

## AYURVEDIC APPROACH TOWARDS STHAULYA (OBESITY)

Vd. Priyanka Singh\*<sup>1</sup> and Vd. Siddharth D. Gaikwad<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>M.D. Scholar (Kayachikitsa), K.G. Mittal Ayurved College, Charni Road, Mumbai, India.<sup>2</sup>Professor, H.O.D., Dept. of Kayachikitsa, K.G. Mittal Ayurved College, Charni Road, Mumbai, India.Article Received on  
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**\*Corresponding Author****Vd. Priyanka Singh**

M.D. Scholar

(Kayachikitsa), K.G. Mittal

Ayurved College, Charni

Road, Mumbai, India.

**ABSTRACT**

*Sthaulya* (obesity) is one among many lifestyle disorders which is rapidly increasing worldwide. It not only disturbs the physical structure but also affects the mental and social health of an individual. Nowadays, it has become a disease of all age group. *Sthaulya* in *Ayurveda* is described in detail under *medoroga* which results due to dysfunction of *meda dhatuagni* (factors responsible for nourishment/metabolism of *meda dhatu*). Rapid modernization and application of modern science to human affair has led to improvement in the quality of life, but it has also induced lifestyle changes that are not always favourable to health. This modernization such as various machines, ready to eat foods, processed food items, use of vehicles,

increase in leisure time activities involving computer, mobile and television, various advertising techniques are being used to target particularly children and the youth whose generous consumption of unhealthy foods leads to obesity which act as a precursor for various disease such as Diabetis, Cardio vascular disease, Cancer These complication affects the Heart, the Brain, the Kidneys, the Liver and the pancreas of an individual. This article describes the Aetiological factors, pathogenesis and various preventive measures and management of *sthaulya* (obesity) through Ayurvedic Aspects as described in classical *Ayurvedic* Texts.

**KEYWORDS:** *Sthaulya*, Obesity, Management.**INTRODUCTION**

Obesity is Accumulation of excess fat in the body which may lead to negative effects on health, reduced life expectancy and increased health problem.<sup>[1]</sup>

A major proportion of Diabetes, IHD(*Medodushti*- Disease of fat metabolism maybe one of the risk factors for IHD), Ischaemic stroke, Osteoarthritis, Cancer may be attributed to overweight and obesity.

In *Ayurveda* *Athistahulya*(Obesity) is described as Excessive accumulation of *Meda*(fat/Adipose tissue) And *Mamsa*(flesh/Muscle tissue) leading to flabbiness of Lips, Abdomen and Breast. It is considered to be as one of the *Santarpanoththavikaras*(Disease due to consumption of excessive calories)in *Ayurveda*.<sup>[2]</sup>

Modern science says the person is considered to be obese when there is an Excessive increase in Tissue, Fat and Muscle in the region of buttocks, Abdomen and breast which becomes pendulous and suffer from Deficient metabolism and energy.

According to WHO Obesity is classified as<sup>[3]</sup>

BMI	WEIGHT STATUS
<18.5	Underweight
18.5-24.9	Normal
25-<30	Overweight
30-34.9	Obesity class 1
35-39.9	Obesity class 2
Above 40	Obesity class 3

Entire world is expecting foremost fruitful management protocol and prevention of obesity without any side effects and aggravation of other health condition, so *Ayurveda* approaches to nearly fulfil the terms.

## **PATHOPHYSIOLOGY OF OBESITY**

Due to obstruction of body channels by *meda dhatu*, the movement of *vata* is specially confined to *koshtha*(Abdominal viscera) resulting in the stimulation of digestive power and absorption of food. Hence, the person digest food quickly and becomes a voracious eater. By not following rules of taking meals at specific times during the day, person is afflicted by dreadful diseases.

*Agni*(*Pitta* component responsible for digestion) and *vata* are the two most troublesome factors from the stand point of obesity. These factors blight an obese person as wildlife destroys a forest.

As the body gains excessive fat, vitiated *dosha* suddenly cause severe disease resulting in the

rapid deterioration of life.<sup>[2]</sup>

## AETIOLOGY

### DIETARY FACTORS

Intake of Non-veg/Sweets/Deep fried food/Fatty (snigdha) food intake. Dairy food items such as *Ghee* and *Ghee* based sweets.

### INCOMPATIBLE LIFESTYLE

Obesity occurs when energy intake from food and drink consumption is greater than energy expenditure through body's metabolism and decreased physical activity over a prolonged period, Resulting in the Accumulation of excess body fat.

Lack of Physical activity and sedentary lifestyle. Excess sleep, day sleep and *sukhshayya*.<sup>[4]</sup>

### PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Obesity is Psychological as well as physical problem.<sup>[5]</sup> E.g- Depression, Anxiety and Eating disorder.

Individual who suffer from Psychological issues finds more difficult in controlling their consumption of food, Exercising adequate amount and maintaining weight.

The rapid increase in the prevalence of obesity suggest that Psychological and behavioral factors rather than biological factors are primarily responsible for this trend.

### HEREDITARY

*Sahaj* and *Kulaja*- According to charak family history is also one of the causative factor of obesity.<sup>[6]</sup>

### EFFECTS OF *ATISTHULTA*

In *Atisthula* person there is excessive of fat (*meda*) which further leads to only accumulation of fat and consequent depletion of *dhatu* obstructing the growth of *dhatu* leading to depletion of *Rasaadi* other *dhatu*.

*Atisthula* person is less active and there is lack of cheerfulness due to excessive accumulation of *meda dhatu* leading to excessive sweating which is unpleasant in nature.

*Meda* is mixed with *kapha* which is *vishyandi* (sweaty) and excessive in amount restricting person from performing exercises.

In *Sthula* person scenario of excessive *vayu* with *Tikshna Agni* is seen which are confined in *koshtha*, this stimulates digestive fire and absorption of food fastens, so the person feels hungry and thirsty all the time.<sup>[7]</sup>

## MANAGEMENT OF OBESITY

Management protocol includes foods and drinks that Alleviate *Vata* and Reduces *Kapha* and *Meda dhatu*(fat).<sup>[8]</sup>

Treatment modalities includes-

- *Shaman*
- *Shodhan*
- *Yoga and Pranayama*
- Diet-Lifestyle Modification

### 1. *Shamana* (Medicinal Preparation)

#### A) *Single Dravya*

*Guduchi, Musta, Bibhitaka, Amalaki, Haritaki, Yavaka, Priyangu, Patola* etc. These *Dravyas* are anti oxidant so Increases digestive capacity and possess *lekhniya* property. They help to reduce cholesterol and Tryglyceride levels.

#### B) *Formulations*

*Takrarishta* (A Fermented medicinal preparation of buttermilk). It has *Katu rasa, Katu vipaka* which balances the properties of *pachaka pitta* and *kledaka kapha*, with the help of *laghu, ruksha, teekshna guna*. It increases the action of *vata shaman* which increases the digestion and metabolism of the body.

Formulation made from *Vidanga, Nagara, Yavakshara*(*Vidangadi yoga*)- They act as a *Kapha* and *Vata shamak* with the help of *katu, tikta, kashaya rasa, ushna virya, katu, madhur vipaka & laghu, ruksha, teekshna guna*. It has *Lekhana* properties which acts on *medas*(adipose tissue). They work in the form of *Apatarpanatmaka dravyas*.

Ash powder of black iron along with honey.

Powder of *yava* and *amalaki* is also an excellent weight loss drug.

*Bilvadi panchmoola* mixed with honey.

*Shilajatu* along with the juice of *agnimantha* are also very effective preparation for weight loss.<sup>[8]</sup>

Some other common classical preparations used in obesity-

- *Navak Guggulu*
- *Medohara Guggulu*
- *Triphala Guggulu*
- *Arogyavardhini*
- *Loharista* (B.R)
- *Loha Rasayan* (B.R)
- *Vidangadi loha* (B.R)
- *Traysunadya loha* (Y.R)
- *Trimurthi Rasa* (Y.R)
- *Agnikumar Rasa* (R.R.S)

### C. *Udvartana*

Dry powder of herbs like *Triphala*, *Ishtika churna* etc is rubbed against the body. It alleviates *Kapha dosha*, reduces excess body fat, Increases stability of the body.

## 2. *Shodhan Chikitsa*<sup>[9]</sup>

- *Vaman*
- *Virechana*
- *Lekhan Basti*

*Lekhan basti* constitute of *madhu*, *saindhav lavana*, *til taila*, *triphala kwatha* and *hinghu*, *kasis*, *yavaskhara*, *tutha*, *gomutra* and *silajatu* these *dravyas* are mainly *lekhaniya*, *yogwahi*, *deepaniya*, *vata anulomaka* in nature due to which they reduce excessive *Meda* by scrapping.

*Lekhan basti* (Medicated enema) are advised for the management of *Sthaulya*.

Acharya Charaka has mentioned *Lekhaniya dashemani Dravyas*<sup>[10]</sup> – a group of 10 drugs, these drugs principally perform the *Lekahana Karma* of excess and abnormal *Meda*, causing weight reduction as well as relief in other signs and symptoms. These drugs are given below:

1. *Mustaka*

2. *Kustha*
3. *Haridra*
4. *Vacha*
5. *Ativisha*
6. *Katu Rohini*
7. *Chitraka*
8. *Chirabilva*
9. *Daruharidra*
10. *Haimvati (Karanj)*

### 3. **YOGA AND PRANAYAMA**<sup>[11][12]</sup>

Exercise indicated in obese are *yoga/pranayama* Jogging, bicycling, swimming, brisk walking etc.

#### ***Pranayama***

It is said that *Yogic Hatha yoga Pradeepika* and others that practiced *pranayama* aimed at making the body slim and fit. *Pranayama* can help to burn excessive fat in the body.

There are two *Pranayama* that are good for weight reduction-*Kapalbhati* and *Anuloma vilom pranayama*.

#### ***Kapalbhati***

In this breath involves forceful exhalation and normal inhalation. This is done in a comfortable sitting posture with erect spine. The belly is drawn in with every forceful exhalation and filled again with normal inhalation. This is known to reduce the fat around the belly.

#### ***Anuloma vilom***

The alternate nostril breathing technique which also helps to reduce weight. This *pranayama* is said to generate heat in the body and to burn down excessive fat.

#### ***Yoga Asana***

*Suryanamaskar, Pawanmuktasana, Bhujangasana, Shalabhasana, Dhanurasana, Pachimottanasana, ArdhaVakrasana, Hakasana, Ardhashakrasana, Naukasana, Trikonasana, Veerbhadrhasana, Ustrasana.*

### Shatkarma

The other hatha yoga practices which are most helpful in obesity are the *shatkarmas* (internal cleansing technique).

These includes: *Shankhaprakshalana* (cleansing of entire alimentary canal, *laghu* (short) *Shankhaprakshalana*), *Kunjla* (cleaning for the stomach) and *Neti* (Cleansing of the nasal passages).

These practices clean our body internally. After practicing the *shatkarma*, person feels as if the body/mind system is rid of extra weight physically as well as mentally.

### 4. DIET-LIFESTYLE MODIFICATION<sup>[13][14]</sup>

DO'S	DONT'S
Take low fat and low caloric food item	High Carbohydrates vegetables like potato, rice etc
Take more protein to longer without food	More sugary or sweet products
To eat Steamed/boiled and baked vegetable	More dairy products
Take frequent small meal to avoid food craving	Fried and oily foods, fast foods
Drink skimmed milk instead of whole milk	Salty foods or excessive salt in meals
Take healthy but slow digesting food such-as walnuts, salads, bitter guard, drumstick, barley(yava), wheat, green gram(moong dal)	Day sleep
Honey( <i>Madhu</i> ), Indian gooseberry( <i>amla</i> ), pomegranate and snake gourd	<i>Nitya Harsha, Achinta, Manaso nivriti, Priya darshan</i>
Skimmed buttermilk	<i>Avyayama, Ayavaya</i>
Include cabbage in daily meal. It will stop the conversion of sugars to fat	
Include lemon in diet and drinks. Use warm water for drinking	
Physical activity, exercise	
Early to bed, early to rise	

### MODERN MANAGEMENT OF OBESITY<sup>[15]</sup>

According to modern science obesity should be recognized and treated as a primary medical condition that is progressive, chronic and relapsing.

Effective treatment of obesity has been shown to reduce cardiovascular risk factors and co-morbid conditions, Physician involvement is necessary for medical assessment, management, counselling and coordination of obesity treatment.

Obese patient should receive weight management program which should include Dietary adjustment, increased physical activity and behavioral modification.

Nutritional modification should take into account the Diet, energy content, composition and suitability for the individual patient. The physical activity component should be and practical including Aerobic activity, strength training and increased daily lifestyle activities.

## CONCLUSION

Due to urbanization, industrialization & modern lifestyle it is seen that people live a sedentary life style which give rise to a metabolic disorder called as Obesity.

Out of Ten every 4<sup>th</sup> person is fat around globe. This is increasing at an alarming rate. Hence obesity has high prevalence rate factor of health problems like coronary heart disease, hypertension, DM type 2.

So medicinal approach of treatment is not enough to treat obesity, but Dietary regulation and lifestyle adaptation along with physical exercise is must to breakdown the chain of this metabolic disorder. Hence this article is written to summarize etiological factors associated with lifestyle responsible for obesity along with its Ayurvedic management.

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