

Vataja Kasa - Review as Per Classical Texts of Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Vataja kasa is one of the most important and very common respiratory disease well described in *Ayurveda*. It has an increasing prevalence overtime due to the external influences such as environmental pollution, population explosion, industrialization and urbanization. Though it is not life threatening disease, it troubles the diseased person in day to day activities. Western medicine has limited options of managing this disease and many people demands for alternative for it. Hence an attempt is made to review it. Classical texts of *Ayurveda* have enough described the causative factors, premonitory signs, symptoms, pathogenesis, do's and don't's along with proper stage wise line of management of *Vataja kasa*. Changed lifestyle is responsible for different respiratory disorders. The prominent causes of *Vataja kasa* mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classical texts are polluted air due to dust (*raja*) and smoke (*dhuma*), which starts the pathological process by making abnormal the *Pranavaha srotasa* (respiratory system). The management is well explained by

classical texts as per the stage and severity of the disease. If the *Vataja kasa* is not treated properly then it may cause other numerous diseases like haemothorax or pulmonary tuberculosis (*kshataj kasa* or *kshaya*); hence this disease must be addressed immediately.

KEY WORDS - *Vataja kasa*, Review of *Vataja kasa*, *Vataja kasa nidanapanchaka*

INTRODUCTION

'*Kasa*' is one of the important disorder which is well explained by classical texts of *Ayurveda*. Respiratory system is in constant contact with the external atmosphere since birth till once lifetime; hence it is most susceptible to infections and measured as the prime object of hyper sensitization in maximum of the situations. Cough is the supreme common symptom of the respiratory diseases;^[1] while most of the patients having recurring cough as the manifestation of the frequent respiratory disease. In classics of *Ayurveda*, explanations of *Kasa* disease resembles with

cough and its pathophysiology precisely correlates the action of cough reflex.^[2]

Prana and *Udana Vata* are accountable for normal working of *Praanvaha srotasa* (respiratory system). The abnormal *Prana vata* and *Udana vata* takes an unusual course through throat and mouth along with other *Doshas* and ousted out tersely with a 'coughing sound' like the broken-bronze vessel.^[3] The clinical symptoms of *Vataja kasa* has been explained in Ayurveda classical texts as severe pain in the epigastric region, sides of chest, and head; extreme voice hoarseness; dryness in the throat, chest and mouth; horripilation and fainting; echoing sound throughout coughing, appearances hopeless, dull sound in coughing; weakness, stressed, illusive views; dry cough, expectorate small amount of phlegm with pain, the *kasa* gets relieved by the food and drinks which are unctuous, sour, salty and hot; and the upward movements rises *vata* after the digestion of food.^[4] Cough executes a crucial protective role for human airways and lungs. It is commonly a sign to the presence of respiratory disorder, particularly acute respiratory tract infections. Feeble or an ineffective cough compromises the ability to clear lower respiratory tract secretions, prejudicing to extra serious infections and their complications. Deprived of an effective cough reflex, a person is at the risk for retained airway secretions and aspirated material predisposing to infection, atelectasis, and respiratory compromise.^[5] *Vataja kasa* is frequently equated to Tropical Pulmonary Eosinophilia (TPE); due to the resemblances of signs and symptoms. TPE is a syndrome causing from immunological hyper responsiveness to human filarial parasites *Wuchereria bancrofti* and *Brugia malayi*. The *filaria* are transferred to humans by mosquitoes and mature worms ultimately exist in the lymphatics. There they discharge

microfilariae, which runs to the lungs and produce a strong inflammatory reaction.^[6]

TPE is an occult form of *filariasis* and is having symptoms like dry cough, dyspnea, night-time wheezing etc., and noticeable peripheral blood eosinophilia. TPE affects males and females at a ratio of 4:1 frequently during the third decade of life.^[7] As India is one of the tropical countries; the prevalence of TPE (*Vataja kasa*) is strangely high. It is endemic in Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bengal, Bihar and coastal areas.^[8] Early intervention is necessary in *Kasa* as it is a potential *Nidanarthakara Vyadhi* (causative factor for another disease) as it can produce *Kshaya* (tuberculosis).^[9]

The human body is continuously under the influence of environmental changes; quality of life on whole earth is deteriorating day by day due to pollution, population, industrialization and urbanization. The quality of air, water and food ingested does not have always a beneficial effect and its purity determines the health of a person. All these variables have a toxins effect on the basic immune system of the human body and fundamental health of the body. One of the exclusive criteria of living action is breathing. One of the basic activities of *pranavaha srotasa* (a channel or path through which external air enters into the body to sustain life) is exchange of air, the rate of exchange of air is to tune of 16 times per minute making it one of the most vulnerable sites for disease.^[10] This problem has been compounded by our modern lifestyle, for industrialization and population explosion. According to *Ayurveda*, *dhuma* and *raja* are the main cause of vitiation of *pranavaha srotasa*.^[11]

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To review and evaluate the importance of *Vataja Kasa*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

References and information collected from classical texts of Ayurveda and different kinds of research journals, published manuscripts, dissertations, etc. from various institutes and other electronic media sources. Relevant information is analyzed and an attempt has been made to draw conclusions.

ETIOLOGY^[12]

Vataja kasa is one of the prominent respiratory disease. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned causative factors of *Vataja kasa* specifically.^[13] *Vagbhata* has mentioned that all the causative factor that vitiates *vata* are the causative factor for this disorder. He has quoted that the increase in *vata* arises due to excessive indulges of factors which is having the similar properties of *vata*. Causative factors can be divided into dietary (*aharaja*), behavioral (*viharaja*), psychological (*manasika*), inappropriate *panchakarma* administration (*panchakarma apacharaja*) and other factors.

Dietary causes (*Aharaja nidana*) - They are mentioned either in the form of tastes (*rasa*) or properties (*guna*), which cause increase in certain *doshas*.

Table No. 1 - Dietary causes (*aharaja nidana*) of *kasa* with respective increase of *dosha*

Taste	<i>Dosha</i>	Properties	Vitiated <i>dosha</i>
Astringent	<i>Vata</i>	Dry	<i>Vata</i>
Bitter	<i>Vata</i>	Cool	<i>Vata</i> , <i>Kapha</i>
Pungent	<i>Vata</i> , <i>Pitta</i>		

Table No. 3 - Premonitory (*poorvarupas*) Signs

Premonitory signs	<i>Charaka samhita</i>	<i>Sushruta samhita</i>	<i>Ashtanga Hridaya samhita</i>
Sensation as if throat filled with thorns (<i>Shookapurnata in gala</i>)	+	-	-
Sensation as if mouth filled with thorns	+	-	-

The astringent (*kashaya*) and bitter (*tikta*) tastes causes increase in *vata dosha* and pungent (*katu*) tastes increases *vata* and *pitta*. Dry property causes increase in *vata dosha* while cool property causes increase in *kapha* and *vata dosha*.

Table No. 2 - Behavioral causes (*viharaja nidana*) of *kasa* with respective increase of *dosha*

Behavioral cause(<i>Viharaja nidana</i>)	Vitiated <i>Dosha</i>
<i>Alpasana</i>	<i>Vata</i>
<i>Praitasana</i>	<i>Vata</i>
Over indulgence in sex	<i>Vata</i>
Stoppage of natural urges	<i>Vata</i>
Exertion	<i>Vata</i>

All the behavioral causes are capable of increasing *vata dosha* only. Psychological (*manasika*) cause includes excessive stress (*atitrasana*) which causes aggravation of *vata*. Other causative factors are including *Atisucha* is the one which increases *vata dosha*. Excessive administration of purification therapy leads to *vata* aggravation which may ends up in *vataja kasa*. Other causative factor includes *varshakala*, after digestion of food and during evening time.

PREMONITORY SIGNS

There is no specific premonitory sign (*poorvarupa*) told for individual type of *Kasa* in *Ayurvedic* classics. So the general premonitory signs for the *Kasa* can only be taken as the *poorvarupa* of the *Vataja kasa* as mentioned in *Charaka samhita*^[12], *Sushruta samhita*^[13], *Ashtanga Hridaya samhita*.^[14]

(<i>shookapurnata in Asya</i>)			
Sensation as if <i>Kantha</i> filled with thorns (<i>sukapurnata in Kantha</i>)	-	-	+
Itching sensation in the throat (<i>kandu in kanhta</i>)	+	+	+
Inability to swallow food (<i>avarodha of bhojana</i>)	+	+	-
Sensation of coating in throat (<i>galalepa</i>)	-	+	-
Sensation of coating at palate (<i>talulepa</i>)	-	+	-
Disturbed speech (<i>shabda vaishamya</i>)	-	+	-
Anorexia (<i>arochaka</i>)	-	+	-
Low digestive power (<i>agnisada</i>)	-	+	-

The prodromal symptoms of *Vatajakasa* is not mentioned in classics. So that the general *purvarupas* said can be considered for all types of *Kasas*. The *Purvarupas* said in classics are spiky sensation in the throat
CLINICAL FEATURES^[15]

Table No. 4 - Clinical features (*roopas*)

Signs

Clinical features	<i>Charaka</i>	<i>Sushruta</i>	<i>Ashtanga</i>
Dry cough	+	+	+
Coughing with	+	+	+
Headache (<i>Shira</i>)	+	+	+
Pain at heart	+	+	+
Pain in flanks	+	+	+
Chest pain	+	-	+
Weakness in	-	+	-
Weak immune	-	+	-
Weak voice	-	+	+
Hoarseness of	+	+	-

PATHOGENESIS

Pathogenesis (*samprapti*) is helpful to understand the disease has manifestation after indulgence in causative factors. *Acharya Charaka* has explained general pathogenesis of *kasa* as vitiated *prana* and *udana vata*, attains upward movement and gets filled up in the channels, which are

and mouth, itchy sensation in throat, obstruction of food morsel in the throat, coating of throat and palate, aversion of food and decreased appetite.

<i>Kshamanana</i>	-	+	-
Dryness in chest	+	-	-
Dryness in	+	-	+
Dryness in	+	-	+
<i>Kasa</i> gets alleviated by the food and drinks	+	-	+
The upward movements	+	-	+
Illusive (<i>Moha</i>)	+	-	+
<i>Kshobha</i>	+	-	+
Horripilation	-	-	+
Agitated	+	-	-
Pain at temporal	-	+	-

present in the head, chest and neck region. Vitiation of *prana* and *udana vata* and blocking of channels of respiratory system results in increased pressure inside the channels of eyes, nose, ear and throat. It creates severe painful contraction of muscles in the areas like mandibular joint and cervical region, resulting in forceful expulsion of air producing a typical sound in the presence or absence of sputum is known

as *kasa*.^[16] Acharya Sushruta has mentioned that pathogenesis of *kasa* as after consumption of causative factors, vitiation of *prana vata* takes place and this gets mixed with *udana vata*, and additionally moves upwards. The increase of these two types of *vatas* causes unusual, forceful expulsion of *vayu* from the mouth creating a peculiar sound similar to that of sound Produced by broken bronze vessel.^[17] Vagbhata also preached the same opinion.^[18]

MANAGEMENT^[19]

Management of *Vataja kasa* is based on the diseased person and the strength of diseased one. The choice of management can be purificatory (*shodhana*) or palliative (*shamana*) in *Vataja kasa*. However, the purificatory therapies are advised for *Vataja kasa* management; it's always recommended to choose palliative option in this disorder. Actually, there is a need of different mode of tactics at different stages. Practically, one should maintain multiple line of management.

It can be tabulated as follows -

Table No. 4 - Management (*chikitsa*) protocols

Management protocols	Charaka samhita ^[20]	Sushruta samhita ^[21]	Ashtanga Hridaya
<i>Snehana</i>	+	+	+
<i>Vatagla siddha</i>	+	-	+
<i>Ghruta pana</i>	+	-	+
<i>Sneha dhooma</i>	+	-	+
<i>Abhyanga</i>	+	-	+
<i>Parisheka</i>	+	-	+
<i>Basti</i>	+	-	+
<i>Sapitta- gluita papa</i>	+	-	+
<i>Sakapha- sneha virechana</i>	+	-	+

<i>Peya, Yusha,</i>	+	-	+
<i>Vidari gandhadi</i>	-	-	-
<i>kruta gluita Sukhosima gluita</i>	-	-	-

Table No. 5 - Palliative (*shamana*) Management (*chikitsa*) recipes

Charaka samhita ^[23]	Sushruta samhita ^[24]	Ashtanga Hridaya samhita ^[25]
<i>Kantakari Ghruta Pipgaliyadi Ghruta Trayushna di Ghruta Rasnadi Ghruta Vidangadi Churn Duralbhadi lehya Duhsparsadi lehya Vidangadi avalehya Chitrakadi lehya Agasty haretaki Manahshiladi Dhooma Prapaundrika dhooma</i>	<i>Kalyanaka Guda Agasty a lehya / Agasty a harita ki Rasayan an</i>	<i>Vatakasana nashak Ghruta Yavaksharadi Ghruta Rasnadi Ghruta Vidaryadi Ghruta Vidangadi Churna Duralabha Yoga</i>

AVOIDING CAUSATIVE FACTORS (*Nidana Parimarjana*)^[26]

It is the supreme important aspect of management. Person suffering from this disorder has to avoid causing factors like smoking, inhalation of dust, etc. There is a need of modifying the occupations also to avoid these causes like mask wearing, avoiding air conditioned working place, etc.

Also the person affected with this disease should avoid cold and take more care in winter seasons and travelling in the cold atmosphere.

DO'S AND DON'TS (*Pathya* and *Apathya*)^[27]

Management protocol for any disease without the diet will not be comprehensive. The diet and drugs, which are favorable in the body, mind, and do not produce any adverse effects, are considered as *pathya* and opposite to it are *apathya*. It plays very significant role in treating the disorder which adds to the positive effect. Only, following *pathya* and avoiding *apathya* in its primary stage can control the disease. *Charaka* has considered the word *pathya* as a symptom of *Chikitsa*. *Pathya* like *mamsa peya*^[28] is beneficial. *Apathya* like excess intake of sweets are contraindicated.

DISCUSSION

Kasa is a disease pertaining to *Pranavaha srotasa* (respiratory system). *Vataja Kasa* is a impulsive, often involuntary, strong release of air from the lung parenchyma because of the vitiation of upward abnormal movement of *Vata dosha*, especially *Udana* and *Prana* type of *vata*. As the respiratory system is straight related with the exterior environment through the nose and mouth, it is additional prone to allergens and droplet infections. The responsible causative factors for this order can be listed as air pollution due to substantial traffic, dust, and development, doing substantial exercises in gym or further places, irregular eating habits, too much consumption of cold, dry, and astringent tastes, too much indulgence in sex, etc. These causes leads to the vitiation of *vata dosha*, which leads to the obstruction of normal movements of *vata*, particularly the *dosha* situated in the lower body. As per *Hemadri* commentator *apana*

vata is mainly vitiated. Thus the clogged *Apana vata* changes its normal route and becomes upward moving. *Apana vata* moves upward and reaches chest area, where it vitiates the *Udana* and *Prana* type of *vata*. These vitiates *doshas* then spreads in to throat and adjacent areas. In this *sthana samshraya* stage premonitory signs (*purvarupa*) manifests.

The premonitory signs like pain in throat and mouth as well itching in throat are because of the vitiated *vata* and *kapha doshas*. The *vata dosha* which is already vitiated takes lodging in throat and chest region, which dries up all the channels present in that area owing to its increased dry property (*rooksha guna*). It makes thorny like form with itching in that area. Dysphagia (*bhojyanum avarodha*) is mentioned as premonitory signs as *prana* and *apana* are the main *doshas* involved in *Kasa*. And the function of intake of food (*annapraveshana karma*) and inhaling air (*nishwasa*) are of *prana vata*, which is itself gets vitiated which results in dysphagia.

After the appearance of premonitory signs, symptoms of the disease appear. Pain in lateral flanks, head and heart are due to abnormal route of *vata*, specially due to obstructed flow of *udana* and *prana* type of *vata*. The dry property of *vata* dries up the *kapha* resulting in dry cough. Dryness in the throat and mouth are because of the drying *kapha* of due to vitiated upward moving *vata*. The disease progress and the relief can be gained by following do's (*pathya*) and don't's (*apathya*) with appropriate line of management.

CONCLUSION:

Classical texts of *Ayurveda* have enough described the causative factors, premonitory signs, symptoms, pathogenesis, do's and don'ts along with proper stage wise line of management of *Vataja kasa*. Changed

lifestyle is responsible for different respiratory disorders. The prominent causes of *Vataja kasa* mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classical texts are polluted air due to dust (*raja*) and smoke (*dhuma*), which starts the pathological process by making abnormal the *Pranavaha srotasa* (respiratory system). The management is well explained by classical texts as per the stage and severity of the disease. If the *Vataja kasa* is not treated properly then it may cause other numerous diseases like haemothorax or pulmonary tuberculosis (*kshataj kasa* or *kshaya*)^[29]; hence this disease must be addressed immediately.

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