna, Trika vedana. These can be considered as paryāyās of Kaṭī śūla.

Vāta is the constructive, motivated factor of the body. va- bal- Vāyu – Tone

Vāta is the venerated as the demolisher, preserver, creator and all – encompassing.

“vātadruthe nāsthi ruja” There can be no pain without the accomplishment of vāta. Vāta is the prime factor for all types of pain. Irritation of sensory nerves produces pain. Kaṭīgraha

As a disease: Vātavāydhī

As a symptom: Ati langhana, Gudagata vāta, Pakvāśayagata vāta, Asthimajjāgata, Gridhrasi, Khalli, Vātarakta, Āmavāta, Abhighāta (Marma involvement), Bhagandara, Arśas.

Ashraya Sthana of vāta: Kaṭī is one of the important sthana of vāta. In Kaṭīgraha, vāta gets vitiated in its own seat. So kaṭīgraha has an important place in the context of vāta vyaadhi.

Vitiated Sāma vāta gets localized in Kaṭī pradeśa characterized by śūla and produces restricted movement of Kaṭī i.e. Kaṭī graha. Aggravated Vāta gets localized in Pakvāśaya and causes Kaṭī Graha Trika is the joint between 2 hip bones and spinal column. The pain which is produced in this region is Trika Śūla. Trika Vedana is one of the lakśana produced due to Pakvāśaya gata Vāta. Trika Śūla is one of the lakśana produced due to Guda gata vāta.

Vāta vyādhi Nidāna: Dhātu Kśaya, Āvaraṇa

The word kaṭī signifies the region of low back and the word graha means holding. Here in this context the most suitable meaning is grasping pain. So kaṭī graha means the grasping pain at the low back region.

Samprāpti

Doṣa	:	Vāta
Dūśya	:	Asthi, Majja, Snāyu
Srotas	:	Asthi majjavaha srotas
Srotoduṣṭi prakāra	:	Sanga, granthi, vimārgagamana

Chikitsa:

Nidāna Parivarjana
Samśodhana therapy
Śamana therapy

- Nidāna parivarjana
- Chikitsa upakrama
- Vātasya upakrama

Nirupasthambha chikitsa (Āvaraṇa rahita) :

Snehana: Snehapāna, Abhyanga, Seka, Pichu, Kaṭī basti

Svedana: Patrapotali, Jambīrapinda sveda, Śāstika Śāli, Avagaha, Nādisveda

Tāpa and uṣṇa sveda are kapha nashaka. And upanaha sveda is vāta naashaka. If vāta is combined with pitta, and then drava sveda should be used.

Drava sveda – avagaha & parisheka ; Upanāha, Mustadi upanāha, Mustā, tila, kinva, kushta, devadāru, lavana, tagara done pāka in dadhi, dugdha and chatur sneha. Taila, tila, sarshapa, atasi etc grinded in kāñji.

Virechana: (Mrudu virechana)

If it does not subside by the above treatment, then along with sneha, mrudu virechana should be given by any of the following. Tilvaka siddha ghruta, Saptala siddha ghruta, Eranda taila with dugdha, Eranda taila with nirgundi.

Vātanulomana: By the uṣṇa, snigdha, amla etc. āhāra, the collected mala in the srotas binds the vāyu. Hence anulomana is essential.

Intervention Methods in Kaṭīśūla :

Sāma Avastha, Dīpana, Pāchana, Virechana, Śodhana & Basti.

Dīpana Pāchana : Āmayuta vāta nāśaka yoga (Bhavaprakasha), Pūtikaraṇja, haritaki and puśkaramūla, Balā, Gudūchi, Devadāru, Śunṭhi, vāyuidanga, Pāṭha, Atasi, Ativiśa.

Causes of Back Pain:

Life Style, Stress and Back Pain

There are four major factors for back pain that go with the modern life style.

Weaker muscles than our ancestors

Modern technological advances has made life easy with tools, aids, gadgets and ever renewed transport facilities (cars and airplanes).

Wrong muscles are overworked;

Bad postures during standing or sitting (sloppy chairs) or sleeping (cushiony beds) are responsible for allowing the spine to go crooked. A muscle when held in a state of contraction for unused duration of time, it gets tired and when pushed beyond its capacity triggers off pain sensors resulting in low back pain.

Repeated injuries due to unused exercise

Problem of recurrent and chronic pain is the major concern. Psychological tension is the main cause of a person return to the same life style of sedentary working in wrong postures.

Psychological Stress

Long standing spasm in the already weak postural muscles of the back triggers off the pain. Irritating pain due to stress on nerve ending cause psychological Stress

Sprung Back:

It is the commonest variety of acute low back pain. This is usually caused by strain, stretching or tearing of various ligaments of the vertebral column. This condition develops from mechanical stress and strain which the lumbosacral region renders itself. It occurs in both acute and chronic forms.

Common site: Lumbosacral region is the site of great shearing strain & it is the junction b/n the mobile & fixed parts of the spinal column both in acute & chronic forms.

CONCLUSION

- Occupation, physiological stress and strain also plays a prime role in the causation of Kaṭīgraha.
- Wrong posture with sedentary life style is also one among the risk factors of Kaṭīgraha.
- Graha (spasm) associated with restricted spinal movements are the main clinical features that draw the attention of the patient and brings to hem to the physician.
- The procedure jet spinal bath was very effective in less restricted spinal movements and in fresh cases. It was less effective in case of increased restricted spinal movements.

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