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A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON GRIDHRASI

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ABSTRACT

Gridhrasi (Sciatica) is one of the severe debilitating syndromes among all the neurological disorders. The *lakshanas* of *Gridhrasi* are *Ruk* (pain), *Toda* (pricking sensation), *Stambha* (stiffness) and *Muhuspandana* (twitching) in the *Sphik* (Gluteal Region), *Kati* (Waist), *Prishtha* (Low Back), *Uru* (Thigh), *Janu* (Knee), *Jangha* (Calf) and *Pada* (Foot) respectively and *Sakthikshepa Nigraha* (restricted lifting of the leg). The above-mentioned symptoms can be compared with sciatica which is characterised by severe pain starting from low back region and radiating down towards the foot. This is a common entity encountered in a clinical practice. The review elaborates the general description of disease *Gridhrasi* w.s.r. to Sciatica. The general principle of treatment and procedures for the management of *Gridhrasi*/Sciatica according to various Ayurvedic classics have been discussed.

KEYWORDS: Gridhrasi, sciatica.

INTRODUCTION

Gridhrasi is a Vatavyadhi in which the gamana is aberrant and it simulates the walking style of gridhra.^[1] Life style has a major role in the causation of Gridhrasi. Gridhrasi is a condition where the patient experiences pain primarily in the *sphik pradesha* which later radiates to kati and to leg through the posterior aspect of uru, janu, jangha and pada where the patient finds difficulty in extending the leg.^[2] Atyadhva, ati yana, vyayama, vyavaya, dhavana, pidana, plavana, bharavahana etc are some of the causative factor for this disease.^[3] Identical to this, Sciatica is characterized by low back ache radiating down to legs and anterolateral aspects of foot, hence it is equated to Gridhrasi. In the practice of conventional medicine, the treatment of Sciatica is to analgesics, anti-inflammatory limited drugs, physiotherapy as well as surgical intervention in extreme cases. Various treatment modalities like Snehana, Swedana, Virechana, Basti etc are said to be efficacious.^[4] Even specific treatments like *siravyadha*, agnikarma, basti etc are also emphasised.^[5] Many shamana yogas are mentioned in our classics which are proved to be efficacious. In this back ground, this comparative clinical study has been taken, as Gridhrasi is one among the Vataja nanatmaja vikaras. The

symptoms such as radiating pain, numbness, weakness, tingling sensation and discomfort along the path of the Sciatic Nerve are the results of Compression, Irritation and Inflammation of the Sciatica Nerve, which is termed as Sciatica.^[6] So, present study has been taken to understand the concept of disease *gridhrasi* and to achieve a treatment protocol accordingly.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To study in detail about Gridhrasi.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Source of data

- 1. Classical text books of Ayurveda
- 2. Texts books of Modern science
- 3. Published article from periodical journals and other magazines.

REVIEW ON GRIDHRASI

Vyutpatthi

Term, Gridhrasi" is derived from word, Gridhra".

Word, *Gridhra*" is made up from *Gridhr*" dhatu, *Krin*" *pratyaya* and then by the *lopa* of k & n.

Kap pratyaya is added to *Gridhra* + So forming *Gridhrat* + kap.

By *lopa* of O and K, Sh" is replaced by rule *Dhatvadeh Shah Sah*" & in female gender *ngish*" *pratyaya* is added to form the word *Gridhrasi*.^[7]

Gridhra may be identified as the vulture. This bird is fond of meat and he eats flesh of an animal in such a fashion that he deeply pierces his beak in the flesh then draws it out forcefully, exactly such type of pain occurs in *Gridhrasi* and hence the name.^[8]

Nirukti

"GridhrAmapisyati"	Syati"-as-,,	Kshepana".
"Gridhraamiva Syaati	Gachhat."	

Gridhrasi is said to cause an abnormal action in the affected leg. By this abnormality the gait of the patients has a resemblance with the gait of bird vulture.

"Gridhyati Maansam-abhikankshati Satatam Iti. Grudh+Krun.

Gridhro Maansalolupa Manushyatam. Syati Peedayati Nashyati vaa".

The above reference from *Shabdakalpadruma* states that, the word *Gridh* refers to a person who is crazy of eating meat. The word *peedayati* in *Sanskrit* means to cause suffering. Thus the word *Gridhrasi* applies to an illness, who has high consumption of meat.^[9]

Paryayas

Ringhinee^[10] - *Ringhinee* means the disease that cause to creep or crawling or that makes a person to go slowly. According to the *Shabdakalpadruma* this term refers to *Skhalana* meaning displacement.

Randhrinee,^[11] - This term is used by *Dalhana* while commenting on *Sushruta*, indicates weak point of rupture.

Radhina^[12] - This term is used by *Aadhamalla* and *Kaashirama* in their *Deepika* and *Goodhartha Deepika* commentary on *Sharanagadhara Samhita*. It indicates pressing, compressing or destroying. Compression of the nerve roots is the primary pathology of radicular pain in sciatica as referred by the word *Radhina*.

Types of Gridhrasi

Acharya Charaka,^[13] Harita,^[14] Madhavakhara^[15] and Bhavamishra^[16] mentioned two types of Gridhrasi -Vataja and Vata Kaphaja whereas; Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhata have not mentioned any classification of Gridhrasi

NIDANA

Gridhrasi is considered as a *Nanatmaja* type of *Vatavyadhi*. The provoking factors of *Vata* can also be taken as a cause of *Gridhrasi*. All the etiological factors given either of *Vatavyadhi* or *VataPrakopaka* in the Ayurvedic classics can be classified into following - *Aharataha, Viharataha, Agantuja, Kalatah*.

Aharaja Nidana,^[17] The excessive and continuous intake of *katu,tikta, kashaya rasas* processing the similar qualities of *Vata.* That is *laghu, rooksha, sheetaguna* are responsible for the provocation of *Vata. Alpashana, Adhyashana, Vishamashana* gives rise to *dusti* of *Agni* which leads to *ama. Madya* having *Sookshma, Vyavayi, Vikashi guna* leads to provocation of *Vata.*

Viharaja Nidana.^[18] Atiplavana, Atiprapatana, Atiprapidana, Ativichestana, Ativyayama, Atichalana increases rooksha guna and these leads to Vata prakopa leading to Gridhrasi. Sciatica is more commonly seen in heavy manual works, particularly occupation involve heavy weight lifting, twisting like Agriculturist, building construction. Dukhasana and Dukhashayya play very significant role in the genesis of Gridhrasi.^[19]

Kalaja Nidana -Vitiation of Vata takes place in the ritu like varsha, greeshma and shishira. It also increases in aparahna kala, jeerna kala aparatra and in jaravastha. Jaravastha,^[20] is the degenerative age which plays major role to cause degenerative changes and acts as predisposing factor for herniation, nerve compression to occur Gridhrasi.

Manasika Nidana - Bhaya, Shoka, Krodha and *Chinta* are the *Manasika nidanas*. These produce *rooksha guna,* in the body, which is responsible for the vitiation of *Vata.* The mental strain, anxiety, depression are the important risk factors for provoking sciatic pain and leads to chronic pain and disability.

Agantuja Nidana - Aghata to marma due to bahyakaarana is to be considered as agantuja nidana. Marmaghata,^[21] to the location of kati, Prishta, vamsha, kukundara marma causes aghata to kandara which results in the manifestation of Gridhrasi.

PURVARUPA

There is no description regarding the *Purvarupa* of *Gridhrasi*. But *Gridhrasi* is a *Vata Vyadhi* and *Avyakta lakshana* are *purvarupa* of *Vata Vyadhi*.According to *Chakrapani* commentary on *Avyakta*, few mild symptoms.^[22,23] are to be taken as the *Purvarupa*. *Gangadhara*,^[24] has given similar opinion to that of *Chakrapani*. But according to *Madhukosha vyakhya* of *Madhava Nidana*.^[25] the symptoms which are not exhibited clearly are *Purvarupa*. Vague low back pain, mild discomfort in the lower extremities, altered sensation in the legs and similar other symptoms of *Gridhrasi* in its minimal severity may be considered as *Purvarupa*.

RUPA

Considering the clinical manifestations of *Gridhrasi*, it may be sub divided into two categories *Samanya Lakshanas* and *Vishesha Lakshanas*.

Samanya lakshanas

These clinical manifestations are seen in both *Kevala* Vataja and Vata-Kaphaja type of Gridhrasi. Following are the Samanya Lakshana of Gridhrasi.

Ruk: "Ruja Vedana,^[26]" Pain is starting from Sphik, Prishtha or Kati and radiating towards Uru, Janu, Jangha and Pada in descending order. This is dull aching pain of a continuous nature and is not localized to a portion alone but is felt throughout the leg. This typical radiating pain involving the legs is suggestive of sciatic-Syndrome in modern parlance where pain is felt along the course of the sciatic nerve.

Toda: "*Todah Suchivyadhanavat Vyatha*,^[27]" Intermittent pain similar to the feeling of pin prick is known as *Toda*, the site of *Toda* is similar to the site of *shoola* that is from buttock to heel.

Stambha: "Stambha Baahu Uru Janghaadeenaam Sankochanaadhya Bhaavah²⁸" "Stambha Nishkriyatvam,^[29]" Stambha refers to the stiffness or rigidity felt at the thigh and legs and is another symptom of *Gridhrasi*. As the movement of the legs worsen the pain, stiff muscles prevent this and there by manifesting as the symptom *Stambha*. The restriction to move the legs also affects the gait of the patient, patient is able to walk and is unable to make free movements of the affected legs. The patient steps shorten and there is slowness and cautiousness in all movements of the legs.

Muhu Spandana: "Spandana Sphuranam,^[30]" "Spandanam Hi Kinchit Chalanam,^[31]" Sphurana refers to the fasciculation. It is a sensation of pulsating or throbbing. Fasciculation may be present in lower extremities in patients of Gridhrasi. It occurs due to Chala Guna of Vata.

Sakthnaha Kshepam *Nigrahanyat:* "Kshepam Prasaranam Tam Nigrahanyat Avarundhyaat Ityarthah,^[32]The movement Kshepana refers to extension. Patient of Gridhrasi is unable to extend his legs as extending the legs worsens the pain. Acharya Vagbhata used the word "Utkshepana" in the place of "Kshepa", which means that the patient is unable to lift the leg that is the flexion of the hip joint. Further the commentator Arunadutta defines this symptom as, Paada Udharane Ashakti,^[33] "expressing the inability of the patient to elevate the legs. As the extension of the legs worsens the pain patient prefers to assume the flexed position of the legs.

Kati-Uru Jaanu madhye bahuvedana: It is a distinct feature of *Gridhrasi*.^[34] This refers to the severe pain experienced at *Kati* (low back), *Uru* (thigh) and *Janu*

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(knee) region. Static or non-radiating pain is also characteristic of *Gridhrasi*.

Vishesha lakshanas

The symptoms of *Gridhrasi* that indicate either *Vataja* or *Vata-Kaphaja Gridhrasi* are described as *Vishesha Lakshana.*^[35] It is evident that the predominance of *Vata Dosha* or *Vata-Kapha Dosha* in the *Samprapti* of *Gridhrasi* leads to the manifestation of *Vishesha Lakshana.*

Vataja Gridhrasi: The *Samprapti* of the *Gridhrasi* is characterized by the involvement of *Vata Dosha*. There will not be association of *Kapha Dosha* in the *Samprapti*. Following are the *Vishesha Lakshana* of *Vataja Gridhrasi*.

Dehasya Pravakrata: In this symptom patient of *Gridhrasi* acquires a particular posture due to pain. It may be lateral and forward bending of body. The patient of *Gridhrasi* keeps the leg in flexed position and tries to walk without much extension in the affected side. Hence the whole body is tilted on the affected side and assumes the bending posture or limping. This gait is typical in *Gridhrasi*.

Sphuranam: "Sphuranam Gatra Deshe Swalpa Chalanam,^[36]" "Sphuranam Punah Punah Chalanam,^[37]" The symptom of fasciculation in Kati, Uru, Janu and Jangha are similar to the Spandana or Muhuspandana is characteristic of Vataja Gridhrasi.

Suptata: The patient experiences various degree of paraesthesia or sensory loss in the affected limb.

Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi: When *Gridhrasi* is manifesting by *Kaphanubandha* leads the following features.

Tandra: "*Tandrayaantu Prabodhito Api Kiamayati Nidrabheda*,^[38]," *Tandra* is one of the symptoms of *Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi. Tandra* is a condition in which, one, does not perceive objects, feels heaviness and, has yawning, feels tired and behaves like a sleepy.^[39] It occurs due to vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha*. The causative factor of *Tandra* like food substances having the qualities like *Madhura, Snigdha, Guru* and some mental factors like *Chinta, Shoka*.

Gaurava: "Aardra Charmavanaddham mivetyartha.^[40]" Patient feels heaviness particularly in the lowerlimb/ limbs. Gaurava is described as the feeling of heaviness of the body in general or particular in lower extremities. Its manifestation is due to *Guru Guna* of *Kapha*. This symptom is reflecting due to the *Kapha Dosha*.

Arochaka: "Arochakaastu Prarthite ApyupayogasAmaye Anannaabhilaasha.^[41]" "Aruchi Prarthita Anna Bhakshana AsAmarthyamucchyte,^[42]" It is a symptom where patient fails to appreciate the taste in the mouth irrespective of state of appetite. In comparison to the role

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of *Vata Dosha*, involvement of *Kapha Dosha* has much relation with the manifestation of *Arochaka*, because the seat of *Bodhaka Kapha* is *Jihwa* which is responsible for *Rasa Bodhana*.

Vahni Mardava: Sluggishness of the Jatharagni results in impairment of both Abhyavaharana as well as Jarana Shakti.

Mukha Praseka: Because of Agnimandya, Ama vitiates Rasa and Kapha Dosha and causes excessive salivation.

Bhaktadwesha: "Dveshamayati Yo Jantu Bhaktadwesha Sa Uchyate.^[43]" Secondary to the sluggishness of *Jatharagni* and *Kaphadushti*, patient of *Gridhrasi* develops aversion towards food.

Staimityam: *"Staimityam Gatranaam Nirutsaahatvam.*^[44]" It means inertness of the body, feeling of freezing sensation in the affected lowerlimb. *Staimitya* means timidness or frozen sensation. Due to *Kapha* vitiation, patient feels as the lower extremities are covered with wet cloth.

Samprapti

For Gridhrasi, samprapti has not been mentioned separately. Since Gridhrasi is a vatavyadhi, the general samprapti of vatavyadhi is considered here. In Gridhrasi, exposure to mild and continuous trauma to kati, sphik region because of improper posture, travelling in uneven roads, carrying heavy loads, digging, spinal cord injury is responsible for producing sthana samsraya at kati, sphik, prishta. They may not be able to produce the disease at the instance, but after acquiring some *vyanjaka hetu*, the disease may be produced. Here based on nidanas, samprapti takes place either by dhatukshaya or margavarodha or agantuja. In the state of dhatukshaya, all the dhatus viz. rasa, rakta, mamsa etc. are subjected to kshaya. Due to rukshadi aharas, the rasa dhatu kshaya takes place and it leads to further dhatukshaya of mamsa, meda, asthi, majja etc. This dhatukshaya results in the aggrevation of *vata* and this vitiated *vata* fills up the empty *srotas* causing *vatavyadhi*. The second type of samprapti takes place by margavarodha. Here kapha is anubandhi dosha along with vata. Atibhojana, diwaswapa etc are the factors responsible for this kind of samprapti. Jatharagnimandhya leads to formation of ama. Ama causes margavarodha to vata producing vata prakopa. When ama samshrista vayu resides at kati, prishtha etc and avarodha to vatavaha nadi of lower limb, *Gridhrasi* is produced. The *agantuja* factors chiefly bahya abhighata are responsible for the 'Achayapurvaka prakopa' of doshas. Abhighata leads to dhatukshaya and vata prakopa. The vitiated vata with asthi, majja dhatu kshaya produce Gridhrasi. Here the intermediate steps of samprapti i.e. chaya, prakopa, prasara are absent.

Samprapti Ghataka Nidana: Vataprakopaka nidana Dosha: Vata & Kapha

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Vyana vayu – kshepana and uthkeshepana Apana vayu – site is kati Sleshmaka kapha – resides in sandhi Dushya: rasa, mamsa, twak, rakta, snayu Ruk and stabhtata of leg, inability of walking-mamsa Arochava & gourava – rasadhathu *Toda* – *twak* and *rakta* Radiating from buttock to heels - snayu Agni: Jatharagni and Dhatvagni Ama: Jatharagnimandyajanita, Dhatvagnijanita Udbhavasthana: Pakwashaya Sancharasthana: low back region to heal Adhisthana: Spik, kati, uru, prushta, janu, janga, pada and anguli Srotas: Rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, Majja Srotodushti: Sanga and Margavarodha Rogamarga: Madhyam Swabhav: Ashukari and Chirkari

Sadhyasadhyata

Acharya Sushruta,^[45] has considered the Vata Vyadhi as Mahagada due to its tendency to be fatal or incurable. It is a Maharoga. Vata Vyadhi generally is very difficult to cure. There is no separate prognosis mentioned regarding the disease Gridhrasi. On the basis of prognosis of Vata Vyadhis given by Charaka,^[46] it can be said that Gridhrasi in which the vitiated Vata is seated in Majja Dhatu, is accompanied with KhuddaVata, Angashosha and Stambha which may or may not be cured even after careful treatment. But if this condition occurs in a strong person, is of recent origin and without any associated diseases, then it is curable. A patient of Vata Vyadhi, if develops the complication like Shoonam (Oedema/ Inflammation), Suptavacham (Distension of abdomen with tenderness) and pain in internal organs, then he does not survive.^[47] On the aforesaid mentioned descriptions it can be said that Gridhrasi is difficult to cure due to its Vataja type of disease which arises with complications.

Upadrava

Pranakshaya, Mamsakshaya, Jwara, Atisara, Murcha, Trishna, Hikka, Chardhi and Swasa, Shotha, Suptata, Bhagna, Kampa, Adhmana, Antahruja are the Upadrava of Vatvyadhi. If Vata Vyadhi co-exists with any of these Upadravas then the disease comes under the heading of Asadhya.

Chikitsa

Chikitsa aims not only at the removal of causative factors, but also the restoration of *doshic* equilibrium. General line of management of *Vatavyadhi* is *Nidanaparivarjana, Samshamana* and *Samshodhana. Gridhrasi* being a *Vatavyadhi; samanya chikitsa* is advised as that of *Vataja* disorder. The first and foremost principle has been adopted in treatment of *Gridhrasi* is to avoid the *Nidana* that cause *Gridhrasi*.

1) Snehana: Snehana is a process which gives snigdhata to the body. Snehana is used externally and internally in case of Gridhrasi. Externally snehana may be performed in the form abhyanga, pizhichil, avagaha, parisheka etc.

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Padabhyanga,^[48] is mentioned for gridhrasi in Charaka samhita.

2) Swedana: Swedana helps in agni deepana, mridutwa, twak prasadana, sroto mukha vishodhana. It opens sweat pores which helps to eliminate toxins from the body through sweat and cleanses the internal system. Among the different forms of swedana procedures, avagahasweda, pizhichil, nadisweda, patrapinda sweda, pinda sweda and upanaha sweda can be done in patients of Gridhrasi.^[49]

3) *Vamana*: Generally, in *Vataja* disorders *Vamana* is contra indicated. But *Cakrapani* and *Bhavamishra* indicated *Vamana* followed by *Basti karma* specifically for *Gridhrasi Cikitsa*. Further *Cakrapani* explains that without *Shodhana, Basti Cikitsa* may not be beneficial.^[50]

4) Virechana: Acharyas advices mridu virechana in gridrasi.⁵¹ Administration of 'Eranda Sneha' along with milk is ideal for the virechana purpose.⁵² This will help in both vata anulomana as well as smooth excretion of mala. The sneha virechana clears obstruction in the srotas and relieves vata vitiation very quickly.^[53] Thus Sneha Virechana of Mridu nature helps in controlling Shoola in Gridhrasi.

5) Basti: As Gridhrasi is vata pradhana vyadhi, basti is helpful in alleviating vata,Basti is considered as ardha or poorna chikitsa. Basti should be adopted after shodhana, deepana and pachana. In kevala Vataja Gridhrasi, anuvasana basti is helpful. In vatakaphaja niruha basti is helpful.^[54]

6) *Siravyedha: Charaka* explained *Siravyadha* at the site of *antara-kandara-gulpha*. *Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhata* indicated *Siravyadha* four *angula* above and four *angula* below knee joint.^[55]

7) *Raktamokshana*: It is a general rule that, when the regular treatment with *Shadvidhopakrama* fails to give any relief in any disease, one should consider the involvement of *rakta dhatu* in the pathogenesis and is best treated by *raktamokshana*. This rule is applicable in *Gridhrasi* also.^[56]

8) Agnikarma: According to Sushruta and Vagbhata, in the management of sira, snayu, asthi and sandhigata vyadhi, Agnikarma⁵⁷ is indicated and Gridhrasi is one of the diseases of these samprapti. For treatment of Gridhrasi, different site for Agnikarma are as mentioned below

-Charaka: Antara kandara gulpha

-Chakradatta: Pada kanisthika anguli (little toe of the affected leg)

-Haritha: Four Angula above the Gulpha in Tiryak Gati

9) Shastra-Karma: Chakradatta has given the treatment of Gridhrasi in detail. He has mentioned shastra karma with prior snehana and swedana to remove granthi in Gridhrasi and also Siravyadha four angula below janu sandhi (Indrabasti marma).^[58]

10) Shamana Chikitsa: Following Chikitsa can be included under shamana chikitsa -Vedanashamaka chikitsa, Vatahara chikitsa, Kaphahara chikitsa, Deepana & pachana chikitsa. Shamanaushadi used in gridhrasi - Maha Rasnadi Kashaya, Erandadi Kashaya,

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Balarishta, Dashmularishta, Abhayadi Churna, Rasna Guggulu, Trayodashanga Guggulu, Mahayogaraja Guggulu, Maashadi Taila, Narayana Taila, Narayana Taila etc.

PATHYA-APATHYA Pathya:^[59]

Gridhrasi, being a *Vatavyadhi*, the *pathyapathya* mentioned for *Vatavyadhi* should be followed. *Ahara* having the basic quality of *madhura*, *amla* and *lavana rasa*, *snigdha*, *ushna guna* and *brimhana* property should be advised.⁶⁰ *Chakradatta*, *Bhaishajya ratnavali* and *Yogaratnakara* mentions *pathyapathya* in detail.

Aharaja:

- Anna Varga: Kulatha, Masha, Godhuma, Rakta shali, Navina Tila, Shalyodana.
- Phala Varga: Amla, Rasayukta Phala, Dadima, Draksha, Jambira, Badara.
- Shaka Varga: Patola, Shigru, Rasona.
- Dugdha Varga: Kshira, Ghrita, Navneeta
- Mamsa Varga: Jangala pashu pakshi
- Taila Varga: Tila Taila, Sasharpa Taila, Eranda Taila
- Anya Varga: Tambula, Ela, Kustha Viharaja: Sukhoshna Pariseka, Nirvata Sthana, Avagahana, Abhyanga, Brahmacharya, Ushna Pravarana, Agni Aatapa Sevana, Snigdha- Ushna Lepa.

Apathya

- Aharaja: Kalaya, Chanaka, Kanguni, Kodrava, Shyamaka, Nivara, Nishpava Beeja, Rajamasha, Karira, Jambu, Trinaka, Tinduka, Shushka Mamsa, Dushita Jala.
- Viharaja: Vegadharana, Vyavaya, Vyayama, Vamana, Raktamokshana, Prajagarana, Diwaswapna, Adhva, Ati-GajaAshwa-Ushtra-Yana Sevana

CONCLUSION

All the ayurvedic classics have mentioned describing the vyadhi gridrasi. The disease Gridhrasi is described as Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi. As Gridhrasi is a Vatavyadhi so through Vatahara medicine and Panchakarma therapies this disease can be managed. Gridhrasi is a painful condition and so far there is no established therapy. Gridhrasi can be correlated with Sciatica in modern medicine. Abhyanga with medicated oil followed by swedana may be used as first line of treatment for both type of Gridhrasi. Agnikarma and Raktamokshana may be useful in severe painful condition and in chronic (degenerative) condition. Basti therapy may be better choice for the management of Gridhrasi. Nidana parivarjan may stop the further progression of disease. It may be concluded that various treatment modalities present in Ayurveda vary according to condition of disease, present.

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