Review Article

Literature Review of Suram (Fever) in Siddha Medicine

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Abstract

Background:
Siddha Medicine is one of the Indigenous medical systems, which mentions about 4448 diseases affecting humans. Suram (fever) is considered as one of the diseases in Siddha Medicine whereas Western Medicine considers it as a sign and symptom of many diseases.

Aim: The present literary review on Suram is aimed at incorporating all the relevant informations pertaining to understanding the synonyms, causes, pathology and types which have been mentioned in various Siddha literatures in scattered form.

Materials & Methods: Literatures pertaining to Suram were reviewed from library of Unit of Siddha Medicine, University of Jaffna and main library of Jaffna municipal council. Thirteen books were identified and collected for this study.

Observations: Out of 13 literatures, 7 (53.84 %) have mentioned about the causes of Suram. All 13 literatures have mentioned the types of Suram which are categorized based on Doshas. 45 causes are identified and categorized based on the Tridoshas (Vatha, Pitta and Kapha) through unhealthy diet and habits. Among the 182 types of Suram identified, 64 types (35%) fall under the category of mixed which are categorized based on the affected Doshas, Dhatus and clinical features. Vata and Vata Kapha Suram are mentioned in 77% of literature and 71% have considered the cause as vitiation of Vathadosha.

Conclusion: A total of 182 types of Suram, due to Vatha and Vathakapha as the main cause has been mentioned in 77% of literature. The literary survey reveals, unhealthy food and habits (71%) as the main cause for Vatha and Vathakapha Suram.

Keywords: Literature review, Fever, Suram, Siddha Medicine

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Introduction

Siddha Medicine is one of the Indigenous medical systems of Sri Lanka which is most popular in North and East Provinces. The literature of Siddha medicine describes 4448 diseases which can affect the human. [1] Vatha, Pitta and Kapha are said to be the functional units of the human body. In healthy body, the ratio of them are 1:1/2:1/4 respectively. [2] The ratio of these functional units can change by the consumption of unhealthy food pattern and habits by which the body gets diseased. Suram is consider as a one of the separate disease in Siddha Medicine. Synonyms, causes, pathology and types of Suram have been mentioned in many Siddha literatures. However, all these details of Suram are not mentioned in all the literatures systematically. Causes, types and its clinical features have been mentioned in few literatures while missed in few. Classification of Suram also differs from literature to literature. Hence the review is aimed at analysing and summarizing all the available references with respect to the causes, classification method and pathology of Suram which helps academician, clinicians and researchers in understanding the concept.

Methodology

The relevant Siddha literatures which has mentioned about the Suram were searched from the Library of Unit of Siddha Medicine, University of Jaffna and main library of Jaffna Municipal council. Thirteen books were identified and collected for this study. All data were collected, listed out and tabulated. These tabulated data were analyzed.

Thirteen Siddha books used for review were as follows,

1. Sarabenthira Vaithiya Muragal (Jeeva Roga Chikilchaiti),
2. Pathinen Sithargal Aruliseithi Athmaratchamirthamenum Vaithya Sara Sangagram,
3. Agathyari Gunavagadam,
4. Yogi Vaithya Sinlamani,
5. Agathyari Rendayiram,
6. Danwanthari Vaithiyam,
7. Anubova Vaithiya Brahma Ragasiyam,
8. Sagarajasegara Vaithiya Thiravukol,
9. Noi Nadal Noi Mathal Nadal Thiratu(Rendam Paagam),
10. Agathyiyar Nanagiyaram,
11. Siddha Maruthuwam(Pothu),
12. Agathyiyar Vaithiya Kaviyam,
13. Pararajasekaram Sura Roga Nithanam

Observations

Synonyms of Suram:
10 synonyms were identified from the review they are: Kone[3] Vennai, Veppunai, Kandal, Kanyagi, Anal, Soodu, Ponnalnoi Pudhupintharath UVan and Kaniahal. [4]

Causes of Suram
Out of 13 literatures, 7(53.84 %) has mentioned about the causes of Suram. 45 causes were identified from the review. These causes are categorized based on the affected Tridatus (Vatha, Pitta and Kapha) through unhealthy diet and habits. This is shown in Table 1.

Table no.1: Causes of Suram mentioned in 13 literatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of cause</th>
<th>Details of Cause of Suram</th>
<th>Mentioned in No. of Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unhealthy Food habits</td>
<td>Improper food, poisonous food, drinking more water, drinking unclean water: [1,2,4,6]</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong Behaviour/ Habits</td>
<td>Exposure to More air, poisonous air, walking long distance, running hardly, too much of work, too much of sex: [1,4,6]</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitiated Vathadosha</td>
<td>Fear, Sleeplessness, worries Anger and Bad thoughts: [1,4,6]</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitiated Kaphadosha</td>
<td>Wandering in mist, too much of chills, wetting in rain, too much of bathing: [1,5,6]</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitiated Pittadosha</td>
<td>Too much of exposure to heat and sun: [1,3,4]</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease condition</td>
<td>Indigestion: [7,6,9]</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>[1,3,4,6,9]</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other causes</td>
<td>Bearing heavy weights on head: [1,4]</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country variation: [4,6]</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using tobacco, variation in sleeping bed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pathology for Suram

Out of 13 literatures, 6 (46.15%) literatures mentioned about the pathology of Suram. Formation of Ama is the main reason for increasing body temperature. Ama means indigestible particle that are formed in the intestine. This Ama is absorbed by the vessels and distributes all over the body and obstructs the excretion of sweat.[2] Kappasumyuthaliyar in his book Siddha Maruthuwan mentioned that “Kudalil Seethemallathu Suramvarathu, Ageranaminri Suramvarathu” (Indigestion as the cause of Suram)[1]
From the literature review, 182 types of Suram was identified. These types were grouped under certain category. Table 2 shows the category of types of Suram.

**Table no. 2: Category of types of Suram (N=182)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>No. of Types</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No of books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on Doshas [1,3-14]</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suram which affects Dhatus [1, 3-6,9,11-14]</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.34</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed types based of Dho, Dhatu and Sign and symptoms [1, 4-6, 8-9, 11-14]</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>35.16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on Causes of Suram [3-4,6-7,10,12,14]</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends only on sign and symptoms [3,6-8,11-12,14]</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God related types of Suram [6,8-11,13]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of Suram [9,11-13]</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on feelings [1,7,12]</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types which cannot be classified [5,13]</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Suram</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure no.1: Showing the types of Suram which were classified based on only Doshas**

Among the 182 types, all are not mentioned in 13 books. [1,4-7,8,9,11-14] All 13 literatures mentioned the types of Suram which was categorized based on Doshas.
77% literatures mention *Vatha* and *Vathakapha Surams* as the main types of *Suram*. [1, 3-7, 9-13] *Vatha, Pitta, Kapha, Vathapitha, Vathakapha and Pithakapha* are mentioned in over 62% of literatures (Fig no.1). [1, 3, 4, 6-7, 9-13]

**Discussion**

According to Siddha philosophy, the human body consists of three functional units and seven structural units they are collectively known as *Muthathakkal* (*Vatha, Pitta* and *Kapha*) and *Ulatkaddukkal* respectively. Each three *Doshas* are classified into sub types and each type is responsible for the special functions of the body. Main cause of *Suram* is said to be formation of *Ama* (indigested metabolic products) in the intestine. Unhealthy food habits have been mentioned as a cause of *Suram* in 71% of selected literatures. (Table 1)

**Pasaka Pitta** (type of *Pitta*), *Kledaka Kapha* (type of *Kapha*) and *Prana, Samana and Vyanaavaya* (types of *Vatha*) are involved in the gastro-intestinal digestion. The digestive effect of *Pasaka Pitta* and the emulsifying, soothing effects of *Kledaka Kapha* are antagonistic to one another. Hence it is evident that a balance or harmony of the effects of *Vatha, Pitta and Kapha* concerned with the gastro-intestinal digestion, is of paramount importance in the production of a balanced and well-formed nutrient fluid (*Rasa*). The imbalance between these interrelated functional factors results in ‘*Ama*’. Generally, the properties and effects in *Ama* resembles those of vitiated *Kapha* which is markedly increased (*Prakopa*). *Ama* could produce poisonous and toxic effects.

*Srotas* should be regarded as an integral ‘internal transport system’ of the human body. It is an anatomical structure which permits materials to flow through. *Ama* will block the *Srotas* and therefore it blocks sweating during fever when the body temperature gets elevated above normal.

**43% of reviewed literature mentions**, Wandering in mist, too much of chills, wetting in rain, too much of bathing are the causes for vitiated *Kapha*. Out of 13 books, 62% (8) books says that *Suram* is caused by increased *Kaphadosha*. The above mentioned reasons increases *Kapha* which fluctuates *Kledakakapha* and results in *Ama* and fever. [2]

**71% of literatures has mentioned wrong habits such as**, Exposure to increased air and poisonous air, walking long distance, running hardly, too much of work, too much of sex are reasons for cause of *Suram*. Due to the above causes, there will be increase of *Vatha* by *Thathushenam* (weakness of *Udatdatus*), vitiated *Vatha* cause *Ama* and fever. [2] 77% of reviewed literature says about *Vathasuram* as one type.

**43% of literature describes**, exposure to sunlight as one of the reason for fever. *Teyupanchabhootta* is responsible for the manifestation of the heat and light. [2] This will initiate the vitiation of *Pithadosha*, at the same time too much of exposure of sunlight causes excess sweat which will reduce the *Rasathathu* (*Thathusheenam*) and increase *Vathadosha* later affecting *Pithadosha* too. *Pitta* consists *Teyu* and water in equal ratio. If *Teyu* increase in *Pitta*, then water will decrease. Vitiated *Pasaka Pitta* (*T + J*) affects digestion causes *Amilapitha* (gastric disturbances) and results in burning pain in stomach. In 69% of literature, *Vathapitha Suram* is mentioned as one of the type among the identified 182 varieties.

In 77% of literatures, *Vathakapha Suram* has been mentioned as one of the type. Here vitiated *Vatha* through *Thathusheenam*, *Srotawaroatham*, change the *Samanawaya* which disturbs the digestion and promotes *Kapha* vitiation resulting in fluctuation of both *Vatha* and *Kapha* thereby resulting in fever. 71% of literatures mentions that constipation is one of the cause for the *Suram*.[16] Usually the bowel movements are controlled by the *Vatha* (*Apanawayu*). [2] The vitiated *Apanawayu* goes in reverse direction and affects the *Samanawaya* and *Uthanawayu* and affects digestion which will cause *Ama*. Therefore, the indigestion and constipation is associated with *Vathasuram* and *Vathakaphasuram*.

The general clinical features of *Suram* are indigestion, nausea, vomiting, taste loss, no sweat, constipation; decrease urine output. These maybe produced by the affected types of *Tridhatus*. In fever, the indigestion is caused by the affected *Samanawaya*. Affected *Apanawayu* causes constipation and decrease urine output. Ache and pain in all over the body is caused by the affected *Vyanaavaya*. Affected *Uthanawayu* causes nausea and vomiting. Taste loss in fever is caused by the affected *Bothaka Kapha*.

**Conclusion**

Among 13 Siddha literatures reviewed, 182 types of *Suram* and 45 causes are identified as the reason for fever. Among 182 types of *Suram*, *Vatha Suram* and *Vathakapha Suram* are mentioned in 77% of literature and the main cause of *Suram* has been mentioned as wrong behaviour/habits, unhealthy food and constipation.
References
5. Vengatran S, Dhanvanthrivaithyaam (Muthalpaham), 1st ed. Thanjavore; Thanjaisaraswathi mahal noolagam; 1884, p. 65-95

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