



"Ayurvedic Insights into *Vatarakta*: Exploring Traditional Causes and Modern Comparisons with Gout"

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ABSTRACT

Vatarakta, commonly known as gout, is a disorder rooted in the accumulation of uric acid crystals in the joints, leading to inflammation and severe pain. In *Ayurveda*, *Vatarakta* is classified under *Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi*, a group of diseases primarily caused by vitiation of the *Vata Dosha*. Gout manifests as sudden attacks of joint pain, particularly in the feet, due to the crystallization of uric acid, exacerbated by factors such as diet rich in purines, alcohol consumption, obesity, and certain medications. The *Ayurvedic* perspective on *Vatarakta* emphasizes the role of dietary habits, lifestyle factors, and the balance of *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) in its etiology and management. Treatment strategies include pacification of aggravated *Vata Dosha* through diet modifications, herbal therapies, and lifestyle changes aimed at reducing inflammation and restoring balance in the body. This article explores the *Ayurvedic* understanding of *Vatarakta* (gout), highlighting its correlation with the modern understanding of uric acid metabolism and joint inflammation. Integrative approaches that combine *Ayurvedic* principles with contemporary medical interventions offer a comprehensive framework for managing *Vatarakta*, ensuring holistic care that addresses both symptomatic relief and long-term management of the underlying causes.

KEYWORDS – *Vatarakta* , *Rakta* , *Nidana* , *Ayurveda* , *Gout* , *Dosha*, *Uttan* , *Gambhir*, Uric acid

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a traditional medical and healthcare system that not only treats chronic illnesses but also upholds human health and keeps the body in good condition. A lot of references along with description of this disease are available in classical texts under the name of *Vatarakta*, *Adhyavata*, *Vatabalasa* and *Khudavata*.

Sedentary lifestyle along with mental stress, consumption of non-vegetarian food and diet rich in protein, sea food, excessive alcohol intake, fasting, journey on wheels, riding on horse, camels, sporting in water, jumping, walking in hot climates and other similar activities which aggravate *Vata* are some of the causative factors which leads to acute exacerbation of *Vatarakta*.

Rakta is the primary *Dushya* in this *Vata pradhana Tridoshaja Vyadhi* known as *Vatarakta* . *Vata* and *Rakta* are both affected by different etiological reasons in the disorder known as *Vatarakta*. According to *Acharya Charak*, the pre-vitiated *Rakta* forms an *Avarana* over *Vata* and agitates the vitiated *Vata Dosha* as it moves

through the *Srotas*. *Vatarakta* is the result of vitiated *Vata* and *Rakta* working together to have a complicated effect on joints.

According to *Acharya Susruta*, the disease process begins in the *Padamula* or feet and spreads throughout body like *Aakhu Visha* (Rat poison) and *Vatarakta* is occasionally a progressive ailment in which the disease initially affects just the superficial *Dhatu*, causing *Uttana Vatarakta*, but later affects the deep *Dhatu*, causing *Gambhira Vatarakta*.

The *Vatarakta* is correlated with Gouty arthritis due to its similarities in causative factors and symptoms between them. The general prevalence of Gout is 1-4% of the general population. In western countries, it occurs in 3-6% in men and 1-2% in women.

Gout is a metabolic disorder of purine metabolism in which excessive accumulation of uric acid leads to the formation of monosodium urate monohydrate (MSUM) crystals which are accumulated in joint or periarticular tissue causing intense pain and inflammation of 1st metatarsophalangeal joint primarily later accompanied by other joints.

In today's era it is important to know the detailed knowledge of *Nidana* for the better assessment of causative factors of disease and for applying the basic component of *Nidana Parivarjana* (Preventive measures) of *Ayurveda* for the betterment of health.

Etiological factors of *Vatarakta* -

➤ **Dietary Factors:**

- Excessive consumption of food with salty (*Lavana*), sour (*Amla*), astringent/pungent (*Katu*), alkaline (*Kshara*), and unctuous (*Snigdha*) properties.
- Consumption of foods with *Ushna Virya* (hot potency).
- Eating before the digestion of the previous meal (*Ajir nabhojana*).
- Consumption of specific foods like *Tilpishta* (sesame seeds), radish, horse gram, black gram, leafy vegetables, mutton, sugarcane, curd, and fermented drinks.

➤ **Lifestyle Factors:**

- Consumption of incompatible foods (*Virudhaahara*).
- Eating without proper digestion of the previous meal (*Adhyashana*).
- Anger (*Krodha*), daytime sleep (*Diva Swapana*), and nocturnal awakening (*Prajagarana*).

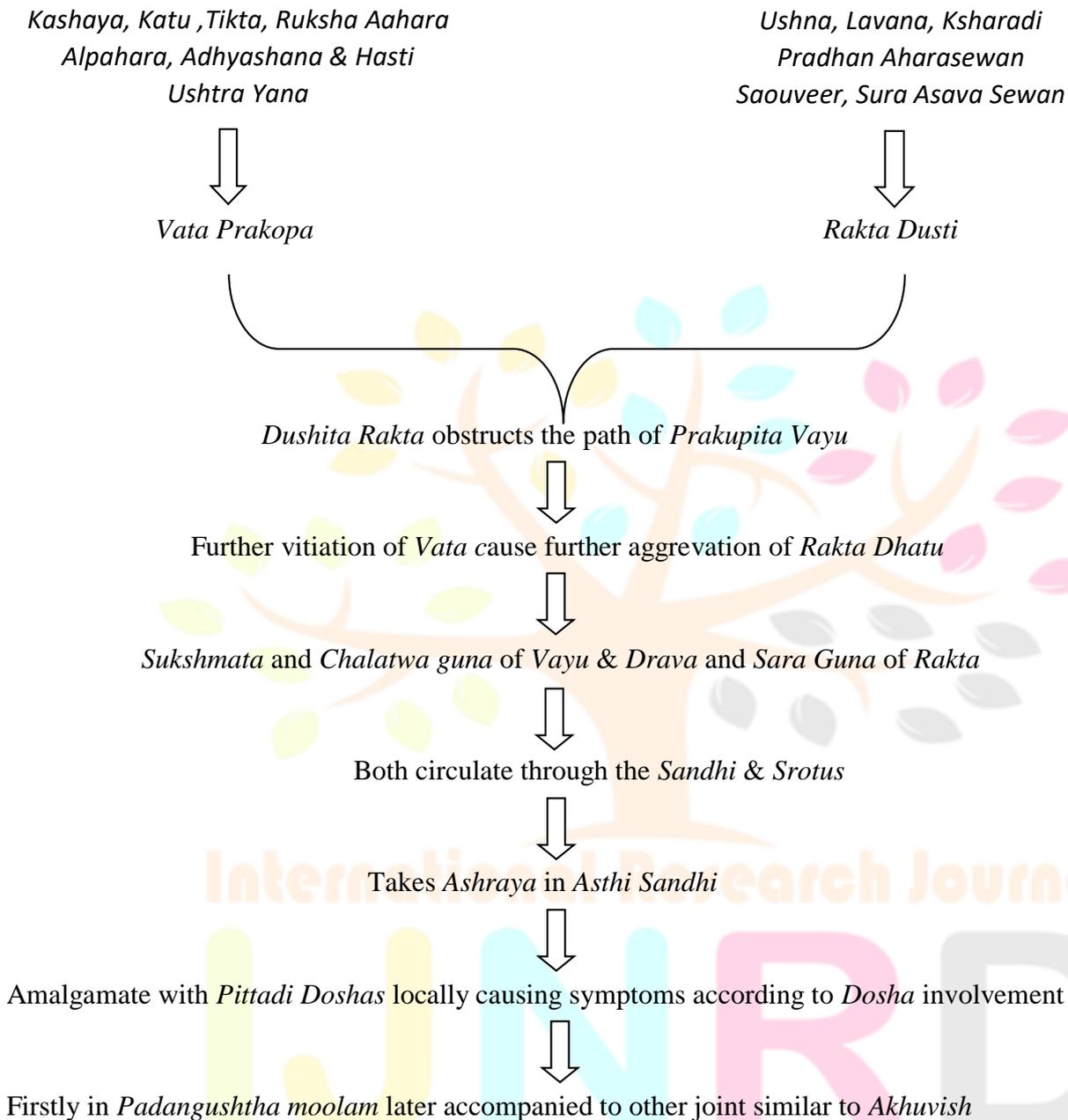
➤ **Constitutional Factors:**

- Persons with a tender constitution (*Sukumar Prakriti*), who are not accustomed to hard work and indulge in improper diet and lifestyle (*Mithyaahara-Vihara*).

➤ **Other Factors:**

- Excessive grief, overindulgence in sexual activities, excessive physical exertion, and regular large intake of wine are also mentioned as causative factors.

SAMPRAPTI CHART-



Samprapti Ghataka

- *Dosha – Vata Pradhana TridoshaJanya Vyadhi*
- *Dushya – Rakta, Twaka, Mamsa*
- *Srotasa (channel) – Raktavaha, Asthivaha, Majjavaha*
- *Srotodusti – Sanga, Vimargagamana*
- *Agni – Agnimandhya*
- *Udhbhavasthana – Pakvashya*
- *Vyaktasthana – Sandhi (Visheshata Kara Pada Sandhi)*
- *Rogamarga – Madhya*

Types of *Vatarakta*

According to *Ashrya* two types

1] *Uttan Vatarakta*

2] *Gambhir Vatarakta*

Uttan Vatarakta Lakshana-

- Itching
- Burning sensation
- Pain
- Extension
- Piercing pain
- Twitching
- Contraction
- The skin color changed to brownish black red or coppery in color

Gambhir Vatarakta Lakshana-

- Swelling
- Stiffness
- Hardness
- Severe pain in interior part of the body
- Blackish brown or coppery discoloration
- Burning sensation
- Pricking pain
- Trembling
- Inflammation

Purvarupa-

The term "*Purvarupa*" refers to prodromal symptoms or early signs that precede the full manifestation of a disease. The various symptoms described in different *Samhitas* for the *Purvarupa* of *Vatarakta* include: *Swedadhikya* (Excessive sweat), *Asweda* (No sweat) . *Karshnya Vaivarnya* (Skin discoloration), *Sparsha Agyuanatwa* (Loss of tactile sensation), *Kandu* (Itching). *Sandhi shaitihilya*, *Stambha* (Joint stiffness), *Alasya* (Lethargy), *Sadana*, *Toda*, *Daha*, *Pidokadgama*, *Spurana*, *Guruta*, *Shrama* (Fatigue), *Supti*, *Mandala*, *Twak Parushya*, *Shotha* (Swelling), *Sakthi daurbalya* (Weakness), *Slathangata* (Flaccidity), *Kotha*.

Sadhyaasadhyatva of Vatarakta-

Vatarakta in which only one *Dosha* is involved and that of recent onset is *Sadhya*. If two *Doshas* are involved it is *Yapya*. If all three *Doshas* are involved and associated with complications, then the *Asadhya*.

Review of Modern Literature-

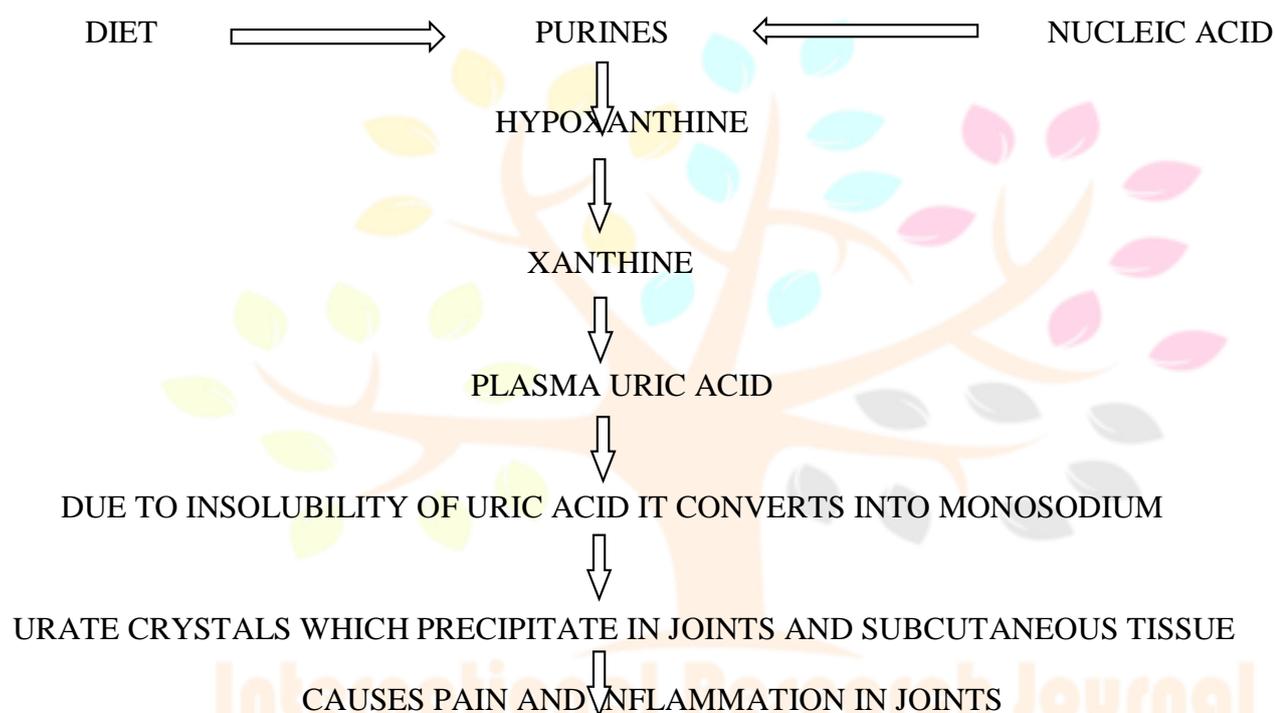
Gout is one of the oldest known forms of arthritis. It is a metabolic disorder of purine metabolism, which is chronic in nature. It is a common inflammatory arthropathy caused by deposition of MSU (monosodium urate) crystals in and around joints and soft tissues. The disease is also known as "pod Agra" as in most cases initially the first metatarso phalangeal joint of the foot (big toe) is affected.

OCCURENCE- It most often affects middle aged to elderly men and post-menopausal women. Gout develops more in men than women (10:1) and seldom in pre-menopausal women. Developed countries have a higher burden of the disease.

ETIOLOGY- Mainly there are two causes either overproduction or insufficient excretion of uric acid from the body.

PRECIPITATING FACTORS- Alcohol, Obesity, Severe mental or physical fatigue, Dietary excess, Diuretic therapy, local injury or any acute infection might precipitate an acute attack of gout.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY



DISCUSSION-

Vatarakta can affect people globally, regardless of race, gender, age, or climate, and is often compared to gouty arthritis. This condition arises from the vitiation of both *Vata* and *Rakta*. When *Vata* is aggravated, it becomes obstructed by vitiated *Rakta*, leading to further aggravation of *Vata*. This interaction disrupts *Rakta* and affects the joints, resulting in *Vatarakta*. Ayurveda identifies various contributing factors (*Nidana*) such as spicy, acidic, hot, and irritant foods, as well as excessive consumption of pulses, alcohol, meat, sedentary lifestyles, and psychological stress like anger and emotional distress, especially in individuals with a delicate constitution (*Sukumar*).

Vatarakta has two stages: *Uttan* and *Gambhir*. *Uttan Vatarakta* primarily impacts the skin (*Twaka*) and muscle tissue (*Mamsa*), while *Gambhira Vatarakta* affects the bone tissue (*Asthidhatu*) and spreads as severe pain (*Aakhuvisha*). Charaka Samhita provides a detailed description of *Vatarakta* as a distinct disease. The main causative factors include excessive intake of heavy, salty, and stringent foods, and poor lifestyle choices. To prevent and manage *Vatarakta*, adherence to *Dinacharya* (daily routines) and *Ritucharya* (seasonal routines) as prescribed in *Ayurveda* is crucial. *Yoga* also plays a significant role in enhancing physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being, which aids in the prevention and management of *Vatarakta*.

CONCLUSION-

Vatarakta is a specific type of *Vatavyadhi* and is closely associated with gouty arthritis. Unlike other diseases, which may be more challenging to prevent, *Vatarakta* is influenced by lifestyle and dietary habits, making it potentially preventable through healthier choices. According to *Ayurveda*, *Hetus* (causative factors) are identified for various diseases and are detailed in the *Nidanpanchak*. By avoiding these causative factors and following the recommended dietary and lifestyle guidelines from *Ayurveda*, one can manage or eliminate *Vatarakta* and maintain good health. *Vatarakta* is an example of *Avarana Janya Vata Vyadhi*, where *Vata* and *Rakta* are the primary *Dosha-Dushya* involved. It is typically characterized by pain in the metatarsophalangeal joint and is clinically diagnosed through elevated serum uric acid levels.

An integrative approach that merges the strengths of *Ayurvedic* and modern medical practices can result in the best outcomes for managing *Vatarakta*, offering individuals with gout a path to a healthier and pain-free life.

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