

VATAKANTAKA W.S.R PLANTAR FASCITIS – REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Plantar Fasciitis or *Vatakantaka* in *Ayurveda* is a condition which is known by pain in feet, more specifically in the heel. It is a clinical condition, as patients classically presents with pain that is particularly more with the first few steps in the morning. *Ayurveda* explains the condition as *Vatakantaka*, resulting due to the prakopa of *Kapha-Vata Doshas*. Although it is a self-limiting condition; however, due to the severity of pain, medical attention is sought. Symptoms will relieve if the risk factors are adjusted and multiple treatment modalities are started as early as possible. *Ayurveda* clearly mentioned this condition as treatable. This journal reviews *Vatakantaka w.s.r to PlantarFasciitis*; presents the most effective treatment options.

KEYWORDS: *Vatakantaka*, *Agnikarma*, *Suchikarma*, *Abhyantara Eranda Snehapana*, Plantar Fasciitis Abhyanga.

INTRODUCTION

Plantar Fasciitis is a painful condition which is also referred to as a plantar heel pain or heel spur syndrome. In *Ayurveda*, it is described as *Vatakantaka*, particularly caused by doing walk on uneven surfaces or by *Ati Shrama* which produces *Ruja* (pain) in *Khaduka Pradesha* (*Parshni* or *Padajangha Sandhi*). The clinical features of *Vatakantaka* are like Plantar Fasciitis which is because of the inflammation of the plantar fascia due to repeated trauma to the tissue where it is attached to the calcaneous bone. In today's world, the incidence of *Vatakantaka* i.e. Plantar Fasciitis is increasing. Men and women are equally affected. The reasons of high prevalence of this disease are wearing high heels, hard or improper fitting footwear, walking long distance, engaging in strenuous exercise for prolonged periods. Thus, it is seen as wide spreading disease condition during these days, found in people from all walks of life.

Aetiopathogenesis: The local *Vayu* enraged by making a false step on an uneven ground, finds lodgement in the region of the ankle (*Khaduka*, instep according to the others), thus giving rise to a disease which is called *Vatakantaka*.^[1]

Aetiology: Although the aetiology is not clear, however, there are varieties of different data on proposed risk

factors that lead to repeated micro trauma of the plantar fascia suggested as follows.^[2]

1. Sudden weight load on the foot due to overweight or pregnancy. It has been observed that when the body mass index is greater than 25kg/m², there is a twofold increased risk of Plantar Fasciitis.^[3]
2. Inflammatory Arthritis like RA & Spondyloarthritis
3. Diabetes Mellitus^[4], Hypothyroidism^[5], Osteoarthritis.^[6]
4. The most common cause of Plantar Fasciitis is tight Achilles tendon (the tendon connecting the calf muscle to the heel) prolongs flexion of the foot causes shortening of the plantar fascia. Therefore, when the person stands, it extends the plantar fascia & accelerates pain.^[7]
5. Mechanical imbalances of the foot problems are due to the foot itself or excessive walking in the shoes with poor arch support including flip-flops or soft soles has been attributed to Plantar Fasciitis. pes planus (flat feet), pes cavus (high arches) & reduced dorsiflexion of the ankle (equines gastrocnemius) are caused. Such risk factors increase the risk of Plantar Fasciitis.^[8]
6. As individual gets older the plantar fascia become less like a rubber band & more like a rope which does not stretches very well. The fat pad on the heel

become thin & can't absorb more shock caused by walking, which create damage to the plantar fascia & it may cause to swell, tear or bruise. Person may experience bruise or swelling on their heel.

7. Long distance running especially running downhill or on uneven surfaces.^[9]
8. Occupation requires spending most time of the day on the feet with lot of walking, standing on hard surfaces are more prone.^[10]
9. Some changes in activities such as a sudden jump, starting a new running program or even changing of footwear can easily place the tissue in repeated stress over a short period.^[11]
10. Overweight individuals are more at risk of developing the condition due to excessive weight impacting on their feet.

As per *Ayurveda*, this condition occurs due to the prakopa of *Kapha Dosha* along with *Vata Dosha*.

Few nidanas of *Vata Dushti*.

1. Excessive exercise
2. walking with bare foot which ultimately leads to *Vata Dushti*
3. Lack of sleep
4. Mental stress leads to *Vata Kopa*

Few nidanas *Kapha Dushti*

1. Lack of exercise
2. Excessive use of sweet, oily food leads to overweight, obesity, diabetes (one of the *Kaphaj Vikaras*).

Lakshanas

1. The most reported symptom of Plantar Fasciitis is described as 'first-step pain' or 'post-static dyskinesia', which is pain or irritation at the heel rising after a period of non-weight bearing or inactivity. Such as getting up from bed in the morning, standing up for several hours, or driving the car for a long period.^[12]
2. Pain is usually worsen in the morning as the fascia tightens up night. After a few minutes, pain decreases as the foot gets warmed up.
3. Pain occurs on pressing the inner side of the heel & fewtimes along the arch
4. Stretching the plantar fascia caused more pain
5. As the condition becomes more severe, the pain can get worse throughout the day, if activity continues.
6. Few times there may also be pain along with the outside border of the heel. It occurs due to off-loading the painful side of the foot by walking on the outside border of the foot. It also be associated with the high impact of landing on the outside of the heel, if the person has high arch feet.

Investigation

1. Laboratory investigation performs to rule out underlying endocrine and inflammatory conditions

X-rays are required to rule out other causes of heel pain, specifically calcaneal stress fractures.^[13]

2. MRI is performed on patients who are resistant to treatment, to exclude alternative diagnosis that were not observed on the X-ray, such as a calcaneal stress fracture, calcium deposit, or soft-tissue tumour.^[14]

Treatment

Treatment for Plantar Fasciitis is divided into numerous categories.

1. Conservative care like patient education, orthotics, soft tissue massage, ice and heat therapy, strengthening exercise, etc.
2. Extra-corporal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT)
3. Medications – The most common antiinflammatory agents are cryotherapy (ice) followed by non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). They are helpful in decreasing both, acute pain and swelling, so decreases the pain temporary but not curatively. Enough studies are not done for evaluating the effectiveness of NSAIDS alone as it is a multifaceted approach.
4. Corticosteroid injections (CSI)
5. Surgery – The most common procedure is a partial plantar fasciotomy which could be open, percutaneous, or endoscopically. Closed is preferred from the open method due to the less recovery time. The success rate of surgical release is variable 70–90% and the recovery range from several weeks to few months.^[15]
6. Nutritional Supplementation – The following additions supplements to the diet have been recommended to ease the pain: Vitamin C, Zinc, Omega3-Fatty acid and Glucosamine. so, keeping in mind that there is no evidence behind it, and if a person chose to use it, it will be an addition to the conservative therapy.^[16]
7. *Ayurveda* has mentioned the treatment of *Vatakantaka* under *Vatavyadhichikitsa*. *External & internal treatment* must be given to treat it, which include local *Ishtika Sweda*, *Valuka Sweda*, *Snehana*, *Upanaha*, *Agnikarma*, *Raktavsechana*, *Bandhana*, *Suchikarma* (*Viddhakarma*) and *Abhyantara Eranda Snehapana*.^[17]

DISCUSSION

According to *Ayurveda*, this condition is due to vitiated *Kapha Dosha* along with *Vata Dosha*. *Vata Dosha* is the pradhana *Dosha* of the three *Doshas*. It has the functions like movements in our body, neurological & motor activities. The improper walking pattern, heavy walking or making a false step on an uneven surface/ground vitiates the *Vata Dosha* at *Gulpha Sandhi Pradesha* which causes *Vatakantaka*. This vitiated *Vata* also causes *Ruja* (pain).

Considering *Vatakantaka* is the result of vitiated *Vata Dosha* along with *Kapha Dosha*, treatment for *Vatakantaka* is *Shamana* of vitiated *Vata Dosha* by

Bahya Snehana, Upanaha, Raktavsechana, Viddhakarma, Agnikarma, Bandhana and Abhyantara Eranda Snehapana. Snehana and Swedana forms the basic lines of treatment adopted in Vataja Vyadhi.

CONCLUSION

Plantar fasciitis w.s.r to *Vatakantaka* is a disease in the contest of *Vatavyadi* as a painful condition of heel caused by its improper placement of foot on the ground that disturbs the daily activity. It is a clinical diagnosis and a self-limiting condition in majority of patients. However, it is successful treatable if integrated mode is used at the same time in the early symptoms. The treatment modalities like *Abhyanga, Swedana, Raktavsechana, Agnikarma* etc. are helpful in *Vatakantaka*.

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