AYUBHA JOURNAL BY AYURVED BHARATI
A Monthly peer-reviewed journal by Ayurved Bharati
ISSN – 3048-8621
www.ayubha.com

Literary Review of Treatment of Hemorrhoids w.s.r. to Arsha Chikitsa Adhyaya of Charaka Samhita

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AyuBha Journal by Ayurved Bharati, eISSN 3048-8621 | Published: 02-08-2024

Keywords: Academic Research, Vol.01, Issue-02, August 2024

Vol.01, Issue-02, August 2024

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Abstract

Hemorrhoids, a common anorectal condition, have been extensively discussed in Ayurvedic literature, particularly in the Charaka Samhita. This review provides a comprehensive analysis of the treatment guidelines for hemorrhoids as described in Charaka Samhita, focusing on surgical and non-surgical approaches, including herbal remedies, dietary modifications, and lifestyle interventions. The significance of maintaining digestive power in managing hemorrhoids and associated conditions like diarrhea and grahani is also highlighted.

Keywords

Hemorrhoids, Charaka Samhita, Ayurveda, Ksharakarma, Agnikarma, Digestive Power, Dietary Modifications

Introduction

Hemorrhoids, also known as arsha in Ayurvedic literature, are one of the most prevalent anorectal disorders. The Charaka Samhita, a cornerstone of Ayurvedic medicine, offers a diverse range of treatment modalities for hemorrhoids, including both surgical and non-surgical methods. This review aims to elucidate the general treatment guidelines for hemorrhoids in Charaka Samhita, emphasizing the importance of personalized treatment based on the classification and symptoms of hemorrhoids.

Material and Methods

This literature review is based on a detailed analysis of the Charaka Samhita's chapters that discuss the management of hemorrhoids. The primary sources of data include classical Ayurvedic texts and contemporary interpretations by renowned Ayurvedic scholars. The review focuses on both surgical and para-surgical techniques, as well as conservative management approaches.

Study Design

The study follows a qualitative design, analyzing textual content from the Charaka Samhita and related Ayurvedic literature. The analysis was categorized into different sections based on the classification of hemorrhoids, treatment modalities, and preventive measures recommended in the texts.

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Discussion

1. Surgical and Para-Surgical Interventions

Charaka Samhita mentions two primary surgical interventions for hemorrhoids: excision using sharp instruments and cauterization through Ksharakarma (alkalies) and Agnikarma (thermal cauterization). These procedures are recommended only for practitioners well-versed in these techniques due to the risk of severe complications, including impotency, ano-rectal swelling, and chronic discharge. The text advises caution and emphasizes the importance of accurate diagnosis and skilled execution of these procedures. There is also mention of Rakta Mokshana for Pittaj type of Arsha.

2. Conservative Treatment Approaches

For hemorrhoids that are not severe enough to warrant surgery, Charaka Samhita provides a range of non-invasive treatments. These include the use of fomentation, sitz baths, smearing, and fumigation with various medicinal preparations. Fomentation is particularly recommended for dry, hard, inflamed, and painful hemorrhoids.

3. Pharmacological Treatments

Charaka Samhita also lists several herbal formulations for the treatment of hemorrhoids, such as Trayaushanadi Churna, Trivritadi Churna, and Takrarishta. These are tailored based on the symptoms and the presence of associated conditions like constipation. Additionally, the text prescribes various forms of Ghritas (medicated ghee), including Pippalyadi Ghrita and Nagaradi Ghrita, for internal administration.

4. Dietary and Lifestyle Modifications

Dietary habits play a crucial role in the management of hemorrhoids. Charaka Samhita recommends the inclusion of leafy vegetables, buttermilk, and specific arishtas as part of the treatment regimen. The importance of maintaining cleanliness and hygiene to prevent infections is also stressed.

5. Treatment for Bleeding Hemorrhoids

For patients with bleeding hemorrhoids, immediate hemostatic treatment is advised. The use of bitter drugs, along with preparations like Kutajadi Kwath and Peyamanda, is recommended. External cooling therapies, including sitz baths and the application of soothing ointments, are also described.

6. Interrelationship Between Hemorrhoids, Diarrhea, and Grahani

Charaka Samhita highlights the interdependence between hemorrhoids, diarrhea, and grahani (a condition related to the digestive system). The text emphasizes that the maintenance of strong digestive power is critical in preventing the aggravation of these conditions.

Conclusion

The treatment of hemorrhoids in Charaka Samhita is multifaceted, combining surgical and non-surgical approaches tailored to the specific type and severity of the condition. The importance of digestive power, dietary habits, and lifestyle modifications in the management of hemorrhoids and associated conditions is paramount. The guidelines provided in Charaka Samhita continue to be relevant and offer valuable insights for contemporary Ayurvedic practice.

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