



Research Article

A Review-Based Conceptual Study of Arma in Ayurveda and Its Correlation with Pterygium

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Abstract

In Ayurveda, *Arma* is described as a disorder occurring under *Shuklagata Netraroga*. It is characterized as a *Mamsala Vriddhi* (fleshy growth) arising from the *Kaneenika Sandhi* (medial canthus), *Apanga Sandhi* (lateral canthus), or from both regions, with a tendency to extend towards the *Krishna Mandala* (cornea).

In modern ophthalmology, pterygium is described as a benign, triangular fibrovascular growth of conjunctival tissue that commonly originates from the nasal side of the eye and extends towards the cornea. Although it is generally harmless and does not lead to severe ocular complications, it may produce symptoms such as irritation, discomfort, and visual disturbances in progressive cases. Management includes preventive measures, conservative approaches, and surgical intervention when required.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The eyes are considered one of the most significant and precious among the five sensory organs, as vision plays a vital role in human life. The absence of eyesight greatly affects the perception and experience of the world. In Ayurvedic classical texts, *Arma* is mentioned under the category of *Shuklagata Netraroga* ^[1]. It is described as a *Mamsala Vriddhi* (fleshy growth) that originates from the *Kaneenika Sandhi* (inner canthus), *Apanga Sandhi* (outer canthus), or may arise from both areas and gradually extend towards the *Krishna Mandala* (cornea). When this growth spreads over the transparent part of the eye, it can interfere with vision ^[2].

The term *Arma* is derived from “*Ru Dhatu*” with “*Manin Pratyaya*”, forming the word *Arman*. The classical explanation “*Shyati Gacchati Iti Arma*” indicates a condition that progressively increases or grows over time.

AIM

To study *Arma* in Ayurveda and its correlation with Pterygium.

2. OBJECTIVES

To review the Ayurvedic concept of *Arma*.

To study Pterygium from a modern ophthalmological perspective.

3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Arma (Pterygium) – Ayurvedic Concept:

The causative factors mentioned for general *Netra Rogas* (ocular disorders) can also be considered applicable to *Arma*. Exposure to external factors such as dust, smoke, and other irritants is described as one of the contributing causes. Additionally, improper dietary habits, including excessive consumption of sour substances such as *Shukta* and *Aarnala* and increased intake of meat-based foods (*Mamsa Sevana*), may contribute to the development of the disease by affecting the vulnerable structures of the eye.

According to Acharya *Sushruta*, ocular diseases occur due to the vitiation and predominance of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha Doshas*, and their manifestation depends upon the specific anatomical site involved in the eye.

Shukla Arma:

Shukla Arma is described as a type of *Arma* that develops due to the aggravation of *Kapha Dosha* and occurs in the *Shukla Mandala* (scleral/conjunctival region or white part of the eye) ^[3].

Signs and Symptoms

The clinical features of *Arma*, such as local erosion, irritation, and other ocular symptoms, along with etiological factors like *Shukta*, *Arnala*, and *Mamsadi Sevana*, contribute to the vitiation of *Doshas*. These aggravated *Doshas* move upward towards the head and affect the vulnerable or weakened part of the eye. This results in the involvement of *Dosha–Dushya* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Rakta*), leading to the development of the disease process and appearance of clinical manifestations.

According to Ayurvedic classics, five types of *Arma* have been described as follows ^[4]:

1. ***Prastari Arma***: It is described as a broad and thin growth with a reddish appearance mixed with bluish discoloration, occurring on the white part of the eyeball. In this type, involvement of *Tridosha* and *Mamsa Dhatu* is mentioned.
2. ***Shukla Arma***: It appears as a soft, white-colored growth that gradually and uniformly spreads over the white portion of the eye.
3. ***Kshataj Arma***: It is characterized by a developing fleshy growth on the scleral region, having a color resembling that of a lotus flower. Acharya *Vagbhata* has referred to it as *Raktaja Arma*.
4. ***Adhimamsaja Arma***: It is described as a broad, soft, thick growth present on the white part of the eye, with a color resembling that of the liver (brownish shade).
5. ***Snayu Arma***: It is a progressive muscular growth appearing in a linear or stripe-like pattern, with a rough texture and pale coloration over the white part of the eyeball.

The human eye plays a vital role in perception and visual awareness, allowing individuals to observe and understand the surrounding environment. Normal functioning of the eye is essential for obtaining visual information and gaining knowledge through vision.

Anatomically, the eye is composed of three major layers: the outer fibrous layer, middle vascular layer, and inner neural layer.

The outer fibrous layer consists mainly of the sclera and cornea. The sclera forms the protective outer coat of the eyeball, and its visible anterior surface is covered by the conjunctiva. Anteriorly, the sclera continues up to the junction called the corneal limbus, beyond which it merges with the cornea. The cornea is a transparent, dome-shaped structure covering the iris and pupil. It allows the entry of light into the eye and, due to its curvature, helps in focusing light onto the retina. It also provides protection to the deeper ocular structures from infection and injury. Since the cornea is avascular, it does not contain blood vessels, limiting direct access of immune cells.

The middle vascular layer (uveal tract) includes the iris, ciliary body, and choroid. The iris regulates the diameter of the pupil and controls the amount of light entering the eye. The ciliary body is responsible for maintaining lens shape and power during accommodation and also produces aqueous humor. The choroid is a vascular layer that supplies oxygen and nutrients to the outer retinal layers.

The inner neural layer is the retina, which is a highly organized structure composed of specialized neurons that receive, process, and transmit visual signals.

The eye has a complex anatomical structure and physiological mechanism; therefore, disturbances in any part may lead to various ocular disorders. Eye-related problems are common and may occur at any stage of life. Some conditions are mild and resolve spontaneously, while others require medical treatment, specialized care, or surgical intervention.

Pterygium is a triangular or wing-shaped fibrovascular growth that originates from the conjunctiva and gradually extends onto the corneal surface.

Although pterygium is generally a benign and non-threatening condition, it may lead to ocular irritation, redness, discomfort, and in progressive cases, visual disturbances [5]. The word “pterygium” is derived from the Greek term “pterygion,” which means a small wing, referring to its characteristic wing-like appearance.

Pathologically, pterygium represents an abnormal proliferation of epithelial and fibrovascular tissue arising from the corneoscleral limbus and extending onto the cornea. This growth may produce chronic inflammation of the ocular surface and can potentially affect vision when it encroaches upon the visual axis.

Pterygium commonly develops on the nasal side of the eye near the inner canthus and may occur in one or both eyes. During the initial stages, it may remain unnoticed and usually does not produce significant symptoms or visual changes.

Classification of Pterygium:

Based on histological and morphological characteristics, pterygium is classified into three types:

1. Angiomatous type
2. Fibrous type
3. Mixed type

Angiomatous Pterygium: In this type, the stromal tissue shows a prominent presence of numerous blood vessels along with edema in the spaces between the vascular structures.

Fibrous Pterygium: The stroma is mainly composed of fibrous tissue with only a few scattered vascular components.

Mixed Pterygium: This type exhibits features of both angiomatous and fibrous varieties, with the presence of vascular channels along with thin bundles of collagen fibers within the stroma.

Another classification system is based on the extent of pterygium progression over the cornea. According to the clinical advancement, pterygium is categorized into five stages:

- **Stage 0:** Represents pinguecula, which is located posterior to the limbus.
- **Stage 1:** The tissue reaches up to the limbus.
- **Stage 2:** The tissue extends slightly beyond the limbus.
- **Stage 3:** The tissue progresses between the limbus and the pupillary margin.
- **Stage 4:** The tissue extends beyond the pupillary margin and reaches the central corneal area.

4. OBSERVATION AND CONCLUSION

Arma is a well-described ocular disorder in Ayurvedic literature under *Shuklagata Netraroga*. The classical description of *Arma* shows significant similarities with pterygium in terms of origin, appearance, progression, and involvement of the corneal region. This conceptual correlation helps in understanding the disease from both Ayurvedic and modern perspectives. Further clinical studies are required to establish a better understanding of preventive and therapeutic approaches for *Arma*/Pterygium.

Pterygium is a benign, triangular fibrovascular growth that commonly arises from the conjunctiva near the inner corner (nasal side) of the eye and gradually extends towards the cornea. Generally, it does not lead to serious ocular complications; however, in some cases it may produce symptoms such as irritation, discomfort, redness, and visual disturbances. Management includes preventive measures, conservative treatment approaches, and surgical removal when the condition becomes progressive or affects vision.

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