

REVIEW ARTICLE: THE CONCEPT OF MEDOROGA & ITS MANAGEMENT THROUGH AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Obesity or *medoroga* is the only disease which is gaining more and more attention at global level. This disease is prevalent in developing as well as in developed countries, in both sexes, across all ages and socioeconomic groups. Obesity is one of the prices we have to pay for rapid urbanisation and sedentary life style. Obesity has been described in Ayurveda texts as *medoroga* or *Sthaulya*. Acharya Charaka has described eight varieties of impediments known as *ashta nindita Purusha*. *Ati Sthaulya* comprises one of them. Obesity is the risk factor for many diseases like diabetes, CVA, hypertension, etc. It is difficult to prevent and treat lifestyle disease like obesity with modern system of medicine alone. Ayurvedic science has great potential in preventing and treating life style disorders like obesity. The presenter view deals with aetiopathogenesis, symptomatology prevention and management of *Sthaulya* as given in the Ayurveda classics.

Key words:- Ayurveda, *Medoroga*, Obesity, *Sthaulya*

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, sedentary lifestyle, faulty dietary habits including ready-to-eat fast food have made man the victim of many diseases. *Sthaulya* (Obesity) is one of these diseases which have taken a toll on whole generation's health. Obesity is emerging as an important health problem in India also. "*Sthaulya*" (obesity) is a disease, which provides the platform for so many diseases like hypertension, ischemic heart disease, Diabetes, Osteoarthritis, infertility, impotency as well as psychological disorders like stress, anxiety, depression etc. Thus it can be said that obesity is a significant contributor towards deterioration of health. In Ayurveda, *Sthaulya* has been described in almost all the available texts. Charaka has described *Atisthool purusha* among the "*Ashta Nindit Purusha*" (eight despicable personalities (1) and *Samtarpanjanita roga* (2). *Sthaulya* is

counted as a disorder of *Sleshma Dosha* seated in *Medodhatu* (3).

Ati Sthula can be defined as a person, "who on account of the inordinate increase of fat and flesh, disfigured with pendulous buttocks, belly and breasts and whose increased bulk is not matched by a corresponding increase in energy.(4) Obesity is defined as a state of excess adipose tissue mass (5)

Aetiopathogenesis-

In Ayurvedic literature, so many aetiological factors of *Sthaulya Roga* have been mentioned. Acharaya Charak has described the heredity component (*Bijadosha*) along with *Aharatmaka*, *Viharatmaka* and *Manasika* factors in causation of this disease. (6) *Ati sampurna* (excessive eating), *sheeta*, *guru snigdha ahaar sevana* (Excessive consumption of cold, heavy, sweet, unctuous food), *avayam* (Lack of physical exercise), *avayava* (Lack of sexual

life), *divaswapana* (sleeping in day time), *achintanat* (Relaxation from tension) are some of the etiological factors of the disease. Thus, it is clear that both the endogenous and exogenous factors are responsible for the disease. Though, *Sthaulya* is a *Dushya* dominant disorder particularly *Meda*, besides that all the other three *Doshas* are vitiated, especially *Kledaka kapha*, *Pachaka pitta*, *Samana* and *Vyana vayu*. Acharaya *Charaka* and *Sushruta* have different opinion regarding the pathogenesis of the disease. *Charaka* has emphasized 'Ahara' as most common pathogenic factor for *Medovridhi* in *Sthaulya*. On the other hand, *Sushruta* has accepted the concept of 'Ama Dosh.' The various *kaphavardhak* etiological factors lead to formation of undigested *Madhura ama rasa*. This *madhura rasa* while circulating in body contribute to the excessive *meda* formation due to *atisnigha guna*. This accumulation of *meda* results in *atisthoolta*, as outlined by *Sushruta*. (7). The above prescribed aetiological factors causes *Medovridhi* which leads to obstruction of *Srotas*, the *Vata* moving mainly into stomach, fires up the *jatharagni* and absorbs the food. The obese person digests foods speedily and craves for food inordinately. Over eating produces more *Upadana Rasa* which causes over growth of *Medo Dhatu*, thus leads to *Sthulata*(8).

Symptoms of the disease:-

The obese person has decreased endurance and less enthusiasm in physical activity due to inordinate increase of fat and flesh, pendulous buttocks, abdomen and breast. (9) Besides these cardinal symptoms, &in abilities of *Sthaulya* are –

1. *Ayushohrasa* (Diminution of life span)
2. *Javoparodha* (Lack of enthusiasm)
3. *Kriccha Vyavaya* (Difficulty in sexual act)
4. *Daurbalya* (General debility)
5. *Daurgandhya* (Foul smelling of body)
6. *Swedabadha* (Distressful sweating)

7. *Kshudhatimatra* (Excessive hunger)

8. *Pipasatiyoya* (Excessive thirst)

CLASSIFICATION-

Obese person can be classified under 3 categories– *Ati*, *Madhyama* and *Hina* for easy diagnosis and management. (10). However, this classification can also be understood on the basis of Body mass index, where *hina*, *madhyam* & *ati sthaulya* correspond to overweight, obese and very obese respectively.

(1) *Hina Sthaulya*: (B.M.I. 25-30 kg/m² – Over Weight)

Mild degree of overweight, without any complication or secondary disease, with less than four undesirable symptoms and with duration of less than 1 year – can be considered as *Hina Sthaulya*.

(2) *Madhyam Sthaulya*:- (B.M.I. 30-40 kg./m² - Obese)

Moderate degree, with least complications without secondary disease, with less than 8 undesirable symptoms and duration of 1 to 5 years can be considered as *Madhyam Sthaulya*.

(3) *Ati Sthaulya*: (B.M.I. > 40 kg./m² – Very Obese)

Excessive degree, with complication and secondary disease with all 8 undesirable symptoms and duration of more than 5 years can be considered as *Adhika Sthaulya*.

PROGNOSIS

Krichha sadhya nature of *Sthaulya* has been described in most of the Ayurvedic classics. *Charaka* has described the bad prognosis of *Sthaulya* as if an obese person is not duly managed; he is prone to death due to excessive hunger, thirst and complications. As per the description of *Vagbhata* (11) *Medogata* diseases are curable only in uncomplicated patients with more *bala* and less chronicity.

Management:-

Preventive aspect:-

Obesity is going to take the form of epidemic across the world, if proper preventive measures are not taken. Ayurveda principles give more importance to prevention rather than curing the disease. General measures of prevention are the adoption of *swasthivritta* in one's life. For the prevention of disease one should follow –*Dincharya, Ritucharya* and *Sadvritta*. Prevention in terms of *ahaar* can be achieved by adopting *pathya ahaar* in diet. *Pathya* consist of *ahaar dravya* like *Yava (Hodium vulgare)*, *Kodravya (Paspalum scrobolatum)*, *Patola (Trichosanthus cucumerine)*, *Mudga (Phaseolus radiates)*, *shyamaka (Echinochloa frumentacea)*, etc. (12)

In Ayurveda, general principles of management are divided into 3 parts

- 1) *Nidana Parivarjana*
- 2) *Samshodhana*
- 3) *Samshamana*

Nidana Parivarjana

The first line of treatment for *Sthaulya* is to avoid those factors which are responsible for the causation of *Sthaulya*. To stop the progress of the disease, all the *Aharatmak, Viharatmak, Mansika* & other described *nidana* must be avoided.

Samshodhan therapy-

Being a syndromic condition (*Bahu-Doshasya Laksanama*) *Samsodhana* therapy is highly recommended for patients possessing stamina & strength (13). *Ruksha Udavartan (bahya shodhana)* is advised for *sthoor purusha*.(14). It is *Kaphahara* and *Medasa Pravalayana* in action. *Abhyantara shodhana* employed for the patient are *Vamana, virechana, raktamokshana*, (15). *Ruksha, Tikshna* and *Ushna basti* (16). It helps in scraping out the excessive accumulated *meda* and *kapha* from the body and also pacifies the other two *doshas*.

Samshamna therapy:-

Management of *Sthaulya* is quite difficult because both *Agni* and *Vayu* are in aggravated state. If *Apatarpana* is done *Vayu* gets *Vridhdha* and *Agni* starts burning other *Dhatus* and if *Santarpana* is done the disease will be aggravated. The treatment principle of the disease is well explained in Charaka Samhita. Administration of *Guru* and *Apatarpaka* articles which possess additional *Vata, Shleshman* and *Medonashaka* properties is considered as an ideal *shamana* therapy for *Sthaulya*.(17) *Chakrapani* has explained that *guru guna* is sufficient to alleviate vitiated *Agni* and *Atikshudha*. *Apatarpana* property provides less nourishment and thus leads to depletion of *meda*. Among *Shad Upakrama, Langhana* and *Rukshana* can be performed for *Samshaman* purpose in *Sthaulya*. *Shamana Chikitsa* can be implemented through seven different ways in patients of *sthaulya-*

1. ***Deepana-*** *Deepana dravyas* are dominated by *Agni* and *Vayu Mahabhutas* which are antagonist to the constitution of *Meda* and *Kapha*. e. *Jala* and *Prithvi Mahabhuta*
2. ***Kshudha and Trishanigraha-*** Fasting is also beneficial because the food is the main source of Nutrition for *Meda dhatu*. Fasting controls the over production of *meda dhatu*. So *kshudha nigrahan* has been advised to obese patients. Person who experience difficulty in complete fasting can practise *alpa ahaar sevan*. Lukewarm water in small quantities is beneficial for obese person. From the word control of thirst it can be said that obese person should avoid sweet and soft drinks, nutritious fruit juice and cold water.
3. ***Vyayama-*** *Vyayama* is one of the causes of obesity and thus, in the management of *Sthaulya* importance has been given to *Vyayama*. It works as *Nidana Parivarjan* as

well as it melts the excessive fat, deposited in the fat depots of obese persons.

4. **Atapa and Marutasevan-** It enhances *Ushma* in the body. This raised body heat reduces *Meda* by *Vibhajana* and *Vilayan*. It potentiates *Kleda Vilayana* and helps in weight reduction. *Vata sevana* is also beneficial as the *Ruksha Guna* of *Vata* reduces *Kleda* and *Kapha* by *Shoshana* and Stimulation *Jatharagni*.

Single and Compound drugs- Various single and compound drugs are mentioned in the text for the treatment of obesity.

Common herbs that can be used are –

Haridra, vidang, Agnimanth, Chitraka, Chakramada, Guggulu, Vacha, Haritaki, Rasanjana. Some *Samsamana yoga* like *Guduchi, Bhadramusta, Triphala, Takrarista, Makshika, Vidangadi Lauha, Bilvadi-panchmula and Shilajatu* with *Agnimantha Svarasa* are advised for prolonged period (18)

Table-1 Some drugs mentioned in sthaulya roga(19,20)

Single drugs	Compound drugs
<i>Madhuka</i>	<i>Triphala</i>
<i>Vidanga</i>	<i>Takrarista</i>
<i>Agnimanth</i>	<i>Vidangadi Lauha</i>
<i>Chitraka,</i>	<i>Bilvadipanchmula</i>
<i>Chakramada</i>	<i>Triphaladya Churna</i>
<i>Guggulu</i>	<i>Dasanga Guggulu</i>
<i>Vacha</i>	<i>Trayusnadi Guggulu</i>
<i>Haritaki</i>	<i>Lauharishta</i>
<i>Rasanjana</i>	<i>Arkadi gana</i>
<i>Guduchi</i>	<i>Trayushnadi gana</i>
<i>Bhadramusta</i>	<i>Gomutrapaki Haritaki</i>
<i>Makshika</i>	<i>Rodhrasava</i>
<i>Shilajatu</i>	<i>Navaka Guggulu, Amruta Guggulu</i>

Various group of drugs like, *Varunadi gana, Salasaradi gana, Rodhradi gana, Mustadi gana,* etc. are described as *Medanashaka* (21) Bhavaprakash has mentioned the remedies for *Medohara* purpose *Chavyadi Saktu, Erand-patra Kshara, Badaripatra Peya, Amritadi Guggulu, Lauha Rasayana* (22) etc. So, for the treatment of *Sthaulya* medicine should be administered before meal and ideally in the morning and empty stomach. (23).

CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be concluded that Obesity is the world's oldest metabolic disorder. Sedentary life, lack of exercise, faulty food habits, and urbanization precipitate the disease. Psy-

chological factors along with genetic predisposition also play a major role in its aetiopathogenesis. There is an involvement of all the three *Doshas* in *Sthaulya* but the vitiation of *Kapha-Vata* and *Meda* is of prime importance. By adopting Ayurvedic principles of healthy lifestyle and effective treatment modalities given by physicians of ancient time one can stay healthy to prevent oneself from obesity and also from the problems associated with it.

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