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MANAGEMENT OF OBESITY THROUGH AYURVEDA: A CASE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Sthoulya (Obesity) has been a growing global epidemic for decades, driven by lifestyle changes, poor dietary habits, and a decrease in physical activity. The global obesity rate continues to rise, and it is estimated that at least 2.8 million people die each year due to obesity. Additionally, 2.3% of the total global Disability-Adjusted Life Years are attributed to overweight and obesity-related conditions. A 34-year-old man had been struggling with obesity and associated symptoms, including constipation, loss of appetite, and a sensation of heaviness in his body. He also experienced symptoms of Amlapitta*, such as severe burning sensation, belching, and nausea. The treatment plan for this patient involved a comprehensive approach, including Udwartana and Parisheka for five days, followed by Snehapana and Virechana to detoxify the body. Along with these treatments, the patient adhered to a specific Apatharpana diet, which was low in calories and fats, designed to regulate nourishment and reduce excess weight. The patient was also engaged in Yogasana practices and Vyayama to promote calorie expenditure and enhance fat metabolism. The overall treatment strategy was a holistic approach based on Nidana parivarjana, Shamanoushadhi, Shodhana, Pathyahara sevana, Vyayama, and behavioral therapies. As a result of this comprehensive approach, the patient's BMI significantly decreased, and he experienced marked improvements in both obesity and* Amlapitta *symptoms.*

KEY WORDS: *Sthoulya, Obesity, Udwartana, Virechana, Yoga*

INTRODUCTION

Sthoulya (Obesity) is a complex metabolic condition with multiple contributing factors. One of the primary indicators used to assess obesity in adults is the Body Mass Index (BMI), which is calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms by the square of their height in meters. A BMI of 30 or higher is typically considered indicative of obesity, while a BMI of 25 or more is classified as overweight. Obesity is associated with a wide range of health conditions[2], as excess body fat can contribute to various metabolic and cardiovascular diseases. These include type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, sleep apnoea, and certain types of cancer. Additionally, obesity can lead to joint problems due to increased mechanical stress on the bones, especially in weight-bearing joints like the knees and hips. The increasing prevalence of obesity globally has led to heightened concerns about its long-term effects on public health, underscoring the importance of prevention and early intervention.

In Ayurveda, obesity is classified under the condition Medo roga, which refers to diseases associated with excessive fat accumulation, and is considered one of the Ashta Ninditiya Roga. Specifically, it is referred to as Sthoulya Roga in the Charaka Samhita. Sthoulya is caused by continuous indulgence in snigdha, guru, madhura, sheeta ahara, avyayama, divaswapna etc. It is characterized by the excessive growth of Meda (fat) and Mamsa (muscle), leading to an imbalance in the body's natural tissues. Key symptoms of obesity include Meda mamsa ativruddhi, Ayatha Upachaya, Krathana, Nirutsaha, Gadgada, Gaatrasada, Swapna, Sweda [3].

The treatment approach for Sthoulya in Ayurveda includes Nidana Parivarjana (elimination of causative factors), Shodhana (detoxification), and Shamana (pacification). It is suggested that for obesity, the primary treatment approach is "Guru cha Atarpanam", meaning that the most effective treatment involves the use of light, non-nourishing diets (Atharpana), which are considered superior for reducing excess weight. This approach emphasizes reducing excessive intake and balancing the body's natural metabolic processes, while promoting the elimination of excess fat and toxins. Acharya mentioned several methods for treating sthoulya in Astouninditiya adhyaya and Santarpaniya adhyaya, including Vatahara, Shleshmamedohara modalities, Vamana, Virechana, Raktamokshana, Vyayama, Upavasa, Swedana, Rukshana, Udwartna, and Basti chikitsa[4][5].

So, this case report is a sincere effort to observe the effect of Virechana and other Ayurvedic treatments along with proper pathya and vihara for Sthoulya and its associative conditions of the patient to improve his physical and mental health.

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MATERIAL AND METHODS

A clinical case study in which Apatarpana Chikitsa with Pachana, Udwartana, Swedana, Rukshana, Virechana was given to the patient suffering from Sthoulya and associated conditions.

History

A 34-year-old man had been struggling with weight gain and related symptoms for over a year and a half, which he attributed to his poor diet and sedentary lifestyle. His symptoms included constipation, loss of appetite, a feeling of heaviness, excessive sweating, and foul body odour. For the past year, he also experienced frequent belching, nausea, and severe burning sensation in the chest. Seeking better relief from these issues, the patient visited the Swasthavritta OPD at SDM College of Ayurveda and Hospital in Hassan, aiming to address both the weight gain and its associated conditions.

General Examination

- Nadi - 74/min
- Mala – Baddha, asamyak pravritti
- Mutra - Anavilam, 4-5 times/day
- Jihwa -Liptha
- Agni -Manda
- Shabda - Prakritha
- Sparsha - Sheeta
- Druk - Prakritha
- Akrithi - Sthula
- Bala - Madhyama
- Rakthachapa - 140/90mmhg

BMI and Anthropometric Measurement

Measurement of BMI and Anthropometry as on 13/07/2024 are given in Table 1.

Treatment

Internal Medication: In consideration with the findings of clinical examination & investigations following drug were given internally (Table 2) for 5 days from 13/07/2024.

External Therapies: Sarvanga Udwartana followed by sarvanga parisheka with Dashamoola Kashaya + Triphala Kashaya + Dhanyamla along with nadi sweda for 5 days from 13/07/2024. The patient was advised to follow specific pathya during the course of therapy (Table 3).

Vihara Krama: Patient was advised to do Yoga between 7:00am to 8:00am, loosening and mild exercises along with Pranayama between 4:00pm to 5:00pm which included Nadi shuddhi, Bhramari, Sheetali, Shitkari and Yoga nidra from 13/07/2024 to 17/07/2024.

Virechana

Poorvakarma:

1. **Shodhananga snehapana:** The patient underwent Shodhananga Snehapana with Murchita Tila Taila for a duration of three days, with the dosage gradually increasing each day. On Day 1, he was given 40 ml, which was increased to 100 ml on Day 2, and 200 ml on Day 3. During this period, the patient was advised to frequently sip hot water throughout the day and consume Shunti-Jeeraka Jala as needed. He was also instructed to observe for Udgara Shuddhi and to eat Ganji (rice gruel) whenever he felt hungry. Additionally, the patient was asked to avoid daytime sleep, exposure to cold breeze, and rain.
2. **Sarvanga abhyanga and swedana :** After the patient attained Samyak Snigdha Lakshana from the Snehapana therapy, he was advised to undergo Sarvanga Abhyanga (full-body oil massage) with Brihat Saindhavadi Taila and Bhashpa Swedana (steam therapy) for a period of three days. He was also advised to follow specified Pathya (Table 4).

Pradhana Karma: Virechana therapy was administered using Trivrut Lehya (90 gm) and Triphala Kashaya (100 ml). The patient experienced a total of 8 evacuations during the procedure. Following the Virechana, the patient was advised to follow the Peyadi Samsarjana Krama (a gradual dietary regimen) for five days to help restore digestive function and maintain the balance of the doshas.

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

After 10 days of treatment, the patient experienced notable improvements like decrease in body weight (Table 5), feeling of increased lightness in the body. improved appetite, easier and more regular bowel movements along with reduced belching, nausea and burning sensation.

DISCUSSION

Effect of Udwartana: The Sushruta Samhita states that when Vata is deranged, it can be restored to its normal state Prakruta Avastha through the practice of Udwartana. This therapeutic procedure helps in the Dravikarana of Kapha and Medas. Additionally, Udwartana aids in reducing the accumulation of Ama (toxins) in the body, which is often caused by Agnimandya (weak digestive fire). By stimulating and improving the digestive fire, it indirectly enhances the body's ability to process and eliminate waste.[6].

Effect of Snehapana: The primary goal of this therapy is to mobilize vitiated Doshas (bodily humors) from deeper tissues and remote areas of the body into the systemic circulation, facilitating their easy elimination through therapeutic methods like Vamana or Virechana. This process helps to remove old, damaged cellular components from the body by stimulating autophagy, the body's natural process of breaking down and recycling dysfunctional cells. Due to its Drava, Sukshma, and Sara qualities, the therapy draws lipophilic (fat-soluble) waste products into the systemic circulation for detoxification and elimination.[7]

Effect of Swedana: Sarvanga Bashpa Swedana is a therapeutic steam bath procedure in Ayurveda that aids in the mobilization and elimination of Ama (toxins or waste products) from various body channels. The process of Sweda Karma helps to balance the function of Meda dhatwagni and Bhutagni, thereby

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accelerates the Pakakarma and supports Srotomukha shodhana, leading to improved circulation and detoxification.[8]

Effect of Virechana: Virechana is an important Shodhana therapy in Ayurveda that facilitates the detoxification of toxins from the lower gastrointestinal tract by promoting bowel evacuation. Waste products, whether present in the extracellular, intracellular, or plasma compartments, can be drawn into the intestines, where they are eliminated from the body through the action of the intestines. Clinical studies have demonstrated the efficacy of Virechana in treating various metabolic disorders, including obesity and diabetes mellitus.[9]

Effect of Shamanaushadhi

1. **Amla juice:** It balances all three Doshas -Vata, Pitta, and Kapha with particular effectiveness in Pitta imbalances. Amalaki is regarded as one of the most powerful rejuvenative herbs in Ayurveda and is classified as a Rasayana. The juice of Amalaki fruit is particularly recognized for its hypolipidemic properties, effectively lowering lipid levels in the body. It helps reduce aortic plaques and is beneficial in preventing the oxidation of low-density lipoprotein, a key factor in cholesterol build-up.[10]
2. **Hingvashtaka vati:** Hingvastaka Churna or vati is a powerful Ayurvedic formulation made from a blend of herbs known for their digestive-enhancing properties. The ingredients include Shunti (*Zingiber officinale*), Maricha (*Piper nigrum*), Pippali (*Piper longum*), Ajamoda (*Apium leptophyllum*), Saindhava Lavana (rock salt), Swetha Jeeraka (*Cuminum cyminum*), Krishna Jeeraka (*Carum carvi*), and Shuddha Hingu (*Ferula foetida*).This unique combination works synergistically to stimulate the Agni, relieve abdominal bloating, and alleviate constipation.[11]
3. **Arogyavardhini rasa:** Arogyavardhini Vati, often referred to as Sarvarogaprashamani, is an Ayurvedic formulation that combines several potent ingredients, including processed Parada (mercury), Gandhaka (sulfur), Tamra (copper), Loha (iron), Abhraka (mica), the pericarps of Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*), Vibhitaki (*Terminalia bellirica*), and Amalaki (*Emblica officinalis*), root of Katuki (*Picrorhiza kurroa*), resin of Guggulu (*Commiphora mukul*), leaves of Nimba (*Azadirachta indica*), Shilajatu, and roots of Eranda (*Ricinus communis*). This powerful blend is widely used in Ayurveda to treat a range of health issues, including liver disorders, jaundice, chronic fever, edema, adipose tissue disorders, obesity, and various skin conditions. Arogyavardhini Vati is characterized by a Tikta and Kashaya rasa, and it is Laghu, Ruksha, and Ushna in nature. It helps to balance the three dosha.[12]
4. **Triphala churna:** Triphala Churna, a blend of Amalaki, Vibhitaki, and Haritaki, has a balancing effect on the three doshas. It has Virukshana and chedana guna. Research has shown that Triphala helps reduce body fat percentage, body weight, and overall energy intake. Additionally, it has been found to lower total cholesterol, triglycerides, and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels.[13]

The treatment protocol was tailored to meet the patient's needs and time constraints. During the Udwartana, the patient reported a sensation of lightness in the body, which persisted throughout the course of the treatment. Upon completion of the 10-day treatment regimen, significant improvements were observed in the patient's symptoms of obesity and associated conditions. Notable changes were also seen in BMI and other anthropometric measurements, indicating the effectiveness of the treatment in addressing the patient's condition.

CONCLUSION

The overall treatment strategy was a holistic approach based on Nidana Parivarjana (elimination of causative factors), Shamana (pacification therapies), Shodhana (detoxification), Pathyahara Sevana (appropriate dietary and lifestyle changes), Vyayama, and behavioral therapies. As a result of this comprehensive approach, the patient's BMI significantly decreased, and he experienced marked improvements in both obesity and Amlapitta symptoms, demonstrating the effectiveness of a comprehensive and personalized treatment plan.

TABLES

Table 1: Measurement of BMI and Anthropometry before treatment

Height	167cms
Weight	89.2kgs
Body Mass Index	32kg/m^2
Chest circumference	100cms
Waist circumference	94cms
Abdomen circumference	107cms
Hip circumference	108.5cms

Table 2: Internal Medication

Sl.No	Drugs with Duration	Dosage	Timings	Anupana	Action
1	Amla juice x 5 days	15ml	Twice a day before food	Water	Reduces gastric secretions
2	Hinguvashtaka vati x 5 days	1 NO	Twice a day before food	Water	Improves digestion

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3	Arogyavardhini rasa x 5 days	2 NO	Twice a day before food	Water	Improves metabolism, immunomodulator, anti-oxidant.
4	Triphala churna x 5 days	5 gm	Twice a day after food	Warm water	Antiobesogenic, rejuvinative, laxative

Table 3: Diet Schedule During Udwartana

Time	Ahara	Dose
06:00AM	Shunti dhanyaka jala	100ml
08:00AM	Peya	200ml
11:00AM	Boiled vegetables	250gms
01:30PM	Laja manda	200ml
05:00PM	Veg soup	200ml
08:00PM	Peya	200ml

Table 4: Diet Schedule During Abhyanga and Swedana

TIME	AHARA	DOSE
08:00AM	Peya	400ml
11:00AM	Laja manda	200ml
01:00PM	Peya	400ml
05:00PM	Laja manda	200ml
08:00PM	Peya	400ml

Table 5: BMI and Anthropometric Measurements after Treatment

Height	167cms	No change
Weight	81.4kgs	7.8 kgs reduced
Body mass index	29.2 kg/m^2	2.8 kg/m^2 reduced
Chest circumference	95cms	5cms reduced
Waist circumference	92cms	2cms reduced
Abdomen circumference	100cms	7cms reduced
Hip circumference	101cms	7.5cms reduced

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