

PREVENTION OF DIABETES MELLITUS THROUGH PATHYA AHARA AND VIHARA: A REVIEW

Shrikant Sahu¹, Aradhana Kande²

¹M.D. Scholar, ²Assistant Professor,

P.G. Dept. of Roga Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Shri N.P.A. Govt. Ayurvedic College, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India

Email: shrikant.sahu1@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The *Pathya* is the one which keeps the person healthy, maintains normal body functions leads to proper functioning of the organs, and nourishes the mind and intellect. *Pathya* not only advocates intake of wholesome food but also it directs to follow a certain regimen to fasten the process of recovery from the diseased state. As mentioned by *Vagbhatta*, *Nidana* of all diseases is imbalanced *Doshas*, and the reason behind this imbalance in *Doshas* is *Ahitkar Ahara* and *Vihara*. According to latest estimates published by International Diabetes Federation (IDF) 415 million adults were living with diabetes in 2015 and this is expected to rise to 642 million by 2040, which has increased due to negligence of proper *Ahara* and *Vihara* which is not taken seriously as preventive point of view. Hence this is an attempt to explain the prevention and management of Diabetes in *Ayurveda*.

Keywords: Diabetes, *Pathya*, *Ahara*, *Vihara*, Prevention

INTRODUCTION

Diabetes Mellitus is a chronic disease marked by elevated blood glucose level. It affects 5-6% of the global adult population. Type 2 diabetes prevalence is rising at alarming rates worldwide because of increased urbanization, high prevalence of obesity, sedentary lifestyles and stress, among other factors. Up to 80% of type 2 diabetes is preventable by adopting a healthy diet and increasing physical activity. According to latest estimates published by International Diabetes Federation (IDF) 415 million were living with diabetes in 2015 and this is expected to rise to 642 million (or 1 adult in 10) by

2040.¹*Ayurveda* is one of the most ancient medical sciences of the world. It conceives and describes the basic and applied aspects of life process, health, disease and its management in terms of its own principles and approaches. All polyuric diseases in *Ayurveda* are described under '*Prameha*' and *Madhumeha* is one amongst them. The description of the acquired form of *Prameha*; referred to as *Apathyanimitaja Prameha*, is very similar to type 2 diabetes. *Apathya Ahara* (dietetic incompatibilities/unwholesome diet) and *Apathya Vihara* (lifestyle incompatibilities) both are the major risk factors for

Madhumeha.² The root cause of this increased prevalence can be traced out from every stage of life right from the childhood. The nurture of children has been changed now a day. Working parents have no time to prepare nutritious food for their children rather they prefer fast food items like Maggi, bread, butter etc. which are less nutritious and rich in fat. The young generation either due to laziness or busy schedule doesn't pay enough attention towards exercise. Studies have proved that active participation of the patients in the form of lifestyle changes can result in less expense for the management of diabetes and ensure good glycemic control also.³ Type 2 diabetes is a largely preventable disease and intensive lifestyle interventions are not only highly effective but cost-effective too. Here, Ayurvedic *Pathya Ahara* (wholesome diet) and *Pathya Vihara* (wholesome lifestyle) can play a major role in disease prevention and management.

Materials and Methods –

Diet and lifestyle related etiologies accountable for diabetes as mentioned in Ayurvedic treatises and websites were reviewed along with recommendations of *Pathya Ahara* (wholesome diet) and *Pathya Vihara* (wholesome lifestyle) as preventive strategies.

Nidana (Etiology) of Diabetes^{4,5}

Aharja Nidana (related to diet)

- *Adhyashna, Guru Guna ahara atisevana*
- *Sheeta Guna ahara atisevana, Madhura ahara atisevana*
- *Amlarasa ahara atisevana, Lavana rasa ahara atisevana*
- *Navannapana atisevana, Guda vikara atisevana*
- *Ikshu vikara atisevana, Ksheera atisevana, Dahi atisevana*
- *Anoop mamsa atisevana, Audaka mamsa atisevana,*
- *Gramya mamsa atisevana, Medovardhak ahara atisevana.*

The above mentioned *Aharas* are having predominant of *Apa* and *Prithvi Mahabhuta* and contain

Snigdha guna and eventually promote to *Kapha* and *Medas*. So which are initial causes for *Prameha/Madhumeha*. As these *Ahara* possess excessive *Apa Mahabhuta*, *Apabhutagni Vyapar Vikriti* takes place and this leads to *Kleda vridhi* which is the prime cause for the pathogenesis of *Madhumeha*.

Viharaja Prameha Nidana (related to lifestyle)

- *Atinidra*
- *Asya atishukha,*
- *Diwaswapna*
- *Vyayam Varjana,*
- *Alasya,*
- *Achinta,*
- *Samsodhana Varjana*

These *Viharaja Nidana* aggravates *Kapha* and *Medas* and cause *Prameha/Madhumeha*. There is less energy expenditure which causes ineffective mobilization of fat from adipose tissue while synthesis and storage of fat continues normally.

Samprapti (Etiopathogenesis)⁶

Madhumeha includes the etiological factors aggravate *Kapha, Pitta, Meda and Mamsa* and obstruct the normal pathway of *Vata*. Vitiated *vata* carries the *ojas* (apara oja) to *Basti* (urinary bladder) and manifest *Madhumeha*, which is difficult to cure.

Lakshana (Symptoms)⁷

Include *prabhuta mutrata* (polyuria), *Avila mutrata* (Turbid urine), the quality of urine is astringent, sweet, pale and unctuous. And the patient of *madhumeha* patient prefers to stand still than walking, sitting than standing, lying down than sitting and sleeping than lying down.

Bheda (classification)⁸

it is two types – *dhatukshayjanya* and *margaavaranjanya*. In both types *vata prakopa* occurs.⁸

Sadhya- Asahyata (Prognosis)⁹

1. *Sadhya* (Curable) – *Kaphaja* types of *Prameha*, early diagnosed case of Diabetes, *Apathya nimittaja Prameha*.
2. *Yapya* – *Pittaja* types of *Prameha*.

3. *Asadhya – Vataja* types of *Prameha, Sahaja prameha*.

CHIKITSA SUTRA (Treatment principle) ^{10, 11,12}

(1) First and foremost guideline is to avoid the diet and lifestyle related etiological factors involved in type 2 diabetes (*Nidanaparivarjana*)

(2) *Sthula Madhumehi* person diet should be *Apatarpanaguna* and heavy for digestion, while *Krishna Madhumehi* person's diet should be *Santarpanaguna* and light for digestion. *Krishna* patients' diet should be such that it doesn't increase *meda*.

(3) Octafactor guidelines for proper use of diet like *Prakriti, Karan, Sanyoga, Rashi, Desha, Kala*, and the user, must be taken into consideration.

(4) According to *Ritu* (seasons), various diets and activities should be prescribed depending upon the nature of *prakriti* and *doshas*.

Pathya Ahara for diabetics in Ayurveda ^{13,14,15,16,17}

Ayurveda has given utmost emphasis for the maintenance of *Pathya Ahara*. Ayurveda stated that if one take wholesome diet and activities suitable to all *Dhatus* (tissues), he can never suffer from *Madhumeha*. Quantity and quality of diet should be decided on the basis of *Agnibala* (digestive power). The recommended diet for *Madhumehi* is detailed below –

Grains: *Yava* (barley)- *Hordeum vulgare*, *Godhuma* (Wheat)- *Triticum sativum*, *Shashtika Shali* (rice)- *Oryza sativa*, *Kodrava* (grain variety)- *Paspolum Scrobiculatum*, *Uddalaka*, *Shyamaka*, *Bajara*.

Chanaka: (bengal gram)- *Cicerarietinum*, *Adhaki* (toor dal)- *Cajanus cajan*, *Mudga* (green gram)- *Phaseolus aureus*, *Kulattha* (Horse gram)- *Dolichos biflorus*

Vegetables: (bitter and astringent) *Methika* (fenu-greek)- *Trigonella foenum*, *Karvellaka* (bitter gourd)- *Momordica charantia*, *Tanduleyaka* (*Choulayee*)- *Amaranthus spinosus*, *Vastukam* (*Bathuva*), *Shobhanjana* (drum stick)- *Moringa oleifera*, *Karkotaka* –

Momordica dioica, *Rasona* (garlic)- *Alium sativum*, *Kadali* (raw banana)- *Musa paradisiaca*.

Fruits: *Jambu* (Jamun)-*Eugenia jambolana*, *Talaphala*- *Borassus flabellifer*, *Amalaki* (goose berry)-*Emblica officinalis*, *Kapittha* (monkey fruit)- *Limonea acidissima*, *Dadima* (pomegranate) – *Punica granatum*, *Tinduka* – *Disospyros embrayoptesis*.

Seeds: *Methika*, *Kamala*- *Nelumbo nucifera*, *Utpala* – *Nymphoea stellate*,

Flesh: (fat free meat; forest animals, forest birds) *Harina* (deer flesh), *Shashaka* (rabbit), Birds likes – *Kapota* (pigeon), *Titira*, *Lavaka*.

Fermented or alcoholic liquids: *Madhveeka Sura*, *Madhvasava* (in *Kapha Pittaja Prameha*), *Purana Sura*- old wine other natural products *Madhu* (honey), *Madhudaka* (honey mixed with water)

Oils: *Nikumba* (*Danti*- *Baliospernum montanum*), *Ingudi* (*Balanitis egyptica*), *Atasi* (*Linum usitatisimum*), *Sarshapa* (Mustard)

Others food articles and spices: *Dhani* (pop corn of jowar), *Laja/Murmura* (puffed rice), *Maricha*– (*Piper nigrum*), *Saindhava*– (rock salt), *Hingu*- (*asafoetida*), *Haridra*- (*Turmeric*), *Adraka*- (*Ginger*)

Pathya Vihara for diabetics in Ayurveda ^{18,19}

- *Vyayama*
- *Ruksha praghada udwartana* (*kolakulathadichurna*, *triphalachurna*, *saileyadichurna* etc.)
- *Nitya Kashya Snana*
- *Jalavaseka*
- *Paridhavana*
- *Lepan of Agarau, usheera, twaka, ela and Chandana*
- *Nisha jagarana*
- *Rich people- Niyudhakreeda, gajacharya, padacharya, carving shila or ratha.*

- *Poor people - walking of 100 yojan in 100 days i.e. 1 yojan per day (1 yojan is ~ 7.5 km), ploughing fields or digging well.*

Follow *sadvritta* Exercising 30 minutes a day reduces the risk of diabetes. Some of the exercises that one can follow are: walking every day, climbing stairs, swimming, stationary bicycling and practicing yoga.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda has a holistic approach in health management. It gives importance to *Ahara* and *Vihara* in the management of disease both as causative factor and as a part of prevention and management. As per *Ayurveda* Diabetes mellitus develops due to faulty eating habits. So *Ayurveda* deals with the *Pathya vyavastha* (planning of diet and lifestyle) in very scientific way. The specific *Pathya-Apathya* for a particular person may differ. As *Ayurveda* believes in the concept of each and every individual.²⁰ The exact *Pathya – Apathya* for a particular person should be decided after analyzing *Prakriti* (body constitution), *Kalpana* (Preparations), *Kala*(time of intake of Pathya), *Matra* etc.

CONCLUSION

Acharya charaka said that the person who takes proper *Aahara* and *Vihara* in right manner which maintain the equilibrium of *dhatu*s and also performs various physical activities, they live free from *Prameha (Madhumeha)*. Considering detailed conceptual part we can defiantly say that *Ayurveda* describes appropriate lifestyle and diet management called as *Ahara* and *Vihara* for the prevention for diabetes. Proper medication as per *Ayurvedic* guidelines along with proper *Ahara and Vihara* will definitely control diabetes without any untoward effects. Though the disease is described as *Asadhya*, it can be managed with regular *Ayurveda* treatment and some lifestyle modifications.

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