



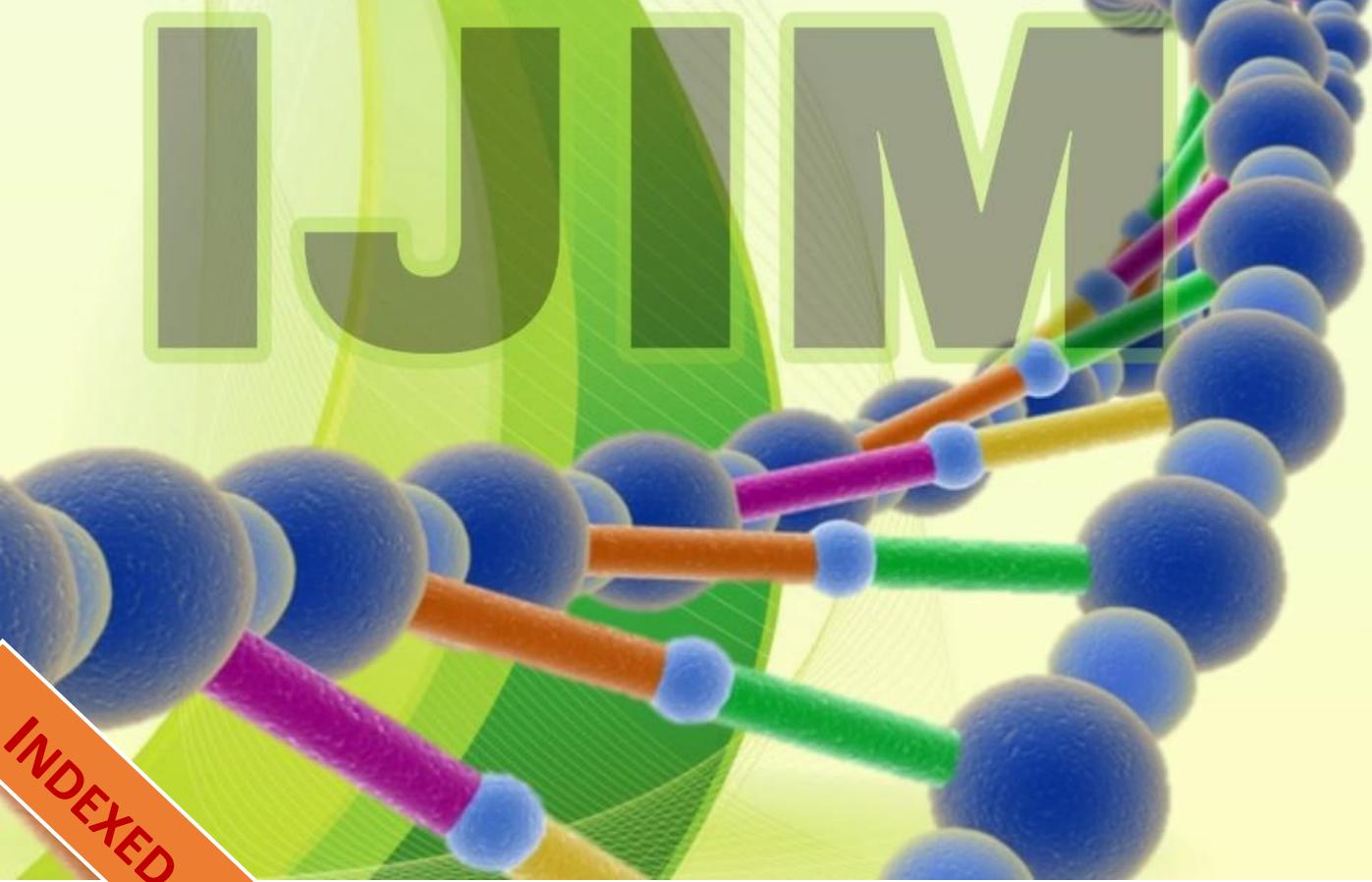
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Amavata: An Ayurvedic Perspective with Correlation to Rheumatoid Arthritis

Sahasrabudhe S.

Associate Professor, Dept of Rognidan Evam Vikriti Vigyan,
Sai Ayurved College Hospital & Research Centre, Vairag

ABSTRACT:

Amavata is a distinct disease entity described in classical Ayurvedic literature, characterized by a combination of articular and systemic manifestations resulting from deranged digestion and metabolic dysfunction. Clinically, it presents with joint pain (Sandhi Shoola), swelling (Sandhi Shotha), stiffness (Stambha), restricted movements, and associated systemic features such as anorexia, heaviness of the body, fatigue, and mild fever. Madhava Nidana elaborately describes Amavata as a condition arising from the pathological interaction of Ama—an incompletely digested, toxic metabolic by-product formed due to Mandagni (impaired digestive fire)—with aggravated Vata Dosha. This Ama-Vata complex disseminates through the body and preferentially localizes in the joints, producing inflammatory and degenerative changes. From a contemporary clinical perspective, Amavata exhibits remarkable similarity to Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), a chronic systemic autoimmune inflammatory disorder characterized by symmetrical polyarthritis, prolonged morning stiffness, synovial inflammation, and progressive joint damage. While modern medicine attributes RA primarily to immunological dysregulation and inflammatory mediators, Ayurveda conceptualizes Amavata as a systemic disorder rooted in metabolic impairment, Ama formation, and functional imbalance of Doshas. The growing prevalence of chronic inflammatory joint disorders and the limitations of long-term conventional therapies have renewed interest in holistic and integrative approaches. Ayurveda offers a comprehensive framework that emphasizes correction of Agni, elimination of Ama, and regulation of Vata, thereby addressing the root cause rather than providing symptomatic relief alone. The analysis highlights conceptual parallels between Ama and modern inflammatory mediators and underscores the relevance of Ayurvedic principles in developing integrative, stage-specific, and disease-modifying strategies for chronic inflammatory joint disorders.

KEYWORDS:

Amavata; Rheumatoid Arthritis; Ama; Samprapti; Vata Dosha.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Dr. Sampada Sahasrabudhe

Associate Professor, Dept of Rognidan Evam Vikriti Vigyan
Sai Ayurved College Hospital & Research Centre, Vairag
Email- sahasrabudhesampada@gmail.com, Mobile no: - 9850095406

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INTRODUCTION:

Amavata is a well-recognized classical disease entity described in Ayurveda, marked by a constellation of musculoskeletal and systemic manifestations. Clinically, it presents with severe joint pain (*Sandhi Shoola*), swelling (*Sandhi Shotha*), stiffness (*Stambha*), and restricted movements, often accompanied by generalized symptoms such as anorexia (*Aruchi*), heaviness of the body (*Gaurava*), fatigue, and low-grade fever (*Jwara*). The disease was described in detail by Madhava Nidana, wherein its etiopathogenesis is attributed to the pathological interaction between *Ama*—a toxic, incompletely digested metabolic product formed due to impaired digestive fire (*Mandagni*)—and aggravated *Vata Dosha*. This *Ama-Vata* complex circulates throughout the body and preferentially localizes in the joints and other *Madhyama Rogamarga* structures, giving rise to inflammatory and degenerative changes. From a clinical standpoint, Amavata bears a striking resemblance to Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), a chronic, systemic, autoimmune inflammatory disorder described in modern medicine, characterized by symmetrical polyarthritis, morning stiffness, synovial inflammation, and progressive joint destruction. The chronicity, systemic involvement, and potential for deformity observed in both conditions suggest a close clinicopathological correlation between Amavata and RA, though Ayurveda conceptualizes the disease as a systemic metabolic and functional disorder rather than a purely immunological pathology. In recent decades, the rising global burden of autoimmune and inflammatory joint disorders, coupled with the limitations and adverse effects associated with long-term conventional therapies such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, corticosteroids, and disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs,

has led to renewed interest in holistic and integrative approaches. Ayurveda offers a comprehensive framework for understanding Amavata, emphasizing correction of *Agni*, elimination of *Ama*, and regulation of *Vata*, thereby addressing the root cause of the disease rather than merely suppressing symptoms. Against this backdrop, the present article aims to critically review the Ayurvedic concept of Amavata, compare its symptomatology with that of modern Rheumatoid Arthritis, and elucidate its *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) and pathophysiology in a scientific and contemporary perspective.

Conceptual Review of Amavata:

Definition

Amavata is defined as a disease caused by the association of *Ama* with aggravated *Vata Dosha*, which gets lodged in *Sandhi* (joints) and other sites, producing pain, stiffness, swelling, and systemic manifestations. According to Madhava Nidana, indulgence in incompatible diet (*Viruddha Ahara*), heavy and unctuous food, sedentary habits, and weak digestive fire (*Mandagni*) leads to formation of *Ama*, which along with vitiated *Vata* circulates throughout the body.

Ayurvedic Etiopathogenesis (Samprapti)

Samprapti Ghataka:

- **Dosha:** *Vata* (Pradhana), *Kapha* (*Anubandhi*)
- **Dushya:** *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Asthi*
- **Agni:** *Jatharagni* *Mandya*
- **Ama:** Present
- **Srotas:** *Rasavaha*, *Asthivaha*
- **Srotodushti:** *Sanga*, *Vimargagamana*
- **Udbhavasthana:** *Amashaya*
- **Vyaktasthana:** *Sandhi*
- **Rogamarga:** *Madhyama*

Samprapti (Pathogenesis):

Due to *Mandagni*, improperly digested food leads to formation of *Ama*. This *Ama* combines with aggravated *Vata Dosha* and circulates through the body via *Rasavaha*

Srotas. Because of Vata's affinity for joints, the Ama-Vata complex localizes in Sandhi, producing inflammation, pain, swelling, and stiffness.

This is described in detail in Charaka Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya, emphasizing that unless Ama is eliminated, treatment aimed only at Vata aggravation will worsen the disease.

Pathophysiology of Amavata (Ayurvedic View)

From an Ayurvedic pathophysiological standpoint:

- Ama acts as a toxic, inflammatory substrate.
- Vata facilitates abnormal movement and localization.
- Obstruction (*Srotorodha*) leads to swelling and pain.
- Chronicity results in joint deformities, muscle wasting, and systemic weakness.

This mirrors inflammatory cascades described in modern immunopathology, where immune complexes and cytokines damage synovial tissues.

Table no. 1 Comparison of Symptomatology: Amavata and Rheumatoid Arthritis

Amavata (Ayurveda)	Rheumatoid Arthritis (Modern Medicine)
Sandhi Shoola (Joint pain)	Symmetrical joint pain
Sandhi Shotha (Swelling)	Synovitis
Stambha (Morning stiffness)	Morning stiffness >1 hour
Angamarda	Generalized body ache
Aruchi	Loss of appetite
Gaurava	Heaviness
Jwara	Low-grade fever
Chronic deformity	Joint deformity and erosion

Thus, Amavata can be considered a comprehensive clinical correlate of Rheumatoid Arthritis, though Ayurveda recognizes systemic digestive and metabolic impairment as the root cause. From a contemporary clinical viewpoint, Amavata closely resembles Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), a chronic systemic autoimmune inflammatory disorder characterized by symmetrical polyarthritis, synovial inflammation, and progressive joint destruction. While modern medicine primarily explains RA through immunological and inflammatory mechanisms, Ayurveda conceptualizes Amavata as a systemic disorder rooted in metabolic impairment, Dosha imbalance, and Srotorodha (channel obstruction). In recent decades, the rising burden of chronic inflammatory joint disorders and the adverse effects associated

with prolonged conventional therapy have renewed interest in holistic preventive strategies. Ayurveda places significant emphasis on the prevention of Amavata through maintenance of Agni, avoidance of Ama-producing dietary and lifestyle factors, and regulation of Vata. Preventive measures include adherence to Pathya Ahara such as light, warm, and easily digestible foods; avoidance of Viruddha Ahara, excessive guru and snigdha diet; regular physical activity; and observance of Dinacharya and Ritucharya to maintain metabolic homeostasis. Early interventions like Langhana, Deepana, and Pachana are advocated to prevent Ama accumulation and disease progression.

This article critically reviews the Ayurvedic concept, symptomatology, Samprapti, pathophysiology, and preventive aspects of

Amavata in comparison with Rheumatoid Arthritis, highlighting the relevance of Ayurvedic principles in preventive, integrative, and disease-modifying management of chronic inflammatory joint disorders.

DISCUSSION:

Ayurveda conceptualizes Amavata as a systemic, multifactorial disorder rooted in derangements of digestion, metabolism, and functional regulation, rather than merely a localized pathology of the joints. The disease is fundamentally attributed to *Agnimandya*, leading to the formation of *Ama*, which subsequently interacts with aggravated *Vata Dosha* and disseminates throughout the body. This systemic dissemination explains the multisystem involvement observed in Amavata, including constitutional symptoms such as fatigue, anorexia, heaviness, and fever, in addition to prominent articular manifestations. In contrast, modern medicine primarily conceptualizes Rheumatoid Arthritis as an autoimmune inflammatory disease characterized by synovial hyperplasia, immune cell infiltration, cytokine overproduction, and progressive joint destruction. Although both systems describe different mechanistic frameworks, they converge clinically in recognizing Amavata/RA as a chronic, systemic inflammatory condition. A critical point of convergence between Ayurvedic and contemporary biomedical perspectives lies in the conceptual similarity of *Ama* with modern pathological entities such as inflammatory mediators, circulating immune complexes, endotoxins, and metabolic by-products that trigger and sustain chronic inflammation. *Ama* is described in Ayurveda as a heavy, sticky, and obstructive substance that impairs *Srotas* function (*Srotorodha*), leading to pain, swelling, and stiffness—features that parallel synovial inflammation, pannus formation, and microvascular obstruction

observed in Rheumatoid Arthritis. This conceptual overlap provides a rational scientific basis for correlating Ayurvedic pathophysiology with immunological and inflammatory pathways recognized in modern medicine. Ayurvedic management strategies for Amavata are distinctly phased and etiopathogenetically driven. In the early and active stages, therapeutic measures such as *Langhana* (therapeutic lightening), *Deepana* (enhancement of digestive fire), and *Pachana* (digestion of *Ama*) are emphasized to arrest disease progression by eliminating the root pathogenic factor. These interventions aim to restore metabolic homeostasis and prevent further *Ama* formation. In chronic or refractory cases, *Shodhana* therapies—particularly *Virechana* and *Basti*—are employed to eliminate deeply seated *Doshas* and *Ama* from the system. Notably, this staged approach aligns conceptually with the modern therapeutic principle of early and aggressive disease-modifying intervention in Rheumatoid Arthritis to prevent irreversible structural damage and disability. Furthermore, Ayurveda cautions against the indiscriminate use of unctuous therapies (*Snehana*) in the presence of *Ama*, as such interventions may exacerbate the disease—an observation that resonates with modern clinical concerns regarding inappropriate immunosuppression during active inflammatory states. Thus, Ayurvedic principles emphasize individualized, stage-specific treatment based on the presence or absence of *Ama*, *Dosha* predominance, and disease chronicity. In summary, the Ayurvedic understanding of Amavata offers a holistic and integrative model that encompasses metabolic dysfunction, systemic inflammation, and functional derangements. When viewed through a contemporary scientific lens, this model demonstrates significant conceptual parallels with the immunopathogenesis of

Rheumatoid Arthritis. Integrating Ayurvedic insights with modern biomedical research may not only enhance disease understanding but also contribute to the development of safer, personalized, and disease-modifying therapeutic strategies for chronic inflammatory joint disorders.

CONCLUSION:

Amavata is a well-defined disease entity in Ayurveda with a clear etiological, pathological, and clinical framework. Its close resemblance to Rheumatoid Arthritis highlights the scientific relevance of Ayurvedic principles. Understanding Amavata through the lens of Samprapti and pathophysiology offers a holistic approach that addresses both systemic and joint-specific manifestations. Integrative research may further validate Ayurvedic interventions as effective and safer long-term options for inflammatory joint disorders.

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