



**A CRITICAL REVIEW OF AETIOPATHOLOGICAL STUDY OF *URUSTAMBHA***

**KOMAL KESHWA<sup>1</sup>**

**ABSTRACT:**

Urustambha which literally means stiffness of thighs, pain and inability to move the pelvis and lower extremities. In the present era, Urustambha patients come with different manifestations which are difficult to diagnose. If oleation therapy or Panchakarma (the five kinds of therapeutic procedures or treatments) therapy is administered due to misdiagnosed that this disease as Vata disorder or due to ignorance, it results in increasing symptoms. So, this article is very useful to understand which types of symptoms that look like Vata Vyadi are not always treated with Snehan (oleation) or Panchakarma etc. This article helps to understand the concept of *Urustambha* from an Ayurveda perspective and modern aspects too and concluded with treatment mentioned in different Ayurvedic texts which can be very useful in the prevention and management of diseases that yield due to *Kphaja* factors and symptoms originate as *Vata Vyadhi* such as Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), Thrombophlebitis, Lipid myopathies (LM) etc.

**Keywords-** Aetiology, Ayurvedic approach, Myopathies, *Urustambha*

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## INTRODUCTION

The words 'Urustambha' consist of "Uru" and "Stambha". Uru<sup>[1]</sup> means thighs and Stambha means stiffness.<sup>[2]</sup> According to *Shabda Kalpa Druma (Uru Stambhanati Iti Uru + Stambha + Anah)*,<sup>[3]</sup> *Urustambha* occurs because of *Kapha* by its *Sthira* (stable) and *Sheeta* (cold) properties which associated with *Mēda* (Fat in adipose tissue and general) <sup>[4]</sup> *Vata* and *Pitta*. *Acharya Charaka* explained *Urustambha* separately from the *Vata Vyadhi Adhyaya* because *Urustambha* is *Kapha Dosha Pradhanaja Vyadhi*.<sup>[5]</sup> *Acharya Sushruta* explains *Urustambha* in *Mahaavata Vyadhi Chikitsa* and *Acharaya Vagbhata* has mentioned *Urustambha* in *Vatavyadhi* because the *Lakshanas* (symptoms) of this disease is similar to *Vat Vyadhi*. <sup>[6],[7]</sup> *Urustambha* is a *Kapha Pradhan Tridoshaja Vyadhi*, where the *Avarana* of *Vata* takes place.<sup>[8]</sup> The *Chala Guna* of *Vata* get affected is responsible for various mechanisms of the body. Due to the obstruction of *Vata*, there is inhibition of the functions of *Vata* which leads to the manifestation of *Vata Vyadhi*.<sup>[9]</sup> Hence, *Acharya Charaka* considered *Urustambha* under *Nanatmaja Vata Vyadhi*<sup>[10]</sup> and *Samanyaja* <sup>[11]</sup> In *Urustambha*, we can see two types of *Avarana* mainly *Kaphaavruta Vata* and *Medaavruta vata*. *Urustambha* is a vast subject so it's very difficult to correlate with a single

modern disease. Hence, this subject *Urustambh* disease it's a group of diseases that can be correlated with some symptoms of myopathies, some of Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), Thrombophlebitis, Lipid myopathies (LM).

## Material and Methods-

*Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Chakrapani, Bhavprakash* other ayurvedic texts, modern textbooks, journals and online databases were reviewed thoroughly for the study material.

## Causes-

Intake of foods of like *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Ushna* (hot), *Laghu* (light to digest), *Sheeta* (cold), *Drava* (liquid), *Shushka* (dry) food (altogether or alternating) when the previous food is partially digested only or completely digested. Intake of food having opposite qualities like fish and milk, the meat of animals which are *Gramya* (from urban area), *Audaka* (aquatic) *Anupa* (marshy places) and *Anupa* (marshy places). Intake of pastries and denatured alcohol. Excessive daytime sleep and awakening during the night. Excessive fasting or taking food while the previous food is partially digested. Overexertion, continuous fear, suppression of urges.<sup>[12]</sup>

**Table 1. Etiological factors**

<b>Dosha</b>	Vitiated <i>Kapha</i> ( <i>Gourava, Sthairya, Shaitya,</i> ), <i>Vata</i> ( <i>Laaghava &amp; Vaishadya</i> )
<b>Dushya</b>	<i>Rasa and Medo Dhatu</i>
<b>Srotas</b>	<i>Rasavaha-srotas, Medovaha-srotas</i>
<b>Prakriti (Sthanik Dosha)</b>	<i>Avalambaka Kapha, Paachaka Pitta, Samaana, Vyaana</i>
<b>Rogamarga</b>	<i>Madhyama roga maarga</i>
<b>Stroto Dushti Prakara</b>	<i>Sanga</i>
<b>Adhishtana</b>	<i>Uru Pradesha</i>
<b>Utpatti Sthana</b>	<i>Amashya, Uru Pradesha</i>
<b>Vyadhi Swabhava</b>	<i>Ashukari</i>

### Etiopathology-

*Acharya Vagbhat* mentioned that Consuming foods having different *Guna* altogether like *Sheet Ushna Ahara Vihara*<sup>[13]</sup> (Cold and hot mix eg. *Jalebi with icecream*), *Drava* (liquid) and *Sshusaka* (dry) and consuming of *Shnighdha, Ushna, Laghu and Shitta* before the previous one gets digested (*Adhyashana*)<sup>[14]</sup> repeated development of indigestion (*Ajirna*) caused by *Agnimandha* explained in the etiology are direct causes for *Tridosha Prakopa*.<sup>[15]</sup> Regular habituation of *Viruddha, Adhyashana* and *Ajirna* causes the accumulation of *Ama* (toxic metabolites of *Rasa Dhatu*). These toxic metabolites reduced the proper utilization of and increased *Tridosha Prakopa, Rasa Dhatu* which carries untransformed *Rasa Dhatu* to *Amashaya*. Thus *Ama* is a condition of *Koshtha*.

If *Amarasadhatu* fails to get digested, it interacts and combines with elevated *Tridosha* to become one which is designated as *Saama (tri)Dosha*. Due to excess unctuousness, the accumulation of *Ama* in *Koshtha* takes place. Due to the above-mentioned causes and due to *Ama*, the vitiation of *Tridosha* takes place. *Ama* with De-arranged *Medas* obstructs *Prakupita Tridosha* and moves downward through *Siras* due to heaviness. *Dosha* gets accentuated by the strength of the *Meda dhatu* to fill the calves and thighs of the lower limbs causing involuntary movements and immobility. *Pada* is part of *Karma-Indriya*, According to *Indriya, Pada* will not work so *Pada* will not be able to do any movement flexion, extensions etc.<sup>[16]</sup> *Kapha* gets more strength as compared to the other two *Dosha*. A example of a big pond

stated by *Acharya Charak* which is deep and filled with water that remains Stable and undisturbed showing the importance of the *Kapha* filled in lower limbs.<sup>[17]</sup> *Kapha* with its *Sthira* (stable) and *Sheeta* (cold) properties associated with *Vata* and *Pitta* and causes immobility of *Uru* (thighs). Hence the disease is termed *Urusthambha*.

Though *Vata* can get *Avarana*, *Urusthambha* has a synonym *Aadhyavata*<sup>[18]</sup> because *Medasaavrita Vata* (obstruction to *Vata* which got aggravated by extrinsic causes by vitiated *Medas*) takes place, according to *Madhav Nidan* its synonym of *Medasaavrita-vata (aadhyavata iti jneyassa kricchro medasaavrite – Madhav Nidan)*. The active movement of lower limbs performed by *Vyana Vayu*, obstructed by the *Medas* and *Saamata* made *Mudha- Vata* (Motionless). Hence the disease got the name of the *Samsthaana* (Affected area), immobility of *Uru* which is called *Urusthambha* caused by *Medas* and *Ama*.

#### **Prodromal symptoms-**

Constantly concentrating on something, excessive sleep, indolence (decreased emotion), anorexia, fever, horripilation, vomiting and due to loss of strength reduced movements of calves and thighs.<sup>[19]</sup>

#### **Symptoms-**

Excessive fatigue of calf muscles and thighs, loss of sensation of the lower limb, walking

difficulties, pain with slight burning sensation, Unable to walk, Insensitivity to cold touch, Loss of muscle power on standing, bricking pain when walking and on moving the lower limbs, Unable to move the lower limbs due to the feeling that they are not own.<sup>[20]</sup>

*Urusthambha* is fatal, If the patient develops pain with burning sensation, pricking pain and tremors.

If such symptoms are absent and it is not prolonged, then it is curable.<sup>[21]</sup>

#### **Why Panchkarma is contraindicated-**

The reason why *Snehan*(oleation), *Basti* (enema), *Virechan* (purgation) and *Vaman* (emesis) are contraindicated in *Urusthambha* is being explained for your understanding.

*Oleation and enema therapies always aggravate Kapha. Purgation is indicated for Pakvashyagat Doshas ineffective to remove Kapha localized in the thighs. Amashaya's situated Kapha and Pitta can be easily removed by emesis. When the three Dosha lodged in Pakvashaya, all could be fully removed by enema therapy. But in Urusthambha since pathognomonic Dosha are stagnant due to Amatva (metabolic defect) and obstructed by fat, Vata and Kapha both have Sheeta Guna and since Vata and Kapha are immobile, it is not easy to remove Doshas just as it is*

difficult to remove stagnant water from a trench. [22]

### **Chikitsa Sutra (Treatment) -**

1. *Kshapana* of *Kapha* and *Meda Dhatu* (reduction of *Kapha* and *Meda Dhatu*).

2. *Rukshana* and *Shoshana* (drying and absorbing excess fat and lipids) with *Yava* (barley), *Shyamaka* (millet), and *Kodrava* along with vegetables cooked with water and oil, but without adding salt. Leaves of *Sunishannaka*, *Nimba*, *Arka*, *Vetra*, *Aragwadha*, *Vaayasi*, *Vaastuka* and bitter vegetables like *Kulaka (karavellaka)* aid *Rukshana*. [23]

3. Exercise in the form of swimming against the flow. To get rid of *Kapha*, the able patients do physical exercise and walk over the ground covered with stones and sand in the morning. The patient should be made to swim often against the current of the river with cold water but harmless. He may also be advised to swim frequently in a pond having clean, cold and stable water. [24]

4. *Churna* preparations- *Sharngeshtadi churna*, [25] *Murvadi-yoga* [26], *Swarnakshiryadi yoga* [27], *Shaddharana Yoga*, [28] *Triphalaadi churna* [29] *Pippalivardhmanaadi yoga* [30]

5. *Taila* preparations- *Piluparnyadi taila*, [31] *Kushthadi taila*, [32] *Saindhavadi taila*,

[33] *Ashtakatvara taila*, [34] *Dvipanchmoola taila* [35]

6. External applications- The mud of anthill, the root, fruits and barks of *Karanja* and bricks should be made to a powder. This should be used for *Utsadana* (therapeutic massage with a mixture of powder and unctuous substance) with different drugs powder like *Danti Arka* etc. [36]

7. *Kwath* preparations- *Rasnaadikwath*, [37] *Pippliadyakwath*, [38] *Bhallatakadikwath* [39]

8. *Asava/Arishth*- *Gandiraarishth* [40]

9. *Gugglu* preparations- *Amritaadyagugglu*, [41]

7. Beneficial diet and lifestyle in *Kapha* vitiation- To alleviate *Kapha*, the able-bodied patients should be engaged in physical exercise and they should be made to walk over the ground covered with gravels and sand in the morning. The patient should be made to swim often against the current of the river with cold water but harmless. He may also be advised to swim frequently in a pond having clean, cold, and stable water. [42]

8. Extranal applications- *Valmikamaritika Utsadan*, *Ashawgandhaadi Utsadan*, *Takrayaraadi Lepa*, *Sarshpa Lepa Vatsakaadi Lepa Syonakaadi lepa* and *Prisheka*. [43]

### **DISCUSSION-**

*Urustambha* which means stiffness of thighs. Patients present with pain and inability to move the pelvis and lower extremities. This is the only

disease in which *Panchkarma* is contraindicated. It can be misdiagnosed as *Vata* dominant disorder due to its clinical presentation, however, *Kapha* and *Mēda Dhatu* are the main culprits in the pathogenesis. It's a lesson that all *Lakshanas* may be the same as *Vatvyadhi* but if oleation therapy is administered due to misunderstanding, that this disease is *Vata* disorder or due to ignorance, it results in loss of strength in the legs, loss of sensation in the legs and difficulty in raising the legs.<sup>[43]</sup> So a good physician always should be careful about the *Nidana* behind the disease and then go for the treatment. In a modern perspective *Urustambha* cannot correlate with a single disease it is a vast group of diseases. It may be correlate with Guillain Barre Syndrome, Myositis, Thrombophlebitis and Lipid myopathies-

**Guillain Barre Syndrome-** Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) is a post infective demyelinating neuropathy of unknown cause, characterised by demyelination of peripheral nerve or spinal root caused by two mechanisms Demyelinating (acute inflammatory demyelinating neuropathy, AIDP), Axonal, may be- Motor (acute motor axonal neuropathy). Sensorimotor (acute motor and sensory axonal neuropathy, AMSAN). Symptoms are weakness, usually starts in lower limbs, ascends rapidly and affects upper limbs (called

ascending paralysis), more marked proximally than distally are similar as present in *Urustambha* but Facial and bulbar weakness, respiratory weakness not present in *Urustambha Lakshnas*.

**Thrombophlebitis-** Thrombophlebitis are of 2types- Superficial thrombophlebitis with sign and symptoms Warmth, tenderness and pain in the affected area, Redness and swelling. Deep vein thrombosis signs and symptoms include : Pain and Swelling, when a vein close to the surface of the skin is affected, you might see a red, hard cord just under the surface of the skin that's tender to the touch. When a deep vein in the leg is affected, the leg may become swollen, tender, and painful within hours. Low back pain, distal paraesthesia and pain may precede weakness. Signs are Muscle tone and power diminished. Loss of all reflexes. Sensory loss-minimum or absent. Bilateral facial palsy (in 50% cases, unilateral in 25% cases). Sphincter involvement (rare). Your risk of thrombophlebitis might increase if you: Are inactive for a prolonged period, either because you're confined to bed or you're traveling in a car or plane for a long period, have varicose veins, which are a common cause of superficial thrombophlebitis, are overweight or obese are similar the causative factors of *Urustambha* and some symptoms like pain, swelling and distal parathesis are similar of symptoms like

loss of sensation of the lower limb, unable to move the lower limbs due to the feeling that they are not own, bricking pain but bilateral palsy etc. are not matched. Etiopathology shows some similarity with *Urustambha*- Clot before inflammation: This is when a clot forms and causes irritation inside a blood vessel. That irritation leads to the inflammation that is key with thrombophlebitis. Inflammation before clot: In other cases, inflammation on the inside of a blood vessel (called phlebitis) can make it possible for a clot to attach to that vessel's inner wall.

**Lipid Myopathies-** Lipid myopathies (LM) are a group of muscular diseases with onset in all ages, due in most cases to enzymatic errors of lipid metabolism. LM often, but not always, are characterized by lipid storage in muscle biopsy. Clinically LM can show stable and progressive weakness or episodic asthenia with rhabdomyolysis crisis, triggered by metabolic stress, fever, physical exercise.

Although the Ayurveda and modern science are two different sciences based on totally different own principles, so it is not possible to compare *Urustambha* to a single modern disease. But if the treatment of such diseases possible by *Kshapana*, *Rukshana* and *Shamana chikitsa* which are easy to perform, cost-effective and most efficient treatments.

## CONCLUSION-

*Urustambha* resembles *Vata* disorder because of the clinical picture of the painful weakness of the pelvic girdle and lower extremities muscles. However, it should not be treated as a *Vatic* disorder as it is caused by vitiation of *Kapha* and *Ama* formation leading to obstruction of *Vata*.

It is caused by poor lifestyle and diet with excess fat and inadequate digestion leading to *ama* and vitiation of three *Dosha* of which *Kapha* is predominant. *Ama*, vitiated three *Dosha* and deranged *Medo Dhatu* (fat) get deposited in the muscles of lower extremities and strangulate them. Regarding *Urustambh Vyadhi* in ayurveda various types of management oral medications, external applications and physical exercises are present which can help to prevent and cure those types of broad spectrum of diseases.

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Komal Keshwa. A Critical review of aetiopathological study of Urustambha. Jour. of Ayurveda & Holistic Medicine, Vol.-XI,  
Issue-III (March 2023).

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**CITE THIS ARTICLE AS**

Komal Keshwa. A Critical review of aetiopathological study of Urustambha. *J of Ayurveda and Hol  
Med (JAHM)*. 2023;11(3):116-126

**Conflict of interest:** None

**Source of support:** None