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PROBABLE MANAGEMENT OF STHAULYA IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Sthaulya (Obesity) is discouraged by the society for social as well as medical reasons. Obesity is an increase in body weight beyond the limitation of skeletal and physical requirement. It is defined as $BMI > 30 \text{ kg/m}^2$.¹ Chronic non-communicable diseases like DM, HTN, Angina pectoris, MI etc are recognized as leading killer diseases of the millennium. Obesity is traced to be a major risk factor for all these diseases. *Sthaulya* is a typical obesity involving *Medo-Vridhhi* with which this study deals with typical obesity and not with the regional obesity which is the reflection of endocrine imbalance. In *Sthaulya* increased *Meda*, *Agni*, *Vayu* creates complications. Now- a -days *Sthaulya* is a big medical problem to the world. In 21st century continuous changes in life style, environment, and dietary habits have made man a victim of many diseases. *Sthaulya* is one of them. *Sthaulya* being a disease of multifactor origin needs multidimensional approach towards its prevention and treatment. Hence Acharyas have mentioned different treatment principles to manage this disease. 'Guru Cha Aptarpana' is *Sreshtha Chikitsa* for *Sthaulya*.²

Keywords: *Sthaulya*, non-communicable, *Medo-Vridhhi*, *Aptarpana*

INTRODUCTION

The Nature has taught the man how to be healthy before the science has discovered the laws of health. But, it is an irony of the fate that, on this earth on one hand millions do not get enough food and roam in a skeletal appearance while on the other hand, there are many more who, besides over eating lead a sedentary life to march towards an untimely death. *Sthaulya* (Obesity) is one among the major diseases of Modern era. The industrialization, stress during the work, dietary habits, lack of exercise & various varieties among the daily diet e.g. fast food, increased amount of soft drinks and beverages, canned foods results into the clinical entity which we can call as Obesity. *Swastha Purusha* is defined as - A healthy body is the only one media to achieve the ultimate goal among the *Chaturvidha Purushartha*.³ and one whose *Doshas*, *Agni*, and functions of *Dhatu* and *Malas* are in the state of equilibrium and who has cheerful mind, intellect and sense organs.⁴ In *Sushruta Samhita* it is said that *Madhama Sharira* is the best but *Ati Sthaula* and *Ati Krisha* are always affected with some complaints⁵ In *Charaka Samhita* *Sthaulya* is described under the eight varieties of impediments which are designated as *Astha-Nindita Purusha*, *Ati Sthaulya* comprises one of them.⁶ In *Sushruta Samhita* *Sthaulya* is considered as 'Sadatura' and requires regular and continuous treatment, hence prevention is the best way of intervention. Drugs in weight control have been used as short term adjunctive therapy to diet and exercise. The long term use of drugs had been disappointing owing to few effects on weight loss or adverse side effects. So it is important to recommend non-pharmacological management in obesity.

NIRUKTI

A person having heaviness and bulkiness of the body due to extensive growth especially in *Udaradi* region is termed as "*Sthula*" and the state (*Bhava*) of *Sthula* is called "*Sthaulya*".⁷

DEFINITION

Ati Sthula has been defined as a person, "who on account of the inordinate increase of fat and flesh, is disfigured with pendulous, buttocks, belly and breasts and whose increase bulk is not matched by a corresponding increase in energy."⁸

Obesity is defined as excess deposition of adipose tissue is obesity.

A body weight 20% or more above desirable weight for age, sex and height is regarded as obese.

A recent National Institute of Health consensus conference defined obesity as Body Mass Index greater than 27 kg/m². Now-a-days obesity is defined at or greater than 25 kg/m² BMI.

- Parks has given obesity may be defined as an abnormal growth of the adipose tissue due to an enlargement of fat cell size (Hypertrophic obesity) or an increase in fat cell number (hyperplastic obesity) or a combination of both. Hence, the modern terminology obesity can be used satisfactorily for the disease *Sthaulya*.

NIDANA (CAUSATIVE FACTORS) OF STHAULYA

Ayurveda *Acharyas* described so many etiological factors of *Sthaulya Roga* in their *Samhitas* which are related to all aspects at life and affect the body from outside and inside also. The hereditary (*Bijadosha*) components besides dietic and psychological factors in the causation of *Sthaulya* have been described in *Charak Samhita*⁹. Except these factors, the components which may vitiate *Meda* and *Shlesma* could be considered as causative factors of *Sthaulya*. Endogenous type of causes has been mentioned by *Acharya Shushrut* and *Maharshi Vagbhat*. Defective intercellular metabolism had been considered as the main cause besides other components in etiopathology at *Sthaulya* by *Vagbhat* i.e. due to excessive ingestion of heavy foods leads to indigestion and which in turn causes for the production of *Ama*. *Ama* gets mixed with *Kapha* at the tissue level and makes them weak and causes increase of fatty tissue.¹⁰ Only *Charak* has defined *Bija dosha* as one of the cause besides other, other texts have humbly followed the *Brihatrayis's* description regarding etiological factors of *Sthaulya*. In context with *Sthaulya*, exogenous causes are *Meda* potentiating diet and regimens where as *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Srotas* etc. come under the endogenous factors. All the causative factors described in Ayurvedic classics can be classified into four groups:

1. *Aharatmaka Nidana*
2. *Viharatmaka Nidana*
3. *Manas Nidana*
4. *Any Nidana*

The causes of obesity are distributed in main three groups according to modern medicine.

1. Exogenous: Where the chief cause is excessive appetite or over feeding.
2. Endogenous: Where endocrine factors are important.
3. Miscellaneous: A number of factors are known to be associated with its development, which are taken under this heading.

Ati Sampurna and *Adhyasana* can be considered as faulty eating habits. *Atisampurana* means excess food intake in a single meal, while *Adhyasana* means frequent food intake before digestion of a previous meal. On the basis of *Samanya Vishesh Siddhanta*¹¹ the excessive consumption of *Dravyas* of similar substance (*Dravya Samanya*) similar quality (*Guna*

Samanya) or similar in action (*Karma Samanya*) helps in over production of *Dhatu*. In the same way the growth of *Meda Dhatu* is observed by excessive consumption of fatty substance due to *Dravya Samanya* in both of them. If either one or two or all the three properties are similar, then such substances boost up the growth of the *Dhatu*s, the result is *Dhatu Vriddhi*. Previously mentioned dietary causes are having specific *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, *Karma* and the *Panchabhautic* composition and so they cause over growth and accumulation of *Meda Dhatu*. *Sthaulya* has been narrated as a *Dusya* dominant disorder i.e. *Medaja Vyadhi* in following words i.e. the combination of *Dosha*, *Dushya* and *Malas* in various places has different constitution as one being *Medhojanya Roga*¹² and further more in

some chapter *Sthaulya* has been mentioned as *Medodoshajha* disorder¹³ Though *Sthaulya* is a *Ddusya* dominant disorder, in pathogenesis of *Sthaulya*, all the three *Doshas* are vitiated, especially *Kledaka*, *Kapha*, *Pachaka Pitta*, *Samana* and *Vyana Vayu* are the responsible factors for proper digestion and metabolism of food at the level of alimentary tract and body tissue *Dusti* of these *Doshika* components results in indigestion metabolic deformity and formation of *Ama* at tissue level as well as alimentary tract.

MANAGEMENT

In Ayurveda, general principal of management of any disorder is divided into 3 parts.

1. *Nidan Parivarjan*
2. *Samshodhana*
3. *Samsamana*

- **Nidan Parivarjan**: It is the first line of treatment of any disease and it is most important line of treatment for *Sthaulya*¹⁴ *Nidana* must be avoided for best management of the disease.
- **Samshodhan Therapy**: Meaning of *Shodhana* is *Apakarshana* of *Dosha*. Therapies in which the aggravated *Doshas* or the excretory products of digestion are eliminated, after mobilising them from their respective sites by *Urdhva* or *Adhah Marga* from the body is known as *Shodhana* Therapy. It is also termed as *Apakarshan*. There are two main parts of *Shodhana* therapy.

Bahya Samshodhana

Acharyas have mentioned various external purification therapy for management of *Sthaulya*. In all classical texts, *Udavartan* was mentioned as part of *Dincharya* and for *Sthaulya Raksha*. The benefits of *Udavartan* was also mentioned i.e. *Kaphahara*, *Medasah Pravailayanm*, *Sthirikaranam Anganam*, *Tvaka Prashadakar*¹⁵ In *Sthaulya* use of *Ruksha Udavartan* has been mentioned as *Bahya samsodhan* which removes the foetid odour, restricts the process of excessive sweating, alleviate the aggravated *Doshas* by function.

Abhyantar Samshodhana

Samshodhana therapy including *Vamana*, *Vireachana*, *Ruksha Niruha*, *Raktamokshana* and *Shirovirechana* *Charak* has recommended *Vamana* and *Virechana Karma* for all *Santarapanajanit Vyadhies*. As *Sthaulya* also comes under the same category *Vamana*, *Virechana* therapies can be tried in *Sthaulya*. *Purvakarma* like *Snehana*, *Svedna* and *Pradhana Karma* including *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Anuvasan Basti* has been contraindicated to *Atisthula*. *Vamana* is indicated for treatment of *Medo Rog*¹⁶. *Vamana* is considered as the best for alleviation of *Kapha Dosha*¹⁷ Hence, *Vamana* can be used for the treatment of *Sthaulya*, but only in uncomplicated patients. *Virechana* has been forbidden for patients of *Sthaulya*¹⁸ mild *Virechana* is indicated for *Pittadhikya* condition. *Virechana Karma* is indicated for treatment of *Atinidra* symptom and thereby for *Atisthauya*. *Virechaka Dravyas* mentioned in *Ayurvedic* *Materia medica*, *Haritaki*, *Katuki*, *Aragvadha*, *Trivruta*, *Danti-Dravanti*, *Snuhi* etc. are attributed to have additional *Medanasaka* property. Hence *Virechana Karma* could be applied to the patients of *Sthaulya* with suitable drugs among these. Practically, also *Vamana* and *Virechana Karma* seem to be fruitful for management of *Sthaulya*.

➤ **Shamana**

For *Shamana* therapy *Guru* and *Aptarpaka Ahara* is administered along with *Vataghana*, *Sleshmahara* and *Medohara* properties.¹⁹ Also *Guruguna* is sufficient to alleviate vitiated *Agni* and *Atikhsudha*.²⁰ *Ayurveda* believe that the body is controlled by three energies i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*. These energies maintain the balance of body in a healthy individual these energies are in natural harmony with each other any disease or uneasiness can therefore be explained as an increase or decrease of any of these energies. *Ayurvedic* herbs help to bring these energies to equilibrium. *Ayurveda* has ample number of herbs that help to increase and maintain the body metabolism therapy thereby reducing fat from the body also the *ayurvedic* herbs reduce bad cholesterol and increase the good cholesterol level in the body and maintain the required weight. *Ayurvedic* herbs for obesity are *Guggulu*, *Mustakam Triphla*, *Arjuma*, *Zingiber officinalis*.

DISCUSSION

Tikshna, Laghu and Sukshma Guna of drugs help in the clearing the obstruction in the channels. *Tikta Rasa* drugs have been mentioned to possess various properties which may be helpful in the management of obesity. According to *Charaka*, these *Tikta* drugs possess the *Lekhana, Karshama, Rasa, Meda, Kleda, Upashoshana* properties. These properties helped in curing the various symptoms of *Medoroga*. *Kapha* is the main *Dosha* of *Sthaulya Roga* so all the drugs having *Kaphaghana* properties provide better result. *Meda, Rasa* and *Kapha* are chief factors in the *Samprapti* of *Sthaulya* and *Kapha* and *Meda* both have also *Ashrayashryibhava* and both are also *Prithvi* and *Apa Mahabhut* dominant substances. In pathogenesis, *Avaran* of *Vata* is also there. So the treatment of *Sthaulya*, drugs having opposite of these two *Mahabhuta* in dominance are recommended. *Tikta Rasa* has *Khara* property which is opposite to *Meda* and also it has *Vayu* and *Akasha Mahabhuta* in dominance. *Harashetu Visheshacha*²¹ according to this principle of Ayurveda, *Tikta Rasa* increase body constituents having *Khara* property and *Vayu Akash Maha Bhuta* in dominance. Further *Sthaulya* is a metabolic type of disease *Dhatvagni Mandhyjanitavyadhi*. This metabolic nature of disease demands "Agnivridhi" therapy particularly at the level of *Rasa* and *Meda Dhatvagni*. When any *Agni* is not proper, *Prashatrasadi Dhatus* are not produced. Improper function of *Agni* is the root cause for all disease, most of the *Deepan* and *Pachan* drugs are *Katu* and *Ushna Virya* properties and they act on the *Jatharagni* level more and thereby at the *Dhatvagni* level but in *Sthaulya* *Jatharagni* is already very good but *Medo Dhatvagni* is not functioning properly so we should try some drug which acts directly at the *Dhatvagni* level.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The disease *Sthaulya* is well described in Ayurvedic texts. Disease has been classified under the heading of eight most denounced personalities. *Shusruta* has clearly mentioned the *Sthaulya* and *Karshya* occurring due to defeat in *Rasa Dhatu (Rasa Nimitmeva Sthaulya Karshyam)*.²² Though while explaining the pathogenesis clear involvement of *Meda Dhatu* has also been mentioned. There are very few diseases where the involvement of *Dushyas* is more predominant than the *Doshas*. In body, it is only the *Meda Dhatu* whose quantitative increase has been widely reported in the society. So maintaining ideal body weight is the need of an hour to prevent from several dangerous disease conditions. The goal of obesity treatment is to increase physical activity and balance between food consumption and calories needed by the body for energy to stay at a healthy weight.

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