

SECONDARY INFERTILITY (MALE & FEMALE) DUE TO WEIGHT GAIN: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW FROM MODERN AND AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Secondary infertility is defined as the inability to conceive after a previous successful pregnancy despite regular unprotected intercourse for one year or more. In recent years, increasing body weight and obesity have emerged as major contributors to female and male infertility. Weight gain affects reproductive hormones, ovulation, metabolic functions, and psychological health, thereby impairing fertility. Ayurveda describes similar conditions under the concepts of Sthoulya (obesity), Artava Dushti, Avarana, Agnimandya, and Beeja Dushti. This review aims to analyze the relationship between weight gain and secondary infertility from both modern and Ayurvedic perspectives and to explore possible management approaches.

KEYWORDS: Secondary infertility, obesity, weight gain, Ayurveda, Sthoulya, infertility, PCOS, Artava Dushti.

INTRODUCTION

Infertility affects millions of couples worldwide and has become a significant public health concern. Secondary infertility refers to difficulty in conceiving after having conceived previously. Among various etiological factors, obesity and excessive weight gain are increasingly recognized as major causes.

Modern sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy dietary habits, stress, endocrine disorders, and metabolic disturbances contribute significantly to obesity-related infertility. Excess adipose tissue alters hormonal balance and interferes with ovulation and spermatogenesis.

Ayurveda considers proper reproductive health dependent upon balanced Doshas, healthy Agni, proper Dhatu nourishment, and unobstructed Artava and Shukra. Weight gain resulting from Kapha aggravation and Meda Dhatu accumulation disturbs the reproductive channels and ultimately affects fertility.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim

To review secondary infertility caused by weight gain from modern and Ayurvedic perspectives.

Objectives

To understand the relationship between obesity and secondary infertility.

To review the pathophysiology according to modern medicine.

To analyze Ayurvedic concepts related to infertility due to obesity.

To discuss integrative management approaches.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present review article is based on classical Ayurvedic texts including:

Charaka Samhita

Sushruta Samhita

Ashtanga Hridaya

Along with modern literature obtained from:

PubMed

Google Scholar

WHO publications

Standard gynaecology and endocrinology textbooks

Secondary Infertility: Modern Perspective

Definition

Secondary infertility is the inability to conceive after a previous conception despite one year of regular unprotected intercourse.

Causes

Common causes include:

Obesity and weight gain

Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)

Hormonal imbalance

Tubal factors

Endometriosis

Male factor infertility

Advanced maternal age

Lifestyle disorders

Obesity and Female Infertility

Obesity adversely affects reproductive function through multiple mechanisms.

Hormonal Disturbances

Excess adipose tissue alters estrogen metabolism and insulin sensitivity leading to:

Hyperinsulinemia

Hyperandrogenism

Anovulation

Menstrual irregularities

Effect on Ovulation

Weight gain disrupts hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis function, resulting in poor follicular development and ovulatory dysfunction.

PCOS Association

Obesity is strongly associated with PCOS, a major cause of secondary infertility.

Inflammatory Changes

Adipose tissue releases inflammatory cytokines that impair implantation and oocyte quality.

Obesity and Male Infertility

Weight gain also affects male reproductive health.

Effects Include

Reduced testosterone levels

Erectile dysfunction

Poor sperm quality

Oxidative stress

Altered spermatogenesis

Ayurvedic Perspective

Concept of Vandhyatva

Infertility in Ayurveda is broadly described under Vandhyatva.

Secondary infertility can be correlated with:

Kakavandhya

Vandhya Yonivyapad

Beeja Dushti

Role of Sthoulya in Infertility

Ayurveda considers Sthoulya as a Santarpanajanya Vyadhi caused by excessive intake of Madhura, Guru, Snigdha Ahara and sedentary lifestyle.

Samprapti

Excessive nourishment causes:

Kapha aggravation

Meda Dhatu vriddhi

Agnimandya

Srotorodha

This leads to obstruction in Artavavaha Srotas and impaired reproductive function.

Dosha Involvement

Kapha

Causes Meda accumulation

Produces obstruction

Vata

Especially Apana Vata becomes vitiated

Disturbs ovulation and conception

Pitta

Hormonal and metabolic disturbances

Dushya Involvement

Rasa

Rakta

Meda

Artava

Shukra

Srotas Involved

Artavavaha Srotas

Medovaha Srotas

Rasavaha Srotas

Correlation Between PCOS and Ayurvedic Concepts

PCOS may be correlated with:

Kapha-Vata Dushti

Artava Kshaya

Medoroga

Avarana pathology

Ayurvedic Management

Nidana Parivarjana

Avoidance of:

Junk food

Sedentary habits

Day sleep

Excessive oily and sweet food

Ahara

Recommended

Laghu Ahara

Yava

Kulattha

Takra

Green vegetables

Avoid

Excess sweets

Fried food

Bakery items

Vihara

Regular exercise

Yoga

Pranayama

Stress reduction

Shodhana Therapy

Vamana

For Kapha predominance.

Virechana

Improves Agni and metabolism.

Basti

Useful in Vata imbalance and infertility.

Shamana Chikitsa

Commonly used drugs:

Triphala

Guggulu

Shatavari

Ashwagandha

Guduchi

Kanchnar Guggulu

Yoga and Lifestyle Modification

Useful practices include

Surya Namaskar

Bhadrasana

Bhujangasana

Kapalabhati

Anulom Vilom

Weight reduction significantly improves fertility outcomes.

Integrative Approach**Combining**

Weight reduction

Dietary correction

Hormonal management

Ayurvedic therapies

Lifestyle changes

provides better reproductive outcomes.

DISCUSSION

Both Ayurveda medicine and Ayurveda therapy are give impact of obesity on reproductive health. Modern science explains infertility through endocrine and metabolic dysfunctions, whereas Ayurveda describes it through Dosha imbalance, Agnimandya, and Srotorodha.

The central pathology in both systems involves metabolic disturbance affecting reproductive function. Weight reduction improves ovulation, hormonal balance, and conception rates.

Ayurvedic therapies and medicines offer holistic management through correction of metabolism, purification therapies, dietary regulations, and rejuvenation.

CONCLUSION

Weight gain is an important reversible cause of secondary infertility. Obesity affects fertility through hormonal, metabolic, and inflammatory pathways. Ayurveda explains this condition through Sthoulya, Kapha aggravation, Meda Dushti, and Artava impairment. Early intervention through lifestyle modification, weight management, and integrative therapeutic approaches can significantly improve fertility outcomes.