

AYURVEDIC CONCEPT OF LEUCORRHOEA: SWETA PRADARA

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ABSTRACT

Leucorrhoea is one of the most common and burning problems faced by women all around the globe. It may be physiological but when turning into a pathological condition, produce associated symptoms like itching vulva, backache, and anxiety to female suffering from the entity. Various factors like fungal, parasite, bacterial, and sexually transmitted diseases are responsible for the causation of this disease. In Ayurveda, it is termed as *Sweta pradara*. It can be a symptom of many diseases as well as an independent entity. No description of *Sweta Pradara* has been described by scholars of *Brihatrayee*. For abnormal white vaginal discharges, the word *Sweta Pradara* has been described in texts during and after the medieval period. The present study has been designed to substantiate the aetiology, pathogenesis, clinical features and treatment of *sweta pradara* so that alternative better forms of therapy can be made available in those suffering from *Sweta pradara*.

Keywords: *Sweta Pradara*, Leucorrhoea, *Yonivyapad*.

INTRODUCTION

Leucorrhoea is one of the most common gynaecological disorders characterized by the whitish discharge from the genitals. Normally vaginal discharge happens in regular variations of amount and consistency during

the menstrual cycle. A greater than usual amount is normal in pregnancy, and a decrease to be expected after delivery, during lactation and after menopause.

Physiological vaginal discharge may not require specific treatment. However pathological conditions involving infections like Vaginal candidiasis, Trichomonas, Gram-negative and positive organisms may necessitate its management.

In Ayurveda classics, it is known as Sweta *pradara*. Due to improper diet and regimens, *kapha* gets aggravated and reaches the genital tract and vitiates *rasa dhatu* of the reproductive system causing discharge of the white coloured foul-smelling fluid. It has been estimated that nearly 60-80% of women suffer from this at some time or other. Normal vaginal discharge may appear clear, cloudy white and without any type of smell. Changes in normal discharge can be caused by many reasons such as menstrual cycle, emotional stress, nutritional status, pregnancy, usage of medications - including birth control pills and sexual arousal. The menstrual cycle affects the vaginal environment i.e., pH of the vagina. Any changes in colour, consistency, amount, the smell of discharge may be a sign of abnormal vaginal infection. It may be due to the attack of yeast, bacteria, hormonal imbalance, constipation, improper hygiene habits, anemia, diabetes and indigestion also.

Ayurveda, an ancient science of life is enriched with the knowledge of gynaecological disorders related to vaginal discharges which may be blood-stained or pinkish, mucoid, purulent, white-thin, thick, curdy or watery. White vaginal discharge is known as Sweta *pradara* in Ayurvedic classics. Sweta *Pradara* (Leucorrhoea) is not a disease, but a symptom of so many diseases

ETIOPATHOGENESIS

Leucorrhoea is a symptom, not a disease, thus etiopathogenesis of principal disease would be etiopathogenesis of this condition also. However, based on clinical features, it appears to be a disease of vitiation of *kapha*, thus etiopathogenesis may be considered in the following way. So, it may be said that *Kapha* aggravated due to its vitiating factors, influences, or vitiates the *rasadhatu* of the reproductive system, already influenced by excessive coitus, abortion, improper mode of life and dietetics during menstruation and *Ritukala* along with non-cleanliness and then produces

white and painless vaginal discharges due to dominance of its liquid property.

TYPES OF LEUCORRHOEA

- 1) Physiological
- 2) Pathological

Physiological Leucorrhoea

Normal vaginal discharge consists of secretions from glands of the cervix, vagina and endocervical mucus. The discharge is usually transparent to white coloured and odourless. Changes in estrogen level can affect vaginal discharge, when levels are high estrogen stimulates the cervix to produce secretions and a small amount of mucus may be discharged from the vagina. Leucorrhoea has the following functions

- 1) Defence mechanism
- 2) To maintain the flexibility of the vagina

Pathological Leucorrhoea

The discharge will be yellow, green, white, has an offensive odour and be accompanied by irritation, itching, pain or tissue inflammation. This may be caused by infections with bacteria, yeast, or other organisms. Psychological factors are most common in this. The discharge also happens due to the defective vaginal defence mechanism.

CLINICAL FEATURES

There is no direct mention of *the rupa* of Sweta *pradara* in classical texts of Ayurveda, one can get indirect references to Sweta *srava* at several places while dealing with *yonivyapad*. In Kaphaja *Yonivyapad Charaka* states that *Pichila, Sheeta, Panduvarna, Kanduyuktha* and *Alpavedana yukta yonisrava* is seen. Similarly, in *Upapluta yonivyapad, Charaka* mentioned that there is Sweta *yonisrava* which is *panduvarna* and along with *toda*. He says that this *srava* is due to *vata* and *kapha*. However, this *sweta srava* is specific to *Garbhini stree*.

Chakrapani has explained *pandura asrugdara* as *sweta pradara* and *Indu* as *sukla asrugdara*. *Swetapradara* is a condition characterized by white vaginal discharges not associated with pain, burning sensation and mixed with other colours, thus it seems to be the description of leucorrhoea.

The patient feels foul-smelling vaginal discharge, itching sensation in the vagina, pain in the stomach, lumbar region and calves, constipation, and headache. In young females, threadworms may cause the onset of this disorder. In mature ladies, inflammation of the uterus (following childbirth) may also trigger and hasten leucorrhoea flow.

INVESTIGATIONS

The following investigations should be done to confirm the diagnosis and for proper treatment to cure the disease.

- 1) Examination of blood= Hb % total count, differential count.
- 2) Blood sugar.
- 3) Urine examination: Routine & microscopic.
- 4) USG (Abdomen& Pelvis).
- 5) Pap Smear, VDRL (Venereal disease research laboratory test), HIV.

TREATMENT

The principle of Ayurvedic treatment of *Sweta Pradara* is mostly based on its etiopathogenesis. As *Kapha* is the main causative factor for vaginal discharge

Treatment consists of two headings

- 1). *Samanya chikitsa* (General line of treatment).
- 2). *Vishesha chikitsa* (Specific line of treatment).

General treatment

- a. *Nidana parivarjana* - It is the basis of the management of all diseases. *Nidana* facilities treatment if the causes of the treatment of the diseases are traced out. Further in most cases when the cause of the disease is removed, the disease subsides naturally. In *Sweta pradara* the causative factors should be avoided to get permanent relief. For example- *Mithya ahara* and *vihara*.
- b. *Kaphasamana treatment*- If discharge per vagina is especially white in colour, *pichila srava*, *kandu yukta* then it is due to disordered *kapha*, the main aim would naturally be to bring *kapha* to its normal state. For this various *Kaphaghna* drugs are advised. The main characteristics of these drugs are *Ruksha* and *Usna*. While administering various *Kaphaghna* drugs accompanying *Dosha*

dushti and *Dhatu- Veishamyia* must be considered.

- c. Symptomatic treatment of *Yonisrava* and *Yonipaichhilya*.
- d. *Balya chikitsa* - It plays an important role to prevent the incidence and treat the disease.
- e. Usage of *katu* and *kashaya rasa dravyas*- These *dravyas* alleviates *kapha*.

Specific treatment

1) Oral medicines

- a) Pestled root of *Rohitaka* should be taken with water.
- b) Pestled fruit of *amalaki* mixed with *madhu* and *sarkara* should be taken after mixing with *jala*.
- c) Paste of *lodhra* mixed with a decoction of stem-bark of *nyagrodha* should be taken.
- d) The use of a decoction of drugs of *Nyagrodha* group is beneficial due to its astringent property.
- e) Use of *Nagakeshara* (*Mesua ferrea* L.) with *Takra* (buttermilk) followed by a diet of only cooked rice and *Takra* can cure leucorrhoea only within three days.
- f) Powder of root of *Chakramarda* (*Cassia tora* L.) should be taken with *Tandulodaka* (rice- water) in the morning hours.
- g) Licking powdered *padawasa* (a variety of *Setaria italica*) mixed with oil of *Tila* for seven consecutive days cures leucorrhoea.
- h) *Pushyanuga churna* should be used with *Tandulodaka* mixed *Madhu*.
- i) *Pradarantaka lauha*, *Pradarantaka rasa*, *Pradarari rasa*, *Pradararipu rasa*, *Pradarari lauha*, *Shitakalyanaka ghrita* etc. are *Rasaushadhi*, mentioned in *Bhaishajya ratnavali* to cure the *Sweta pradara*.
- j) *Ghrita-Taila*: *Ashoka ghrita*, *Nyagrodhadi ghrita*, *Vishwavallabha ghrita* and *Priyangwadi taila* *Asava-Arishta*: *Lakshmanarishta*, *Ashokarishta*, *Patrangasava* and *Lodhrasawa*.
- k) *Kukkutandatwak bhasma* 250mg with *Madhu* (honey) twice a day.

2) Drugs for external or local use:

- A. *Yoni Prakshalana*

- a) Vaginal irrigation with a decoction of stembark of *lodhra*
- b) Vaginal irrigation with a decoction of *vata*.

B. Yoni Purana

- 1) After oleating the vaginal canal, a bolus made with powdered bark of *plaksa* mixed with honey should be placed.
- 2) Fine powders of *Khadira*, *Pathya*, *Jatiphala*, *Nimba*, and *Puga*, triturated with soup of *Mudga* and used in vagina after drying the mixture

C. Yoni-Varti

- 1) Suppository made with powdered *lodhra*, *priyangu*, and *madhuka* mixed with *Madhu* or else with *kasaya*(astringent) drugs should be placed in oleated vaginal canal

D. Yoni-Dhupana

- 1) After oleating vaginal canal, fumigation with *sarala*, *guggulu*, and *yava* mixed with plenty of *ghrta* or else *katu matsyaka* along with oil should be done

Pathya: meat soup, rice water, all dairy products and garlic

Apathya: Sweet and sour fruits, nuts, and excess salt.

Preventive Measures

- Avoid vulvo/vaginal irritants, including perfumed or deodorant soaps/body washes.
- Don't scratch infected or inflamed areas; it can cause further irritation
- Wash the genitals carefully during every bath and do not let moisture retain in the genital area after the bath.
- Avoid synthetic or nylon undergarments. Wear cotton undergarments
- Don't wash the undergarments with strong detergents.
- Use the medication as long as directed.

DISCUSSION

Leucorrhoea is the most common and certainly the most annoying problem confronting the gynaecologist in practice. The result of recent surveys in this regard shows a picture that an estimated 75% of women experience at least one episode of vaginal infections dur-

ing their lifetimes. The most common causes of leucorrhoea in modern are cervicitis, vaginitis, cervical erosion, and bacterial vaginosis. If neglected it also points to serious underlying obstetrics and gynaecological complications.

Sweta pradara is predominantly a *kapha vataja* disorder. *Kapha* can be considered as the main causative factor by its vitiated *snigdha* does not occur without the involvement of *vata dosha*. Moreover, any type of *yoniroga* does not occur without the involvement of *vata dosha*, vitiation of *vata* occurs chiefly by its *chala guna*. Though *kapha* and *vata* seem to be leading *doshas* responsible for *Swetapradara* the role of *pitta* cannot be neglected here as any disease in Ayurveda involves all the three *doshas* through predominance varieties. *Pitta* is vitiated mainly by its *visra*, *sara* and *drava guna*. So *Swetapradara* can be considered as *kapha vata pradhana tridoshaja vyadhi*. Since ancient times various treatment modalities explained in different forms with the drugs available in nature. Ayurveda explains both oral and local procedures. Treatment of *Swetapradara* is mainly based on the use of drugs which are having a predominance of *Kashaya rasa* and *Kapha-shamaka* property. Therefore, the drugs of *Kashaya rasa* dominance are mainly used locally and internally.

For this treatment *sthanika chikitsa* plays an important role here. The vaginal wall is very well suited for the absorption of drugs since it contains a vast network of blood vessels. The drugs used for *sthanika chikitsa* acts by exerting their antiseptic, antimicrobial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory and analgesic actions. Here proper *Sthanika chikitsa* with proper internal medicines gives potentially good results in the treatment of *sweta pradara*

CONCLUSION

Leucorrhoea is the most common and certainly the most annoying problem confronting the gynaecologist in practice. Increased incidences and recurrence rates of *Swetapradara* directly implies the need for a treatment that not only cures it but prevent its recurrence. There are various oral and local treatments available

for *Swetapradara* in our classics. Treatment of *Swetapradara* is mainly based on the use of drugs which are having a predominance of *Kashaya rasa* and *Kapha-shamaka* property.

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