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GI BLEEDING - AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE AND ITS MANAGEMENT; A REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurvedic medicine, one of the world's oldest healthcare systems, continues to serve as a cornerstone of traditional medicine in India. Acharya Charaka has classified Raktapitta as Mahagada, a severe and life-threatening condition with rapid progression, akin to the destructive nature of fire. [1] The term Raktapitta itself signifies the simultaneous vitiation of Rakta (blood) and Pitta (one of the doshas), attributed to their ashray–ashrayee (mutual dependence) relationship. The primary clinical manifestation of this disease is the spontaneous outflow of Rakta dhatu (blood) from the body through various orifices, without any apparent external injury.

The Bruhatrayi (three major classical Ayurvedic texts) extensively describe the Nidana Panchaka (fivefold diagnostic framework) and Chikitsa (treatment) for Raktapitta. Raktapitta is closely correlated with bleeding disorders in contemporary medicine, which are conditions where the body's normal blood clotting process is impaired, leading to excessive or prolonged bleeding. Charaka Acharya has advised that initially should avoid immediate arresting of the bleeding and instead focus on expelling the vitiated doshas through the opposite route. [2]

KEYWORDS: *Raktapitta, Rakta, Pitta, Bleeding Disorder, GI Bleeding*

INTRODUCTION

Gastrointestinal bleeding is classified into upper and lower types, with the ligament of Treitz acting as the anatomical boundary. Upper GI bleeding often presents as hematemesis or melena, while lower GI bleeding typically manifests as haematochezia. Melena is marked by dark, tarry stools caused by haemoglobin breakdown. [3] In Ayurveda, Acharya Charaka describes Raktapitta following Jwara, noting that an imbalanced Agni (Teja Mahabhoota) leads to the condition. [4] Similarly, Acharya Sushruta described it after discussing Pandu due to shared causative factors. Raktapitta involves blood loss through natural orifices, highlighting the life-threatening consequences of blood loss in both modern and Ayurvedic perspectives.

Definition of Raktapitta

As result of Ashray Ashrayee relationship of Pitta Dosha and Rakta Dhatu, this vitiated Pitta Dosha and Rakta Dhatu, this vitiated Pitta

- Combined with Rakta (Lohit Sansarg)
- Contaminates Rakta (Lohit Pradushan)
- Pitta having similar odour and colour like Rakta (Lohit Saman Gandha- Rasa- Varna) after vitiation.[5]

Due to this association, the condition is referred to as Raktapitta.

Table-1 Etiology [6,7,8,9]

Acharya	Causes
Acharya Charaka	- Excess intake of **hot (ushna), sharp (tikshna), sour, pungent, salty** substances and food causing burning sensation. - Excess consumption of grains like **yavaka, uddalaka, koradusha**. - Legumes: **Nishpaava, black gram, horse gram, alkali**. - Dairy: **Curd, whey, buttermilk, sour buttermilk, sour gruel**. - Meat: **Pig, buffalo, sheep, fish, cow**. - Alcohol & Fermented Drinks: **Sura (wine), sauvira, tushodaka (vinegar), maireya, medaka, madhulaka, shukta, kuvala, badara (jujube)**. - Excess **flour-based foods** after meals. - Overconsumption of **pishtanna (triturated grains)**. - Excess **unboiled milk**, especially after exposure to intense heat or recovering from heatstroke. - **Rohini vegetable with milk**. - Milk with **sour beverages, horse gram, oil cake, jambu, lakucha** after heat exposure.
Acharya Sushruta	- **Excessive grief, fright, anger**. - **Excess physical labour**. - **Exposure to the sun and fire**. - Constant consumption of **pungent, acidic, saline, and alkaline foods**. - Foods that are **keen and heat-generating** in potency.
Ashtanga Hridaya	- Similar to Charaka's causes. - Additionally, consumption of **Kodrava** vitiates Pitta.

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Pathogenesis

The *pitta* which becomes *vidagdha* (burnt or corroded) by the above-mentioned etiological factors quickly reaches the *rakta* (blood) and causes its vidaha (burns the blood). This *rakta* contaminated by *vikrita* (vitiated) and *vidagdha pitta* flows out of the orifices in the upward or downward or in both directions. While flowing upwards, the bleeding in *Raktapitta* occurs through *nasa* (nasal openings), *akshi* (eyes), *karna* (ears) and *aasya* (mouth). The *Raktapitta* flowing downwards bleeds through *medhra* (urinary passages in men and women), *yoni* (vagina in women) and *guda* (anal opening). Severely aggravated *Raktapitta* moves sideways and bleeds through the orifices in the skin (*romakupas*). [10]

Pitta prakopaka ahara, vihara →CHAYAAVASTA

↓

Guna of pitta vitiates the Rakta

↓

Due to pitta Guna Rakta Exceeds its normal quantity → PRAKOPA AVASTA

↓

Rakta and pitta go to raktavaha srotas (Spleen and yakrut)

↓ →STHANASAMSHRAYA

Rakta dusti due to blockage in Raktavaha srotas

↓ ↓

RAKTAPITTA →VYAKTA STHANA

↓

ADHOGA AND UEDWAGA RAKTAPITTA →BHEDA AVATHSA

Table-2 Types

Type	Characteristics of Blood
Vataja Raktapitta	- Shyava-Aruna - Brownish red - Saphena - Frothy - Tanu - Thin - Rooksha - Dry
Pittaja Raktapitta	- Kashaya or Pink red, like the colour of the Patala flower - Black like Gomutra (Cow's urine) - Mechaka - Shining black - Agaradhuma - Horse soot - Anjana - Black collerium
Kaphaja Raktapitta	- Sandra - Dense, Viscous - Sapandu - Pale - Sasneha - Oily, unctuous - Picchila - Slimy

Due to combination of two doshas the symptoms of the concerned ones are combined. Raktapitta caused by sannipata has symptoms of all the three doshas. [11]

Other conditions of GI bleedings are

Urdhvaga-Raktapitta - in which the bleeding of contaminated or vitiated blood takes place in the upward directions and from upward passages or orifices i.e. from Mukha (mouth), Karna (ears), Akshi

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(eyes), Nasa (nostrils). Here the causative attributes are Snigdha and Ushna guna which vitiate the combination of Kapha and Pitta. We can correlate the Nose bleeds, bleeding from the gums, Haematemesis and Haemoptysis which are present in ITP as involvement of Kapha in its pathology.

Adhoga-Raktapitta - in which the bleeding of contaminated or vitiated blood takes place in the downward directions and from downward passages or orifices i.e. from Guda, Yoni, Mootramarga. Here the attributes are Rookshaand Ushna Guna which causes vitiation of Vataand Pitta. In Adhoga aktapitta, symptoms of ITP like Menorrhagia, Haemorrhagic ovarian cyst, Ulcerative colitis, Haemorrhagic Diarrhoea, Proctitis and Crohn's disease indicates the involvement of Vata Dosha in Raktapitta.C.Ubhaya or Tiryak - When all the Doshas are vitiated and are circulating in the blood stream, the manifestation is subcutaneous, above said Urdwaga and Adhoga here.[8] Easy Bruising, petechial haemorrhage and hematoma in the subject of ITP, can be considered under this category due to involvement of all tridoshas. Along with this, as there is involvement of spleen here in ITP, due to excess sequestration and production of antibodies against platelets there will be splenomegaly.

Rakta Atisara

Rakta Atisara is a condition in which there is bloody diarrhoea. This is said to be a superseded condition developed on the backdrop of Pittaja Atisara. When Pittaja Atisara (diarrhoea caused by vitiated pitta) is neglected or not treated properly or if the person suffering from pittaja atisara keeps taking pitta aggravating foods, the pitta further aggravates and causes Rakta Atisara. This condition includes Inflammatory Bowel Diseases like Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis.

Raktaja Pravahika

Pravahika means dysentery. Raktaja Pravahika means pravahika which is caused by vitiated Rakta or blood. Even in this condition there is bleeding from the rectum or bloody diarrhoea.

Raktaja and Pittaja Arshas

Arshas means Piles or haemorrhoids. Among the types of Arshas, Pittaja Arshas (piles caused by vitiated pitta) and Raktaja Arshas (haemorrhoids caused by vitiated rakta or blood) are the 2 conditions in which there are bleeding from the anal route, more bleeding occurs in Raktaja Arshas.

Tridoshaja Chardi

Chardi means vomiting. Tridoshaja Chardi is a type of vomiting caused by all 3 vitiated doshas. Rakta pravritti or bloody vomiting (vomiting of blood) is one of the symptoms of Tridoshaja Chardi.

Raktaja Arbuda

Arbuda means tumours or cancer. Raktaja Arbuda is a type of arbuda caused by vitiated blood. Achira Rudhira Pravritti or bleeding in quick time and excessive bleeding are characteristic of Raktaja Arbuda.

Bleeding from upper or lower passages is one of the main symptoms of Raktaja Arbuda. This can be compared to blood cancer or tumors which are associated with upper GI or lower GI bleeding.

Chikitsa Methods

1)Santarpana / Apatarpana Chikitsa
2) Mrudu, Sheetala, guna Ahara
3) Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya rasa Ahara
4) Pradeha, Parisheka, Avagaha, Samsparshana etc, external coolants
5) Pratimargaharana Chikitsa

Brumhana Chikitsa

1) When raktapitta is alpa dosha yukta
2) Apatarpana janyam
3) Alpa bala or ksheena rogi
4) Samshodhana anarha rogi

Langhana Chikitsa

- Ama is associated with raktapitta & attains increase,ytus Langhana is done here if – Rogi is with full-fledged bala and Mamsa
- Langhana is given in – Urdhwagata,Samapittayukta, Kaphanubandhayukta, Snigdha Ushna Nidana janita Raktapitta

Pratimargaharana Chikitsa (Shodhana)

Virechana – indicated in Urdwaga Raktapitta –Trivrut, Hareetaki, Aragwadha, individually or Trivrut Avaleha

Vamana - in Adhoga RP - Madanaphala yoga -Vamana Panchakam

- 1. Madana + Madhu, Sharkara,
- 2. Madana + Ksheera
- 3. Madana + Sharkara, Jalam
- 4. Madana + Ikshu rasam
- 5. Madana + Madhukodakam (Yastimadhu kwadham)

Vasti Chikitsa

- ❑ Drakshadi Mantham, Peya etc as food
- ❑ Vidari gandhadi gana siddha Ksheera astapana vasti
- ❑ Draksha, Madhu, Sharkara, Ghruta siddha Anuvasana vasti [14]

Tarpana Chikitsa

Tarpana is indicated in Adhomargagata RP, Vatanubandha RP, Rooksha Ushan Nidana janya RP

For Tarpana –

1) Kharjura, Draksha, Amla etc shrutasheeta jalam
2) Usheera, Parpataka, Musta, jalam, or
3) Peya, Pachana, Lehya (Shobhanjana Lehya), Ghruta (Vasa Ghruta), etc. are given

Stambhana Chikitsa

Stambhana is not immediately indicated in the raktapitta. Because the raktapitta is with asuddha rakta, utklista, udrikta dosha dusti associated. If stambhana is done at inappropriate timings it gives rise – Moorcha, Jwara, Gulma, Anaha, Pleeha vruddhi, Kilasa, Kusta, Pandu, Grahani, etc.

Stambhana indicated in – Heena Dosha associated, when suddha Rakta is coming out, When Rogi loses the strength, Alpashana or Anashana of Rogi or when Rakta Kshaya lakshana are observed. [15]

Samshamana Chikitsa indication

1. Bala, Mamsa Vyadhi, ksheena
2. krusha with – Bharavahana, Adhwagamana
3. Agni, Surya santapta

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4. Garbhini, vruddha and children
5. Rooksha, Alpa, Pramita Bhojana sheeli
6. Avamya, Avirechya

Avastika Chikitsa

1) **Gradhita Rakta –** kapota vista with honey
2) **Kapha anubandha gradhita rakta** – Utpala Nala kshara with madhu + ghruta
3) **Agni deepti with Kapha nasha** – a) Aja Dugdha b) Go Dugdha with 5times water c)Vidarigandhadi Gana sheetala Dugdha d)Jeevaka Rushabhaka dugdgam
4) **Nasa gata Rakta** – nasya after theconformation of Dusta Rakta sruti with a)Usheera Lodhradi kwatha b)PathyaAtaroosha kwatha c) Go ksheera d) Amrasti
mocharasaadi jalam, e) draksha rasa +sharkara, f) sugarcane juice and –Apakwa Udumbara with Jaggary
5) **Mootra marga gata** – a) shatavari ksheerab) Raktapitta hara Dravya yukta Uttaravasti
6) **Shastra Kshata** – Priyangu, Lodhra, Anjana Aavachurna
7) **Gudagata** – Mocharasa + dugdha,Watasrunaga dugdha, Madhuka Anjana Manjista etc Astapana Vasti, Yastimadhu Ghruta Anuvasana vasti
8) **Bahya prayoga** – sheetala Dravya pralepa, pradeha, parisheka, avagaha, shayana, Asana, Dhara gruha

Gastro Intestinal Bleeding [16]

Gastrointestinal bleeding is a medical condition routinely encountered in clinical practice. Gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding is any type of bleeding that starts in GI tract. GI bleeding is a symptom of a disease or condition, rather than a disease or condition itself. Acute GI bleeding is sudden and can sometimes be severe. Chronic GI bleeding is slight bleeding that can last a long time or may come and go. Gastrointestinal bleeding can fall into two broad categories: upper and lower sources of bleeding. 1/10 people who have a GI bleed will die.

Acute upper Gastro-intestinal bleeding or Haemorrhage is a common medical emergency and carries a significant mortality. Peptic ulcer disease remains the most common aetiology, but esophageal varices is also a important cause. Haematemesis refers to vomiting of fresh red blood whereas Melena refers to the dark black tarry feces both are included in Upper gastro intestinal bleeding. In lower gastro intestinal bleeding we can include ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, internal hemorrhoids, colonic diverticulitis and irritable bowel syndrome etc.

Table-3 Etiology

Category	Conditions
Local	**Oesophagus**: Oesophageal varices, Oesophageal CA, Reflux oesophagitis, Mallory-Weiss syndrome. **Stomach**: Gastric ulcer, Erosive gastritis, Gastric CA, gastric lymphoma, gastric leiomyoma, Dieulafoy's syndrome. **Duodenum**: Duodenal ulcer, Duodenitis, Periampullary tumor, Aorto-duodenal fistula.
General	Haemophilia, Leukemia, Thrombocytopenia, Anti-coagulant therapy.

Clinical Features

- Haematemesis : vomiting of blood whether fresh and red or digested and black.
- Melaena: passage of loose, black tarry stools with a characteristic foul smell.
- Coffee ground vomiting: blood clot in the vomitus.
- Hematochezia: passage of bright red blood per rectum (if the haemorrhage is severe).

DISCUSSION

Gastrointestinal bleeding is most often a secondary symptom or presentation of a chronic or acute illness or a complication of some disease. Probably we cannot find the root cause (causative disease) being mentioned in Ayurvedic texts as responsible for causation of bleeding from upper or lower passages. The gross symptom i.e., bleeding should be considered in this context. All diseases causing bleeding in upward direction (upper GI Bleeding) should be considered under Urdhwaga Raktapitta or Raktaja Chardi. Similarly, all diseases causing bleeding in downward direction (lower GI Bleeding) should be considered under Adhoga Raktapitta, Rakta Atisara, Raktaja Pravahika, Pittaja Atisara and Raktaja Atisara.

Bleeding disorders can occur due to one of these factors, either due to decrease in coagulation factor in blood or due to increase in bleeding factor. When patient complaining of bleeding disorder from anus (Guda), vagina (Yoni), is encountered in OPD'S, then it is difficult to differentiate whether the disease is Adhoga Raktapitta,Raktarsha,Raktatisara or Pradara.

GI bleeding and Raktapitta share the symptom of blood loss but are distinct in their origins and treatment. GI bleeding is a medical condition that demands immediate intervention to control the bleeding, while Raktapitta involves a more holistic approach to restore balance and prevent recurrence. Both perspectives provide valuable insights into how blood loss is managed, one focusing on direct physical causes and the other on balancing dosas.

CONCLUSION

Both gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding and Raktapitta, as described in Ayurveda, involve the loss of blood, but they differ in their causes, pathophysiology, and treatment approaches. While both conditions share a common feature of blood loss, Raktapitta emphasizes a holistic approach to balance the body's internal energies, using diet, lifestyle changes, and herbal remedies. In contrast, GI bleeding management in modern medicine involves direct medical intervention to control the bleeding source and prevent complications.

Understanding both perspectives can provide a more comprehensive approach to treatment, especially when integrating Ayurvedic concepts with modern medical care to address both the physical and emotional factors influencing health.

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