

AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO MALE INFERTILITY

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ABSTRACT

Infertility is defined as the inability to conceive within one or more years of regular unprotected coitus. Male infertility is one of the burning problems now a day's. Incidences of this problem increases day by day due to change in lifestyle. Causes of male infertility include abnormal sperm production or function and/or impaired delivery of sperm. Oligospermia is the male infertility issue defined as low sperm concentration in the ejaculation. As per World Health Organization (WHO), a low sperm count is less than 20 million sperm/ml. Normal sperm count varies from 20 to 150 million sperm per milliliter. Ayurveda described various terms related to male infertility such as; Kshina shukra, Kshina retasa, Alpa retasa and Shukra dosha which resembles conditions associated with oligospermia. Ayurveda also described various treatment modalities for the management of Oligospermia named as Vaaajeekarana-chikitsa. Also use of herbs and formulation, conduction of balanced lifestyle and diet control, etc. Current paper aims at putting forward the causes and treatment of male infertility as described in Ayurveda.

KEYWORDS: Male infertility, Ayurveda, vaaajeekarana-chikitsa, Oligospermia.

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the motivation to have children and formation of a new family unit are essential components of the individual instinct for existence and well being. Fertility problems may represent a stressful situation to the individual's life with important negative psychological consequences. Conception depends on the fertility potential of both the male and female partner. The male is directly responsible in about 30-40%, the female in about 40-55% and both are responsible in about 10% cases. The remaining 10% is unexplained. Male infertility is due to low sperm production, abnormal sperm function or blockages that prevent the delivery of sperm. Illnesses, injuries, chronic health problems, lifestyle choices and other factors can play a role in causing male infertility. A hormone imbalance or blockage of sperm movement can cause a lack of sperm. Oligospermia is the seminal disorder in which sperm count is below 20 million per ml. It is the common finding in male infertility.

Ayurveda also explained in detail about infertility, its cause's pathophysiology, treatment under the head of Vajikarana. Vajikarana or Vrishya chikitsa is a one of eight major specialty of the Ashtanga Ayurveda. This subject is concerned with aphrodisiacs, virility and improving health of progeny.^[1]

AIM

1. To study the term Oligospermia from modern medicine literature.
2. To correlate above mention term with Ayurvedic concept.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

- All classical text available in the modern and Ayurvedic literature is reviewed.
- Database available after net surfing, modern text and various research articles was also reviewed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I. Oligospermia modern view

Oligospermia which refers condition of low sperm count less than 20 million sperm per milliliter. This condition occurs due to etiological factors which hamper Spermatogenesis and also blockage in path, which conveys sperms from testis to outside.^[2]

Causes of oligozoospermia^[3]

- ❖ Obstruction of the normal flow of sperm
- ❖ Infection and sexually transmitted diseases
- ❖ Hormonal disorders and diseases of the testicles
- ❖ Stress, smoking and alcohol consumption
- ❖ Malnutrition and obesity

- ❖ Adverse effects of some medications
- ❖ Irregular sexual intercourse
- ❖ Lack of physical activity and conduction of disturbed life style pattern
- ❖ Consumption of low protein and high fat diet
- ❖ Bitter, astringent and spicy foods, etc.

2. Ayurvedic view

In Ayurveda the channel carrying nutrient to reproductive system is called as shukravaha strotas. Healthy functioning of shukravaha strotas plays important role in maintaining the harmony and happiness in marital life. Shukra dhatu is one of the saptadhatu mentioned in Ayurveda literature. It is produced from sneha bhag of majja dhatu. It constitutes of 4 bhootagunas i.e. tej, vayu, aap and prithvi & it originates from madhuradi shadarasa. It is saumya in nature.^[4] It develops dhairya, chyavana, priti, dehabala, harsha and helps in production of progeny.^[5] The pramana of shukra is ardha Anjali.^[6] Normal characteristics of shukra is sfatikabham (white like alum), dravam (liquid), snigdham (viscid), madhuram (sweet in taste) and madhugandhi (honey like odor).^[7]

In Ayurveda, 8 types of shukradusti are mentioned vataja, pittaj, kaphaj, granthibhut, putipuyanibham, mutrapurishgandhi and ksheena.^[8] When vata and pitta doshas are vitiated, quality and quantity of shukra gets altered leading to ksheena shukra. Oligospermia can be correlated with ksheenashukra dushiti.^[9]

Ayurvedic causes for male infertility

- a) **Doshaja Shandtva:** This condition is due to vitiation of Shukra by Tridoshas. There are eight such a conditions enumerated by Charaka and Sushruta which lead to infertility. Excessive intake or certain dietary factors like Katu-Amla-Lavana Atisevana are responsible for the vitiation of soumyadhatukshaya and shukra, and may lead to infertility due to state of low quantity of shukra.^[10] Bhavamishara considered that above factor may lead to Pittavruddhiresult- ing in Shukrakshaya.
- b) **VyadhijanitaShandtva:** Some diseases like Medhrarogas, Marmacheda, Rajayakshama and Vataroga are involved with Shukraksaya because these diseases occurs due to Dhatukshaya and vata dosha.^[11]
- c) **JarasambhavajaShandtva:** The Vridhavasta (old age) leads to Shukrakshaya and Dhatukshaya. It may also occur due to Avrashyasevana. Vridhavasta predominant by Vata- vridhi and Kaphakshaya leads to Dhatuk- shaya and shukrakshaya.^[12]
- d) **Shukrakshayajaklaibya:** Sushruta quoted that repeated indulgence in sex may lead to regression in Shukrad- hatu and low quantity of sperm count.^[13]

Ayurvedic concept about prevention of male infertility

In the classics of Ayurveda the following charya's (conducts) have been mentioned with which a person will be able to be healthy and cure many of lifestyle disorders such like infertility.^[14,15]

- Dinacharya
- Ritucharya
- Rathricharya
- Thrayopasthambha palana
- Sadvritha
- Achara rasayana
- Ashtanga yoga's

Ayurveda also described Shamana and Shodhana Chikitsa for the management of male infertility

Ayurveda emphasized Vajikarana tantra for the management of oligospermia using rasayanas and vajikara dravyas (virilificatory or aphrodisiacs drugs) along with panchakarma.

SHAMANA CHIKITSA

Ahara: Shalidhanya, Godhuma, Mamsa, Kulatha, Milk, Dadhi, Ghrita, Navnita, Kharjura, Amalaki phala, Lashuna, Guda-sharkara, Mamsarasa, Veshavara, Amla vilepi, Saindhava and Rasala these dravyas offers shukrala and vrishta properties

Vihara: Abhyanga, Vyayama, Snana, Nidra and Suvichara.

Aushadha: Mamsa and Ghrita which offers Shukarajanana effect, Kshir yukta asthapana and Trivruttnayukta ghrita for virechana possessing Shukrashodhana properties, Ashwagandha having Brimhana effect and Amalaki offers Vayasthapana effect.

SHODHANA CHIKITSA

Shodhana procedure performs before using Vajikarana drugs. Virechana and Basti are major Shodhana procedures employed for the treatment of shukra doshas, klaibya and oligospermia.^[16-20]

Herbs traditionally used for vajikarana and shukral purposes

- Kapikacchu (*Mucuna Pruriens* Bak.), which has been found to increase sperm concentration and motility.^[21]
- Gokshura (*Tribulus terrestris* Linn.), which raises testosterone levels.^[22]
- Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera* Dunal.), which enhances spermatogenesis via a presumed testosterone-like effect.^[23]
- Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus* Willd.), which appears to enhance fertility by reducing oxidative stress.^[24]
- Yashtimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra* Linn.), found to improve semen quality.^[25]

Male infertility can be cured with various other Ayurvedic medicines, some of them being Shilajatu

rasayan, Abhrak Bhasma, Agnitundi Vati, Sukumara ghrutam, Amritaprasam, Asvagandhadi lehyam, Mamsa sarpi, Kusmanda ghrutam, Kalyanaka ghrutam, Asvagandhai ghrutum, Satavari lehyam, Madana kameswari, Chavanprasam, Dasamularistam, Draksharistam, Asvagandharistam, Chandra prabha vati, Swarna bhasma etc.

Sukra sodhana gana (drugs which help in purification of semen or sperm) Kustha, elavaluka, katphala, samudra phena, kadamba niryaasa, iksu, kanda iksu, iksuraka, vasuka, usira.

Sukra janana gana (drugs which help in formation of semen or sperm) Jivaka, rsabhaka, kakoli, ksirakakoli, mudgaparni, masaparni, meda, vrksaruha, jatila, kulinga.

These should be given with milk as anupan or combined with a vajikarana diet that includes urad dal, milk, basmati rice, wheat, ghee, honey and for non vegetarians, chicken soup and fish.^[26]

CONCLUSION

The literary study concluded that drug possess Snigdha Guna, Balya and Vata-Sthapana properties offers good effect in oligospermia. By addressing simple lifestyle factors and providing vajikarana remedies offered in the Ayurvedic texts, the Ayurvedic practitioners can help male clients optimize their fertility.

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