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Concept of Anatomical Structure of Snayu in Snayugata Roga

Dr.. Vijayalakshmi Patil[1], Dr. Harshavardhan Byalihal[2]

[1]BAMS, 3rd year pg scholar, Dept of Rachanna Shareera, R.G.E.S.A.M.C RON.
[2]BAMS, Professor & HOD, Dept of Rachanna Shareera, R.G.E.S.A.M.C RON.

Abstract
In Ayurveda, Snayu is a vital anatomical structure responsible for binding and providing stability to the body. This study explores the classical definitions, classifications, and clinical significance of Snayu, particularly its role in Snayugata Roga (disorders of the fibrous tissues). By correlating ancient Ayurvedic concepts with modern anatomical structures like ligaments, tendons, and fascia, this research aims to bridge the gap between traditional and modern medicine.

Keywords: Snayu, Snayugata Roga, Ligaments, Tendons, Ayurveda, Vata Vyadhi.

Introduction:
Ayurvedic anatomy (Sharir Rachana) uses terms like Snayu to describe structures that "bind" and support joints while bearing weight. While classically described as fibrous, its exact modern equivalent has historically been unclear, often corresponding to ligaments, tendons, or fascia.
The primary function of Snayu is to bind Mamsa (muscle), Asthi (bone), and Medas (fat), providing the body with the stability necessary to bear weight. Understanding these structures is essential for the effective management of musculoskeletal conditions, as injuries to Snayu are often more debilitating than injuries to muscles or even bones.

Methods:
This research was conducted as a critical review and compilation of classical Ayurvedic literature. The methodology involved:
- **Literature Review:** Comprehensive analysis of references from the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya.
- **Structural Analysis:** Examination of the embryological origin (Pitruj bhava) and formation of Snayu through the metabolic process of Meda paaka.
- **Comparative Correlation:** Comparing the four classical types of Snayu (Pratanavati, Vrutta, Sushira, and Pruthula) with modern anatomical equivalents such as aponeurosis, sphincters, and nerve cords.

Results:
The research identified specific anatomical and clinical characteristics of Snayu:
- **Anatomical Distribution**: There are 900 Snayus in the human body: 600 in the extremities, 230 in the trunk (middle body), and 70 in the head and neck.

- **Classification:**
- **Pratanavati:** Branched structures found in joints and extremities (Ligaments/nerves).
- **Vrutta:** Circular structures known as Kandara (Tendons/large nerve cords).
- **Sushira:** Porous structures found at the ends of the stomach, intestines, and bladder (Sphincters).
- **Pruthula:** Flat structures found in the chest, back, and head (Aponeurosis/fascia).
- **Pathology (Snayugata Vata):** Vitiation of Vata in these tissues leads to severe pain, stiffness (Stambha), contractions (Samkocha), and restricted movement.
- **Clinical Findings:** Conditions such as Tennis Elbow, Trigger Finger, and Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy can be understood through the lens of Snayu pathology.

Discussion:

The study reveals that Snayu is a broad term encompassing various fibrous connective tissues. Structurally, it is described as Shanakara (resembling strong fibers) and was traditionally compared to the materials used for bowstrings.

A critical clinical finding is the importance of Snayu Marma (vital points). Of the 107 Marmas, 27 are classified as Snayu Marma; injury to these points can cause clonic spasms, severe pain, and even permanent disability. The study also notes that while modern anatomy distinguishes between ligaments (bone-to-bone) and tendons (muscle-to-bone), Ayurveda groups them under Snayu due to their shared "binding" function.

The treatment for Snayu disorders typically involves Vata-pacifying regimens such as Snehana (oleation), Upanaha (poultice), and Agnikarma (therapeutic cautery), which support tissue repair and recovery.

Conclusion:

Snayu represents the fibrous connective tissue system of the body, appearing in various forms to meet functional requirements. Whether acting as ligaments in joints, tendons for muscles, or sphincters for viscera, Snayu is fundamental to structural integrity. Recognizing these structures as the site of Vata localization is vital for the holistic management of modern musculoskeletal degenerative diseases.

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