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Review about causative factors of karshya (emaciation) from charaka samhita

Sonali Gawade¹, Bhandare Vijay M.², Chaudhari Manojkumar V*.³

1. M. D. (Samhita Siddhanta) Scholar, Email: sonaligawade29.sg@gmail.com, Mobile: 9921850270
2. Professor & HOD, Email: drvijaybhandare@gmail.com, Mobile: 9422080246
3. Assistant Professor,

Department of Samhita Siddhanta,
Ashtang Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Pune, Maharashtra

*Corresponding author:

Email: manojksamhita@gmail.com,
Mobile: 9552509052

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Abstract:

Karshya (emaciation) is an *Apatarpanjanya Vyadhi* and *Rasa-pradoshaja vyadhi*. It is the most large spreading health and nutritional disorder in developing countries. *Karshya* means person having lean and thin body character but doesn't have any more complaints. *Charaka* has well explained clinical symptoms of *Karshya* as well he has explained causative factors in detail, viz., *Aharaja* (dietary), *Viharaja* (behavioural), and *Manasika* (Psychological). These all causes do aggravation of *Vayu*, alteration of *Agni*, insufficient production of *Rasa dhatu* along with other *Dhatus* which leads to *Karshya*. If the emaciated person is not treated properly then he/she gets suffered from spleen enlargement, cough, wasting, dyspnoea, *Gulma*, piles, abdominal disease, and the disease of gastro-intestinal tract. *Karshya* is better than *sthaulya* (obesity), a statement given by *Charaka*. Avoiding causative factors is *Chikitsa*. As well *Charaka* is well known clinician; hence to refer *Charaka Samhita* priority is essential. If causative factors are well known to affected people and reduced or avoided completely, it is useful to eradicate *Karshya* (emaciation) from society. Hence an attempt is made to review causative factors of *Karshya* from *Charaka Samhita*.

Introduction:

Karshya (emaciation) is an *Apatarpanjanya Vyadhi* (due to lack of nutrition). Among the eight socially undesirable persons (*Ashtoninditiya*) as mentioned by *Charaka*, *Karshya* has been categorized under nutritional deficiency.^[1] It is the most large spreading health and nutritional disorder in developing countries. According to National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-3, carried out in 2005-06, 40% of India's children under the age of three are underweight, 45% are stunted and 23% are wasted.^[2] Malnutrition in adults is recorded as 36% of women and 34 % of men are undernourished, with a BMI less than 18.5, indicating a high prevalence of nutritional deficiency.^[2] According to World health organization the incidence of low weight at birth estimates that more than 20 million children, every year and approximately 150 million children younger than 5 years have low weight patterns for their age.^[3] The nutritional status of women and children is particularly important, because it is through women and their off-spring that the pernicious effects of malnutrition are propagated to future generations. A malnourished mother is likely to give birth to a low birth- weight (LBW) baby susceptible to disease and premature death.^[4] A new study published in LANCET Journal in 2016 has found 'India has most underweight people' with 102 million men and 101 million women and leads the world being home to over 40 percent of global underweight population.^[5]

The word *Krishna* is derived from root *Krish* *Tanukarane* with *Acha Pratyaya*.^[6] Its unembroidered meaning is to be short of food, to turn into emaciated, to develop into lean and thin. It means a condition or disorder in which the body of a person becomes emaciated, having a lesser amount of *Rasa Dhatu* additional causing a status of *Mamsa-hinata* or *Mamsa-kshaya*. *Dalhana*

comments *Karshya* as - *Karshyam Mamsakshayam*.^[7] It means person having lean and thin body character but doesn't have any erstwhile complaints is *Karshya*. *Charaka* has classified it under *Rasa-pradoshaja vyadhi*.^[8] As treatment is concerned, *karshya* is better than *sthaulya* (obesity), a statement given by *Charaka*.^[9] Avoiding causative factors is *Chikitsa*.^[10,11] As well *Charaka* is well known clinician; hence to refer *Charaka Samhita* priority is essential. If causative factors are well known to affected people and reduced or avoided completely, it is useful to eradicate *Karshya* (emaciation) from society. Hence an attempt is made to review causative factors of *Karshya* from *Charaka Samhita*.

Symptoms of *Karshya*:

Charaka has well explained the symptoms of healthy individuals as follows –

सममांसप्रमाणस्तु समसंहननो नरः।
दृढेन्द्रियो विकाराणां न बलेनाभिभूयते॥

(च.सू. २१/१८)

Person having proportionate musculature and compactness of the body no doubt posses very strong sensory and motor organs and as they are not overcome by the onslaught of diseases. *Swastha purusha* can tolerate hunger, thirst, excessive physical exercise, hot and cold climate.^[12] *Karshya* is one of condition of body in which by physique i. e. size and shape of the body is disoriented. *Karshya* is condition which disowns definition of *swastha purusha*. *Charaka* has well explained clinical symptoms of *Karshya* as follows^[13] –

- *Shushka* - *sphic*, *udara*, *greeva* - dried up buttocks, abdomen, neck
- *Dhamanijala* *santataha* - prominent vascular network
- *Twagasthi shesho* - remnant of skin and bone
- *Sthoola parva* - thick joints

- *Vyayam Atisauhityam* - does not tolerate physical exercise
- *Kshutpipasamay-aushadham* - does not tolerate high in toxicity of hunger, thirst, disease, drugs
- *Ati-shitoshna-maithunam* - too much of cold, heat and sexual intercourse.

शुष्कस्फिकगुदरग्रीवो धमनीजालसन्ततः।

त्वगस्थिशेषोऽतिकृशः स्थूलपर्वानरो

मतः॥

(च.सू.२१/१५)

Symptoms of Atikrisha:

An excessive emaciated person does not stand physical exercise, intake of food in large quantity, hunger, thirst, diseases and drugs.^[14]

व्यायाममत्तिसौहित्यं

क्षुत्पिपासामयौषधम्।

कृशो न सहते तद्ददशीततोष्णमैथुनम्॥

(च.सू.२१/१)

Causative factors of Karshya:

Charaka has explained causative or etiological factors in detail as follows^[15] –

A. Aharaja (Dietary):

Rukshanna pana sevana - indulgence in rough food and drinks: *Ruksha guna* causes *Kharatva* (roughness), *Vaishadya* (non-sliminess), and *Roukshva* (dryness). The substances which are consisted of *Roukshva*, *Laghu*, *Khara*, *Tikshna*, *Ushna*, *Sthira*, *Apicchila*, are causing *Rukshana Karma*.^[16] *Ruksha annapana* is constituted of intake of *katu* (pungent), *tikta* (bitter), *kashaya* (astringent) substances oil cakes of mustard, tila tail, honey, etc.

B. Viharaja (Behavioural):

- *Vega-nidra-trusha-kshudha-nigrha* - suppression of natural urges, such as - sleep thirst and hunger: Forceful suppression of all

the physical urges, specially the sleeping urges lead to aggravation of *vata*.

- *Shrama* - excessive physical and mental activity
- *Atishrama, ati maithuna, atisnana abhyasa* - excessive exercise, sexual intercourse, excess bath
- *Ruksha udvartana* - excess non - unctuous anointing to body: *Udavartana* is done after *abhyanga* for external purification of the body. This action naturally mitigates *kapha* and *medo-harana*.
- *Langhana* – fasting: *Langhana* is process which reduces body. *Langhana* is of 10 types. Four types *samsuddhi* (elimination therapy – *vamana*, *virechana*, *niruha* and *nasya*), *pipasa* (control of thirst), *marut* and *atapa sevana* (exposure to wind and sun), *pachana* (digestion stimulant), *upavasa* (fasting), *vyayama* (physical exercise).^[17]
- *Ati Snana abhyasa* - indulgence in bath: bathing more than 2 times a day for prolong time lead to aggravation of *vayu*.
- *Pramitashana* - little diet: Inadequate quantity of food is termed as *pramitashana*.
- *Kriyatiyoga* - excessive subjection to evacuative therapy. The term *kriyaatiyoga* is implied here in respect to the administration of *Vamana*, *virechana*, *niruha-anuvasana*, *nasya* and *shiro-virechana*.
- *Prakruti* – constitution: It plays important role in *karshya*.
- *Beeja dosha* - heredity
- *Jara* - old age
- *Vikar-anushaya* - continued disorder: Disease cannot be treated properly or cured for long time leads to *karshya*.

- According to *Charaka* untimely intake of food in reduced quantity is prime cause for *Karshya*.^[18]
- *Ahara Dosha* is the main affecting factor for *Karshya* and *Alpashana* as well *Vishamashana* (false habit of intake) also cause for it.^[19]

C. *Manasika* (Psychological):

- *Krodha* - anger
- *Shoka* – grief: *Shoka* is a psychological phenomenon in which signifies the miserable state. This condition leads to aggravation of *vayu*.
- *Chinta* - worries
- *Bhaya* - fear

सेवा रूक्षान्नपानानां लघ्वनं
प्रमिताशनम्।

क्रियातियोगः शोकश्चवेगनिद्राविनिग्रहः॥

रूक्षस्योद्वर्तनं स्नानस्याभ्यासः
प्रकृतिर्जरा।

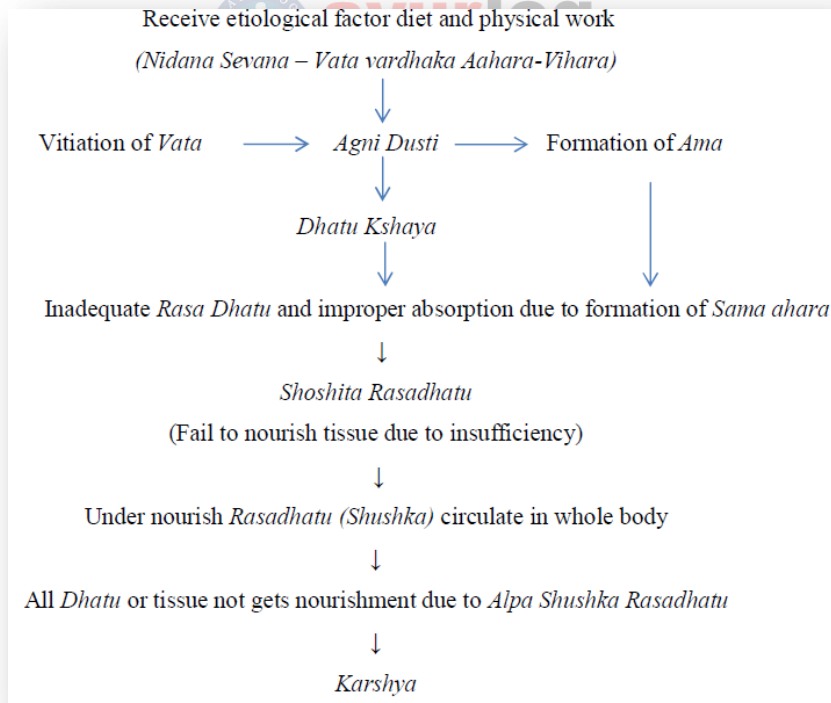
विकारानुशयः क्रोधः कुर्वन्त्यतिकृशं
नरम्॥

(च.सू.२१/११-१२)

These all causes do aggravation of *Vayu*, alteration of *Agni* which leads to insufficient production of *Rasa dhatu* along with other *Dhatu*s chronologically, ultimately forms *Karshya*.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis of disease):^[20]

Those who indulge in *Vata* vitiating diet, physical exercise, excessive sexual intercourse, strenuous study, anxiety, wakefulness in night, thirst, hunger, taking of astringents, partial starvation etc., circulating *Rasa* being reduced in quantity fail to nourish the tissue due to insufficiency; which leads to *Karshya* (emaciation).^[21]



Complications of *Karshya*:^[22] If the emaciated person is not treated properly then he/she gets suffered from spleen enlargement, cough, wasting, dyspnoea, *Gulma*, piles, abdominal

disease, and the disease of gastro-intestinal tract.

Conclusion:

Karshya (emaciation) is highly prevalence nutritional disorder in developing countries. *Charaka* has well explained clinical symptoms, causative factors, complications and therapeutic guidelines. *Charaka* has well explained clinical symptoms of *Karshya* as well he has explained causative factors in detail, viz., *Aharaja* (dietary), *Viharaja* (behavioural), and *Manasika* (Psychological). Knowledge of causative factors to affected people will help them to reduce or avoid etiological factors will help to cure *Karshya*.

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