



HYPOTHYROIDISM - AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH

[Santhykiran K.C.¹](#), [Krishna Kumar K.M.²](#)

¹PG Scholar, ²Professor Department of Kayachikitsa, Sree Narayana Institute of Ayurvedic Studies and Research Hospital Puthur, Kollam, Kerala, India

Corresponding Author: santhyvaisagham@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj1110062022>

(Published Online: June 2022)

Open Access

© International Ayurvedic Medical Journal, India 2022

Article Received: 05/05/2022 - Peer Reviewed: 16/05/2022 - Accepted for Publication: 08/06/2022



ABSTRACT

The thyroid gland is the first of the body's endocrine gland to develop and is the site for the production of thyroid hormones¹. Among all endocrine disorders, thyroid dysfunction is possibly the most common endocrine disorder. It is believed that in India alone there are 42 million patients suffering from thyroid disorders. Hypothyroidism is the state of low circulating level of thyroid hormone that may arise due to disease of the thyroid gland or deficiency of trophic hormones. Hypothyroidism is more common in women than men. In Ayurveda, it is very difficult to correlate the thyroid gland disorders but the actions of thyroid hormone can bring under the concept of *Agni*. The normal and abnormal functions of thyroid hormones and *Agni* are similar. So as per the Ayurvedic view how *Agni* is essential for the whole metabolism in our body similarly thyroid hormone is also very essential for the proper metabolism in our body.

Keywords: Hypothyroidism, Agnimandya, Ama, Agni.

INTRODUCTION

The Thyroid gland is an endocrine gland situated in the lower part of the front and sides of the neck which regulates the basal metabolic rate, stimulates somatic and psychic growth, and plays an important role in the calcium metabolism. The thyroid gland produces two related hormones, thyroxine (T₄) and triiodothyronine (T₃). Acting through thyroid hormone receptors α and β these hormones play a critical role in the cell differentiation during development and helps to maintain the thermo genic and metabolic homeostasis in the adults. The thyroid hormone plays a very crucial role in the development, growth, and function of the majority of the organ systems in the human body³. Hypothyroidism is a condition in which the thyroid gland fails to produce enough thyroid hormones due to structural or functional impairment and the reduction of these hormones results in decreased metabolism of the body⁵. Based on the signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism this condition can bring under the concepts like *Agnimandya*, *Medodhathu Vikriti*, and *Rasa Dhathu Vikriti* in *Ayurveda*. The tissue level hypo metabolism in hypothyroidism is similar to the hypo functioning of *Jataragni* and is the main underlying pathology⁴. This further leads to *Dhatwagnimandya* and thus, the *Uttarothara Dhathus* get affected and finally results in the formation of *ama*. Majority of the signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism were similar to the *Lakshanas* of *Kapha Pitta Dushti* and *Dhatwagnimandya*. Considering all these, the treatment principles like *Agni Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Kaphahara*, *Medohara*, and *Srotoshodhana* were adopted in the treatment of Hypothyroidism.

Rationale And Background

In India alone, there are 42 million people suffering from thyroid disorders. In community surveys the prevalence of overt hypothyroidism varies from 0.1 to 2%. The prevalence of subclinical hypothyroidism is higher ranging from 4 to 10% of adults with possibly a higher frequency in elderly women. Hypothyroidism is much more common in women². The mean annual incidence rate of Autoimmune Hypothyroidism is up to 4 per 1000 in women and 1 per 1000 in men³. Synthetic thyroid hormone may bring the value of TSH, T₃, and

T₄ to the normal range but the increased dosage and continuous medication make the patient drug-dependent till the end of the life. It will be highly beneficial for the society if effective *Ayurvedic* management is introduced after evaluating the disease from an *Ayurvedic* view.

AIM

To study and evaluate the *Nidana Panchaka* of hypothyroidism from an Ayurvedic perspective.

To study the role of *Agni* in the *Samprapthi* of hypothyroidism.

Materials And Methods

The study was carried out by literary research and a critical review of the obtained facts. Various *Ayurvedic* texts were critically analyzed and took an effort to understand the pathogenesis of hypothyroidism from an *Ayurvedic* perspective.

Hypothyroidism In the Ayurvedic View

Nidana

Those factors responsible for the manifestation of disease are known as *Nidana*. In *Ayurveda*, it is mentioned that *Mandagni* is the root cause of all disorders. This statement is apt in the case of hypothyroidism also. The functions of *Jataragni* and *Dhatwagni* can be correlated with the metabolic activities of the thyroid gland. The causes for the impairment of functions of both *Jataragni* and *Dhatwagni* are the state of *agnimandya* and the *prakopa* of *Kapha Dosha*. Hence the factors responsible for the impairment of these two may be considered the *nidana* of hypothyroidism. *Snigdha*, *Sheeta*, *Guru*, *Manda*, *Slakshna*, *Mrutsna* and *Sthira* are the qualities of *Kapha Dosha*. The excess use of factors possessing these *Gunas* will cause the *Prakopa* of *Kapha dosha* in the body. Excess intake of *Madura*, *Amla*, and *Lavana Rasa* will lead to *Kapha Prakopa* in the body. Among *gunas*, the intake of *Snigdha*, *Sheeta*, *Guru*, and *Pichila* excessively results in the *Prakopa* of *Kapha Dosha*. The use of *Ahara Dravyas* like *Masha*, *Mahamasha*, *Yavaka*, *Godhuma*, *Tilapishta Vikruti*, *Dadhi*, *Dugdha*, *Krushara*, *Payasa*, *Ikshu Vikaras*, *Anupa Mamsa*, *Navanna*, *Nava madya* etc. *Viharas* like *Divaswapna*,

Avyayama, Atinidra, Sayyasana Sugham and Manasika Nidanans like Alasya, Cheshtadweshha, and Tyakthachintha also causes *Kapha Prakopa*.

Samprapthi

A Series of pathological changes taking place inside the body starting from *Nidana Seva* till the manifestation of diseases is known as *Samprapthi*. Due to *ahara* and *Vihara Nidana Sevana* that are similar to *Dosha Guna* and dissimilar to *Dhathus* and *srotas* will lead to the vitiation of the same. When the provoked *Doshas* circulates through the body manifestation of disease takes place at a particular site where they get obstructed. *Agni* gets vitiated at first due to *Ahikara Ahara Vihara Sevana* and further, it leads to *Agnimandya, Ajeerna*, accumulation of *Ama*, and production of *Sama Rasa*. When the *Sama Rasa* circulates through the body it causes *Srothorodha* and *Srotodushti* at the site of *Khavaigunya*. After this pathological changes, the signs and symptoms of the diseases get manifested completely.

Pathogenesis of hypothyroidism according to Ayurveda may be summarized in different levels

1. at the level of *Jataragni*
2. at the level of *Dhatwagni*

Samprapthi at the level of Jataragni

The *kaphakara Ahara Viharas* when consumed in excess brings changes in *Ahara Parinamakara Bhavas* leading to the state of *mandagni* due to the *Guru, Manda, Hima, Snigdha, Slakshna, Sandra, Mrudu* and *Sthiragunas* of *Ahara* consumed and the intensity of *Ushma* that means when *Jataragni* gets decreased leading to the stage of *Mandagni*. At the same time, the function of *Vata* which regulates the food by *anna Grahana, Pachana, Vivechana, and Munchana Karmas* also gets hampered. Along with this the increase in *Kleda* and *Sneha* of *Ahara Parinamakara Bhava* leads to the delayed digestion of food and causes the accumulation of *Ama*. As a whole *Dhathus* are not nourished properly due to the *Jataragni Mandya* and the improper formation of *Dhathu Samyakara parinamamsa*.

Samprapthi at the level of Dhatwagni

Improperly formed *Ahara Rasa* at *Jataragni* level vitiates *Rasa Dhatwagni* to form *Sama Rasa Dhathu*.

Due to the *Sama Rasa Dhathu Poshakamsha* will not be formed properly which in turn leads to the *Dhatwagni Mandya* and thereby improper nourishment of the respective *Dhathus*. This state brings about the *Upachaya* of the body.

Samprapthi ghatakas

- *Dosha - Kapha Pradhana Tridosha Kopa*
- *Dushya-Rasa Medha* predominant *Sapta Dhathus*
- *Agni - Jataragni* and *Dhatwagni*
- *Ama - Jataragni Mandya Janya Ama, Dhatwagni Mandya Janya Ama*
- *Srotas - Saptha Dhathuvaha Srothas* predominantly *Rasavaha* and *Medovaha Anna, Mutra, Pureesha, Swedavaha Srothas*
- *Srotodushti - Sangam*
- *Adhishtana - Urdhwa Sareera*
- *Udbhavasthana -Aamashaya*
- *Sancharasthana -Rasayani*
- *Rogamarga -Trividha Roga Marga* predominantly *Bahya Roga Marga*.
- *Vyaktha Sthana -Sarvasareera*
- *Roga Prakruthi -Chirakari*

Poorvaroopa

Premonitory symptoms are the earliest symptoms that indicates the impending diseases. Due to the *Jataragni Mandya*, and *Dhatwagni Mandya*, at the initial stages, there will be *Ajeerna* and accumulation of *Ama* which can be considered as the *Poorvaroopa*. Also, the *Ama Lakshanas* like *Srothorodha, Balabhrmsha, Gourava, Anila Mudhata, Alasya*, etc can be included as the *Poorvaroopa*. All the signs and symptoms in milder form in the initial stages of hypothyroidism are considered as the *Poorvaroopa* of the disease.

Roopa

The signs and symptoms of the disease manifested are known as *Roopa*. The signs and symptoms in *Poorvaroopa* when manifested can call it as *Roopa*. *Roopa* is exhibited in the fifth stage of the disease which is *Vyakthaavastha* and these *Lakshanas* are purely based on the predominance of *Doshas*. In this disease, the symptoms like *Alasya, Anga Saada, Asahishnuta* to *Sheetha, Badhamala, Sthoulyatha, Aruchi*, etc can be considered the *roopa*.

Upashaya And Anupasaya

All the *Aharas* and *Viharas* that causes an increase of *Kapha*, *Vata Dosh*, and *Pitta Kshaya* are considered the *Anupashaya*. *Ahara Viharas* that causes *Rasa Dushti* are also *Anupashaya*. *Ahara Viharas* that decrease *Kapha* and *Vata* are considered to be the *Upashaya* of the diseases.

Sadhya Asadhyata

In the Ayurvedic view, hypothyroidism is considered to be a *Yapya Roga*.

Chikitsa

All those activities or approaches or methods through which the *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Malas* of the body revert to their normalcy is called *Chikitsa*. *Chikitsa* causes *Samprapthi Vighatana* and is opposite to the *Nidana* of *Roga*. According to the *Ayurvedic* concept, the *Doshas* that predominantly vitiated should be treated first and the treatment of other *Doshas* should be considered afterwards. According to *Acharya Charaka*, the management of diseases should be based on the consideration of *Dosha*, *Dushya*, etc. It is very difficult to manage a disease that affects all the systems of the body. Hypothyroidism is such a condition that affects all the systems of the body. So, when we consider such a complicated disease proper *Sodhana* and *Shamana* therapies are also very essential. Initially, for all diseases, *Nidana Parivarjana* should be done. In this condition, *Kapha Vata kara Ahara Viharas* should be avoided. Also, hypothyroidism is a slowly progressing disease which affects different systems of the body. In such conditions proper *shodhana* with *samana* therapies are essential. Among *Shodhana Chikitsa*, *Vamana Chikitsa* has much importance as it is a *Kapha Pradhana Vyadhi*. *Vamana* is the best therapy to eliminate the vitiated *Kapha*. *Virechana* is also effective in this condition since constipation is the main feature. Also, *Niruha basthi* and *Lekhana Basthi* can also be done. *Virechana Nasya* will also be effective in this condition as it can provide some kind of influence on the HPT axis. *Samshamana Chikitsa* the drugs having *Agni Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Sroto Shodhaka*, *Lekhana*, *Anulomaka*, *Medohara*, *Kapha Shamaka* properties are essential.

DISCUSSION

In Ayurveda, there is no direct correlation for hypothyroidism, but a disease named *Galaganda* is mentioned in *Samhithas*. After evaluating the disease hypothyroidism in various aspects of Ayurveda, it is better not to restrict the disease hypothyroidism under the single disease *Galaganda* as it is a localized disease only. Hypothyroidism is a major issue in the present scenario and most of the patients are unsatisfied with the present treatment as they have to take the synthetic hormone derivatives continuously which are expensive and have many side effects. The conceptual evaluation of the disease hypothyroidism helps in the diagnosis, prognosis and to formulate the treatment protocol according to *Ayurvedic* principles²

CONCLUSION

This article shows the importance of *Nidana Panchaka* in the diagnosis of hypothyroidism, and it can be concluded that *Agni* is the basic factor that should be corrected predominantly in the treatment of hypothyroidism. Also, the vitiation of *Agni* is not only taking place at *Jataragni* level but also *Dhatwagni* level. So, the management of hypothyroidism includes treatment of *Agnimandya*, *Nidana Parivarjana*, use of *Deepana*, *Pachana* drugs. *Sodhana Chikitsa* is also very essential because almost all *Srothas* are affected by this disease. Thus, through *Ayurveda*, a better safer, and effective treatment through the correction at the basic level can be adopted for the disease hypothyroidism.

REFERENCE

1. Barbara Young, Phillip Woodford, Geraldine O'Dowd et al Organ system:Endocrine system. Wheatearsfunctional histology, 5th edition. Philadelphia: Elsevier Churchill Livingstone; 2006, pg 335.
2. Subhash K Wangoo, Jamal Ahmad, Mohammad A Siddiqui et al Hypothyroidism: Principles and Practices of Thyroid gland disorders, 1st ed New Delhi: 2017, pg53.
3. Kasper, Fauci, Hauser, Jameson, t Loscalzo, Et al Hypothyroidism.in: Harrison's Principle of Internal Medicine19th ed. New York, NY: The MC Graw hill Companies; 2012 accessed Oct 13, 2015, pg 2289-2290.
4. Dr. Mamatha Kumari, Dr. Surendra Kumar Sharma, and Dr. Reetu Sharma. Concepts of Pathogenesis of

Dhatawagnivikara with special reference to Hypothyroidism and therapeutic evaluation of Trikatu choornam and Kanchanara kwatha. World Journal of Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences. 2017; 3(8): 78-81.

5. Unnikrishnan AG, Kalra S, John M, Sahay R K, Ganapathy B, et al Prevalence of hypothyroidism in India. Disorders of thyroid function. Thyroid 2012; 22(Suppl 1):91
6. Dr. Krishna Kumar K.M.A Clinical Study on the Management of Primary Hypothyroidism an Ayurvedic Ap-

proach Under Rajiv Gandhi University of health science Bangalore.

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Santhykiran K.C, & Krishna Kumar K M: Hypothyroidism - An Ayurvedic Approach. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2022 {cited June 2022} Available from:
http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/1466_1470.pdf