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Concept of Udana Vata and Its Applications

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Abstract

Udana is one type of vata dosha which is known as responsible factor for maintenance of normal physiology of human beings, specially upper part of the body. The term Udana itself signifies upward movement of this *vata dosha*. Udana Vata is one of main responsive factor for sustenance of the body. Udana Vata not only helps in health maintenance but also provides heaven if regulated properly. Abnormal or aggravated *udanavayu* causes various diseases and finally the death too. Descriptions related to Udana Vata are available in most of the Ayurvedic texts as well as other contemporary books but not in detailed. How does pathophysiological status of Udana Vata affects the body will be reviewed and discussed along with its sites, cause of aggravations, various diseases, management etc.

Keywords: vayu, vaka, kantha, bala

Introduction

Doshas are biological humours which constituted the body ^[1] and are responsible for sustenance of the body. ^[2] There are two groups of doshas named as physical and mental. *Vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* are physical doshas. ^[3] Vata is chief among doshas. ^[4] Vata or vayu has five fold divisions which are Prana, Udana, vyana, samara, apana and all of these control and regulate the body by their unimpaired movement. ^[5] Udana signifies itself as a vayu which courses upward and also said *asuttama* [most vital or important] among vayus. ^[6] Various other meanings of *udana* have also been given as breathing upward, breathing, vital air, an expression of praise [Buddhist], navel, eye lashes. ^[7] Udanavayu has been considered as responsible factor for physical strength [bala] ^[8].

Materials

Seats of Udana Vata

Various seats of Udana have been told as *nabhi* [umbilicus], *urah* [chest or thorax], *kantha* [throat] ^[9], *nasa*[nose] ^[10], *phupphusa* [lungs] ^[11], *pada* [both foot] hasta [hands], *sandhi* [joints] ^[12], along with above mentioned seats the *urahsthana* [thoracic region] ^[13], and *kantha* [throat] ^[14], have been told as specific sites of Udana Vata.

Colour of Udana Vata

Colour of Udana Vayu has been told *asagni* [the fire], *vidyuta* [lightning] ^[15] and *b dhoom* [smoke] ^[16].

Normal Physiological actions of Udana Vata

Normal functions of Udana Vata in the body has been given as *vakapravritti* [initiation of vocal functions], *prayatna* [efforts], *urj* [energy], *bala* [strength], *varna* [complexion], ^[19] *bhashita* [initiation of speech], *geeta* [initiation for singing], ^[18] *dhee* [acquisition], *dhriti* [retention of psyche], *smriti* [recollection of psyche] ^[19], *ucchavasa* [expiration] ^[20], *utsaha* [will power] ^[21], acts as regulator of the *tejain* the body ^[22], stimulates *marmas* [vitals] for acquiring knowledge ^[23], helps in the origination of *shabda* [voice] ^[24], helps to achieve the *svarga* [heaven] ^[25],

Causes of aggravation

Followings are the causes for aggravation of Udana Vata which have been enumerated in the

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Ashtanga Hridaya i.e. suppression of sneezing, belching, vomiting and sleep, carrying heavy loads on the head, excessive indulgence in weeping and laughing [26],

Abnormal and Pathological Functions of Udana Vata

There have been various functions enumerated which are followings- *urdhvajaturoga* [occurrence of diseases above the clavicles] [27], *kasa* [cough] [28], *kshavathu* [sneezing], *hikka* [hiccough] [29], *shwasa* [dyspnoea], *parishwasa* [bronchial asthma], *shosarti* [pain in tuberculosis], *galagantika* [a disease of the throat], *hrillasa* [excessive spitting], *hridishula* [angina], *yakritavikara* [liver disorders], *vatadivamana* [expulsion of vataetc], *jrimbha* [yawning], *vaisvarya* [laryngitis], *peenasa* [running nose], *aruchi* [tastelessness] [30], *kantharodha* [obstruction of throat], *manobhransha* [depression], *chardi* [vomiting], *aruchi* [loss of appetite], *peenasa* [nasal catarrh], *galaganda* [enlarged gland of the neck] [31].

Management of Udana Vata

Acharya Charaka has stated that to understand the movement of any of the *vata* inside of the body is difficult to ascertain, if a physician wants to be successful in the management of any of the *vatika* disorder first of all he should examine the habitat, wholesomeness, seasonal effects and strength of the patient then he should administer appropriate therapies guided by the descriptions in *Ayurvedic* scriptures. [32] For the morbidity of *udanavayu*, upward moving therapy has been said because normal movement of *udana* is upward [33]. *Basti* [Therapeutic enema] has been considered as best for any of the *vatika* disorders, so it is very useful for regulation of *Udanavayu*. [34] *Udanavayu* should be brought to their own habitat if it moves in different channels after occlusion. [35] Obstruction [occlusion] of *udanavayu* by both *kapha* and *pitta* is serious condition, so should not be neglected by expert physician otherwise it may lead to loss of life and vitality both [36]. In occlusive condition of *udanavayu* [along with other types of *vayu*] a common line of treatment has also been told as use of *anabhisyadi* [which do not cause obstructions to the channels], unctuous materials, *yapana* type of medicated enema, *anuvasana* type of medicated enema, *rasayana* [rejuvenating recipes], *silajatu* and *guggulu* along with milk and *chhyanprash* etc. [37]

Discussion

Udana Vata or *vayu* is second most *oruttama* [topmost] among all the *vayu*. It having nature of upward movement or it helps in upward movement of contents inside of the body which shows that *udanavayu* is light in nature. By regular practices of controlling the *udanavata*, a person can easily make the body light and can floats over the water. Light nature of this *vayu* makes its movement upward, so this *vayu* strikes with different places responsible for origin of speech and stimulates those speech centres thus helps in speech delivery. Bro cas area and wer nicks area play role in above mentioned functions which can be said as specific seats for action of *Udana Vayu*. *Udanavayu* plays major role in *vakapravritti* [speech] that's why its specific site has been considered as *kantha* [throat]. *Udanavayu* also helps in *ucchavasa* [expiration] which is done by the expiratory centres in the brain including phrenic nerve supplying the diaphragm so this is more relevant with *Udana*. *Udanavayu* has been told as responsible factor for *Bala* [physical strength] means physical strength of the body depends on this, therefore

if *Udanavayu* is normal then physical strength or the immunity will be good otherwise low. It has been seen that abnormal *udanavata* affects upper part of the body means body organs situated above the clavicles along with thorax, so diseases related to throat, nose etc. have been enumerated. For the management of *udanavayu*, application of upward moving therapy has been mentioned, because normally the *udanavayu* moves upward or becomes cause of upward movement. So, it can be said that a person may get heaven or wilful death if controls the *udanavayu*.

Summary and Conclusion

After going through reviews and discussion it has been found that *udanavayu* or *vata* is light in nature with upward movement, acts as biological humour, responsible factor for physiology of the body especially upper part of the body, having chief seat *askantha* [throat] and chief function as *vakapravritti* [speech stimulation]. Conclusively, it can be said that *udanavata* is biological humour which has special force [*bala*] responsible for physical strength as well as vocal functions.

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