

RHEUMATISM (AYURVEDIC CONCEPT)

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Preface

The junction between two bones is called a joint. The junction between two cells or tissues is also a subtle joint. All the bones have a cavity inside, a part of which is filled by bone marrow (i.e. majja). Vatadosha is naturally dominant in bones. The word sandhi means joint and vata is the dominant dosha. Hence rheumatism is called as sandhivata. Because of continuous movement, vatadosha gradually increases in bones and joints. Hence in all diseases of the joints, vatadosha is dominantly affected though pitta and kapha doshas too may be increased to some extent. Thus when vatadosha is increased in joints, it leads to rheumatism.

Injury to joints, tuberculosis, viral infections, syphilis, scurvy and other diseases also give rise to swelling of joints. In children and young adults, rheumatic fever and rheumatoid arthritis are the common causes of joint involvement. Both these are included in amavata in Ayurveda. In old age, osteoarthritis i.e. degeneration disease of joints and cartilage is the commonest cause of rheumatism.

Rheumatism of junction between cells and tissues is called as connective tissue disorder in modern medicine and vatarakta in Ayurveda.

Like all vataja (vatainduced) diseases, rheumatism is also not cured easily. It is characterised by intermittent aggravation and relief of symptoms and this cycle can last for months or years. Hence in rheumatic diseases, it is important to meticulously follow the restrictions of diet and activity as advised by the physician and undertake physiotherapy . In addition undertaking the spiritual practice and worship of the deity of fire (Agni) and the Sun deity (Surya) also prove to be useful.

In this book, we endeavour to describe the Ayurvedic concept of various types of rheumatism. This book shall be useful to doctors, vaidyas, medical students and patients suffering from rheumatism or other chronic joint disorders.

We pray to the deity of fire (Agni) and the Sun deity (Surya) to bless all the people by keeping their joints healthy and relieve the suffering of patients afflicted by rheumatism.

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