



“CONCEPT OF RAKTAPITTA AND ITS MODERN INTERPRETATION – A SCIENTIFIC REVIEW”

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Raktapitta is a classical disease entity described in Ayurvedic Samhitas, characterized by bleeding from different orifices of the body due to aggravated Pitta vitiating Rakta Dhatu. It is considered a grave condition with systemic implications, and its description highlights the complex interplay of Dosha, Dhatu, and Srotas. Modern medicine recognizes similar bleeding disorders under categories such as hemorrhagic diathesis, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, and coagulopathies. **Methods:** A comprehensive review of classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* was undertaken. Additionally, modern databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science were searched using keywords “Raktapitta,” “Ayurveda and bleeding disorders,” “hemostasis,” and “coagulation disorders.” Peer-reviewed studies, systematic reviews, and clinical trials were included, while anecdotal reports and non-peer-reviewed sources were excluded. **Results:** Classical texts describe Raktapitta as arising due to excessive intake of Ushna, Amla, and Lavana substances, leading to Pitta aggravation and Rakta vitiation. The condition manifests as bleeding through nasal, oral, rectal, or urinary pathways, classified into Urdhwaga (upward), Adhoga (downward), and Tiryaga (lateral). Modern interpretations link Raktapitta with vascular fragility, platelet dysfunction, clotting factor deficiencies, and gastrointestinal bleeding. Therapies in Ayurveda include cooling agents (Sheetala Dravyas), hemostatic herbs, and Panchakarma procedures, which may parallel modern approaches targeting coagulation pathways and vascular stabilization. **Discussion:** Raktapitta demonstrates Ayurveda’s profound understanding of pathophysiology and bleeding disorders. Its interpretation in light of modern hematology and gastroenterology enriches clinical practice. However, translational challenges persist in correlating Ayurvedic parameters with measurable biomedical markers. Integrative research is needed to establish objective diagnostic criteria and validate Ayurvedic interventions through clinical trials.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Bleeding disorders, Hemostasis, Raktapitta, Srotas

INTRODUCTION

Raktapitta, as described in Ayurveda, is one of the most important and potentially fatal bleeding disorders. It arises when aggravated Pitta vitiates Rakta Dhatu, leading to hemorrhage from various orifices^[1-2]. The Samhitas classify it into subtypes based on the direction of bleeding and emphasize dietary, lifestyle, and environmental factors as triggers. The detailed description of Raktapitta highlights the holistic approach of Ayurveda to pathogenesis, prevention, and management^[3-4].

In modern medicine, hemorrhagic disorders are understood in the context of vascular integrity, platelet function, and coagulation pathways^[5]. Disorders such as hemophilia, thrombocytopenia, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, and bleeding due to peptic ulcer or hepatic dysfunction may be considered comparable to Raktapitta. Thus, studying Raktapitta through both Ayurvedic and modern lenses provides an integrative understanding of bleeding disorders^[6-7].

To critically analyze the concept of Raktapitta in Samhitas and explore its modern interpretations in the context of bleeding disorders^[8]. Review classical Ayurvedic descriptions of Raktapitta, its causes, types, and management. Correlate Raktapitta with modern pathological and clinical entities. Highlight therapeutic measures described in Ayurveda and explore their relevance in modern medicine. Identify research gaps and propose future directions for integrative healthcare^[9-10].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sources of Data:

Classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and their authoritative commentaries^[11].

- **Databases searched:** PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar.
- **Search terms:** “Raktapitta,” “Ayurveda bleeding disorders,” “Ayurveda hemostasis,” “hemorrhagic disorders,” “coagulation disorders.”^[12]
- **Inclusion criteria:** Classical references, peer-reviewed studies, clinical trials, and review articles (2000–2024) focusing on Raktapitta or related bleeding disorders^[13].

- **Exclusion criteria:** Anecdotal reports, non-peer-reviewed sources, and non-scientific commentaries^[14].
- **Data extraction:** Data were compiled thematically under classical concepts, modern correlations, therapeutic approaches, and research perspectives^[15].

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

1. Classical Description of Raktapitta in Samhitas

Raktapitta is described in detail by Acharya Charaka (Chikitsa Sthana 4), Sushruta (Uttara Tantra), and Vagbhata (Ashtanga Hridaya, Chikitsa Sthana).

- **Definition:** Raktapitta is a condition characterized by bleeding through natural orifices due to simultaneous vitiation of *Rakta* (blood) and *Pitta dosha*.
- **Etiology (Nidana):** Excessive intake of hot (*ushna*), sour (*amla*), salty (*lavana*), pungent (*katu*), and fermented foods, alcohol, exposure to heat, anger, and sun are emphasized as causative factors.
- **Samprapti (Pathogenesis):** Pitta vitiation heats up Rakta, leading to its liquefaction and movement in abnormal pathways. This results in bleeding manifestations.
- **Types of Raktapitta:**
 - Urdhwaga (upward): bleeding from nose (epistaxis), mouth (hematemesis), ears, eyes.
 - Adhoga (downward): bleeding per rectum, hematuria, menorrhagia.
 - Tiryaka (lateral/transverse): cutaneous bleeding, purpura, ecchymosis.
- **Prognosis:** Urdhwaga is relatively manageable, while Adhoga and Tiryaka forms may be severe and life-threatening.

These detailed classifications indicate that ancient scholars recognized Raktapitta as a systemic hemorrhagic disorder with site-specific presentations.

2. Modern Correlations of Raktapitta

A systematic review of biomedical literature reveals multiple parallels between Raktapitta and hemorrhagic disorders:

- **Urdhwaga Raktapitta:** Comparable with epistaxis, hemoptysis, hematemesis, and subconjunctival hemorrhage. Causes may include hypertension, chronic sinusitis,

pulmonary tuberculosis, gastric ulcer, or varices.

- Adhoga Raktapitta: Correlates with gastrointestinal bleeding, hematuria, melena, hematochezia, and abnormal uterine bleeding. Common underlying mechanisms include peptic ulcer disease, hemorrhoids, renal pathology, or coagulation defects.
- Tiryaka Raktapitta: Comparable with purpura, petechiae, ecchymosis, and hematological disorders like thrombocytopenia, hemophilia, and vasculitis.

Pathophysiological parallels:

- Pitta dosha ↔ systemic inflammatory mediators, oxidative stress, and vasodilation.
- Rakta dushti ↔ platelet dysfunction, clotting factor deficiency, vascular fragility.
- Samprapti Ghatakas (pathogenetic factors) ↔ imbalance in hemostatic mechanisms.

Thus, Raktapitta can be interpreted as a broad spectrum of hemorrhagic disorders, with its Ayurvedic pathogenesis aligning well with modern insights into vascular and hematological pathology.

3. Symptomatology and Clinical Features

Ayurvedic texts provide detailed clinical features:

- Urdhwaga: Nasal bleeding, oral bleeding, blood-stained sputum, hematemesis.
- Adhoga: Hematuria, bloody stools, excessive menstrual bleeding.
- Tiryaka: Bruising, subcutaneous bleeding, oozing from skin pores.
- Associated features: Fever, burning sensation, thirst, faintness, anorexia, weakness, and tachycardia.

Modern literature corroborates these features with systemic symptoms of anemia, shock, and multi-organ dysfunction in severe bleeding disorders.

4. Therapeutic Approaches in Samhitas

a. General Principles

- Shamana (palliative): Cooling herbs, diet, and lifestyle for mild cases.
- Shodhana (purificatory): Virechana (purgation) and Raktamokshana (bloodletting) in chronic/recurrent cases.
- Brimhana (nourishing): Restoring strength through Rasayana therapy.

b. Herbal Formulations

- Amalaki (*Embllica officinalis*): Cooling, antioxidant, hemostatic.
- Yashtimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*): Soothing, anti-inflammatory, mucosal protective.
- Draksha (*Vitis vinifera*): Nutritive, Rakta-Pitta pacifying.
- Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*): Hemostatic and anti-inflammatory.
- Kamala (*Nelumbo nucifera*): Cooling, stops bleeding.

c. Panchakarma Therapies

- Virechana (purgation): To expel aggravated Pitta.
- Nasya: In nasal bleeding.
- Raktamokshana: In localized vascular congestion.

d. Diet and Lifestyle

- Avoidance of hot, spicy foods, alcohol, and exposure to heat.
- Inclusion of milk, ghee, cooling fruits, and easily digestible foods.

5. Modern Research Evidence

A growing body of clinical and experimental studies supports Ayurvedic management of bleeding disorders:

- *Embllica officinalis* (Amalaki): Demonstrated antioxidant and capillary-stabilizing activity, reducing bleeding tendencies.
- *Glycyrrhiza glabra* (Yashtimadhu): Shows anti-ulcer, mucoprotective, and anti-hemorrhagic effects in pre-clinical models.
- Ayurvedic polyherbal formulations: Clinical trials have reported reduced bleeding episodes in patients with idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP) and abnormal uterine bleeding.
- Rasayana therapy: Improves platelet count, enhances hemopoiesis, and strengthens vascular walls.

6. Case Reports and Clinical Studies

Several clinical studies highlight the efficacy of Ayurvedic interventions in conditions comparable to Raktapitta:

1. Sharma et al. (2011): A clinical trial using *Amalaki and Yashtimadhu* in upper gastrointestinal bleeding showed significant reduction in hematemesis and improved hemoglobin levels.

2. Srikanth et al. (2014): Evaluated *Amalaki* in recurrent epistaxis in adolescents, reporting reduced frequency and intensity of bleeding.
3. Dwivedi et al. (2020): Reviewed Ayurvedic interventions in hemostatic balance, confirming role of herbs like *Lodhra* and *Mulethi*.
4. Nampoothiri et al. (2021): Demonstrated bioactive compounds in Ayurvedic herbs exerting hemostatic and antioxidant effects at molecular levels.

7. Integrative Understanding

The integration of Ayurveda with modern medicine provides a dual framework for interpreting Raktapitta:

- Ayurveda emphasizes *dosha-dushya samprapti* and systemic correction.
- Modern hematology emphasizes platelet count, coagulation pathways, and vascular health.
- Both highlight diet, lifestyle, and systemic balance as preventive measures.

This integrative view suggests that Raktapitta is not only a pathological disorder but also a systemic imbalance, requiring both preventive and curative strategies.

DISCUSSION

Raktapitta as described in Ayurveda shows striking similarities with modern bleeding disorders. The emphasis on dietary and environmental factors parallels modern recognition of lifestyle and systemic influences on vascular and hematological health. The classification into Urdhwaga, Adhoga, and Tiryaga provides a unique framework to differentiate site-specific bleeding, comparable to organ-specific manifestations in modern medicine^[16-17].

Ayurveda's focus on Nidana parivarjana and Rasayana therapy underlines preventive and holistic care, while modern medicine emphasizes acute hemostatic interventions such as blood transfusions, factor replacement, and endoscopic therapy. Integrating both systems can create complementary models—Ayurveda for long-term prevention and systemic correction, and modern interventions for emergency management^[18].

Challenges include the lack of objective diagnostic criteria for Raktapitta in modern terms, absence of standardized herbal formulations, and limited clinical

trials. Bridging these gaps requires interdisciplinary research, biomarker mapping, and comparative clinical studies^[19].

The concept of Pitta aggravation liquefying Rakta aligns with hypercatabolic and inflammatory states that impair vascular and hematological stability. Modern correlates such as oxidative stress, cytokine imbalance, and vascular injury provide potential biomedical parallels. Exploring these intersections can validate Ayurveda's observations and strengthen integrative medicine^[20].

CONCLUSION

Raktapitta is a classical Ayurvedic disease entity that encompasses a wide spectrum of bleeding disorders. The Samhitas provide detailed descriptions of etiology, pathogenesis, classification, clinical features, and therapeutic measures, emphasizing both preventive and curative strategies.

Modern interpretation correlates Raktapitta with hemorrhagic conditions such as epistaxis, gastrointestinal bleeding, hematuria, purpura, and coagulopathies. Ayurveda's use of cooling, hemostatic, and Rasayana therapies complements modern approaches like coagulation correction, endoscopic interventions, and transfusion medicine. By integrating Ayurvedic principles with modern hematology and gastroenterology, a comprehensive framework for diagnosis and treatment can be developed. Future research should focus on clinical validation of Ayurvedic formulations, objective biomarkers for Raktapitta, and development of integrative treatment guidelines.

Ultimately, Raktapitta exemplifies Ayurveda's holistic understanding of systemic diseases and its potential to inform modern medical science.

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