

EFFECT OF RAKTAMOKSHANA BY CUPPING THERAPY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF KATIGRAHA - A CASE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Low back pain has become a common problem in all generations of people. Low back pain can be correlated with *Katigraha* concept in Ayurveda. *Katigraha* is a *Vedanapradhana vyadhi*. Patient feels pain and stiffness in the lumbar region, which hampers normal activities of person. The main culprit for this is our lifestyle, stress and faulty food habits. A 27 years old male, who is a driver presented with complaints of low backache, stiffness, tenderness, restriction in movements of *Kati* i.e., forward bending and backward bending since 6 months. He had taken Allopathy medications, but result was unsatisfactory. This case was diagnosed as *Katigraha* and was treated with *Raktamokshana* by cupping therapy. 3 sittings of cupping therapy were conducted at the interval of 7 days. The result of the treatment was encouraging; Hence, study concluded that *Katigraha* can be managed with Cupping therapy.

Keywords: *Katigraha*, *Raktamokshana*, Cupping.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda context, the *Sthanas* of *Vata Dosha* are *Pakwashaya*, *Kati*, *Sakthi*, *Shrotrasthi*, *Sparshanendriya*¹. In *Katigraha*, there are *Shoola* and restricted movements, present in whole *Kati Pradesha*

i.e. in between *Urah* and *Nitamba*². According to *Gad-anigraha*, *Vata* is affected by *Ama* and gets located in *Kati Pradesha*³. *Katigraha* as a *Swatantra Vyadhi* is not much elaborated in *Bruhatrayee*, it is explained as

symptom in *Vataja jwara*⁴, *Vidradhi* in *Vrukka*⁵ and *Pakwashayagata Vata Kopa Lakshane*⁶.

For the 1st time in Ayurveda literature, *Acharya Shodhala* has described *Katigraha* as a *Swatantra Vyadhi* in *Vatavyadhi Chikitsitam adhyaya*. In *Gadanigraha*, *Samprapti* given by him is as follows- *Shuddha* or *Saama Vayu* enters in *Katipradesha* and causes stiffness of muscles of *Katipradesha*³. *Acharya Trivedi R.* has stated *Sthana* of *Kati* in *Parishaadhyayam Shabdarth Shareeram* as follows- in between *Uraha* and *Nltamba*. Further he added symptoms of *Katigraha* as- pain and restricted movement in *Katipradesha*².

In Ayurveda, several treatment options are available for the management of *Katigraha*. There are mainly 5 types of *Shodhana karma* i.e., *Panchakarma* procedures⁷-*Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, *Nasya* and *Raktamokshana*. These procedures are described as major therapeutic modalities in Ayurveda. It maintains state of health and manage diseased condition which is the main aim of Ayurveda. It promotes detoxification and rejuvenation. Among these procedures *Raktamokshana* is one of the fascinating procedures and satisfactory answer for *Katigraha*. *Raktamokshana* is accepted as half of the therapeutic measure in *Shalyatantra* like *Basti* in *Kayachikitsa*⁸. *Raktamokshana* is classified mainly as *Shastra Visravana* and *Anushastra Visravaan*. *Prachan* and *Siravedha* comes under *Shastra Visravana* whereas *Shringa*, *Jalauka*, *Alabu*, *Ghati*, *Vigharshan* are included in *Anushastra*⁹. Out of these methods, Cupping therapy can be correlated with *Shringa*. The suction through specific cupped instrument was used since prehistoric time for the treatment of disease.

Cupping therapy is an ancient method that has been used in the treatment of broad range of conditions¹⁰. There are many types of cupping therapy; however, Dry and Wet cupping are the two main types¹¹. Dry cupping pulls the skin into the cup without scarification

while in wet cupping the skin is lacerated so that blood is drawn into the cups¹². There are three main possible hypothesis and theories might explain mechanism of pain reduction-

- 1) Pain Gate Theory
- 2) Reflex Zone Theory
- 3) Diffuse Noxious Inhibitory Controls

Case Report-

This is a case report of a 27yrs old male patient, who had complained of low backache, stiffness (*Graha*), Tenderness, Restriction in movements of *Kati* i.e., forward bending and backward bending, since 6 months. The patient had consulted Allopathic physician but could not get complete relief, therefore the patient approached for Ayurvedic treatment. He neither had history of DM, HTN, Asthma, trauma, any other illness nor any surgical history. This male patient worked as driver since 5 yrs. He had to drive for 8 hours daily and had a shift duty. Investigations such as X-ray of L. S. Spine (AP view and lateral view) with opinion of Radiologist were carried out by patient. Report was-Loss of normal lordosis and some degenerative changes in L. S. Spine and paraspinal muscle spasm. The patient was treated with *Raktamokshana* by Cupping therapy.

Procedure of Wet Cupping-

A) Poorvakarma-

- 1) Written informed consent of the patient was taken having the information regarding the procedure to the patient and relatives.
- 2) The required materials: Cupping set, disposable surgical blade no. 15, betadine, spirit swab, kidney tray, gauze piece.
- 3) Blood pressure, Pulse rate, Respiratory rate, Temperature, Random BSL, BT, CT, was noted prior to procedure.
- 4) *Mudga Yusha* was advised to patient one hour before procedure.



Fig 1: Cupping Set

B) Pradhan Karma-

- 1) Patient was given prone position. Then the affected area of back (lumbar region) was painted with betadine solution. Cups of suitable size for affected area were selected. Here, 4 cups of medium size were selected.
- 2) First, cups were applied to the sites and air was sucked inside the cups by cupping gun. These cups were applied to the skin and left for the period of 3-5 minutes till the skin colour became dark pinkish purple and then removed.
- 3) After cleaning the affected area (dark pinkish purple coloured skin) with spirit swab, superficial incisions (Scratches) were taken with the help of surgical blade no.15.
- 4) The cups were placed back on the skin using similar procedure described above. The observation was done for proper oozing of blood in the cups. Collection of blood in cups was started spontaneously. It took 3-5 minutes and then started to form clots.
- 5) Cups were removed and impure blood collected in cups was wiped off in kidney tray with sterile guaze piece.

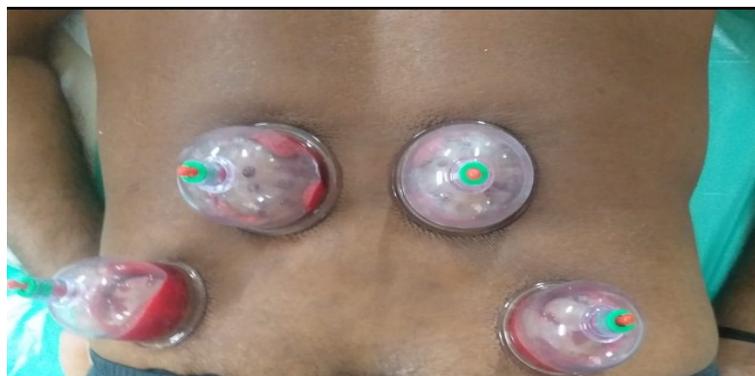


Fig.2 Cupping at lumbar region

C) Pashchat Karma-

- 1) The site was cleaned and disinfected with the help of betadine.
- 2) Dressing was not done at this place.
- 3) Patient was advised to avoid water contact to this area for 24 hrs.

Table 1: Do’s and Don’ts after Cupping

Do’s	Don’ts
AHARA- Light diet Liquid diet (<i>Mudga Yusha</i>) Sweet eatables Milk and milk products VIHARA- Light work Maintain proper posture of spine while sitting	AHARA - Spicy and oily foods Sour eatables e.g. Lemon, curd Fermented eatables Junk food Cold drinks, ice-cream VIHARA- <i>Diwasvap</i> <i>Jagarana</i> Heavy Exercise Excessive Sitting, walking, swimming

Assessment Criteria-

A) Subjective Assessment-

1) Pain during lumbar flexion and extension measured by VAS scale-Before and after treatment.

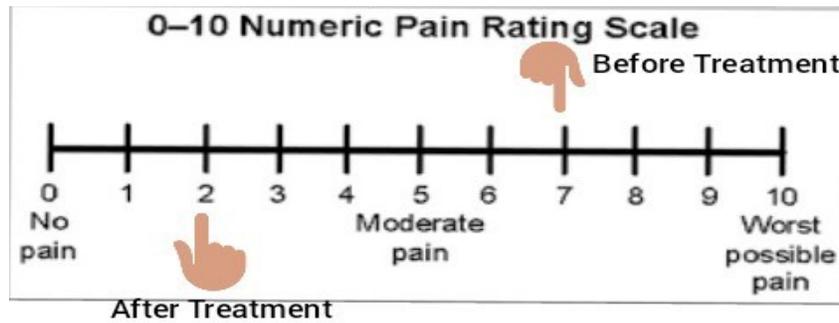


Fig 3: VAS scale- Before and After treatment

2) *Katigraha* & its Grades-

Table 2- *Katigraha* and its grades-

<i>Katigraha</i> (Stiffness)	Grade
No stiffness or stiffness lasting for 5min	0
Stiffness for 5min to 2 hrs	1
Stiffness for 2hrs to 8hrs	2
Stiffness for more than 8 hrs	3

B) Objective Assessment-

1) LEM (Lumbar Extension Measurement) by Goniometer

2) LFM (Lumbar Flexion Measurement) by Goniometer

Result-

Table 3: Assessment Score-

NO.	Criteria	Before Treatment	After Treatment (After 3 settings of cupping)
1.	Pain intensity (VAS Scale)	7	2
2.	<i>Katigraha</i> (Stiffness)	Grade 2	Grade 0
3.	LEM	50 ⁰	30 ⁰
4.	LFM	80 ⁰	60 ⁰

DISCUSSION

Due to heavy industrialization and development, advanced software technology, the mankind is running behind fast and furious life. Due to that every person indulges in improper sitting postures, continuous long journeys, overexertion, jerky movements during travelling and sports, weight lifting, sitting for a prolonged time and other strainful activities, etc. create an undue pressure to the spinal column and play an important role in producing low backache even in early decades of life. In the above case, the patient was suffering from *Katigraha* due to excessive travelling and lack of exercise. According to *Acharya Shodhala*, *Shuddha* or *Saama vayu* enters in *Katipradesha* and causes stiffness of muscles of *Katipradesha*.

Raktamokshana is considered as half of therapeutic measures in *Shalyatantra*¹³. *Raktamokshana* means the

procedure of blood letting for the therapeutic purpose for removing morbid *Doshas* with blood. *Acharya Sushruta* declared *Rakta* as a 4th *Dosha* and its importance in our body. Also, *Acharya Charaka* and *Acharya Vagbhata* stated that diseases, which are not relieved by *Sheeta*, *Ushna*, *Snigdha*, *Rooksha*, etc., *Upakrama* can be considered as there is an involvement of *Rakta* and these diseases can be treated with *Raktamokshana*¹⁴. *Raktamokshana* by *Shringa Avcharana* is indicated in *Vaat Dushti Rakta Vyadhis* in *Sushrut Samhita*. *Ushna*, *Madhura* and *Snigdha Gunas* of *Shringa* antagonizes the *Sheeta*, *Katu* and *Ruksha Gunas* of *Vata Dosha* and relieves pain¹⁵. Hence, *Shringa Avcharana* was beneficial in this case. Cupping therapy can be equated with the *Shringa*. Thus, *Raktamokshana* by cupping therapy was chose for treating patient diagnosed as *Katigraha*.

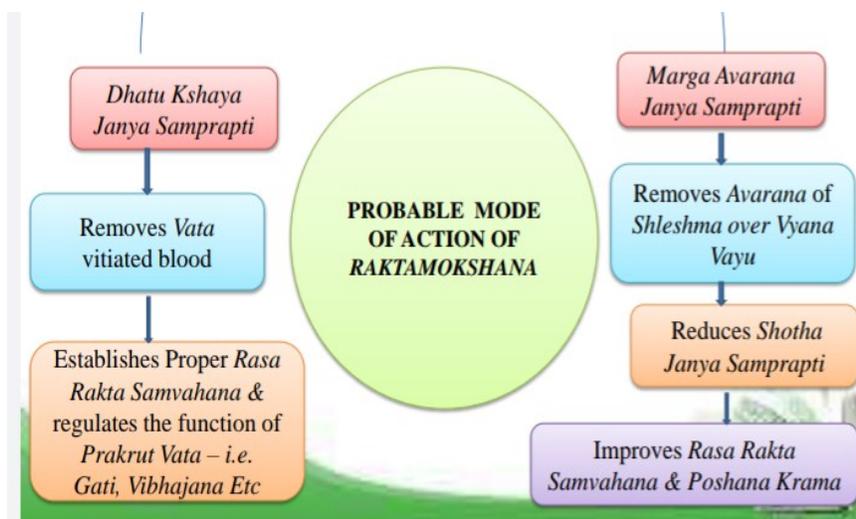


Fig 4: Probable Mode of Action of *Raktamokshana*

Cupping works on the principle of vacuum extraction. Cupping targets soft tissue by applying local pressure to pain points and areas of swelling. It helps to extract blood from the body which may be harmful and in turn, overcome the potential adverse effects, leading to physiological well-being. Loss of blood along with vasodilation tends to increase the parasympathetic activity and relax body muscles. Thus, paraspinal muscle spasm experienced by the patient due to driving for the long hours resulting in stress is relieved thus relieving the

pain. Also, cupping mainly involves improving micro-circulation, promoting capillary endothelial cell repair, accelerating granulation and angiogenesis in the regional tissues. This helps in normalizing the patient's functional state and progressive muscle relaxation. Cupping is the best deep tissue massage.

Samyaka Lakshane- *Samyaka lakshanas* like *laghavam*, *vedanashanti* and decrease in diseased condition were experienced by patient¹⁶.

CONCLUSION

Katigraha/Low backache is commonly seen in society as a prominent problem due to modern lifestyle. Cupping- a type of Raktamokshana is one of the parasurgical treatment choices in Katigraha due to paraspinal muscle spasm. In this study 3 sittings of cupping at the interval of 7 days played a significant role in the management of Katigraha. Further studies are needed in more patients for its scientific validation.

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