



Review Article

COMPARATIVE PATHOPHYSIOLOGY OF AMAVATA AND RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Singh Manoj Kumar

Associate Professor, Kriya Sharir, Faculty of Ayurveda, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India.

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ABSTRACT

Amavata, as described in Ayurveda, and rheumatoid arthritis, recognized in modern medicine, are chronic inflammatory joint disorders with significant systemic involvement and progressive disability. Although rooted in different medical traditions, both conditions exhibit striking similarities in clinical features, disease progression, and underlying pathological processes. *Amavata* arises from impaired digestive and metabolic function (*Agnimandya*), leading to the formation of *Ama*, which associates with vitiated *Vata Dosha* and localizes in joints, producing pain, stiffness, swelling, and systemic symptoms. Rheumatoid arthritis is characterized by immune-mediated synovial inflammation, resulting in progressive cartilage and bone destruction. The Ayurvedic concept of *Ama* parallels modern inflammatory mediators and immune dysregulation observed in rheumatoid arthritis. Both diseases demonstrate chronicity, systemic inflammation, and significant impact on quality of life. This comparative review highlights conceptual correlations between Ayurveda and modern medicine, supporting an integrative, holistic approach to understanding and managing chronic inflammatory joint disorders.

INTRODUCTION

Diseases that affect movement not only hurt the joints, but they also make it hard for people to live on their own, be productive, and enjoy life in general. Other signs of these diseases are trouble moving around. Arthritis is one of the most important of these conditions. It lasts a long time, hurts, and gets worse over time. *Amavata* is one of the inflammatory joint diseases that has been studied and written about the most in Ayurvedic medicine. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a well-known autoimmune inflammatory disease that affects the joints. Even though the two scenarios come from different ways of knowing, they show clinical realities that are very similar to each other.

Acharya Madhavakara officially recognized *Amavata* as a distinct disease entity during the ninth century CE. He was able to reach this goal because he carefully described the disease's causes, symptoms, and progression in *Madhava Nidana* [1].

Amavata is a systemic illness that results from metabolic inefficiency and abnormal physiological movement, setting it apart from degenerative joint diseases. Rheumatoid arthritis is not merely a localized joint disorder; it is a systemic inflammatory syndrome with significant immunological consequences [6,7]. This is something that has been more recognised in recent years.

To facilitate the integration of traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with contemporary biomedical science, it may be advantageous to investigate the pathophysiology of *Amavata* and rheumatoid arthritis. By using an integrative approach, we can learn more about chronic inflammatory disorders without hurting either of the systems involved.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

At the beginning of the preparation of the present article on *Amavata*, relevant classical and contemporary literature was reviewed and studied methodically. The major Ayurvedic compendia, including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Madhava Nidana*, along with their available commentaries, were critically examined to understand the conceptual framework of *Ama*, *Vata*, and the pathogenesis, symptomatology, and management of *Amavata*.

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In addition to classical sources, published research articles, review papers, and indexed online databases were explored using a combination of search terms such as "Amavata," "Ama," "Vata," "Rheumatoid Arthritis," "Vyadhikshamatva," "Agni," and "Shodhana therapy" to obtain subject-related information and contemporary interpretations.

The collected material was screened for relevance and authenticity. Conceptual data were analyzed comparatively, particularly with reference to modern descriptions of inflammatory arthropathies where required. On the basis of compiled information and analyzed data, the subject was discussed systematically with domain experts, and the findings were organized thematically. After critical appraisal and synthesis of classical and contemporary evidence, the conclusions were drawn in a concise and structured manner.

Pathophysiology of Amavata: An Ayurvedic View The Central Role of Agni and Ama

Amavata thinks that *Agnimandya* is very important. This kind of thing happens when the digestive and metabolic fire isn't strong enough. Ayurveda says that *Agni* is one of the most important parts of health. It controls digestion, the use of tissues, and the immune system's ability to fight off illness. When *Agni* isn't working right, it makes a thick, sticky, and poisonous metabolic waste product called *Ama*. This makes digestion not work as well as it should. [1-3] When digestion isn't working right, *Ama* is made.

Ama is not merely undigested food; it is a pathogenic substance capable of obstructing physiological pathways (*Srotas*), disrupting tissue metabolism, and eliciting inflammatory responses. This discovery indicates that Ayurveda acknowledged the relationship between metabolism and inflammation at an early stage.

Vata Dosha and Systemic Spread

When the digestive system isn't working right, *Ama* is made. The *Vata Dosha's* imbalance is what makes this toxic substance spread through the body. *Vata* is in charge of moving *Ama* from the digestive system to the body's outer tissues, especially the joints (*Sandhi*), because it can move around and spread out [2,4].

Ama and *Vata* must maintain a certain relationship with each other. Each of these factors can cause disease on its own, but when they are combined, they create a complicated clinical condition that shows up in different ways, such as pain, stiffness, swelling, and systemic symptoms. Ayurvedic medicine says that *Amavata* is a *Samyoga Janya Vyadhi*, which is a type of illness that happens when two things interact in a strange way.

Srotas Involvement and Tissue Dysfunction

Amavata most often attacks the *Srotas* of *Annavaha*, *Rasavaha*, and *Asthivaha*. When these pathways are blocked, the tissue doesn't get enough nutrients, waste builds up, and inflammation doesn't go away [3,4]. *Gaurava* (heaviness), *Angamarda* (body discomfort), *Alasya* (fatigue), and *Sandhi Shoola* (joint pain) are the symptoms that are seen in the clinic for this condition.

Because it affects more than just the joints, *Amavata's* systemic involvement is a more serious disruption of the body's normal balance.

Indicators of Chronicity and Clinical Manifestation of These Conditions

Amavata is marked by a variety of clinical signs, including arthralgia, oedema, stiffness, fever, loss of appetite, excessive thirst, and generalised weakness [3]. A large number of symptoms, such as deformity, loss of function, and severe disability, are very similar to those of advanced rheumatoid arthritis. If medication is not given, the disease will get worse over time, making it very hard to live with.

The Pathophysiology of Rheumatoid Arthritis from a Modern Biomedical Standpoint

Immune dysregulation is the main process that causes this. Rheumatoid arthritis, a long-lasting inflammatory condition, causes inflammation in the synovial fluid as the disease gets worse. The immune system's wrong attack on synovial tissues makes some immune cells, like macrophages and T lymphocytes, work harder [7,12]. These cells keep the joint inflamed and make inflammatory substances that could even make the problem worse.

On the other hand, rheumatoid arthritis is marked by a failure of the resolution process, which causes long-term damage to the tissues. This kind of inflammation is not harmful, unlike acute inflammation, which protects the body. When rheumatoid arthritis is present in the body, the synovial membranes go through the first pathogenic change, which is marked by swelling and too much growth. A pannus is a mass of inflamed tissue that can form on bones and cartilage[7]. When the synovium makes pannus, it gets bigger and turns into pannus. Proteins made by inflammatory cells break down the structures of joints. This damage is permanent and can cause problems.

People with chronic rheumatoid arthritis have a lot of pain, stiffness, and limited movement because their joints are slowly breaking down.

Clinical Expression and Chronicity

Rheumatoid arthritis is an inflammatory disease that impacts the entire body, and an increasing number of individuals are becoming aware of this reality. The presence of specific symptoms, including

an elevated ESR, modified haematological markers, and biochemical irregularities, can be crucial in assessing the existence of systemic inflammation [6,11]. The presence of extra-articular symptoms that affect the cardiovascular, pulmonary, and haematopoietic systems^[13] provides further evidence that it is a systemic condition. A progression of the disease through its many stages- the disease goes through three stages: early synovitis, proliferative synovial thickening, and finally destructive arthritis^[7]. This tiered procedure shows how *Amavata* slowly got worse because it wasn't treated in the previous phase.

A Comparison of Rheumatoid Arthritis and Amavata

Immunological complexes, inflammatory mediators, and metabolic by-products are linked to rheumatoid arthritis; similarly, the concept of *Ama* in Ayurvedic therapy parallels these elements.^[1,6,12] Both of these signs mean that the body can't get rid of toxins, which can cause long-lasting inflammation.

Amavata and rheumatoid arthritis are both seen as examples of systemic illness. This indicates that joint involvement constitutes merely one aspect of a more extensive pathological process^[3,6]. Fatigue, fever, malaise, and anorexia are common symptoms of both disorders.

The structure is getting worse, and the material is moving to the joints at the same time. In all of these cases, the joints are the main places where diseases show up. There is a link between the Ayurvedic idea of *Ama* in *Sandhi* and *Pannus* based on what we know now about synovial inflammation and how pannus grows. If the right treatment is not received, joint deformity and functional impairments are likely to get worse over time^[4,7].

Amavata and rheumatoid arthritis have similar symptoms because they both get worse over time. Because of this, if these disorders are not treated quickly, they will slowly make it harder to do things, which will cause pain and a lower quality of life. This underscores the considerable personal expense linked to these conditions^[4,13].

Ayurvedic treatment for *Amavata's* symptoms focusses on fixing the problems that cause it, such as problems with digestion, the buildup of *Ama*, and *Vata* dysregulation. *Deepana*, *Pachana*, and *Shamana* are all very important therapeutic treatments that help bring the body's metabolism back into balance and lower inflammation. Sources from the classical period say that *Rasonadi Kwatha* has the qualities of *Tikta* and *Katu Rasa*, as well as *Ushna Virya* and *Katu Vipaka*^[5].

Experimental studies employing CFA-induced arthritic models have demonstrated that these formulations effectively reduce paw oedema, enhance haematological parameters, and normalise biochemical markers of inflammation^[6-9]. These findings, derived

from modern experimental techniques, demonstrate that traditional therapeutic approaches can be substantiated by evidence.

The primary components of modern rheumatoid arthritis treatment, as opposed to other types of medications, are non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), glucocorticoids, disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs), and biological treatments. Even though these treatments work most of the time, they can also have bad side effects, cost a lot of money, and make people worry about their long-term safety^[6,8,9]. People are once again looking at older systems as a reliable and long-lasting way to solve the problem. People with chronic inflammatory diseases like rheumatoid arthritis and *Amavata* not only have pain in their joints, but they also feel worse overall. Discomfort, fatigue, and limited mobility can all contribute to the disorder, in addition to restricting social interaction and emotional stability. It is a compassionate and sensitive way to deal with health, and it fits with the modern need for patient-centered care. Ayurveda offers a complete view of health by looking at things like diet, lifestyle, mental balance, and digestion. Both systems agree that management strategies should be both comprehensive and empathetic because people are more than just their physical condition.

CONCLUSION

Even though they are called different things in medicine, *Amavata* and rheumatoid arthritis are both clinical illnesses that are very similar to each other. An internal imbalance that causes systemic inflammation to get worse is what makes each of these conditions different. This inflammation eventually damages joints and makes it impossible to function normally. Ayurvedic concepts of *Ama* and *Vata* enhance the current understanding of the immune system by providing a more comprehensive insight into the body's metabolic and physiological systems.

To make progress in both Ayurvedic and modern medicine that is good for both, we need to set up a comparative pathophysiological framework. By bringing together different points of view, we can come up with a holistic, effective, and caring way to treat chronic inflammatory joint disorders.

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***Address for correspondence**

Dr. Singh Manoj Kumar

Associate Professor
Kriya Sharir, Faculty of Ayurveda,
Institute of Medical Sciences
Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.
Email: singhmk@bhu.ac.in

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