ROLE OF PATHYAPATHYA IN INFERTILITY W.S.R. TO BEEJOPAGHATAJA KLAIBYA AND VANDHYATWA

Sowmya Bhat¹, Vijay B. Negalur²

¹I PG Scholar, ²Associate Professor, Department of Swasthavritta, S.D.M.C.A.U, Karnataka, India

Email: sapre.soumya@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

According to W.H.O. one in every four couples in developing countries has been found to be affected by infertility¹. It is believed that 10% of the general population suffers from some form of infertility. The drop in fertility started about 10 years ago in India, with a steady 17% decline from the year 2000. Thousands of women are declared perfectly healthy, but still fertility rate is poor. As per I.S.A.R. reports, 41% of male infertility accounts to poor sperm count and 40% of female infertility is due to P.C.O.D. The prime cause of infertility is anovulation, which can be remedied by modifying diet and lifestyle. Acharya Charaka clearly mentioned defective diet and lifestyle practices have significant role in causing beejadushti which results in male infertility, female infertility or both. Genetic morbidity can be prevented by following healthy food habits. The diet mentioned in Ayurvedic texts contains antioxidants which help to protect the ovum and sperm from free radicals. Harvard research showed that 80% decrease in infertility with lifestyle changes are made by switching to a fertility diet. Present paper highlights the role of healthy diet and lifestyle in the prevention of infertility due to beejopaghata.

Keywords: Infertility, Diet and lifestyle, Beejopaghata

INTRODUCTION

Reproduction represents the continuation of a family and the survival of a community. When we look into different cultures around the world, the concept ‘infertility’ carries a very strong social stigma, especially in its relation to women. Ayurveda being an ancient medical science gives a great importance to fertility. An infertile person is compared to a tree devoid of shade & fruit, which has an unpleasant odour; he is equivalent to a lamp drawn on paper which cannot give light; similar to a dry pond which cannot quench the thirst; just like
an artificial statue which appears as if it is made up of gold & silver. Such a person is devoid of any usefulness to the society and thus will have no respect. Infertility has negative impact on self, on relationships, on psychological status and on emotional status of a person. In the present scenario, thousands of women are declared perfectly healthy, but still fertility rate is poor. According to W.H.O. one in every four couples in developing countries has been found to be affected by infertility. It is believed that 10% of the general population suffers from some form of infertility. According to 2013 World Bank Estimate, the drop in fertility started about 10 years ago in India, with a steady 17% decline from the year 2000. W.H.O. definition of health says 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity. Dimensions of health include physical, mental, social, spiritual and emotional aspects of a person. Ayurveda explains Sharira and Manas are the two Ashrayas for the Vyadhi. Both Sharirika as well as Manasikadoshas must be considered while treating a disease.

Infertility and its causes:
Infertility is a disease of the reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve a clinical pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse. As per I.S.A.R. reports, 41% of male infertility accounts to poor sperm count and 40% of female infertility is due to P.C.O.D. The prime cause of infertility is anovulation, which can be remedied by modifying diet and lifestyle. Harvard research showed that 80% decrease in infertility with lifestyle changes are made by switching to a fertility diet.

In Ayurveda, it is clearly stated that defective diet and lifestyle practices cause beejadushti which results in male infertility, female infertility or both. Beejopaghata is caused due to sheeta-rooksha-alpa-sanklipsht-viruddha-ajirnabhojana, shoka, chinta, bhaya, trasa, ativyavaya, abhichara and by panchakarmapachara; which in turn cause vatadi doshadushti. This leads to shukrakshaya or anutpatti in males. In females, when the beejabhaga is afflicted by vatadidosha in garbhashaya, it causes vandhyatwa. Shandhya (napumsakata) is one of the Vyapat caused by Viruddhahara Sevana.

The Shukra that is afflicted by vitiated Vata, Pitta, Shleshma, Shonita; one which has Kunapagandha, Pooti-Pooya-KsheenaReta is inefficient to produce an offspring. Dvireta, Samskaravahi Shandha, Nara-Nari Shandha, Vatika Shandha are the conditions in which persons remain infertile. The cause of infertility in such conditions is Beeja Dourbalya or Upatapta Beeja JanakaBeejabhaga. An individual born out of PradushtaBeeja & Beejabhagavayava (Shonita/ Shukra), will become Vandhya (female) or Kleeba (male). Causes of infertility include Veeryakshaya, Bhaya, Shoka, Streedoshadarshana, Narinamarasajnata, Abhichara & Asevana. Ativyavaya, Ativyayama, AhitaAhara-Viharasevana, Akala & AyoniMaithuna, Asevana, Ruksha-tikta-kashaya-tila-lavanama-amlauhnasevana, Chinta-shoka-bhaya-krodha, Avisrambah (without mutual understanding), Vardhakya, Mala-mutra-
shukraVega vidharana cause Shukradushti. Such vitiated Shukra cannot produce Apatya. As per Modern Science, one of the several causes of male infertility is defective spermatogenesis. Spermatogenesis and sperm maturation require optimum scrotal temperature (1-2°F less than the body temperature) and a high androgenic environment. Raised scrotal temperature, malnutrition, heavy smoking, alcohol consumption, anxiety, exposure to radiation, cytotoxic drugs, antidepressant drugs reduce spermatogenesis. Chronic anovulation is the most common cause of female infertility, may be due to hormonal or chemical imbalance, functional problems in ovaries and PCOS. Poor diet and lifestyle practice and stress can cause anovulation. Intake of fried foods & trans-fats, sugary foods, soft drinks, gluten, lack of exercise can result in infertility. In women with PCOS, the damaged fats found in these foods have been shown to decrease fertility by up to 73%, also it does impact all women suffering from anovulation. Sugary foods negatively impact hormonal balance. Weight loss or anorexia can also cause hormonal imbalance, leading to irregular ovulation. On the other hand, excess weight can also create ovarian dysfunctions. Apart from physical factors, even mental factor has its own impact on fertility rate. Recent research tells that stress boosts level of stress hormones, such as adrenaline, catecholamines & cortisol, which can inhibit the release of GnRH, which is responsible for the release of sex hormones. Subsequently this may suppress ovulation in women, reduce sperm count in men and lower libido in both women & men.

Role of Pathya:

Pathya is considered as a paryaya to ‘Bheshaja’ by Acharya Charaka and as ‘Mahanabhshaja’ (supreme medicine) by Acharya Kashyapa. It is rightly quoted in ‘Vaidya-jeeyana’ that “No amount of medication can do any good to patient who does not observe Pathya, likewise no amount of medication is needed to a patient if he follows Pathya”. Pathya is the one which does not harm the body and do not obstruct the ‘Patha’ (Srotas/channels). Manah-sharira-Anupaghati is the Pathya. It does not cause any negative effect on body and also it doesn’t produce any manasika vikara. In ‘Yogaratnakara’, the metaphor of ‘Ankura’ (seedling) is used for progressive form of disease. This Ankura will dry and perish away if it is not nourished by water; similarly if a patient avoids Apathya Sevana his disease can be cured even without taking any medication.

Dosha Prakopa in the body will be greater either due to Sanchayaroopaprakopa or Acharyaroopaprakopa. When Pathya Ahara-Vihara is followed, there will be Mridu and Alpa Doshaprakopa which is Alpavikara-karaka. If disease occurs even after following Pathya, its Matra should be increased after studying the nature of the disease and Pathyasevana should be continued for a longer duration.

Under ‘Agryaprakarana’ Acharya explains different types of Agryadravya based on its Karmapradhanata. Some of them that can be quoted in this context are- Aahaaratah-‘Nakraretovrishyanam’(semen of crocodile-aphrodisiac), ‘Ksharahpumstvopaghati-nam’(alkali-damaging virility), ‘Vidarigan-dhvavrishyasarvadoshaharanam’, ‘Kalabhojanamanarogyakarananam’ (timely eating- main-
taining health); Vihaaratatah ‘Shukravegani-grahahshandhyakaranam’ (suppression of urge of semen-causing impotency), ‘Prashamahpathyanam’ (serenity of mind-wholesome ones), ‘Mithyayogovvyadhi-karanam’ (perverted use-pathogenic factors), ‘Sankalpovrishyanam’ (determination); Mana-sika- ‘Dourmanasyamavrishyanam’ (mental worry-non aphrodisiac), ‘Harshah-preenanamanam’ (pleasant mood-saturating ones), ‘Soumanasyamgarbhadharananam’ (cheerfulness-foetus supporting ones).20

Madhurarasa, Madhuravipakidravya are Shukravardhaka and Vrishya. Lavana, Katu and Tikta rasa Atisevana causes pumstva-hani. Pippali & Shunti is Vrishya apart from having Katu rasa, because of Madhura Vipaka21. Few examples quoted in text are: Shukadhanya - Raktashali is Shukrala, Godhuma is Vrishya; Shamidhanya- Masha is Vrishya (ShukraSruti-Vriddhikara); Gorasavarga-Ksheera (Piyusha), Ghrita are Vrishya & Shukra vardhaka22. Garbhasthapana Dravya are mentioned in text such as Aindri, Brahmi, Dooradvaya, Patala, Guduchi, Bala, Pri-yangu; which should be used for Dharana, Pana (by processing with Ksheera & Ghrita), Snana (in Pushyamasa). Jeevaniyaganadravya should be used23. Sarpi, Paya, Mamsarasa, ShashtikaShali, RaktaShali, Yava and Godhuma are said to be Pathya that avoid Shukradosha24.

**DISCUSSION**

Prajnaparadha is the Moolakarana for Vikarotpatti. Under the context of prevention of Agantu and Manasavikara, Acharya explained Prajnaparadha Tyaga & Sadvrittaanuvartana is to be done to achieve Vikara anutpatti25. Under the context of Yanivyapat, Acharya explains that Shandhi Yanivyapat caused by Beejadosha (Rajadosha & Shukradosha) is an Anupakramyayadhi26. It is an AgantukaVyadhi that can be prevented by following Hitahara and Vihara.

The couple who desire for ‘ShreyasiPrajaa’ should undergo Snehana, Swedana, Samshodhana and Samsarjana karma; Asthapana and Anuvasana prior conception. Then follow the Pathya- Madhuroushadha siddha Ksheera & Ghrita (male) and Taila, Masha (female)27.

Switch to healthy and positive diet, exercise regularly, maintain optimum weight and conceive at right age. Fertility diet includes- Protein rich food (beans, lean meats, low fat dairy products), vitamin (whole grains, fruits, vegetables), multivitamin supplements, omega-3 (salmon, tuna, egg), antioxidants (fruits-berries, vegetables, kidney beans), olive oil. One must avoid usage of drugs and tobacco, junk food & soft drinks, Trans fat, caffeine, smoking, alcohol consumption, frequent long journeys, exposure to high temperature, radiations, environmental or industrial toxins. Exercise is essential for optimal hormonal balance, nutrient circulation, cellular oxygenation, stress reduction, blood sugar regulation and weight management. Possibility of natural conception decreases with increasing age. Women with an age 35 years and above find difficulty in conceiving spontaneously. Hence decision to have a baby at right age increases the chances of conception.
CONCLUSION

It is rightly said that “Prevention is Better Than Cure”. Few infertility conditions are irreversible. Hence prevention of infertility gains greater importance. Diet and lifestyle modification, Regular exercise, Stress management, Weight management, trying for conception at right age and Proper understanding in relation are important in preventing infertility. While mentioning the Chikitsakrama for ViruddhaharaJanya Vyadhi, Acharya quotes “Poorvam Vaa Hitasevanam”, giving utmost importance to the prevention aspect. As told in BhelaSamhita, Pathya Ahara nourishes all Dhatus and Srotas leading to Poshana of whole body. It detoxifies the body by eliminating the vitiated Doshas, contrary to which Apathya leads to Dooshana of Vatadidoshas. Similar given- Akalavrishti leads to destruction of the Beeja in Bhoomi and Kala vrishti enhances its healthy growth.

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   www.who.int/topics/infertility/en


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