

## Ayurvedic Therapeutic Approach in Gridhrasi (Sciatica): A Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Acharya Charaka identifies Gridhrasi as one of 80 Nanatmaja Vyadhi types, referring to patients with severe pain and altered gait. It causes difficulty walking and has cardinal symptoms like Ruk, Toda, Stambha, and Spandana. Sciatica, a condition causing pain along the sciatic nerve, is correlated with Gridhrasi in Ayurveda. Low back pain, a prevalent musculoskeletal disorder, worsens Vata due to unhealthy Ahara and Vihara, affecting Vata dosha circulation.

**Aim:** To study the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatment in the management of Gridhrasi.

**Material and method:** A 42-year-old Female came to OPD with complaints of pain in the lower lumbar region radiating to the Left lower limb for One Year. Gradually, she experienced stiffness in the lower back region for six months, a feeling of tingling sensation in the Left leg, heaviness, and difficulty while walking. In this case study, treatment for Gridhrasi follows Samprapti vighatan chikitsa, which comprises Shaman chikitsa (Vatanashini vati), Shodhana chikitsa (Kati basti of Vishnu tail).

**Observation and result:** The effect of therapy on cardinal symptoms was observed, with relief noted in pain, pricking sensation, stiffness, and twitching. Looking at the overall effect of treatment, moderate improvement was observed.

**Conclusion:** Through this article, we will gain comprehensive knowledge of the Diagnosis, Symptoms, and Treatment of Gridhrasi Roga, providing a clear understanding of this disease that is beneficial to people.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Vatavyadhi, Gridhrasi, Sciatica.

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### INTRODUCTION

The majority of the diseases belonging to the ancient Indian system of medicine, Ayurveda, are *Vatavyadhi*. Most rampant and severe amongst them today is *Gridhrasi* and that produces paralysing agony. *Gridhrasi* is one out of the 80 *Nanatmaja Vatavyadhi*, says *Acharya Charaka*, and they are caused only by the vitiation of *Vata Doṣha*. The name "*Gridhrasi*," borrowed from that of "*Gridhra*" (vulture), has been given to the patient's distorted gait, as if he walks in a vulture-like motion, due to excruciating agony that shoots down his leg.<sup>1</sup>

The four main constituents of *Gridhrasi* are *Ruk* (pain), *Toda* (pricking feeling), *Stambha* (stiffness), and *Spandana* (twitching) according to classical texts. *Sphik* (buttock) is the seat of these virtues, spreading to *Kaṭi*, *Uru*, *Janu*, *Jangha*, and *Pada*. There are other references to similar ailments like *Tandra* (lassitude), *Gaurava* (heaviness), and *Arochaka* (loss of appetite).<sup>2</sup> *Gridhrasi* has been linked with sciatica in Modern Science as well. The latter most commonly results from irritation or pressure on the sciatic nerve, normally in relation to degenerative changes, spinal stenosis, or a prolapse of the intervertebral disc. As a result of

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lifestyle-related reasons such as weight lifting, travel, obesity, sitting, and lack of activity, low back pain and sciatica are gaining widespread prevalence in the current world.

Epidemiological studies reveal that 50% to 70% of people would experience low back pain during their lifetimes, and over 40% of people would experience Sciatica, with 4–6% being clinically severe.<sup>3</sup> As this condition most characteristically presents in 30 to 50-year-old adults, it is a significant socioeconomic problem at a time of maximum social and vocational

<b>O.P.D. NO.</b>	-	20240030339
<b>DATE OF CONSULTATION</b>	-	27/08/2024
<b>NAME</b>	-	xyz
<b>AGE</b>	-	42 Yr.
<b>SEX</b>	-	Female
<b>RELIGION</b>	-	Hindu
<b>EDUCATION</b>	-	Highly educated
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>	-	Married
<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS</b>	-	Middle Class
<b>ADDRESS</b>	-	Raipur (Chhattisgarh)
<b>OCCUPATION</b>	-	Service
<b>TYPE OF LIVING</b>	-	Nuclear family
<b>HABITATION</b>	-	Urban

**CHIEF COMPLAINTS: -**

Pain in the lower lumbar region radiating to the right lower limb.

**Associated Complaints: -**

- She also had complaints of stiffness in the lower back region and difficulty while walking from three months.
- These symptoms were associated with reduced appetite, gaseous distension of the abdomen, constipation, and general weakness from one month.

**LOCAL EXAMINATION: –**

- Inspection - No Visible Deformity
- Palpation - Tenderness L5-S1 Region
- Straight Leg Raising Test - Left (60°) Right (90°)
- Swelling (*Shotha*) - No
- Muscle Wasting - No

**INVESTIGATIONS: -**

**Table no. 1**

No.	Investigation	Before	After
1.	Hb	13	12.7
2.	ESR	50	36
3.	Blood sugar – Fasting	126	110
4.	X-Ray (Digital) Lumbosacral Region	Early Lumbar Spondylosis with Normal Disc Space	Early Lumbar Spondylosis with Normal Disc Space

obligation. Thus, *Gridhrasi* causes not just pain but also restricted motility, productivity, and quality of life. Better understanding of its pathophysiology, an Ayurvedic management, and a collaborative approach to management can resolve this stubborn issue.

**CASE REPORT: -**

A 42-year-old female patient visited *Kayachikitsa* OPD of Ayurvedic Hospital of Shri Khudadad Dungaji Government Ayurveda Hospital, Raipur (C.G.), with the following details –

**HISTORY OF PRESENT ILLNESS: -**

A 28-year-old married Female came to *Kayachikitsa* OPD of Shri Khudadad Dungaji Govt. Ayurvedic Hospital, Raipur (Chhattisgarh), with complaints of pain in the lower lumbar region radiating to the Left lower limb from One Year. She also had complaints of stiffness in the lower back region and difficulty while walking from three months. These symptoms were associated with reduced appetite, gaseous distension of the abdomen, constipation, and general weakness from one month. It was managed with symptomatic allopathic treatment. Later, she again gradually developed pain in the lower lumbar region and then gradually radiated to the posterior aspect of the thigh, knee, calf region, and foot of the Left leg from three months. Gradually, she experienced stiffness in the lower back region from six months, a feeling of tingling sensation in the Left leg, heaviness, and difficulty while walking.

**PAST HISTORY: -**

She has neither a traumatic nor any other past medical or surgical history. Due to Severe Pain, she consulted a doctor and was advised to take analgesics for pain management.

**CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT: -**  
**SUBJECTIVE PARAMETERS<sup>2</sup>**

**Table no. 2**

No.	RUK (Pain)	TODA (Pricking pain)	STAMBHA (Stiffness)	SPANDANA (Tingling)	GRADING
1.	No Pain	No Pricking Sensation	No Stiffness	No Twitching	0
2.	Slight pain only on hard work	Occasionally Pricking Sensation	Sometimes for 5-10 min.	Sometimes for 5-10 min.	I
3.	Pain on movement, but without disturbing routine work	Mild Pricking Sensation, once a day	Daily for 10 - 30 min.	Daily for 10-30 min.	II
4.	Pain on movement, disturbing routine work	Moderate Pricking Sensation, frequently in a day	Daily for 30 - 60 min.	Daily for 30-60 min.	III
5.	Severe pain is compelling patients to lie in bed	Severe and persistent Pricking Sensation	Daily More than one hr.	Daily more than 1 hr.	IV

**FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT –**

**Table no. 3: Straight Leg Raise (S.L.R.) Test –**

No.	SLR Test	GRADING	BEFORE TREATMENT		AFTER TREATMENT	
			Left Leg	Right Leg	Left Leg	Right Leg
1.	More than 90 <sup>0</sup>	0				0
2.	71 <sup>0</sup> - 90 <sup>0</sup>	1		1	1	
3.	51 <sup>0</sup> - 70 <sup>0</sup>	2	2			
4.	31 <sup>0</sup> - 50 <sup>0</sup>	3				
5.	Up to 30 <sup>0</sup>	4				

**TREATMENT PLAN: -**

**Table no. 4: Washout Period –**

No.	Drug	Dose	Duration	Anupan
1.	<i>Sanjeevani Vati</i>	250 mg twice	1 Week	<i>Sukhoshna jal</i>
2.	<i>Panchasakar churna</i>	5 gm twice	1 Week	<i>Ushnodak</i>

**Table no. 5: Shaman Chikitsa**

No.	Drug	Dose	Duration	Anupan
1.	<i>Vatanashini Vati<sup>4</sup></i>	250 mg twice	2 months	<i>Ushnodak</i>

**Table no. 6: Shodhan Chikitsa**

No.	Procedure	Ingredients	Duration
1.	<i>Kati Basti of Vishnu Tail<sup>5</sup></i>	<i>Vishnu Tail (Shalparni, Prishniparni, Brihati, Kantakari, Bala, Nagbala, Shatavari, Saireyak, Erand, Karanj)</i>	2 months
2.	<i>Patra Pinda Sweda<sup>6</sup></i>	<i>Nirgundi Patra, Eranda Patra, Chinch Patra, Shigru Patra, Datura Patra, Arka Patra, Rasna Churna, Shatapushpa Churna, Devadaru Churna, Saindhava Lavan</i>	2 months

**Note:** Kati Basti from Vishnu tail was used for 15-15 days, 3 times in the complete treatment procedure, with a gap of 7 days between every Kati Basti Procedure.

**OBSERVATION: -**

**Table no. 7: SUBJECTIVE PARAMETERS**

S.N.	Subjective Parameters	Before Treatment	After Treatment	Duration
1.	<i>Sphikshool/Katishool/Prishtha shool</i>	3+	1+	2 Months
2.	<i>Urushool (Pain in the back of the thigh)</i>	3+	1+	2 Months
3.	<i>Janghashool (Pain in the calf muscle)</i>	3+	0	2 Months

4.	<i>Padashool</i> (Pain in the foot)	2+	0	2 Months
5.	Radiation of Pain	+	0	2 Months
6.	<i>Toda</i> (Pricking Sensation)	3+	0	2 Months
7.	<i>Stambha</i> (Stiffness)	2+	0	2 Months
8.	<i>Spandan</i> (Tingling Sensation)	2+	0	2 Months
9.	<i>Supti</i> (Numbness)	2+	0	2 Months

## RESULT

In effect of therapy on cardinal symptoms, relief was observed in pain, pricking sensation, stiffness, and twitching. Improvement observed in associated symptoms such as *Gaurava* also remained highly significant. Improvement was observed in the SLR, Bragard, Bowstring, and Slump tests. But in the X-ray Report, no change was observed in the Structure of the Spinal cord. Due to *Vatahara* Treatment, the patient was feeling relief and able to do her daily work. Looking at the overall effect of treatment, moderate improvement was observed.

## DISCUSSION

### SHAMAN CHIKITSA -

#### *Vatanashini Vati*

The *Katu*, *Tikta Ras*, and *Katu Vipaka* are *Vata-Kapha Shamaka*, along with *Ushna Virya*, which is *Vata-Kapha Shamaka*. *Ruksha* and *Laghu Guna* will check *Kapha*, while *Ushna Guna* will check *Vata-kapha*. The *Nadi-uttejak Prabhav* in *Vatanashini Vati* will lead to the better movement of *Vata Dosha* across the body.

**ACTIVE PRINCIPLES:** Constituents- Alkaloids, Indole Alkaloids, Strychnine & Brucine, Monoterpenoid Glycoside (Loganin),  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ -Colubrine, Vomisine<sup>28</sup>.

### SHODHAN CHIKITSA -

#### ROLE OF KATI BASTI IN (GRIDHRASI) SCIATICA<sup>7</sup>: -

Among the several Ayurvedic treatment modalities, *Kati Basti* is a regional *Snehana-swedana* therapy that is quite successful in reducing lumbosacral pain and stiffness.

#### Method of Kati Basti:

- Using black gram flour (*Masha pishti*), a circular border is made on the lumbosacral area.
- This reservoir is filled with warm medicinal oil, which is left there for 20 to 30 minutes.
- Regular replenishment keeps the oil at a moderate temperature.
- *Nadi Sweda* and a light massage typically come next.
- Depending on chronicity, the procedure is performed every day for 7–14 days.

#### Ayurvedic/Pharmacological Mode of Action:

1. ***Snehana* (Oleation effect):** The heated medicinal oil eases *Ruksha* and *Sheeta guna* of *Vata* by

penetrating the skin and nourishing *Asthi* and *Majja Dhatu*.

2. ***Swedana* (Sudation effect):** Local sudation improves circulation, eases stiffness, and lowers the *Avarana* of *Vata* caused by *Ama* and *Kapha*.
3. ***Vedana sthapana* (analgesic effect):** *Vishnu Tail* has neuro-musculoskeletal and *Vatashamaka* pain-relieving properties.
4. ***Sroto-vishodhana*:** Heat promotes blood flow, widens *Srotas* (local channels), and makes it easier to eliminate inflammatory metabolites.

#### Modern Viewpoint

*Kati Basti* offers the following benefits from a biological perspective:

- **Thermotherapy effect:** enhances local blood circulation, reduces muscle spasms, and encourages the healing of nerve compression locations.
- **Anti-inflammatory effect:** Phytoconstituents found in oils have been shown to have analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Neuro-muscular relaxation:** enhances flexibility and eases paraspinal muscle tension.

#### ROLE OF PATRA PINDA SWEDA<sup>8</sup> –

##### Mode of action of *Patra Pinda Sweda* in *Gridhrasi*

As a form of *Snigdha Sweda* (oleation with sudation), *Patra Pinda Sweda* involves processing medicinal leaves (*Patra*) with *Vata-Kapha-hara* and *Shoola-hara* qualities with oils, then tying them into boluses (*pinda*) for fermentation. In *Vatavyadhi*, especially *Gridhrasi* (Sciatica), it is frequently indicated. It simultaneously relieves pain, promotes relaxation, and gives external oleation and sudation.

#### Method of Action in Ayurveda

1. ***Vata-Shamana*:** The main cause of *Gridhrasi*, exacerbated *Vata dosha*, is calmed by the combined action of *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, *Sookshma*, *Vyavayi*, and *Snigdha gunas* of oils and leaves.
2. ***Avarana Hara*:** When *Ama* or *Kapha* block *Vata*, *Patra Pinda Sweda*'s *Ushna* and *Tikshna* attributes clear the blockage and let *Vata* flow freely again.
3. ***Snehana–Swedana Synergy*:**
  - *Asthi–Majja dhatu* (bones and nerves) is nourished by *Snehana*.

- *Swedana* enhances movement and alleviates *Gaurava* (heaviness) and *Stambha* (stiffness).

**4. Shoola-Prashamana (Analgesic effect):**

- The heat and phytoconstituents of treated leaves reduce the frequency and intensity of *Shoola* (pain) by acting locally.

**A Contemporary View of Action:**

- 1. Thermotherapy Effect:** Local heat promotes nerve repair, enhances circulation, lowers ischemia, and dilates superficial blood vessels.
- 2. Transdermal Absorption of Phytochemicals:** Alkaloids, flavonoids, and terpenoids with analgesic, muscle relaxant, and anti-inflammatory properties are found in leaves like *Nigundi*.
- 3. Neuromuscular Relaxation:** By calming the paraspinal and gluteal muscles, a continuous massage with boluses lessens nerve compression.
- 4. Anti-inflammatory and Analgesic Actions:** It has been demonstrated that the leaves of *Eranda* (*Ricinus communis*) and *Nirgundi* (*Vitex negundo*) reduce inflammation and neuralgia.

Therefore, *Patra Pinda Sweda* functions similarly to an analgesic and natural herbal thermotherapy.

**CONCLUSION**

The current *Gridhrasi* (Sciatica) case study showed that the chosen Ayurvedic treatment offered a moderate alleviation of symptoms like pain, stiffness, and limited mobility. Although total remission was not attained, the therapy did enhance quality of life and functional capacity. This implies that although Ayurvedic treatments can significantly lessen the severity and frequency of symptoms, the final result may be influenced by variables including the disease's chronicity, the extent of structural alterations, lifestyle, and compliance.

As a result, Ayurvedic treatment in *Gridhrasi* offers a safe, non-invasive, and comprehensive approach; however, to achieve greater and longer-lasting outcomes, long-term monitoring, dietary control, lifestyle adjustments, and potentially coupled therapies are necessary.

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