

A CRITICAL REVIEW ON BACKACHE WITH AYURVEDIC THERAPIES

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ABSTRACT

Backache is one of the most common ailments caused by sedentary living habits and hazardous work patterns. The psychological conditions associated with emotional stress, which bring about spasm of the muscles, may also cause backache. The vertebral discs act as shock absorbers for the back. Mobility would be impossible without discs. Slipped' disc, degenerated disc affects the nerve causes numbness and pain radiates to the arms. *Ayurveda* has enormous power of healing and regeneration through various processes like *Oleation*, *Sudation* and *Basti karma*. Most importantly, *Kati basti* and *Niruh basti* have shown good results in backache.

Keywords: Backache, *Kati basti*, *Niruh Basti*

INTRODUCTION

Backache is one of the most common ailments. It is widely prevalent these days due to sedentary living habits and hazardous work patterns. The psychological conditions associated with emotional stress, which bring about spasm of the muscles, may also cause backache. As the back bears the weight of the entire body it gives way when it has to carry an extra load in the case of persons who are overweight, the back, a complex structure of muscles, bone and elastic tissue, is known as the life-bone of the body. The spine is made of blocks of bones piled one on top of the other. Sandwiched between these bony blocks are cushions of cartilage and elastic tissues called interring vertebral discs. The ver-

tebral discs act as shock absorbers for the back. Mobility would be impossible without discs. Sometimes these cushions rupture and the pulp protrudes a little. The process is erroneously called a 'slipped' disc. If the cushion disappears entirely, the result is known as a degenerated disc. In slipped-disc trouble, the nerve is affected in such a way that the pain radiates down the thigh and leg. If the disc 'slips' in the neck area, it causes numbness and pain radiates to the arms. Disc trouble does not occur suddenly but builds up over a long time. The backbone forms a protective arch over the vertebrae and spinal cord and protects the spinal nerves that are interwoven through the spinal column. There is a

close relationship between the bones, discs, joint muscles and nerves in the back and the slightest problem or injury to the back or neck area can have bad effects.

Etiology –

Lumbar spondylosis, Slip disc (neuritis, sciatica), TB spine (Pott's disease), Tumors (malignant or benign) and Muscle sprain. The early degeneration in lumbar vertebrae is due to –

- 1) Faulty life style
- 2) Fast food, low vitamin B 12
- 3) No sun exposure
- 4) Faulty sitting, standing, sleeping postures
- 5) Hectic driving for many years
- 6) Mental stress
- 7) Strong exercises or sport injuries

The main causes of backache and spondylosis are muscular tension, joint strain, poor posture and incorrect nutrition resulting from dietetic errors and lack of exercise. Acute or chronic illnesses like kidney or prostate problems, female disorders, influenza and arthritis, may also lead to backache. Other causes include stress and strain resulting from sitting for a long time, improper lifting of weight, high heels and emotional problems which may cause painful muscle cramping.

Pathology –

Holding the anatomical structures on the proper place is one of the functions of Vata^[1]. In Vata vitiation the structures are displaced from their site or early degeneration take place. Apan Vayu disturbance is the important aspect of this pathology.

Symptoms –

In the most cases of backache, the pain is usually felt either in the middle of the back or lower down. It may spread to both sides of the waist and the hips. With acute pain, the patient is unable to move and is bedridden. About 90 per cent of backache patients suffer from what is called cervical or lumber spondylosis. It is a degenerative disorder in which the vertebral bone or the inter-vertebral disc becomes soft and loses shape. As a result of this, the spine loses its flexibility.

Cervical Spondylosis in GP —

1. Elderly Patients
2. CIO Sub acute pain & stiffness in the neck, which radiates to one arm
3. Tingling numbness in the same arm (As this is a ageing process , osteophytes formed on the vertebra compress the nerves)
4. Rarely osteophytes can compress the vertebral artery & produce giddiness or syncope (Basovertebral insufficiency)
5. X ray cannot be diagnostic because osteophytes are commonly seen in x ray at this age.

Investigations –

- (1)X-ray of the affected part e.g. x-ray of lumbo-sacral region —AP & Lateral — to rule out the vertebral cause.
- 2) MRI of spine can also be helpful to r/o Pott's disease
- (2) USG of abdomen to rule out abdominal pathology.

Treatment –

Drugs prescribed to relieve pain or relax muscles in backache disorders do not cure common back problems. These drugs can be-

come habitual. Certain safety measures, especially, for people in sedentary occupation, are necessary to relieve and prevent backache. The most important of these is exercise which improves the supply of nutrients to spinal discs, thereby delaying the process of deterioration that comes with age and eventually affects everybody.

Exercise in Backache

Safe exercises include walking; swimming, bicycling & yoga postures like *Bhujangasana*, *Naukasana* & *Shalabhasana*. Controlling one's weight is another important step towards relieving backache as excess weight greatly increases the stress on soft back tissues. Neck tension arising from long hours at the desk or behind the wheel of the car can be relieved by certain neck exercises. These include rotating the head clockwise and anticlockwise, allowing the head to drop forward and backward as far as possible and turning the head to the right and left as far as possible several times. These exercises help to loosen up contracted neck muscles which may restrict the blood supply to the head.

Dietary modification in Backache –

The diet of those suffering from backache should consist of a salad of raw vegetables such as tomato, carrot, cabbage, cucumber, radish, lettuce and at least two steamed or lightly cooked vegetables such as cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, spinach and plenty of fruits, all except bananas. The patients should have four meals daily. They may take fruits and milk (Separately) during breakfast, steamed vegetables and whole wheat chapattis during lunch, fresh fruits or fruit juice in the evening and a bowl of raw salad and sprouts during dinner. The patients should avoid fatty, spicy, and fried foods, curd,

sweetmeats, sugar, condiments as well as tea and coffee. Those who smoke and take tobacco in any form should give them up completely. Proteins and vitamin C are necessary for the development of a healthy bone matrix. Vitamin D, calcium, phosphorous and the essential trace minerals are essential for healthy bones. Foods that have been processed for storage to avoid spoiling have few nutrients and should be eliminated from the diet. Vitamin C has proved helpful in relieving low-back pain and averting spinal disc operations.

Supportive Treatments –

Local heat or application of Analgesic ointment *Narayani* cream or Lep goli

Physiotherapy – either SWD (Short Wave Diathermy) or Cervical Traction

Use a thin pillow at night while sleeping

Use cervical collar during day time

Neck Exercises daily. Also static movements against resistance. Shoulder exercises.

Low Backache in GP —

Mainly 3 causes –

1. Acute Lumbago (Mechanical LBA),
2. Acute LBA with nerve pain (Sciatica or prolapsed disc) and
3. Chronic LBA (more than 3 months duration)

Acute Lumbago —

- a) Pain comes suddenly after lifting of heavy weight, bending etc
- b) Pain does not radiate to the legs
- c) Pain is not aggravated by coughing, sneezing or straining at stool
- d) No anesthesia in the legs or no loss of power (Thigh muscle weakness or foot drop)
- e) Straight leg rising (SLR) test is negative.

- f) Spasm in the back muscles may or may not be present
- g) If spasm is there then back movements are difficult & painful

Acute low backache with Nerve pain –

- a. Severe sudden pain in back radiating to one leg, radiating to one leg with Tingling Numbness
- b. Pain radiate to the legs
- c. Pain is aggravated by coughing, sneezing or straining at stool
- d. Anesthesia in the legs or loss of power (Thigh muscle weakness or foot drop)
- e. Straight leg rising (SLR) test is positive.

Caution - This patient has to be admitted if –

No response to Usual treatment within 3 days or

Patient complains of retention of urine

Motor involvement (Like foot drop)

Then CT scan or MRI, epidural anesthesia or

Emergency surgery may be required.

Chronic low backache –

Usually in males having age more than 50 years or in postmenopausal women

Cause is degeneration of the spine (Lumbar spondylosis)

Pain is dull nagging type, increased by prolonged sitting and bending etc.

Stiffness, especially in the morning is always present.

X ray of Lumbo-sacral spine may show many changes like of osteoporosis, osteophytes, compression fractures etc.

But in women if LBA is due to depression — then x-ray will not show any changes.

AYURVEDIC THERAPY-

Panchakarma –

Avagaha Sweda^[2] - Sudation act as *vatashamak*, so Tub bath with *Dashamool Kwath* or

even with hot water is also beneficial. Hot fomentations, alternate sponging or application of radiant heat to the back will also give immediate relief.

Basti Treatment- *Basti* is very effective treatment for *vatavyadhi*^[3]. It act on root of *vatadosha* and give promising result in relieving pain and functional disability. It also helps in absorption in vitamin B12 in gut so it help in regeneration of nerves^[4].

Katibasti^[5]- *Panchguna Oil / Mahamash Oil / Karpasasthydai oil* are preferred for *Katibasti*. It is useful for disc problems along with *Matrabasti* of 60 ml with *Shacharadi oil*.

Matra Basti- *Sahachar Oil* 50 ml for *Basti* is used for 7 days to reduce the backache.

Yapan Basti The ingredients of this *basti* are *Majja Sneha*(Bone marrow in long bones of Goat) 25 ml Cow Ghee- 25 ml Sesame oil- 50 ml *Dashamool Kwath*- 500 ml.

This is useful to improve the soft tissue nourishment along with the bones. Hence it is generally recommended where the disc problem is present^[6].

Niruha Basti (Decoction Basti)- With *Dashamool, Rasna, Erand* is also recommended. Generally the dose varies from 600 ml to 900 ml. decoctions with honey 25 ml, sesame oil 25 ml, Rock salt 10 Gram is made homogeneous and then is administered in a standard left lateral position. It is given on an empty stomach.

Thus backache is necessary to treat on preventive, supportive, rehabilitative dimensions.

DISCUSSION

In the era of advanced technology, Digitalisation provokes different life style changes, and emotional stress which causes Backache. It

is further classified into other categories such as Acute and Chronic Backache, associated with nerve involvement. Physiotherapy proves to be beneficial treatment in backache, which involve various postures, helping in stabilization of various bones. Apart from this, as the age proceeds, degenerative changes start which causes vitiation of vata. Due to accumulation of ama, vata kaphaj predominant vyadhi, cause ache in different regions of the body. Sudation including Kati Basti which pacifies the kapha and do the pachan of ama and oleation with different oil counteracts the symptoms caused by vata vyadhis. Moreover, decoction used in Kwath dravya of niruh Basti cure the root of disease. As per ayurvedic context, Basti is best treatment for vat vyadhis. Numerous basti having constituents of different oils relieve the backache and also prevent the reoccurrence,

CONCLUSION

Backache widely prevailed in current scenario needs integrated approach for treatment. Dietary modification, food which is rich in Calcium, vitamin D is essential for healthy bone. Protein and vitamin C are necessary for bone Matrix as well. SWD (Short Wave Diathermy) or Cervical Traction, Neck Exercises and Shoulder exercises. It helps in removing muscular Tension. Ayurvedic treatment such as panchkarma which include *Kati basti*, *Niruh Basti*, *Matra Basti* and *Yapan Basti* have good result on effect on Backache.

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