

## Ayurvedic management of *Sthoulya (Medoroga)* W.S.R. to obesity

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### Abstract

Obesity has been described as *Sthoulya* or *Medoroga* in *Ayurvedic* texts. It is described under *Santarpanottha Vikar*. *Sthoulya* is an abnormal state i.e., excessive accumulation of *Medodhatu*. Faulty lifestyle like over-eating, unhealthy diet, lack of exercise leads to various health problems. One of such lifestyle health problem is obesity which leads to various disease such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, cardiovascular disease, joint disorders, diabetes and sometimes cancer also. Now a days, obesity is considered as a Global epidemic and a public health problem. One of the important aspects is mentioned in *Ayurvedic* text is *Agni* which plays an important role to maintain the normal state of health (equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Agni*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*). *Mandagni* leads to production of *Ama* which may be at the level of *Jatharagni*, *Bhutagni* or *Dhatvagni*. *Mandadhatvagni* leads to improper *Dhatu Vriddhi* and vitiated *Medodhatu* is main cause of metabolic disturbance in an obese individual. *Medodhatu* also becomes increased due to excessive intake of *Kaphavardhaka Aahar-vihar*. The modern drugs like appetite suppressants and lipase inhibitor have their side effects but *Ayurveda* acts on the causative factors (aggravated *Kapha Dosha*, *Mandagni* and vitiated *Medodhatu*) through *Aoushadha*, *Aahar* and *Vihar* which will be further described in full paper.

**Keywords:** Medoroga; Agni; Medodhatu; Kapha Dosha; Obesity; Sthoulya

### 1. Introduction

*Sthoulya* is an abnormal state in which there is excessive accumulation of *Medodhatu*. As per modern medical science an individual is said to be obese when their BMI (Body Mass Index), a measurement obtained by dividing a person's weight by square of the person's height. The range of BMI between 25-30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> defined as overweight.<sup>[1]</sup> Faulty lifestyle like over-eating, unhealthy diet, lack of physical exercise or sleep at day time are generally responsible for *Medoroga*. It is precursor to various disease such as heart disease, diabetes mellitus type 2, certain type of cancer, osteoarthritis, high blood pressure and asthma<sup>[2]</sup>. In 2013 the American medical association classified obesity as a disease. In 2014, 600 million adults (13%) and 42million children under the age of 15years were obese. Obesity is more common in women than men. Authorities view it as one of the most serious public health problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Obesity is mostly preventable through a combination of social changes and personal choices. Changes to diet and exercising are main treatments. Medications may be taken along with a suitable diet to reduce appetite or decrease fat absorption.

The causative factors affect the *Agni* of the body which plays an important role in maintaining the normal state of health. *Mandagni* leads to production of *Ama* which may be at the level of *Jatharagni*, *Bhutagni* or *Dhatvagni* that leads to production of *Ama* in concerned *Dhatu* and giving rise to improper *Dhatu Vriddhi*. *Medodhatu* is the site of metabolic disturbance in an obese person. The modern medicine acts on the symptoms only apart from that *Ayurveda* acts on

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pathogenesis. The *Aahar*, *Vihar* and *Aushdha* mentioned in *Ayurvedic* text, plays a significant role in managing the disease specially obesity.

## 2. Review of literature

The term *Sthoulya* derived from the root "*Sthulya brimhane*". The *Sthoulya* comes under *Medoroga* and it is described as increase in *Meda* and *Mansa Dhatu* resulting in pendulous appearance of *Stana*, *Sphika* and *Udara*.

### 2.1. Medoroga- Santarpanajanya Vyadhi

"*Santarpana*" means to nourish and satisfy the body. Also, "*Brimhana*" is a synonym of *Santarpana* which is also responsible for the nourishment of body.

The causative factors of "*Santarpanajanya vyadhi*" are:

सन्तर्पयति यः स्निग्धैर्मधुरैरुपिच्छिलैः | नवान्नैर्नवमद्यैश्च मांसैश्चानूपवारिजैः |  
गोरसैर्गौडिकैश्चान्नैः पैष्टिकैश्चातिमात्रशः | चेष्टाद्वेषी दिवास्वप्नशय्यासनसुखे रतः |  
रोगास्तस्योपजायन्ते सन्तर्पणनिमित्तजाः | [3]

*Aharaja Nidana*- The food which is *Snigdha*, *Madhur*, *Guru*, *Navanna*, *Navamadya*, *Gaudika*, *Anup Mamsa*, *Matsaya Mamsa*, milk and its preparations, etc.

*Viharaja Nidana*- *Asya-sukha*, *shayya-sukha*, *Chesta-dwesh*, *Divaswapana*, *Abhyanga*, *Snaan*, *Avyayam* and *Achintana*, etc.

*Specific causes (Nidaan) of Sthoulya Vyadhi are described in Charak Samhita which are as follows*

तदतिस्थौल्यमतिसम्पूरणाद्गुरुमधुरशीतस्निग्धोपयोगादव्यायामादव्यवायाद्दिवास्वप्नाद्धर्षनित्यत्वाद- चिन्तनाद्वीजस्वभावाच्चोपजायते | [4]

In *Ayurvedic* text it also mentioned that *Sthoulya* is very bad for health. For this they elaborate the reason behind that

अतिस्थूलस्य तावदायुषो ह्रासो जवोपरोधः कृच्छ्रव्यवायता दौर्बल्यं दौर्गन्ध्यं स्वेदाबाधः क्षुदतिमात्रं पिपासातियोगश्चेति भवन्त्यष्टौ दोषाः | [4]

### 2.2. Ayurvedic Management

In *Ayurvedic* text, *Nidana Privarjana* is the first line of choice for the management of any disease. As *Aaharj* and *Viharaj* *Nidaan* are the main culprit in *Sthoulya Vyadhi* as per *Ayurveda*. So, first of all correction of improper *Aahar* and *Vihar* is most important management of *Sthoulya (Medoroga)* apart from *Aoushadha* only. Therefore, there are three lines of choices of management/ treatment for the of *Medoroga* as:

- Management through *Aahar*
- Management through *Vihar*
- Management through *Aoushadha*

#### 2.2.1. Management through Aahar

The food that we intake in daily routine diet is also helpful in managing the obesity if it has *Kaphamedonasak* properties.

Manage *Kapha*-The main cause of *Medoroga*

*Kapha* plays an important role in causing of *Medoroga*. So, avoid *Kapha* aggravating factors that will help in reducing the fat from the body.

Manage at the level of *Srotodusti* in *Medodhatu*

The factors which are responsible for *Dusti* of *Medovaha Srotas* are lack of exercise, sleeping during day time, eating luxurious, fat rich, fried, high caloric food in excess and excessive consumption of alcohol. So, avoid all these aggravating factors to keep the *Medovaha Srotas* healthy.

### Use of *Deepana-Pachana* Modalities

*Manda Medodhatvagni* is the principal cause of *Medoroga* which developed at the level of *Dhatvagni*. *Agni* works on the metabolism of fat. The *Deepana* drugs increase the weak metabolic process and *Pachana* drugs help in digestion of *Ama* which is an intermediate metabolic toxin. Sticky property of *Ama* may block the channels of the body which may lead to the improper nutrient supply to the organs or even the cell that in turn create disease. Most of the *Deepana Pachana* modalities works on the virtue of *Katu, Tikta, Kshaya Rasa; Ushna Virya; Katu Vipaka* and sometimes *Prabhav*. All these properties help in destroying the excess *Kapha, Ama* and *Meda* which are accumulated in body cells because of blockage of body channels.

### Pathaya Aahar

प्रशातिका प्रियङ्गुश्च श्यामाका यवका यवाः।जूर्णाह्वाः कोद्रवा मुद्गाः कुलत्थाश्चक्रमुद्गकाः।  
आढकीनां च बीजानि पटोलामलकैः सह।भोजनार्थं प्रयोज्यानि पानं चानु मधूदकम्।  
अरिष्टांश्चानुपानार्थं मेदोमांसकफापहान्।अतिस्थौल्यविनाशाय संविभज्य प्रयोजयेत्॥ [5]

*Yava, Godhum, Takra, Madhu, Jo, Moong, Aamlaki, Sava, Kanguni Dhanya, Kodo, Kulthi, Arhar seeds, Parwal, Medmamsanashak Arista* etc.

### 2.2.2. Management through Vihar

When we are talking about *Vihara*, *Aptarpana* is basically *Siddhanta* which usually we should follow that includes *Langhana, Rukhshna* and *Swedena*.

### Aptarpana

गुरु चातर्पणं चेष्टं स्थूलानां कर्शनं प्रति। [6]

*Guru Aptarpana Chikitsa of Sthoulya* is mentioned in *Ayurvedic Samhitas*. *Medoroga* is a *Santarpanojanya Vikar*. So, *Aptarpana* must to be done which is one of the unique *Ayurvedic* principle. It includes *Rukhshana, Langhana* and *Swedena*. These induce lightness in the body and help in maintaining the health. *Aptarpana* helps in reducing the body fat found in body cells, tissues, organs and channels. *Medoroga* is amalgamation of *Vata* and *Meda*, so *Guru Aptarpana* plays a significant role in managing the disease at this level. *Aptarpana* is antagonistic to *Meda* and *Guru Guna* is antagonistic to *Lagu Guna* of *Vata*.

### Udwartana

It also works on pathogenesis of the *Medoroga* through the massage of herbal powder all over the body in upward direction and helps in reducing the excess *Kapha, Ama* and *Meda* from the body and keeps healthy state of a person.

### Pathya Vihaar

प्रजागरं व्यवायं च व्यायामं चिन्तनानि च।  
स्थौल्यमिच्छन् परित्यक्तुं क्रमेणाभिप्रवर्धयेत्॥ [7]

- Jagran
- Vyvaye
- Vyaayam
- Chintan

There is one more concept of management of *Santarpanjanye Vyadhi* specially *Sthoulya* in *Charak Samhita* which includes both *Aahar* and *Vihaar* is as follows

व्यायामनित्यो जीर्णाशी यवगोधूमभोजनः।  
सन्तर्पणकृतैर्दोषैः स्थौल्यं मुक्त्वा विमुच्यते॥ [8]

- Daily exercise,
- Take food only after prior food digested
- Wheat food

### 2.2.3. Management through Auoshadha-

वातघ्नान्यन्नपानानि श्लेष्ममेदोहराणि च। रूक्षोष्णा बस्तयस्तीक्ष्णा रूक्षाण्युद्वर्तनानि च।  
गुडूचीभद्रमुस्तानां प्रयोगस्तैफलस्तथा। तक्रारिष्टप्रयोगश्च प्रयोगो माक्षिकस्य च।।  
विडङ्गं नागरं क्षारः काललोहरजो मधु। यवामलकचूर्णं च प्रयोगः श्रेष्ठ उच्यते।  
बिल्वादिपञ्चमूलस्य प्रयोगः क्षौद्रसंयुतः। शिलाजतुप्रयोगश्च साग्निमन्थरसः परः।।<sup>[9]</sup>

## 2.3. Other modalities

### 2.3.1. Panchkarma

*Vamana* is a therapeutic emesis that works on *Kapha* and *Ama*; and by expelling out these two; the accumulated fat expelled out which is a precursor of *Kapha* and *Ama*. Another modality in *Panchkarma* is *Virechana* that is a therapeutic purgation which eliminate excess *Meda* from the body. Some *Medohara* and *Lekhaneeya Basti* <sup>[10]</sup> are also mentioned in *Ayurveda* that will helpful in *Medoavrita Vata* mainly.

## 3. Discussion

In *Ayurveda* treatment, *Siddhanta* is based on the *Viparit Guna*. As *Sthoulya* is a *Santarpanajanya Vyadhi*, so we can cure *Medoroga* or *Sthoulya* by *Viparit Guna Chikitsa* i.e. *Aptarpan*. That's why we need to follow *Aptarpan Siddhanta* in every type of treatment that can be *Aahar*, *Vihaar*, *Auoshadha* and *Panchkarma*.

Life style is also a major factor to cause *Sthoulya*. So, it become necessary to improve life style in every manner to cure this. According to *Ayurveda*, we treat the disease at the level of *Dhatu*s and at this level *Dhatwagni* is responsible for further nourishment of the next *Dhatu*. *Dhatwagni Mandya* is main culprit behind all the disease. Like in *Sthoulya* *Medodhatuagni Mandya* is the reason. So, we need to correct the *Medodhatuagni*. By this we can treat *Sthoulya*.

Including all these things one more unique concept of *Ayurveda* is that two persons are not exactly alike, also they don't react alike. So *Ahaar*, *Vihar* and *Auoshadha* mentioned in *Ayurveda* not the same for every individual because of variation of *Prakriti*, *Desh*, *Kaal* and *Agni* of an obese person. In other words, there is need of more personalized approach is necessary while treating obesity.

## 4. Conclusion

- *Santarpana* act as *Nidana* for various *Santarpanajanya Vyadhi*. *Medoroga* comes under *Santarpanajanya Vyadhi* in *Ayurveda*. So basically, we need *Aptarpano Chikitsa* in *Medoroga/Sthoulya*. We can manage/treat *Medoroga* in so many ways i.e. *Aahar*, *Vihar*, *Auoshadha* and *Panchkarma* also.
- Drugs that are *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya* in *Rasa*, possessing *Ushna Virya*, and *Laghu Ruksha Guna* are largely responsible for *Medohara* and *Lekhaneeya* activities. Same concept we can follow about *Aahar* and *Panchkarma* also. By this approach we can manage *Sthoulya*.
- So, we can conclude that *Medoroga/Sthoulya* is curable by the above *Ayurvedic* measures.

## Compliance with ethical standards

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### Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.

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