

ROLE OF DIFFERENT FOOD ARTICLES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF MEDOROGA (STHOULYA) OR OBESITY

Ahuja Suman

Assistant Professor, Kayachikitsa Department, Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University, Vedant Gyan Valley, Jharna, Mahala-Jobner link road, Jaipur- Ajmer Express way, NH8 Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Email: drsumanahuja@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Overweight and obesity are defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health, resulting in number of chronic diseases, including diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, arthritis, PCOS and cancer etc. Once considered a problem only in developed countries, overweight and obesity are now dramatically on the rise in developed countries, particularly in urban settings. In *Ayurveda Acharya Charaka* has described *Ashtanindita Purusha* and emphasized in detail about two pathological conditions viz. *Atisthoola* and *Atikarshya*. *Atisthoola purusha* is considered worst among them, due to its complicated pathogenesis, variable complications and treatment. Obesity has been described as *Sthoulya* or *Medoroga* also in *Ayurvedic* texts. It is described under the caption of *Santarpanotha Vikara*. *Ayurvedic* classics give sufficient focus on obesity (*Sthoulya* or *Medoroga*) and advise diet and life style modifications and drugs to control the disease.

Keywords: *Sthoulya, Medoroga, Ashtanindita*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurvedic classics described obesity under headings of *Atisthoulyam* and *Medorogam*. The word *Atisthoulya* is made up of prefix 'Ati' and 'Sthoola' *dhatu*. Ati means excessive and Sthula means extraordinary, bulky. The meaning of *Atisthoulya* is to become excessively fat. There is increase in body fat and muscles so that hips, abdomen and breast become pendulous^[1]. The body metabolism and enthusiasm is decreased, the persons having these characteristics are termed as "Atisthoola" or obese.

The basic principles of treatment of *Sthoulya* (Obesity) as described in *Ayurvedic* classics are *Nidanaparivarjana*, *Apatarpanachikitsa* and

Samana & Shodhan chikitsa are used in the management of obesity. Knowledge of *Pathya Apathya* is essential for proper management of disease and maintenance of health. Food which are mentioned in *Ayurvedic* textbooks for the management of Obesity are aimed to pacify *kapha dosha* and *medodhatu* and *vataanuloman* are rich in dietary fiber and low glycaemic index.

Pathya is referred to the *ahara* and *vihara*, which causes pacification of the disease^[2]. *Apathya* is referred to the *ahara* and *vihara*, which causes complications and aggravate the disease^[3]. Consumption

of good quality food results in the strength, complexion and vitality of the living beings.

Ahara has the ability to promote health as well as to control the disease. The benefits of food like health, strength, longevity and energy are achieved only when the food is consumed by the person according to *Ahara Ashtavidha Aayatana* mentioned in *Ayurveda* otherwise it will end up in manifestation of disease like *sthoulya*.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Ayurveda emphasizes that the successful treatment of any disease is not only depends upon the proper medication but proper diet and proper lifestyle is equally important. By following *Ahara Vihara* as described in *Ayurveda* one can prevent himself from Obesity and reduces its risks of various complications will be discussed here. Administration of *Guru* and *Apatarpana*^[4] articles which possess additional *Vata Shleshmahar* (Alleviating *Vata-Kapha-Meda*) properties is considered as an ideal for *Sanshamana* therapy. In *Ashtanga Samgraha*^[5] usage of *Laghu* (Light), *Ushna* (Hot), *Ruksha* (Dry), *Tikshna* (Sharp) articles etc are suggested for obesity management as they possess *Medonashak Kaphanashaka* and *Sthoulyahara* actions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In different *ayurvedic* texts various food articles are mentioned as *medohar*, *aptarpaniye*, *karshniye* and *lekshniye* but literature on *Medoroga* elaborated in *Bhaishjyaratnavali* has been taken for present review. In *Bhaishjyaratnavali*^[6] following food articles has been described for *Medoroga*:

Venu Yava (Bamboo seeds)

Venu Yava is *ruksha* in *guna* with *madhur* and slightly astringent in *rasa*. It is *kapha* and *Medodhatu nashak*.^[7] It is believed that bamboo rice has low glycemic index compared to other varieties of rice, which is considered to be a healthier option for diabetics and obese patients. The rice has low or no fat and is rich in vitamin B. It has immense calcium and phosphorus content.

Kodo, Samak, Niwar and Priyangu Dhanya

Kodo millets are rich in B vitamins, especially niacin, B6 and folic acid, as well as the minerals such as calcium, iron, potassium, magnesium and zinc. It has high protein content (11%), low fat (4.2%) and very high fiber content (14.3%).

Instead of eating polished white rice, which has been stripped of its nutrients, one could opt for wild rice, as it contains complex carbs and belongs to the low glycemic index foods list, enabling one to lose weight.

Kodo, Samak, Niwar and *Priyangu* all work in the body with *madhur- kashaya ras*, *sheetavirya* and *laghu guna* these are *kaphhar* and *dhatushoshak* which leads to *shoshan* of *medodhatu*.^[8]

Jau(Barley)

Jau is *kaphavikarhar* due to its *ruksha, laghu guna, Kashaya ras* and *vata dosha* aggravating properties, as a result helpful in *Medoroga*^[9]. As barley contains a lot of fiber; it helps one feel full for a longer period of time. So, one does not get cravings for snacks very often.

Kulthi (Horsegram)

Kulthi has *ushnaveerya, kashaya ras* and *amla vipaka*. With its *kashaya ras* and *ushnaveerya kulthi* has *kaph- medohar* properties.^[10] Horse gram and other legumes are high in protein and fiber. Protein and fiber rich foods are typically high-satiety i.e. they keep a person full and less hungry when dieting.

Chana daal

Chana daal causes *rukshta* (dryness) in the body because of its *laghu, sheetvirya* and *madhur-kashsya ras* properties.^[11] It is high in fibre and helps to lower cholesterol. It also has a very low glycemic index, high fiber which is important for Obesity patients.

Masoor Daal

Masoor dal also causes *rukshta* (dryness) in the body because of its *laghu, sheetvirya* and *madhur-kashsya ras* properties.^[11] It has low contents of fats and is enriched with fiber. *Masoor Daal* controls appetite and can make one feel fuller for longer period of time.

Toor daal (Arhar Daal)

It balances *kapha* by increasing level of *vata*.^[12] It is high in protein and soluble fiber, two nutrients required for weight loss

Mung Daal

Mung possesses *Kashaya-madhur ras, sheetveerya, katuvipaka, ruksha- laghu- vishad guna and kaphnashak karma*, which are beneficial in the *chikitsa* of *Medoroga*.^[13] *Mung* beans provide fiber and protein, two satiating nutrients that can help control hunger so you can reduce your calorie intake to lose overall body fat.

Madhu (Honey)

Madhu is *guru but kaphashamak*.^[14] It is also *yogyahi* in nature means carries the properties of drugs added to it. According to a 2010 study published in the journal of American college of nutrition, Honey had less on an effect on Blood Sugar than regular table sugar. That is important in controlling one's appetite since rapid swings in blood sugar levels can trigger hunger, even if you don't truly need more food

Laaja

Laaja is described as *ruksha, laghu* and *kapha-medoohar*.^[15] While there is no puffed rice diet, this nutty-tasting, low-calorie cereal makes a good choice if a person is trying to lose weight or limit sodium intake. But its high-glycemic index means it may not keep one feeling full for too long. Compared to other ready-to-eat cereals, puffed rice is very low in calories.

Tikta, Katu and Kashaya Article

Katu rasa specially indicated for the cure of *Upachaya rog* i.e. *Medoroga*. It also balances *kapha* by its *laghu, ushna* and *ruksha guna*.^[16] *Tikta rasa* also has *ruksha* and *laghu guna* with *lekhan* and *Medoshoshak karma*.^[17] *Kashaya rasa* dries up *sharirik Kleda* and balances *kapha dosha* because of its *ruksha* and *laghu guna*.^[18]

Takra (Buttermilk)

Takra is digestive, stimulant, *agnivardhak* and recommended in *Medoroga*.^[19] It's possible to lose

weight with the help of buttermilk if used to replace snacks that contain more calories.

Sura(Jirna Madya)

Although *Sura* is *amla rasa* and *amla vipaka* but being a *ushnaveerya, ruksha* and *tikshana* article it is helpful in the *Medoroga*.^[20]

Vartaku (Eggplant)

Vartaku possesses *katu tikta rasa and katuvipaka and ushnaveerya*, all work for *Medoroga*.^[21] Eggplant is a great food to help you lose weight. Eggplant is a low-carb, nutrient-dense, calorie-poor food, meaning that it contains high levels of nutrients but not a lot of calories or carbohydrates.

Triphala

Triphala is *ruksha, agnideepak* and *kaphanashak*,^[22] so it is helpful in *Medoroga*. *Triphala*, also known as the "queen mother" of remedies in *ayurvedic* medicine, according to Almine Barton, licensed acupuncturist and owner of Indigenous Medicine Therapies in Bend, Oregon. *Triphala* is an herbal formula that simultaneously cleanses tones and detoxifies the entire digestive system, which can lead to weight loss.

Guggulu

Guggulu possesses *katu, tikta, kashaya ras, katuvipaka, ushnaveerya* and *laghu, ruksha guna*. Having all above characteristic, *guggulu* is indicated in *Medoroga*.^[23] In *Medoroga* specifically old *guggulu* is used because has *atilekhan* property.

Lauha Bhasma

It has *lekhan* action and burns excess fat. Thus, it is also useful in obesity. *Lauha bhasma* works well in central obesity and reduces belly fat. *Lauha Bhasma* is *Kapha Medohara*, as it is possessing *Tikta-Kashaya Rasa*, which does *Shoshana* of *kleda, meda, sweda, mutra, pureesha, sleshma* in the body thus doing *Karshana*.^[24]

Trikatu

Trikatu is the combination of three herbs *Saunth*, *Maricha* and *Peepali*. It is *agnideepak*, *medohar*, *kaphahar* and *Sthooltanashak*.^[25] *Trikatu churna* also burns accumulated fats by rectifying the fat me-

tabolism in the body and improving metabolic power.

Sarshapa Tail (Mustard oil)

Mustard seeds are low in calories and carbohydrates, so the seeds may be a beneficial addition to your weight loss meal plan.^[26]

Ela (Small cardamom)

Ela is *katurasa* and *laghuguna yukta*, it is *kapha* and *medahar*.^[27] Cardamom also helps fend off fat accumulation in a common problem area – the abdominal region. For many people, the fat tends to sit around the belly, putting them at risk of a host of metabolic problems and even cardiovascular problems. Research now tells us that cardamom powder taken as a supplement may help prevent this abdominal fat deposition.

Til Tail (Sesame oil)

Til tail is beneficial in *Medoroga* by virtue of its *madhur-kashaya* rasa and *ushnaveerya* properties.^[28] Studies suggest that polyunsaturated fatty acids in sesame oil may play a role in the reduction of body fat. These polyunsaturated fatty acids increase the plasma levels of the hormone leptin, which is a hormone that regulates body weight. Leptin goes to the satiety center of the brain providing a full and satisfied feeling.

Shaaka (Vegetables)

Green leafy vegetables contain compounds known as thylakoids that trigger satiety signals in humans to help people regulate food intake, prevent weight gain, and promote weight loss. Generally all kind of Shaakas is *Laghu*, *ruksha* and *kaphvatashamak* so they should be included in Diet^[29]

Shilajeet

Shilajeet has *kaphashamak* property because of its *katu- tikta ras* and *katuvipaka*. *Shilajeet* is beneficial in *medoroga* because of its *chhedan karma*.^[30] It has well established “Fat Scraping Action” to lower Body Fat and increases lean muscle mass. According to *Ayurveda*, *shilajit* possesses “lekhaniya” or fat Scraping Qualities that remove excess fat and accumulations in the body.

Ushna jal (Hot water)

Drinking hot water is beneficial in diseases like *kapha* related disorders, *aamvata*, decreases fat deposition in the body and cleanses the urinary bladder.^[31] Cold water is absorbed a little faster than hot water, so drinking a cup of hot water could help one feel fuller a bit longer than drinking the same amount of cold water.

DISCUSSION

Sthoulya as described in *Ayurveda* can be closely compared with Obesity. The main cause of Obesity is excessive intake of calories and less physical activity to burn those calories. Similarly in *Ayurveda* excessive accumulation of *meda dhatu* leads to *sthoulya* or *medoroga*. In today’s hectic schedule, in the race of meeting deadlines, a person has no time for physical effort or exercise, so putting its health on back foot.

Ayurvedic texts have mentioned *sthoola* persons under *ashtaninditta purush* and they are difficult to treat than others. *Ayurveda* has given equal importance to *pathya- apathya* regarding the treatment of most of the diseases.

Pathya ahara plays a important role as that of medicine especially in the disease like *sthoulya*. Considering the pathological factors, the *Acharayas* have advocated numerous *pathya aharas* for *sthoulya* under the caption of *santarpanottha vikaras*. *Acharya* has stressed upon the use of *guru* and *apatarpana* articles as a special regimen for *sthoulya*. Commentators like *Chakrapaani* and *Gangadhar* had mentioned that *sthokabhojan* or *alpabhojan* are best for *karshana*. They have also emphasized on *laghu* and *ruksha ahara sevan*.

So articles mentioned above are having same properties that’s why recommended in *sthoulya*.

CONCLUSION

Excessive accumulation of *kapha* and *meda* with other factors eventually leads to *Sthoulya roga*, so specific diet management as discussed above should be followed to combat *Sthoulya Roga*. The weight loss expected to be gradual and long-lasting.

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