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Review Article

Karnasrava : An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT-

Ayurveda the ancient science of health has immense knowledge about human body and various types of diseases. Our great seers described myriad of diseases with the causes, pathogenesis and treatment. *Urdhvajatrugata* (ENT) *Roga* is described vary vastly in classics. *Karnasrava* is one such disease described by all ancient *acharyas* of *Ayurveda*. The term *Karnasrava* means flow, oozing, dropping, exudates or discharge through ear. According to *Sushruta*, *Karnasrava* may

arise due to head injury, diving in water and suppuration or bursting of an abscess. *Charaka* included *Karnasrava* as a symptom under the four types of *karanrogas*.

Key words :- *Urdhvajatrugata Roga, Karnasrava, karanrogas*.

INTRODUCTION

Karnasrava is one such disease among 28 *Karanrogas* mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta* in the chapter named *Karna Roga Vigyana*¹. *Acharya Charaka* included *Karnasrava* as symptom under the four types of *Karanrogas*² due to vitiation of different *doshas*. *Acharya Vagbhata* has not described *Karnasrava* separately. It is a fact that systematic description of *Karanrogas* are available in all the ancient treatises. In *karnasrava* discharge of pus from a *Vata* afflicted ear may result from head injury or due to immersion in water or else due to suppuration of an abscess.³ This disease can be correlated to chronic suppurative otitis media C.S.O.M. on the basis of sign and symptoms. CSOM is chronic infection of the middle ear and mastoid. It is characterised by a permanent perforation in Tympanic membrane. Any perforation which persists for more than 12 weeks is considered as permanent and leads to CSOM⁴

Etymology of *Karnasrava*

Karnasrava: The term *Karna* is derived from “*Kriyate khipyate, shabdo vayuna yatra, kirti shabda gharhna mansi sukkham khipati-shabd kalpadrum*”

Definition of *Karnasrava*

"*Karnasrava*" word is made up of two words:

- 1) *Karna* which means the ear.
- 2) *Srava* which means flow, flowing, oozing, dropping, exudate or discharge. So *Karnasrava* literally means any type of oozing, discharge or exudates from ear.

Nidana Pancaka of Karnasrava

There are five means for understanding a disease explained in *Ayurvedic* texts .

1. *Nidana* (Causes, aetiology).

2. *Purvarupa* (Premonitory symptoms, prodromal).

3. *Rupa* (Signs and symptoms, clinical features).

4. *Upashaya* (Diagnostic tests).

5. *Samprapti* (Process of manifestation pathogenesis).

NIDANA

Charaka Samhita

Acharya Charaka has not mentioned any kind of *Nidana* regarding *Karnaroga* but he has described *uttpatti* of *Karnaroga* from *Siroroga* in *Kiyantahshirasiyam adhyaya*.⁵

Sushruta Samhita⁶

According to *Sushruta* the *Nidaana* of *Karnasrava* are

- (1) *Shiroabhyanga* (Head injury)
- (2) *Nimajjatae Jala/ Jala Krida* (Immersion in water)
- (3) *Prabhakar Vidradhi* (Bursting of abscess in ear)

Ashtanga Sangraha and Ashtanga Hridaya

Acharya Vagbhata has considered common *Nidaana* of *Karnaroga* as *Nidaana* of *Karnasrava* i.e.⁷

1. *Pratishyaya*(Common cold)

2. *Jalakrida*

3. *Karnakandu*

4. *Mithyayogen Shabdasya* (sound pollution)

Yogaratanakara⁸

Common causes of *Karanrogas* are

1. *Avasyava*
2. *Jalakrida*
3. *Karnakandu*
4. *Mithya Yoga Shastrasya*

Purvarupa

No specific symptoms are found for *Karnasrava* in the classical literature. *Acharya Madhavakara* describes *Purvarupa* as expression of *Rupa* (*Lakshanas*) with less intensity i.e. less intensity of sound in the ear, may be considered as the *Purvarupa* of *Lakshanas*

Rupa

Karnasrava itself is the *Rupa* of this disease.

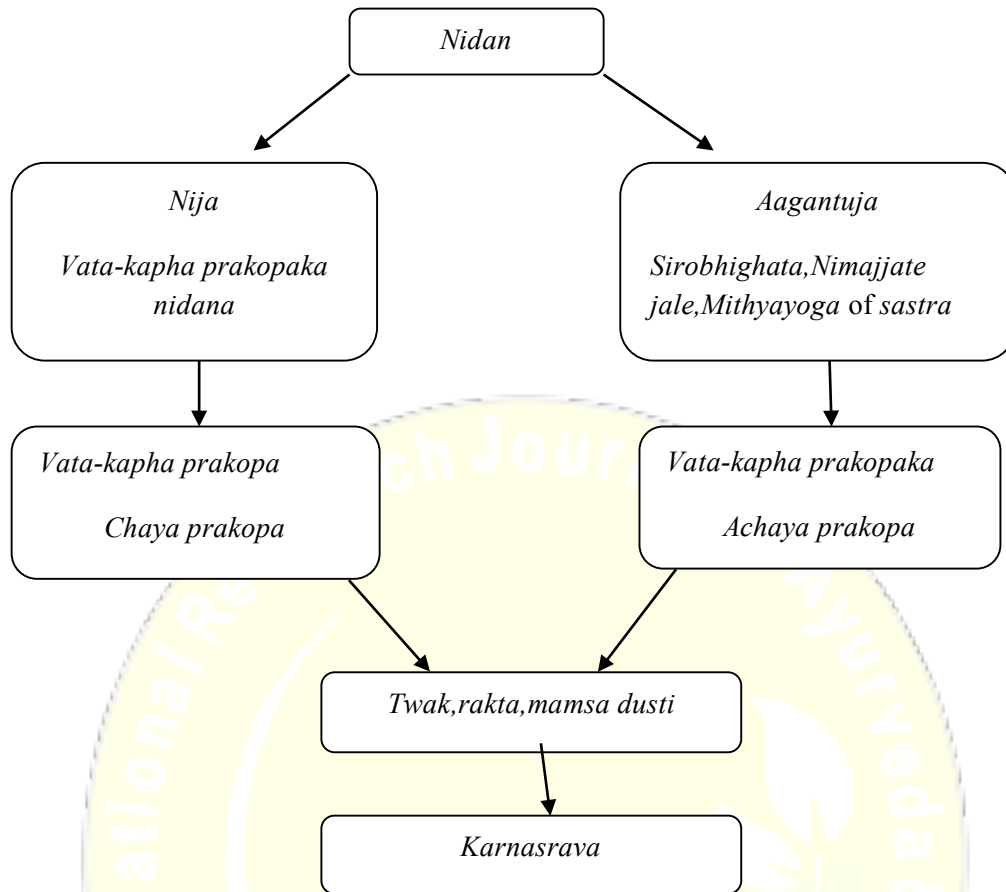
The various characteristics of *Srava* according to involvement of *Dosha* are mentioned by *Acharya Charak* in following table:

Table :- According to involvement of *Dosha* characteristics of *Srava*

<i>Vatika Karnasrava</i> ⁹	<i>Kaphaja Karnasrava</i> ¹⁰
<i>Tanusrava</i> (thin discharge)	<i>Shukla-Snigdha Sruti</i> (White and sticky discharge)
<i>Ashravana</i> (Inability to hear)	<i>Alpa Ruka</i> (Dull pain)
<i>Karnanaada</i> (Tinnitus)	<i>Visrutha</i> (Defective hearing)
<i>Atiruka</i> (Excessive pain)	<i>Kandu</i> (Itching)
<i>Karnamalasya Shosha</i> (Drying of ear wax)	<i>Sthirata</i> (stiffness)

Samprapti

Maharshi Sushruta has not explained the *Samprapti* of *Karnasrava* separately and we have to consider the general *samprapti* in *karnarogas*. Due to the various aetiologies as cited above, ear afflicted by *Vata Dosha* causes discharge from ear.

**Samprapti Ghatakas**

<i>Dosha</i>	-	<i>Vata</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	-	<i>Karnagata Siras, Rasa</i>
<i>Shrotas</i>	-	<i>Shabdavaha</i>
<i>Shroto dushti</i>	-	<i>Vimargagamana of Vata</i>
<i>Adhishthana</i>	-	<i>Karna</i>
<i>Rogamarga</i>	-	<i>Madhyama</i>
<i>Sanchara Sthana</i>	-	<i>Sarva Sharira (Vatavaha Nadi)</i>
<i>Vyakta Sthana</i>	-	<i>Karna</i>
<i>Udhbhavasthana</i>	-	<i>Koshtha</i>
<i>Prabheda</i>	-	<i>Vatika, kaphaja.</i>
<i>Lakshanas</i>	-	<i>Discharge of pus etc.</i>

Doshika Dominance in Karnasrava

According to *Acharyas Sushruta*, *Vata-kapha Doṣa* is dominance in *Karnasrava*.

Chikitsa

It is the curative aspect and this has to be done simultaneously giving due importance to *Nidana Parivarjana* i.e. preventive measures. So, *Nidana Parivarjana* i.e. avoidance of causative factors is the first step in combating the disease and forms the part of line of treatment.¹¹

Samanya Chikitsa

Acharya Sushruta described general treatment of ear disorders as *Snehapana* (drinking ghee), *Rasayana* (rejuvenation therapy), avoidance of physical exercise and head bath, maintaining celibacy (avoiding copulation) and not speaking too much.¹²

Vishesha Chikitsa

Acharya Sushruta mentioned some procedures in the treatment of *Karnasraava* which is *shirovirechna*, *dhupana*, *purana*, *pramarjana*, *dhavana* (*Raajavrukshadigana*, *Surasaadigana*), *avachurnana* (*manashila*, *lodhra*), *Karanpurana*.¹³

Pathya - Apathya in Karnasrava

There is no specific *Pathya* or *Apathya* for *Karnasrava*. Therefore *Pathya-Apathya* of *Karna Roga* is applied for *Karnasrava*.¹⁴

Pathya- Aahara

- Intake of food grains like *Godhuma*, *Mudga*, *Shali*, *Yava*, *Purana Ghrita* are beneficial.
- Intake of *Mamsa* of *Lava Pakshi*, *Mayura*, *Harina*, *Tittira*, *Vanakukkuta* are conducive
- Vegetables like *Patola*, *Shigru*, *Varthaka*, *Sunisannaka* and *Kathillaka* are advised.
- All sorts of *Rasayanas* are beneficial.

Vihara

- Following *Brahmacharya* and less talk are helpful.

Apathya-Aahara

- *Kapha* aggravating and heavy foods and drinks.

Vihara

- Brushing teeth with a brush prepared with twigs, head bath, excessive exercise, itching of the ear and exposure to fog should be avoided.

DISCUSSION

Karnasrava is explained as a symptom and as a disease in *Ayurveda*. *Karnasrava* occurs due to *Nija Nidana* and *Aagantuja Nidana*. *Nija Nidana* is *Pratishyaaya* while *Aagantuja Nidana* are *Siroabhighata*, *Avashyaaya*, *Jalanimjjana* and *Mithyaayoga* of *Shastra*. Due to the etiological factors which are of *Vata - Kapha* provocative in nature, gradual vitiation of *Doshas* will occur. After vitiation they get accumulated (*Sthaana samsraya*) in the middle part of ear. On other hand, when *Aagantuja Nidana* likes water entry, scratching, head injury and itching leads to *Achaya Purvaka Dosha Prakopa*. These *Dosha* causes *Twaka* and *Mamsa Dhaatu Dushti* which leads to formation of *Vidradhi* i.e. accumulation of pus behind the TM in middle ear. When inflammation occurs in *Vidradhi* it gets suppurated and causes serous to purulent discharge to come out from ear, according to the involvement of *doshas*. Now *Vidradhi* get converted into *Vrana*. The vitiated *Vata* will produce the symptoms like pain, tinnitus, hearing impairment and vitiated *Kapha* is responsible for the clinical features like itching, discharge, heaviness and blockage. During explaining *Samanya Chikitsa* of *Karnaroga*, *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned that it should be treated like

Vrana when *Paaka* or *Srava* is present as a symptom¹⁵

CONCLUSION:

Karnasrava is *Vataj* and *Vatakaphaj* disease in which Discharge of pus comes from ear. CSOM (safe type) can be correlated with *Vata Kaphaja Karnasrava* as the discharge was found mucoid or mucopurulent in nature. Special *nidanas* of *karnasrava* are described by *Susruta Shiroabhyanga* (Head injury) *Nimajjatae Jala/ Jala Krida* (Immersion in water) *Prabhakar Vidradhi* (Bursting of abscess in ear) but other *aacharays* described the common *nidanas* for all *karan rogas*. *Samanya chikitsa* of *Karna Roga*, *Rasayana*, *Ghrita Pana*, *Avayayama*, *Bramchariya*, *Asnana* etc. Specific treatment of *Karna Rogas* – *Nasya*, *karnapurana*, *shirovirechan* which is alleviating *Vata Dosha* along with gives nourishment of nervous system. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Karnasrava* is treated by *shirovirechana (nasya)*, *dhupana*, *poorana*, *pramarjana*, *dhaavana*, *avachoorana* and oral drug therapy etc. The principles of *Dushta Vrana Chikitsa* can be adopted in treatment of *Karnasrava*. In modern medicine the treatment is surgery which is expensive and their chances of reoccurrence .Hence whole world is looking towards *Ayurveda* because it provides safe, easily available and complete cure and thus increases quality of life

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