



CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MALIGNANCIES IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT:

Cancer is one of the major causes of death across the globe accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020. Every 6th death in the world is due to the cancer. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (ARC), by 2040, the global burden of Cancer is expected to grow by 27.5 million new cases. As per national Cancer Registration data (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, GOI), in India there were 63,797 deaths in 2020 due to cancer and projected deaths by 2022 are 66,879. And it is going to increase further due to faulty dietary and lifestyle practices. Therefore, it becomes necessary to look for every possible solution including the ancient medical sciences such as in Ayurveda. Ayurveda is an ancient Indian medical science. There are references to various malignancies in Ayurveda. The tumor is referred as 'Arbuda' or 'Gulma' in Ayurveda. All the characteristics of tumor are very well mentioned in Ayurveda. Ayurvedic acharyas have suggested to excise the tumor completely along with surrounding healthy tissue otherwise it recurs soon, indicating the malignant nature of the tumor. Most of the tumors are mentioned as incurable again indicating its malignant nature. In Ayurveda, tumor is classified based on *doshas*, *dhatu*s and structural appearances. Among the treatment modality for Cancer, apart from medicine and surgery, cauterization and application of Alkali is also suggested in Ayurveda to avoid the recurrence. The liver cancer is mentioned under headings like 'Yakrit Gulma' and 'Yakrut Udara'. Viral liver cirrhosis is the main cause of liver cancer apart from fatty infiltration, obesity, diabetes and alcoholism. It is observed and concluded that Cancers are very well documented in Ayurveda and the Ayurvedic treatment suggested for treating the tumors need to be reexplored.

KEYWORDS – *Arbuda*, *Gulma*, Tumor, Cancer

INTRODUCTION

Cancer is one of the major causes of death across the globe accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020. According to GLOBAICON database nearly 45% of new cases are diagnosed in Asia, 26% in Europe, 15% in North America and 6% in Africa. [1] The commonest cancers are breast, Lung, colorectal and prostate cancer. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (ARC), by 2040, the global burden of Cancer is expected to grow by 27.5 million new cases. And it's going to increase further due to faulty dietary and lifestyle practices. Ayurveda is an ancient Indian medical science. There are references to various malignancies in Ayurveda. In the context of global burden of Cancer, it becomes essential to explore the Cancers in ancient medical sciences such as Ayurveda. The tumor is referred as 'Arbuda' or 'Gulma' in Ayurveda. In Ayurveda, tumor is classified on the basis of *doshas*, *dhatu*s and structural appearances. There are references to Liver tumor, Nasal tumor, Ear tumor, throat tumors, head tumor, muscle tumor, liposarcoma and hemangiosarcoma. But there is no reference to breast malignancy which is common today. The less prevalence of breast malignancy during ancient time could be due to better infant feeding practices as compared to today's era or it could be had been included under *Mansarbuda*. Among the treatment modality for Cancer, apart from medicine and surgery, cauterization and application of Alkali is also suggested in Ayurveda to avoid the recurrence. In the present study, the ayurvedic literature about cancer will be studied critically to come to logical conclusions.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the present study is to explore the concept of cancer and its types and treatment in Ayurveda in view of global rise in cases of cancer.

MATERIAL & METHOD

Literary descriptive method of research is adopted in the present study. Critical study of Ayurvedic literature is done to come to logical conclusions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tumour is a mass of tissue formed as a result of abnormal, excessive and inappropriate, uncontrolled growth of the cells which continues indefinitely. Basically, there are 2 types of tumors.

A] Benign tumour – It remain localized forming a single mass which is often symptomless and can be excised completely.

B] Malignant tumour – It is also called as cancer. It invades the surrounding tissues and spread through lymphatics and blood to other parts of the body where it gives rises to secondaries (metastasis).

Characteristics of Tumor as Per Ayurveda [2]

- Circular,
- Fixed,
- Mild aching,
- Broad based,
- Slowly growing,
- Non suppurating big muscular growth

Types of Tumor As Per Ayurveda [3]

1. *Vataj Arbuda*
2. *Pittaj Arbuda*
3. *Kaphaj Arbuda*
4. *Raktaj Arbuda*
5. *Mansaj Arbuda*
6. *Medoj Arbuda*

Other Types of Tumour In Ayurveda ^[4]

As per oncologists (*Arbudgya*), tumors could also be classified into following types

1. *Adhi-Arbuda* – The tumor erupting over the tumor is called as *Adhi-arbuda*.
2. *Dwi-Arbuda* – The tumor occurring in pair or after one another are called as *Dwi-arbuda*.

Features of Tumor In Ayurveda ^[5]

The clinical features of *doshik* variety of tumors are like that of *granthis* (cysts)

Non-Suppurative of Tumor ^[6]

Tumors usually does not suppurate due to predominance of Kapha and Meda in it and also due to stability of doshas owing to cohesive intermixing.

Recurrence of Tumour ^[7]

The left-over portion of excised tumor re-grow very fast. Hence it should be cauterized after excision.

Causes of Tumor ^[8]

1. The repeated trauma to muscles
2. Excessive intake of meat

The cause no.1 leads to external tumors whereas cause no.2 may lead to internal malignant tumors

Pathogenesis of Muscle Tumor ^[9]

With above causes there is morbid vitiation of muscles and muscular built of organs leading to tumor development.

Features of Muscle Tumor ^[10]

A] Tumor features

1. Painless tumor
2. Unctuous tumor
3. Colour like skin
4. Non suppurating tumor
5. Stony hard tumor

6. Fixed immovable

Prognosis of Muscle Tumor

Mansarbuda is incurable.

Aetiopathogenesis of

Blood Vessel Tumour ^[11]

Vitiated doshas vitiates the blood and blood vessels leading to localized inflammation and congestion of blood. The congestion of blood causes upward growing swelling. This growth is covered with the small fleshy projections (papillae) from where the blood oozes continuously.

Features of Blood Vessel Tumor

1. Tumor with bleeding
2. Tumor with papillae
3. Fast / uncontrolled Growing
4. Anemia

The other features related to anemia like anorexia, weakness, fatigue etc are also present and to be understood.

Prognosis of Blood Vessel Tumour

This *Raktajanya Arbuda* (tumor) is incurable.

Some Other Forms of Tumours ^[12]

As its root is deep seated and not visible like the tuber (*kanda*) and as it is rigidly entangled in itself (*sanhat*) like tendril (*gulma*) and have broad base, it is called as 'Gulma'. [SUT 42/5]

The intermixing and consolidation of various tissues in the body is called as 'Gulma' [Bhela]

This definition of 'Gulma' given by acharya Bhela, indicates towards the development of benign or malignant growth in the body.

Types of Gulmas ^{[13] [14] [15]}

A] Abhyantar Gulma

1. *Vataj Gulma*
2. *Pittaj Gulma*
3. *Kaphaj Gulma*
4. *Sannipataj Gulma*
5. *Raktaj*

Acharya Charaka is also of the same view but he had also mentioned about the mixed (*Dwandaj*) variety of Gulma also.

B] Bahya Gulma

There is one more type mentioned by Vagbhata; i.e. external Gulma.

Sites of Gulmas ^{[16][17]}

1. *Basti* – Hypogastrium and bladder
2. *Nabhi* – Umbilical region
3. *Hridaya* – Chest and thoracic cavity
4. *Dakshin Parshwa* – Left loin and hypochondrium
5. *Vama Parshwa* – Left loin and hypochondrium

Prodromal F/O Gulma ^[18]

1. Looseness in body
2. Diminution of appetite
3. Abdominal bloating
4. Abdominal gurgling
5. Stasis of urine & stool
6. Non passage of flatus
7. Early satiety
8. Anorexia
9. Eructations

Clinical Features of Gulma ^[19]

1. Anorexia/loss of taste
2. Abdominal distension
3. Abdominal gurgling
4. Difficulty in passage of urine & stool
5. Non passage of flatus
6. Eructations

Specific F/o Kaphaj Gulma ^{[20][21]}

1. As if covered with wet cloth
2. Fever with shivering
3. Looseness in body
4. Nausea

5. Cough
6. Loss of taste
7. Heaviness
8. Feeling cold
9. Fixed root lump
10. Enlarged lump
11. Hard lump
12. Heavy lump

Sannipataj Gulma ^{[22][23]}

1. Severe pain
2. Associated with burning
3. Stony hard
4. Elevated
5. Rapidly suppurating
6. Very fatal
7. Leads to fear and depression
8. Leads to loss of appetite
9. Leads to loss of physical strength
10. Incurable

Yakrit Gulma ^[24]

The *Gulma* in *hridaya* (chest) region is called as '*Yakrit Gulma*'.

The *Yakrit Gulma* grows due to Vata, suppurates due to Pitta and solidifies due to Kapha.

1. Cachexia
2. Vomiting
3. Fatigue
4. Eructation
5. Nausea
6. Dyspnoea
7. Syncope
8. Heart burn
9. Thirst
10. Fainting
11. Burning in throat

12. Headache
13. Chest pain
14. Rhinorrhoea
15. Bitter spitting
16. Pricking pain in chest
17. Heaviness in Chest
18. Gurgling in abdomen

Metastasis of Yakrit Gulma ^[25]

1. Yellowish Sputum
2. Putrid Smell
3. Frequent Hemoptysis
4. Bloody diarrhea
5. Fatigue

6. Cachexia

7. F/o Urahakshata

On noticing these features, one should infer that yakrit gulma had invaded the chest.

No doubt these are features of gastro esophageal or liver malignancy which is metastases in lungs.

Incurable F/O Yakrit Gulma ^[26]

1. Breathlessness
2. Thirst (water depletion)
3. Vomiting
4. Confusion
5. Swelling on hands feet
6. Anorexia
7. Diarrhoea

These are classically seen in malignancy.

Breathlessness indicates thoracic invasion.

Prognosis of Gulma ^[27]

1. Lump with established root
2. Lump covered with blood vessels
3. Lump elevated and irregular like tortoise
4. Weakness
5. Anorexia

6. Nausea
7. Vomiting
8. Restlessness
9. Fever
10. Thirst
11. Drowsiness
12. Rhinorrhoea
13. Breathlessness
14. Cough
15. Diarrhoea
16. Ascites
17. Edema feet and hands
18. Emaciation

Yakrit Pleodara

(Hepatocellular Carcinoma) ^[28] ^[29]

In Yakritdalyodara, hepatomegaly is stony hard (*ashthila vat kathin*) and knobby, irregular (*Kachhap prishtha vat*) with cachexia, anorexia and difficulty in respiration which indicates Hepatocellular carcinoma. *Jalodara* (ascites) is due to the portal hypertension. *Strotobhya Shonit struti* indicates the coagulopathy which is observed in chronic liver diseases. *Pandu* (anemia) is due to blood loss and due to chronic affection of liver. Anorexia and mild fever are constitutional features. *Harit Raji Yuktam Udaram* is the caput mediosae formed due to portal hypertension.

Prognosis of Tumors ^[30]

The tumor from which the blood oozes, which is developed in systems or in vital parts and which is very much fixed, is incurable and should not be treated. When tumor erupts over the tumor (*Adhi-
arbuda*) When tumor occurs in pair or after one another (*Dwi-
arbuda*)

The *Mansarbuda* and *Raktajanya Arbuda* are also incurable.

Treatment of Tumors [31]

External Tumour

- Apply the paste of sesame, kulthi, meat, and curd on the tumour.
- Allow the flies to drop eggs on it.
- When maggots eat the tumour significantly, scrap it little and then cauterize it.
- After regression in size, excise it.

Treatment of Liposarcoma

After fomentation, excise it completely and clean it. Ensure hemostasis and then ligate it

For C & D, use *Karanj taila* mentioned for the t/t of abscess to prevent the recurrence of tumour. If not excised completely tumour recures.

OBSERVATION

Table No. 1 – Doshaj & Dhatuj Types of Tumors in Ayurveda

Sr	Doshik Tumours	Dhatuj Tumours
1	<i>Vataj Arbuda</i>	<i>Raktaj Arbuda</i>
2	<i>Pittaj Arbuda</i>	<i>Mansaj Arbuda</i>
3	<i>Kaphaj Arbuda</i>	<i>Medoj Arbuda</i>

Table No. 2 – Features of Gulma

Sr	Prodromal Gulma	F/O	Clinical Gulma	F/o
1	Looseness in body		Weakness	
2	Diminution of appetite		Anorexia	
3	Abdominal bloating		Abdominal gurgling	

4	Early satiety	Abdominal distension
5	Eructation	Eructation
6	Difficulty in passing urine & stool	Stasis of urine & stool
7	Non passage of flatus	Non passage of flatus

Table No. 3 – Kaphaj Vs Sannipataj Gulma

Sr	F/O Kaphaj Gulma	F/O Sannipataj Gulma
1	Weakness	Severe pain
2	Fixed root lump	Stony hard Mass
3	Enlarged lump	Elevated Mass
4	Hard & Heavy Lump	Rapidly suppurating
5	Feeling Cold	
6	Nausea	loss of appetite
7	Loss of taste	loss of physical strength
8	Cough	fear and depression
9	Chronic	Very fatal

Table No. 4 – Yakrit Gulma Vs Yakritodara

Sr	F/O Yakrit Gulma	F/O Yakritodara
1	Heaviness in Chest	stony hard, knobby, irregular hepatomegaly
2	Anorexia	Anorexia
3	Cachexia	Cachexia
4	Dyspnoea	Anemia
5	pain in chest	mild fever

6	Frequent Hemoptysis	Ascites
7	Putrid Smell	caput mediosae
8	Bloody diarrhea	Coagulopathy

Table No. 5 – ENT Tumors In Ayurveda

Sr	Ear Tumours	Oral Tumours
1	<i>Vataj Karnarbuda</i>	<i>Talu Kachhapa</i> (Palatine Adenoma tumour)
2	<i>Pittaj Karnarbuda</i>	<i>Talu Arbuda</i> (Palatine tumour)
3	<i>Kaphaj Karnarbuda</i>	<i>Mansasanghat</i> (Fibroma of Palate)
4	<i>Tridoshaj Karnarbuda</i>	<i>Walaya</i> (Pharyngo-Oesophageal CA)
5	<i>Raktaj Karnarbuda</i>	<i>Balas</i> (Laryngo pharyngeal Malignancy)
6	<i>Mansaj Karnarbuda</i>	<i>Swaraghna</i> (Laryngeal CA)
7	<i>Medoj Karnarbuda</i>	<i>Shataghani</i> (Throat papilloma)

DISCUSSION

Acharya Sushruta described oral malignancies in Nidansthana. Apart from oral malignancies, acharya Sushruta had also mentioned the nasal, aural and head malignancies. All the oral malignancies are said to be incurable by the Ayurvedic acharyas. In the book, Vaidyak Sarwasva, there is reference to ‘*Yakrit Gulma*’ which appears to be hepatocellular carcinoma. Acharya Charaka, instead of *Yakrit Gulma*,

described *Yakritodara* which also appears to be the hepatocellular carcinoma. Pulmonary features in *Yakrit Gulma* (HCC) indicates its thoracic invasion. Although *Gulma* refers to the tumor, features of *Kaphaj Gulma* are suggestive of malignancy. Whereas features of *Sannipataj Gulma* indicates the incurable stage of malignancy. The *medoj Arbuda* described by acharya Sushruta appears to be the Liposarcoma as the its treatment consist of complete excision of tumor with surrounding healthy tissue. Acharya Sushruta had mentioned that liposarcoma can recur if not completely removed. The *Mansarbuda* described by acharya Sushruta appears to be rhabdomyosarcoma and the *Raktarbuda* appears to be the hemangiosarcoma as it affects the blood vessels and leads to the incurability. There are references to Liver tumor, Nasal tumor, Ear tumor, throat tumors, head tumor, muscle tumor, liposarcoma and hemangiosarcoma in Ayurvedic literature. But there is no reference to breast malignancy which is common today. The less prevalence of breast malignancy during ancient time could be due to better infant feeding practices as compared to today’s era or it could be may have been included under *Mansarbuda*.

The description of ENT cancers is out of the scope this article.

CONCLUSION

- Cancers are very well described in Ayurvedic literature
- Oral malignancies and hepatic malignancies were commonly found in ancient times
- Features of *Kaphaj Gulma* are suggestive

of malignancy.

- *Sannipataj Gulma* represents the incurable stage of malignancy.
- Pulmonary features in *Yakrit Gulma* (HCC) indicates its thoracic invasion.
- *Mansarbuda* described in Ayurveda appears to be rhabdomyosarcoma.
- *Raktarbuda* described in Ayurveda appears to be the hemangiosarcoma.

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