



RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Ayurveda Concept

Rheumatoid arthritis can be included under the clinical condition called Vatarakta. Vatarakta is a condition in which the blood and its pathways are impaired simultaneously with the impairment of vata (the humor that controls body movements) causing diverse symptoms that also include joint inflammation and restricted movements. It is classified into *uttana* (involving the superficial structures) and *gambhīra* (involving deeper structures) based on the chronicity and progression of the disease. The treatment of the disease also gets more difficult as the condition progresses and the severity increases. The rheumatoid arthritis of recent origin and with minimal morbidity can be managed well, while the others can be brought under control. While in chronic condition, with the involvement of deeper structures, the efficacy of treatment is variable.

Ayurveda approach to medical management

Rheumatoid arthritis is a condition that demands the best implementation of the nuances of clinical skills of an Ayurveda physician. It is a medical condition that has multifaceted shades of presentation, which includes many systemic complaints as the disease progresses. The main aim of treating a rheumatoid arthritis patient is to arrest the progress of the disease and prevent onset of any abnormality. Persons in whom the deformity has already set in the aim is to reduce the pain and deformity.

The treatment modality is both internal medications and therapies, judiciously administered after assessing the clinical condition. Here the therapies like *lepa* (anointments), *vasti* (medicinal enema), *dhara* (pouring of medicinal liquid in a particular fashion) are of great significance. Significant improvement in respect to pain and range of movements can be brought about by the appropriate treatment. In conditions of deformity also treatment in long run may be of some help to the patient. In progressive

state involving multiple systems though some efficacy is evident , the benefit of the treatment is unpredictable.

Treatment specific information

The nature of the disease necessitates long run treatment protocol with continuous internal medications regular therapies. The patient need to be on naimittika rasayana (rejuvenation therapy specific to the disease) during the convalescence also.