

VYANA VATA – THE MAHAJAVA

Review Article

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Abstract

Vyana Vata is described as *Mahajava* which is highly powerful. Therefore it keeps the *Rasa Dhatu* in circulation continuously and always throughout the life. *Vyana Vata* with its swift action performs all the functions in the body. All the three *Doshas* residing in *Hridaya* contribute directly or indirectly to the functioning of the body; but *vyana vata* has a unique role in carrying out the functions throughout the body while residing in *hrdaya*. Any obstruction to *vyana vata* leads to a disease that affects the whole body. Vitiating of *vyana vata* hampers its functions as well as nutrition and movements of the body. Therefore treatment should aim at understanding *vyana vata* and to correct the root cause. The paper describes the physiological, pathological and treatment aspects of *vyana vata* in accordance with the contemporary view. The physiological aspect includes the location, functions and dependency of other sub types of *Vata* to *Vyana Vata* which is discussed along with its contemporary understanding. The pathological aspect deals with causes for vitiation and symptoms seen and the general line of treatment modality applied.

Key words: *Vata, vata dosha beda, vyana vata*

Introduction

Doshas are the functional representatives of our body. They can be known only through the actions exhibited in the body. *Vata* is not only mobile but also capable of keeping *Pitta, Kapha, Dhatus* and *Malas* in motion(1). This stresses the importance of *Vata Dosha*. The *Vata Dosha* indicates both *Gati* – motor and *Gandhana*- sensory. The life of an individual is dependent upon these two functions. The movements may be visible or invisible. Both *Prana* and *Udana* are

concerned with some of these visible and invisible movements in the body. The locomotion is a visible movement and it is one of the most important functions of a living being. All movements are effected through the contractions and relaxations of the muscles. Among the sub types of *Vata, Vyana Vata* is mainly responsible to bring about various movements in the body along with other functions. *Vyana vata* is personified as son of *Udana Vata* and father of *Apana Vata*(2).. *Vyana Vata* is the only *Vata* which pervades throughout the body and is responsible for the opening of the *Nadis*(3).

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Location of *Vyana Vata*

Acharya Vagbhata defines heart (4) as the principal location of *Vyana Vata* and that it circulates in the entire body performing the various functions

designated to it. *Acharya Charaka*(5) and *Sushruta*(6) opine that *Vyana Vata* is continuously circulating in the entire body and hence its location is body as a whole.

Functions of *Vyana Vata*

Acharya Charaka in *Vatavyadi Chikitsa* explains the general functions of *Vyana Vata* as one that swiftly circulates throughout the body performing the functions of motion, extension, sudden movements, closing and opening of eyelids(7). The specific function is explained in *Grahani Chikitsa* as that which stimulates and causes the circulation of *Rasa Dhatu* throughout the body simultaneously and continuously with the propulsive force (8). All the functions of the body is dependent on how *Rasa Dhatu* is circulated throughout the body.

That which diffuses all over the body is *Vyana Vata* and is constantly engaged in the transport of *Rasa*. It helps in sweating and also in the flow of blood. And its voluntary movements are of five types like expansion, contraction upward, downward and oblique movements according to *Acharya Sushruta* along with blinking and opening of eyelids(9).

Astanga Sangraha explains in detail about the functions. Due to its high speed *Vyana Vata* performs functions of unspecific movement, stretching, contraction, upward and downward movements, closing and opening of eyes, yawning, appreciating taste of food, clearing the passages or channels, helps in the discharge of sweat and blood, transportation of semen into the uterus, dividing food for absorption and excretion and gradually nourishing the *Dhatu*s from the nutrient material(10).

Astanga Hridaya mentions *Vyana Vata* as *Mahajava* because of its great speed and performing all the activities in the body (11). *Rasa dhatu* gets ejected out of the heart through the blood vessels called *Siras* which originate at the heart

(12) which is carried throughout the body with the help of *Vyana Vata*.

Hence the functions of *Vyana Vata* can be summarized under the headings – *Gati*(all the movements) , *Rasa- Raktha Paribhramana*(circulation of nutrients), *Sweda Srava*(excretion of sweat), *Anna Aswadhana*(appreciate taste) and *Shukra Pratipadhana*(carrying semen)

Pathological and treatment aspect

As in normal state, *Vyana Vayu* performs its *Rasa-Rakta Vikshepana Karma* normally. But when it gets vitiated, *Dhamani Sankocha* occurs due to its *Ruksha, Shita* and *Khara Gunas*, resulting in the reduction of *Srotovivar* (lumen of the Channels). Due to this narrowed pathway, *Avarodha* (obstruction) occurs in *Rasa- Rakta-Vikshepana Karma*, causing decreased functioning in the particular site.

Vyana Vata gets aggravated by excess of walking , sexual intercourse, worry, exercise, improper activities, intake of food which are incompatible and dry, fear, joy, sorrow etc produces diminution of masculine power, enthusiasm, strength, swelling, disorders of mind, fever, paralysis of whole body, intermittent pain, horripilation, loss of sensations, skin diseases (13)and other diseases affecting the whole body like *Jwara, Atisara, Rakthipitta* and *Rajayakshma*(14).

Avarana of *Vata* occurs in two ways: by *Avarana* of *Ama, Kapha, Pitta , Mala* etc or by the five types of *Vata*. The second type called the *Visistha Avarana* is *Avarana* of *Vata* by another sub type of *Vata* producing severe symptoms. When *Vyana Vata* is occluded by *Pitta* the symptoms seen are burning sensation all over the body, tiredness, exhaustion, and arrest of mobility in different parts of the body accompanied with burning sensation and pain. When *Vyana Vata* is occluded by *Kapha* then there will be heaviness all over the body, pain in all the joints and loss of mobility (15).

For the morbidity of *Vyana Vata*, all the measures adopted for *Udana Vata*, *Apana Vata* and *Samana Vata* has to be adopted like emesis, purgation and alleviation respectively (16).

Table shows the type of *Anyonya Avarana* (mutual occlusion) and its specific symptoms and treatment (17)

Type of avarana	Symptoms	Treatment
<i>Vyana Vata</i> occluded by <i>Prana Vata</i>	loss of functions of sense organs, memory and strength	Therapies prescribed for supra clavicular diseases.
<i>Prana Vata</i> occluded by <i>Vyana Vata</i>	excessive sweating, horripulation, skin disease and numbness in the body	Purgation therapy with medicated oil
<i>Apana Vata</i> occluded by <i>Vyana Vata</i>	Vomiting, abdominal distension, upward movement of <i>Vata</i> , tumour, sawing pain in the abdomen	Unctuous therapies for downward movement of <i>vata</i>
<i>Vyana Vata</i> occluded by <i>Apana Vata</i>	Excessive elimination of stool, urine and semen	All types of <i>Sangraha</i> (astringent) therapies
<i>Vyana Vata</i> occluded by <i>Samana Vata</i>	Fainting, drowsiness, delirium, diminution of <i>Agni</i> , <i>Ojas</i> and strength	Advise exercises and light food
<i>Vyana Vata</i> occluded by <i>Udana Vata</i>	Stiffness, diminution of <i>Agni</i> , reduced sweating, lack of strength and inability for closure of eyes	Wholesome and light diet in limited quantity

Discussions

Vyana Vata as *Mahajava*: *Vata* is having the properties like rough, laghu, cold, rough, subtle, movement (18) along with *Yogavahi* that is spreads throughout the body. *Vyana vata* endowed with the *Chala* and *Yogavahi Guna* is capable of performing the functions throughout the body in swift manner.

Stana of Vyana Vata:

The active site of *Vyana Vata* is *Hridaya*. The word *Hridaya* can be considered as center or the core or the essence. In the contemporary science(19), the spinal cord is the pathway for sensory input to the brain and motor output from the brain. The gray matter on each side of the spinal cord is subdivided into regions called horns. The anterior gray horns contain somatic motor nuclei, which are clusters of cell bodies of somatic motor neurons that provide nerve impulses for the contraction of skeletal muscles. Between the posterior and anterior gray horns are the lateral gray horns, which are present only in the thoracic and upper lumbar segments of the spinal cord. The lateral gray horns contain autonomic motor nuclei, which are clusters of cell bodies of autonomic motor neurons that regulate the activity of cardiac muscle, smooth muscle and glands. The functions executed by the anterior and lateral horns co ordinates all the functions of *Vyana Vata*. So it is justifiable to assume the location of *Vyana Vata* in the spinal cord as *Hridaya*.

Role of Vyana Vata in Rasa- Raktha Paribhramana

Vyana makes *Rasa* to get forcefully ejected out of the heart and makes it circulate throughout the body. So, sympathetic and parasympathetic control of heart can be included under *Vyana Vata*. Sympathetic function in the medulla oblongata, which is concerned with the control of heart, is vasomotor centre(20). Hypothalamus and other cortical areas in

turn influence this. *Vyana Vata* is indicative of all these functional entities. . Any quickest response like involuntary reflexes, just as observed in palpebral reflex or equilibrium reflex is due to *Vyana Vata*. Sensations like proprioception, balance, respiratory, circulatory, secretory reflexes are in jurisdiction of *vyana*.

Vyana Vata is primarily responsible for all the movements of the body. As per the *Asraya Asrayibhava*, *Vata* resides in *Asthi* and the movements are possible with the help of *Vyana Vata*. So *Vyana Vata* residing in the *Asthi* brings about the movements. The functions of somatic nervous system can also be ascribed to *Vyana Vata* as movements like flexion, extension, opening and closure of eyelids have said to be under its control. Conduction velocity is maximum in alpha group of motor neurons, which supply all these skeletal muscles.

The function *Asrk Sravana* is possible by the stimulation of the sympathetic supply to heart. This depends not only on the effective contraction of heart but also on the caliber of the blood vessels. Apart from the contracting force of the heart, the outflow of blood is also under the control of *Prana Vata* performing the function of *Dhamani Dharana*(21).

Due to the excess blood flow to a particular area especially after exercises, *Sweda Sravana* occurs which in turn is the function of *Vyana Vata*. The skin is supplied by the muscular arteries. When the temperature rises in the active muscles, the blood is warmed in the muscles and is immediately transported to the skin where it is radiated out in the form of sweat.

In Shukra Prathipadhana

The actual outflow of semen is under the control of *Apana Vata*. But the voluntary act of intercourse may be under the control of *Vyana Vata*.

Inter relation of Vyana Vata with other types of Vata

All the types of *Vata Dosha* are interdependent on each other. *Vyana Vata* performs the functions in conjugation with other types of *Vata Doshas*.

Vyana Vata and Prana Vata

Prana Vata residing in the region of head, performs the function of ingestion of food(22). *Vyana Vata* helps in the perception of taste which helps *Prana Vata* for the ingestion of food. *Prana Vata* controls all the *Indriyas*. The movement of the *Indriyas* is possible with the help of *vyana vata*

Vyana Vata and Udana Vata

Srotopreenana (23) is a function destined to *Udana Vata* which indicates the extensive circulation to every cell, which is possible only through the *Vyana Vata* which carries the essence of food throughout the body. The process of respiration (24) is also the function of *Udana Vata* and this movement can be made possible with the help of *Vyana Vata*.

Vyana Vata and Samana Vata

Samana Vata residing in the vicinity of *Agni* helps in the digestion of food and separation of food into essence and waste (25). The essence of food is transported all over the body only with the help of *Vyana Vata* for nourishment. *Samana Vata* maintains the integrity of *Swedavaha Srotas* and *Vyana Vata* helps in the excretion of sweat.

Vyana Vata and Apana Vata

Apana Vata is the controller of all the excretions especially ejection of semen (26). The semen ejected can pass to the yoni with the help of *Vyana Vata*. The actual outflow of semen is under the control of *Apana Vata*. But the voluntary

act of intercourse may be under the control of *Vyana Vata*.

Conclusion

Vyana Vata is considered as the highly powerful *Vata* among all the sub types of *Vata*. *Vyana Vata* residing in *Hridaya* performs the functions in the body like *Gati* (all movements), *Rasa- Raktha Paribhramana*(circulation of nutrients), *Sweda Srava*(excretion of sweat), *Anna Aswadhana*(appreciate taste) and *Shukra Pratipadhana*(carrying semen). The function of *Rasa Raktha Paribhramana* is mainly responsible for all other functions to happen. Any occlusion to the flow leads to disease. The treatment should aim to rectify the cause. The function of *Vyana Vata* is interdependent on other sub types of *Vata*. In the contemporary view the site of location of *Vyana Vata* can be related to heart and also the anterior and lateral horns of gray matter that execute the functions with respect to *Vyana Vata*.

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