



# A Critical Review On *Vaitarana Basti* In *Gridhrasi* With Special Reference To Sciatica

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**Abstract:** The rising prevalence of Locomotor system diseases is limiting social and professional activities. Sciatica, a locomotor disease, refers to the low back pain radiating to lower limb in a dermatomal distribution. The prevalence of Sciatica ranges from 1.2% to 43%. The presentation of Sciatica shows close resemblance with Gridhrasi which is one of the Vataja Nanatmaja Vyadhi. It starts from Kati – Prishta (pelvic region and lumbosacral) radiating to Jangha Paada (thigh, feet) with impairment of lifting the leg. In Ayurveda, Vaitarana Basti has been mentioned by Acharya Vangasena in the management of Gridhrasi. In this article, an attempt has been made to review critically the role of Ksheera Vaitarana Basti in Gridhrasi, considering its therapeutic potential, application, and efficacy, based on classical texts and contemporary research.

**Keywords:** Gridhrasi, Review, Sciatica, Vaitarana Basti

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sciatica is a painful locomotor system disease in which pain in the lower back region radiates into the lower extremity along the area of distribution of the sciatic nerve. Gender wise, it is more prevalent in males than females at young age while in middle age, females are more prevalent than males<sup>1</sup>. *Gridhrasi*, commonly referred to as sciatica in modern medical terms. The Ayurvedic system of medicine categorizes *Gridhrasi* as a *Vata* disorder<sup>2</sup>, wherein vitiated *Vata* (the bio-energy related to movement) affects the nervous system, resulting in pain, stiffness, numbness, and difficulty in movement. One of the significant therapeutic interventions in Ayurveda for managing *Gridhrasi* is the *Vaitarana Basti*. *Basti* therapy, in general, is a powerful tool for balancing *Vata Dosha*, and *Vaitarana Basti*<sup>3</sup> is considered particularly effective in treating diseases of the lower limbs, particularly sciatica. This critical review will evaluate the role of *Ksheera Vaitarana Basti* in *Gridhrasi*.

## II. METHODS OF INFORMATION

The Ayurvedic literature available on *Gridhrasi* and its management from *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Ashtanga Samgraha*, *Bhavaprakash*, *Sharangdhara Samhita*, *Baishajya Ratnavali*, *Madhava Nidana*, *Chakradatta* and *Bhela Samhita* and modern texts for Sciatica were reviewed thoroughly.

## III. SEARCH STRATEGY

The databases like PubMed, Scopus, Cochrane, Ayush portal, and Google scholar were searched to access data by keywords including Pain, *Gridhrasi*, Sciatica and management through Ayurveda.

## IV. SELECTION PROCESS

Relevant reviewed information related to Sciatica and *Gridhrasi* was collected, recorded, analyzed, and reported.

## V. PATHOGENESIS AND PATHOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF GRIDHRASI

The pathogenesis and pathological components of *Gridhrasi* according to Ayurveda and contemporary science<sup>3,4</sup> have been depicted in Fig 1.

## VI. CONCEPT OF VAITARANA BASTI IN AYURVEDA

*Basti*, in Ayurvedic parlance, is considered one of the most effective treatments in *Panchakarma*, an Ayurvedic detoxification regimen. *Vaitarana Basti* is a type of *Niruha Basti* (non-unctuous decoction-based enema) used primarily in the management of *Ama* and *Kapha-Meda-dominant* disorders<sup>5</sup>. It is especially indicated in *Gridhrasi* (sciatica), *Arsha* (piles), *Amavata* (rheumatoid arthritis), *Katishoola* (Low back pain) and other *Kapha-Vata* disorders<sup>6</sup>. The word "*Vaitarana*" is derived from the mythological "*Vaitarani River*", which one has to cross in order to attain liberation - metaphorically indicating this *basti* helps eliminate morbid doshas and toxins effectively<sup>7</sup>.

### Types of Vaitarana Basti by Different Acharyas

Different *Acharyas* have described variants of *Vaitarana Basti* based on clinical context and ingredients which is illustrated in Table 1.

**Ingredients and dose of Vaitarana Basti:** The general ingredients of *Vaitarana Basti* are *Saindhava Lavana* (Rock Salt), *Guda* (Jaggery of Sugarcane or Date palm), *Amlika* (Tamarind), *Gomutra* (Cows urine) and *Ishat Taila* (little quantity of Sesame oil) in the prescribed quantity. Ingredients as per different *Acharya's* are illustrated in Table 2.

### *Ksheera Vaitarana Basti*

*Ksheera Vaitarana Basti* is a milder form of the traditional *Vaitarana Basti* indicated for delicate patients or those with increased *Pitta* or *Rakta dhatu*. The ingredients of *Ksheera Vaitarana Basti* are *Ksheera* (Milk) – 500 ml, *Gomutra* (Cow's urine) – 100 ml, *Saindhava Lavana* (Rock salt) – 10 g, *Guda* (Jaggery) – 20 g and *Madhu* (Honey) – 20 ml

**Probable Mode of Action:** Milk acts as a vehicle and coolant. *Gomutra* acts as a detoxifier and *Kapha-Vata Shodhaka*. *Saindhava* helps in *Ama Pachana* and *srotoshodhana*. *Guda* and *Madhu* assist in *Lekhana* and *Anulomana*.

## VII. CRITICAL REVIEW OF VAITARANA BASTI IN GRIDHRASI

### 1. Efficacy

The primary claim regarding *Vaitarana Basti*'s effectiveness lies in its ability to address the root causes of *Gridhrasi*. It targets the *Vata Dosha*, which is believed to be the primary factor behind the symptoms of sciatica<sup>5</sup>. Clinical evidence, though somewhat limited, suggests that *Basti* therapies, particularly *Vaitarana Basti*, can indeed provide substantial relief from pain, numbness, and tingling associated with sciatica<sup>13</sup>. Several studies have reported positive outcomes, with patients experiencing improved movement, less pain, and enhanced quality of life post-treatment<sup>14</sup>.

### 2. Safety

*Vaitarana Basti* is generally considered safe when performed under the supervision of a trained and qualified Ayurvedic practitioner. However, like any therapy, it is important to monitor for any allergic reactions or discomfort following the procedure<sup>15</sup>.

### 3. Cost and Accessibility

*Panchakarma* therapies, including *Basti*, are often not covered by conventional health insurance policies. Additionally, finding qualified Ayurvedic practitioners who can administer *Basti* therapy can be a challenge in regions where Ayurveda is not widely practiced<sup>16</sup>.

### 4. Integrating Modern Medicine and Ayurveda

The use of *Ksheera Vaitarana Basti* for *Gridhrasi* lacks integration with conventional Western medical approaches. *Ksheera Vaitarana Basti* primarily works through *dosha shodhana* (detoxification of morbid doshas), particularly targeting *Vata-Kapha* pathogenesis<sup>11</sup>. In classical formulations, ingredients are used in specific proportions to produce an effect of *Ama pachana* (toxin digestion), *Srotoshodhana* (channel cleansing), coolant and *Vata anulomana*<sup>10</sup>. Clinical evidence suggests that *ksheera Vaitarana Basti* provides significant symptom relief in cases of *Gridhrasi*, especially in reducing pain, numbness, and stiffness<sup>17</sup>.

However, a major limitation in the application of *Ksheera Vaitarana Basti*, particularly in global or integrative settings, is its lack of anatomical specificity. From a Western medical perspective, sciatica is not a disease in itself but a symptom of various underlying structural or degenerative spinal pathologies, such as herniated discs, spinal stenosis, spondylolisthesis, or piriformis syndrome<sup>4</sup>. These conditions often require precise diagnostic imaging (MRI, CT) and may need surgical intervention, physical therapy, or targeted pharmacological management, which are not directly addressed by *Basti chikitsa*. While *Ksheera Vaitarana Basti* may alleviate neuropathic symptoms through anti-inflammatory and neuro-modulatory mechanisms, it does not rectify the anatomical distortions that are frequently the root cause of sciatic pain in many patients.

This creates a gap in its standalone application, particularly in chronic or structurally complex cases. Therefore, integrative approaches could offer a more comprehensive and sustainable solution<sup>18</sup>.

## VIII. DISCUSSION

In *Gridhrasi*, the *Vata Dosha* is aggravated in the region of the hips, lower back, and legs, leading to symptoms like radiating pain, stiffness, and difficulty in walking. *Vaitarana Basti* works on the following principles to alleviate these symptoms:

1. **Vata Shamana (Calming of Vata):** *Vaitarana Basti* primarily aims to pacify the aggravated *Vata Dosha*, balancing the energy and promoting smooth circulation and nerve function<sup>19</sup>.
2. **Detoxification:** *Basti* helps to eliminate toxins (*Ama*) from the body, which in turn supports overall *Vata* balance. *Ksheera Vaitarana Basti* helps eliminate *Ama* (endogenous toxins) from the gastrointestinal tract, which is considered a key pathological factor in *Gridhrasi* (sciatica). By removing *Avaranjanya Ama* and clearing obstructed *Srotas* (body channels), it restores the normal flow and function of *Vata dosha*, thereby reducing pain, stiffness, and neurological symptoms associated with *Gridhrasi*. This detoxifying and *Vata*-balancing action makes *Ksheera Vaitarana Basti* particularly effective in managing *Vata-Kapha*-dominant conditions like sciatica<sup>20</sup>.
3. **Improved Circulation and Nerve Health:** *Vaitarana Basti* can improve blood circulation leading to reduced inflammation, enhanced nerve function, and relief from the pain associated with sciatica<sup>21</sup>.
4. **Strengthening of Musculoskeletal and Nervous Systems:** The *Basti* help nourish the muscles, bones, and nerves, facilitating healing and rejuvenation<sup>21</sup>.

**Contemporary Research and Efficacy:** Various clinical studies have demonstrated that the use of *Vaitarana Basti* in *Gridhrasi* significantly reduces pain, inflammation, and discomfort associated with sciatica. Another study in *Ayurveda Today* (2018) concluded that *Basti* therapies, including *Vaitarana Basti*, show a marked improvement in both acute and chronic cases of *Gridhrasi*, enhancing the overall quality of life of patients<sup>22</sup>.

## IX. CONCLUSION

*Vaitarana Basti* remains a cornerstone treatment in Ayurveda for managing *Vata* disorders, especially *Gridhrasi*. Its ability to pacify the aggravated *Vata Dosha*, detoxify the body, and enhance circulation in the lower limbs makes it an effective therapy for sciatica. Classical references and contemporary research both support its efficacy, although it is important to consider individual patient needs and conditions.

Despite its challenges, *Vaitarana Basti* holds promise as a holistic approach to managing *Gridhrasi*, offering a safe and effective alternative to conventional pain management techniques. *Vaitarana basti* with *godugdha* is effective in *vataja gridhrasi* while *vaitarana basti* with *gomutra* is effective in managing *vatakapahaja Gridhrasi*. The future of *Vaitarana Basti* lies in further research and integration with modern medical practices, creating a more well-rounded and evidence-based approach to the management of *Gridhrasi*.

## Figures and Tables

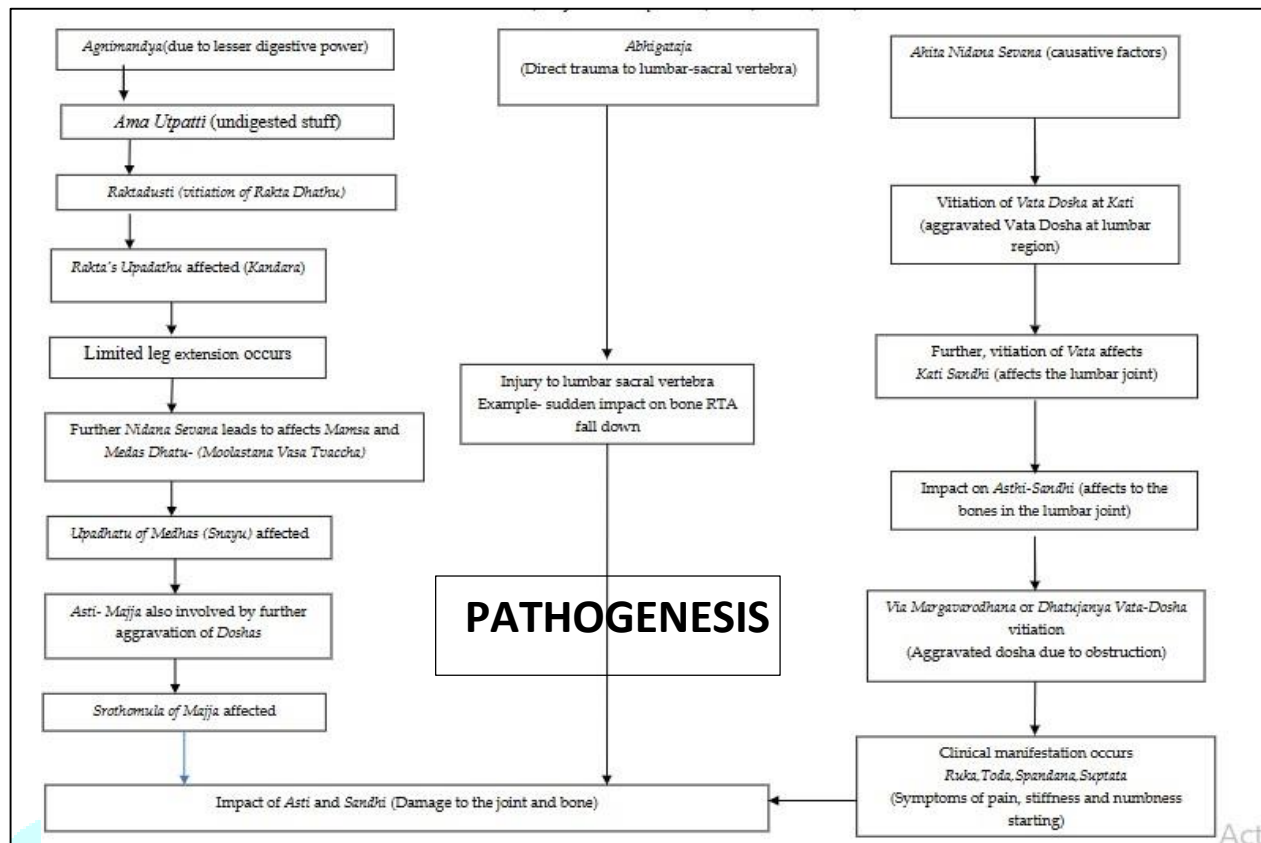


Figure 1 showing pathogenesis of Gridhrasi

Table 1 showing Vaitarana basti according to different Acharyas

Acharya	Vaitarana Basti	Key Ingredients	Indications
Acharya Chakrapani	Vaitarana Basti	Gomutra, Madhu, Saindhava, Tila Taila, Amalaki Swarasa	Gridhrasi, Arsha
Bhavaprakasha <sup>7</sup>	Ksheera Vaitarana Basti	Ksheera (milk), Gomutra, Saindhava, Guda	Vata-Kapha disorders
Bhaishajya Ratnavali <sup>8</sup>	Modified Vaitarana	Gomutra, Kshara, Chitraka, Madhu	Gulma, Udararoga
Yogaratinakara <sup>9</sup>	Kshara Vaitarana Basti	Gomutra, Kshara, Saindhava, Guda, Madhu	Arsha, Shoola



Table 2: Dose of ingredients of *Vaitarana Basti* as per different Acharyas

Ingredients	<i>Chakradutta, Vrinda Madhava<sup>11</sup>, Todarmalla</i>	<i>Vangasena<sup>10</sup></i>	<i>Ayurvedasara<sup>12</sup></i>
<i>Saindhava</i>	1 Karsha (12gm)	1 Karsha (12gm)	1 Karsha (12gm)
<i>Guda</i>	1 Shukti (24gm)	½ Pala	1 Shukti (24gm)
<i>Amlika</i>	1 Pala (48gm)	1 Pala (48gm)	1 Pala (48gm)
<i>Taila</i>	Quantity not mentioned	<i>Ishat Taila</i>	1 Pala (48ml)
<i>Drava dravyas</i>	<i>Gomutra – 1 Kudava</i>	<i>Surabhi Paya (Ksheera)</i>	<i>Gomutra – 1 Kudava</i>

## X. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

NIL

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