

LEUCORRHOEA AND ITS MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT: Leucorrhoea or white discharge is a complaint with which each woman suffers at least once in a lifetime. It refers to the white or yellowish discharge from the vaginal canal in women. It is a sign of normal reproductive activity in all females and is due to hormonal changes in the reproductive system. But it is also caused due to inflammation and infections of the genitor-urinary tract. Although the severe and chronic cases require long term treatment with antibiotics, mild cases can be effectively controlled by naturopathic treatment, diet and yoga. The following work shows the efficacy of above interventions on the problem of leucorrhoea in women.

Keywords: Leucorrhoea, Naturopathy, Yoga, Antibiotics

In recent years, medical problems associated with women are being brought into focus by medical practitioners of all systems. One of the reasons is increased awareness among women about their problems. Today's woman is aware about her health. She immediately notices any variation from normal and seeks medical advice.

Many researches have been published about leucorrhoea i.e. regarding the effects of drugs, allopathic, Homeopathic and Ayurvedic. But negligible amount of work has been done in the field of proving efficacy of natural remedies in treatment of leucorrhoea.

This article is an effort to evaluate the effects of natural remedies in the management of leucorrhoea.

What is Leucorrhoea?

Leucorrhoea is a medical term that denotes a thick, whitish or yellowish vaginal discharge. (Commonwealth)

According to Shaw's textbook of Gynecology, the term leucorrhoea should be restricted to only those patients in whom the normal vaginal secretion is increased in amount. Some clinicians use the term leucorrhoea to describe any white or yellowish-white discharge from the vagina, strictly excluding the presence of blood.

This type of vaginal discharge is not always abnormal. It sometimes occurs in young girls before onset of menarche, the first period and is therefore a sign of onset of puberty. This may be due to increased vascularity of the genital tract and is temporary.

Leucorrhoea can be broadly classified into Physiological and Inflammatory Leucorrhoea.

➤ **Physiological Leucorrhoea**

This type of leucorrhoea is mainly due to estrogen stimulation. It is commonly seen during puberty, pregnancy, at the time of ovulation and during the premenstrual phase of menstrual cycle. This is because of increased mucus discharges from the hypertrophied premenstrual glands of the endometrium of some women. Female infants may have leucorrhoea for a short time after birth due to their in-uterine exposure to estrogen.

➤ **Inflammatory Leucorrhoea**

This type is due to the inflammation or congestion of vaginal mucosa. This could be due to organic bacterial infections, sexually transmitted diseases etc.

After delivery, leucorrhoea if accompanied by backache and foul smelling lochia may suggest the failure of involution of uterus due to infection.

Many textbooks describe leucorrhoea on the basis of site of origin i.e.

- Cervical leucorrhoea which is a mucoid discharge and is due to conditions of cervix like chronic cervicitis, cervical erosion etc.
- Vaginal leucorrhoea which is a transudate secreted through the wall of vagina due to bacterial infections.

Causes of Leucorrhoea:

The main causes of leucorrhoea include:

- Local congestive states of pelvic organs such as pregnancy
- Prolapsed congested ovaries
- Chronic pelvic inflammatory disease
- Chronic constipation
- Sedentary occupation
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unhygienic conditions
- Frequent abortions

Symptoms:

- White or yellowish discharge from vaginal passage
- Itching on the vulvae area
- Pelvic pain and Low back ache
- Frequent Headaches
- Generalized weakness

Diagnosis:

It is very important that pathological leucorrhoea should be differentiated from physiological one. A detailed case history taking can give us a clue about the frequency, time and nature of discharge. Examination of external genitalia may also provide clue for the site and type of leucorrhoea. Leucorrhoea must be distinguished from specific vaginitis by bacteriological examination.

Investigations:

- Wet smear, Pap smear, Gram stain culture, Biopsy
- Complete blood picture, Random & Microscopic Urine analysis

Management:

1. **Conventional:** After confirming a pathological leucorrhoea, medicines to be taken orally and broad spectrum (antifungal & antibacterial) ointments for local application are given in order to relieve local symptoms like itching etc. In case of infections diagnosed through lab investigations, antibiotics are given. Nutritional supplements may be added to improve general health.

2. **Homeopathic:** Homeopathic remedies have also been found very effective in treatment of leucorrhoea.

3. **Ayurvedic:** Ayurveda considers use of coriander and fenugreek seeds important in the treatment of leucorrhoea. Coriander seeds should be taken in the form of infusion. Fenugreek seeds can be taken in the form of decoction internally or a neutral douche of fenugreek seeds should be administered to the patient for 1 week.

The other medicines which are advised in Ayurveda include Pushyanug churna, Patrangasava, Chandraprabhavati, Amla, Mulethi and Pradrantak churna etc. which aim at moderating the frequency of excessive white discharge.

4. Natural Home remedies:

- Increase the fluid intake
- Include plenty of fruits and raw vegetables in the regular diet particularly bananas, oranges, lemons, green leafy vegetables etc.
- Spices such as ginger, garlic, fenugreek and coriander should be taken regularly. An infusion of coriander seeds should be consumed every day.
- Foods such as eggs, sweets, bread, mushrooms etc. should be avoided.

4. Naturopathy and Yoga for Leucorrhoea:

The naturopathy treatments for leucorrhoea can be administered with the following views:

- A. Detoxification of the body
- B. Controlling the infection and inflammation
- C. Improving circulation to the pelvic area
- D. Relieving local symptoms

The main Naturopathy treatments which can be given beneficially are:

1. **Neutral Compress to lower abdomen** will help to relieve pain and soothe the nerves.
2. **Neutral neem water enema** helps to remove accumulated toxins and also relieve back ache.
3. **Hot neem water & turmeric sitz bath**- This is an important treatment which helps not only to control the infection and inflammation but also to soothe the painful pelvic and lower back area. Sitz bath is a variation of hip bath in which the patient is made to sit on a wooden plank in a tub filled with hot neem and turmeric water in such a way that the genitals, perineum and pelvic regions are immersed in hot neem water. The temperature of the water should be maintained at **104° F- 110° F (40-43° C)**. **It is given for duration of 10-15 minutes**. Before entering the tub, she is asked to drink one glass of cold water. A cold compress is kept on her head. After sitting in the tub, she is asked to apply friction (rubbing) to the immersed parts, either with hand or with a towel. After completion of treatment, the parts are dried with a dry towel.
4. **Neutral neem water vaginal douche** should be given daily for 1 week. This will exert a germicidal effect on the affected area.
5. **Yoga and Exercises:** Regular yoga and other exercises should be advised to the women as they improve blood circulation & tissue oxygenation thereby replenishing energy reserves of the body.
6. **Counseling and Life style Modification:** The patients should be regularly counseled for a regulated daily routine, proper diet and consistent physical exercise. They should be taught about maintaining personal hygiene.

Clinical Observation:

A number of female patients coming for treatment at naturopathy hospital complain of having excessive white discharge. A detailed case history is taken to rule out physiological leucorrhoea. In case of physiological leucorrhoea, patients are counseled about the natural origin of white discharge.

A retrospective analysis revealed that 29 patients coming for health care at the Naturopathy hospital between May 2013 and October 2014 were diagnosed as having pathological leucorrhoea as presenting complaint or associated complaint. The diagnosis was done on the basis of frequency, quantity and nature of white discharge. They also exhibited associated symptoms like itching on private parts, burning micturition and increased frequency of micturition.

In these patients with pathological leucorrhoea, **Hot neem sitz bath at the temperature between 104° F- 110° F (40-43° C) was given for duration of 10-15 minutes**.

It was observed that in all these cases, the symptoms were relieved within 7 days.

Conclusion:

Leucorrhoea is a condition which troubles almost every woman at least once in a lifetime. At the same time, there are a lot of myths about white discharge. It is important that the physician should rule out normal white discharge so that unnecessary intake of antibiotics can be prevented.

Naturopathy treatments have been proven efficient & safe in controlling most cases of leucorrhoea whether presented as a chief complaint or associated with other complaints.

Counseling also has proven effective in the therapy.

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