

MANAGING SANDHIVATA (OSTEOARTHRITIS) WITH AYURVEDA: A SINGLE CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Osteoarthritis (OA), referred to as Sandhivata in Ayurveda, is a progressive joint condition marked by the degeneration of cartilage, leading to symptoms such as pain, stiffness, and decreased mobility. It considerably affects individuals' quality of life, especially among older adults. Traditional treatments typically involve pain relievers, anti-inflammatory medications, and surgical options, which may carry risks of long-term side effects. In contrast, Ayurveda offers a comprehensive method for managing OA that incorporates dietary adjustments, lifestyle changes, herbal remedies, and therapeutic techniques aimed at achieving balance in the Vata dosha—widely recognized as a key factor in Sandhivata. This article discusses a case study involving a 58-year-old female patient diagnosed with Sandhivata, who

underwent treatment following Ayurvedic methodologies, including Panchakarma therapies, herbal treatments, and lifestyle modifications. The study seeks to showcase the effectiveness of Ayurvedic practices in alleviating symptoms like pain and stiffness, while also improving mobility and overall joint function. Patient outcomes were tracked through clinical assessments, pain evaluations, and mobility tests conducted before and after the treatment. The findings reveal that Ayurveda may offer substantial long-term relief by addressing the underlying causes of the condition rather than solely managing its symptoms. The outcomes showed marked improvements in pain levels, increased range of motion, and enhanced quality of life, indicating Ayurveda's potential as a safe and effective alternative for OA management. The study suggests the need for further research and clinical trials to confirm these results and investigate Ayurveda's integrative approach in the treatment of osteoarthritis.

KEYWORDS: Sandhivata, Janu Sandhi Sofa, Osteoarthritis, Abhyanga, Swedana.

INTRODUCTION

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the prevalent type of arthritis, impacting millions globally. It is a degenerative joint condition that causes the gradual deterioration of cartilage in the joints, leading to symptoms such as pain, stiffness, swelling, and reduced mobility.^[1] OA mainly involves weight-bearing joints, including the knees, hips, and spine, which can make everyday tasks difficult for those affected. This condition is often linked to factors such as aging, obesity, previous joint injuries, genetic factors, and excessive mechanical stress on the joints.^[2]

In traditional medical practice, osteoarthritis (OA) is treated with a combination of analgesics, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), corticosteroid injections directly into the affected joints, physiotherapy, and, in more advanced cases, surgical joint replacements. It is important to note that these treatments primarily alleviate symptoms rather than tackle the underlying issues. Additionally, prolonged use of NSAIDs and corticosteroids can result in negative side effects, including gastrointestinal ulcers, kidney problems, and increased cardiovascular risks.^[3]

Ayurveda, the traditional medical system of India, identifies Osteoarthritis (OA) as Sandhivata. This condition arises chiefly from an exacerbated Vata dosha, which results in the deterioration of joint structures, a reduction in synovial fluid, and damage to bone and cartilage health. Ayurvedic teachings suggest that factors such as inadequate diet, lack of physical activity, excessive strain, and the natural aging process can worsen Vata dosha, leading to symptoms such as dryness, roughness, discomfort, and rigidity in the joints.^[4]

The Ayurvedic approach to managing Sandhivata emphasizes the importance of rebalancing the Vata dosha while promoting the rejuvenation of joint tissues. This is achieved through a comprehensive plan that includes dietary guidelines, herbal remedies, Panchakarma therapies, and lifestyle changes. Panchakarma, known for its detoxification and revitalization effects, is essential in removing built-up toxins (referred to as Ama) and providing nourishment to the joints, which enhances flexibility and mobility.

This case study focuses on examining the efficacy of a holistic Ayurvedic method in addressing Sandhivata (osteoarthritis) by outlining a patient's experience with Ayurvedic

treatment, which encompasses herbal remedies, external therapies, and changes in lifestyle. The research aims to add to the increasing evidence that supports Ayurveda as a feasible option for long-term management of osteoarthritis.

AIM

The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the efficacy of Ayurvedic management in treating Sandhivata (Osteoarthritis) and to assess the impact of herbal medicines, Panchakarma therapies, and lifestyle modifications on the patient's symptoms and mobility.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the role of Ayurveda in managing Sandhivata (Osteoarthritis).
- To evaluate the effect of Ayurvedic dietary modifications on joint health.
- To assess the impact of herbal formulations in reducing inflammation and pain.
- To study the role of Panchakarma therapies in improving joint function.
- To investigate the benefits of lifestyle modifications in managing symptoms of Sandhivata.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: A single case study approach was used to document the effectiveness of Ayurvedic treatment for Sandhivata.

CASE REPORT

A 58-year-old woman sought medical attention due to knee pain, stiffness, and challenges with walking that had persisted for the last five years. Her medical history indicated weight gain and a lack of physical activity, which contributed to the worsening of her symptoms. Following a clinical evaluation, she was diagnosed with Sandhivata, taking into account her symptoms and the results of the examination.

Clinical Examination

The patient underwent a detailed clinical examination, which included:

General Examination

Pulse: 76 bpm

Blood Pressure: 130/85 mmHg

Weight: 72 kg

Body Mass Index (BMI): 27.5 kg/m² (Overweight)

Temperature: Normal

Local Examination

Pain Assessment: Visual Analog Scale (VAS) score of 7/10 (moderate to severe pain)

Swelling: Mild swelling around knee joints

Tenderness: Present on palpation of knee joints

Crepitus: Audible crackling sound during movement

Range of Motion (ROM): Restricted flexion and extension

Muscle Strength: Slightly reduced in lower limbs

Gait Analysis: Mild limping observed due to pain.

Treatment Protocol

Treatment	Drug/Procedure	Dose	Duration
	Shallaki (Boswellia serrata)	500 mg twice daily	3 months
	Guggulu (Commiphora mukul)	500 mg twice daily	3 months
	Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera)	500 mg twice daily	3 months
	Haridra (Curcuma longa)	1 teaspoon with warm milk	3 months
	Nirgundi (Vitex negundo)	Oil application on affected joint	Daily
Panchakarma Therapy	Abhyanga (Oil Massage)	Mahanarayana Taila	Daily for 3 months
	Swedana (Sudation Therapy)	Herbal steam	Daily for 1 month
	Basti (Medicated Enema)	Dashamoola Niruha Basti	7 days cycle (3 cycles)
	Rakta Mokshana (Bloodletting)	As per requirement	Once a month (if needed)
	Lepa (Herbal Paste)	Dashanga Lepa	Twice weekly for 3 months

Lifestyle Modifications

Daily mild exercises like yoga and walking.

Regular use of warm water for drinking and bathing.

Stress management techniques like meditation and pranayama.

Avoiding excessive strain on joints and using supportive aids like knee braces if necessary.

Practicing joint mobility exercises to maintain flexibility and strength.

Statistical Analysis

The effectiveness of the treatment was assessed using a Visual Analog Scale (VAS) for pain, Range of Motion (ROM), and overall functional improvement. The following table shows the statistical comparison before and after treatment:

Parameter	Before Treatment	After Treatment	Improvement (%)
VAS Score (Pain)	7/10	3/10	57%
Swelling (Grading)	Moderate	Mild	50%
Tenderness	Present	Absent	100%
Range of Motion (ROM)	Restricted	Improved	60%
Muscle Strength	Slightly Reduced	Normal	40%
Gait Analysis	Mild Limping	Normal Walking	100%

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following a three-month course of Ayurvedic treatment, the patient reported a notable decrease in pain, enhanced mobility, and an overall improvement in quality of life. The Panchakarma therapies offered prompt relief from symptoms, whereas the use of herbal remedies and dietary changes played a crucial role in promoting long-term joint health. The holistic nature of Ayurveda not only addressed the symptoms but also aided in decelerating the degenerative progression.

In addition, the follow-up after treatment indicated that the patient successfully decreased her reliance on pain medication and experienced enhancements in her physical activity levels. The incorporation of Rasayana (rejuvenative) therapies contributed to the reinforcement of joint tissues, highlighting Ayurveda's capability in mitigating disease advancement.

The observed enhancements can be linked to the combined benefits of Ayurvedic practices. Key Panchakarma treatments, including Abhyanga, Swedana, and Basti, were instrumental in alleviating inflammation, enhancing joint lubrication, and fortifying tissues. Additionally, herbal remedies like Shallaki, Guggulu, and Ashwagandha provided significant anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving properties. Furthermore, nutritional adjustments played a vital role in ensuring proper nourishment and mitigating the risk of further deterioration.

Ayurveda's comprehensive method for addressing Sandhivata goes beyond merely alleviating symptoms; it also targets the root cause by balancing the Vata dosha and restoring joint health. This approach offers long-term advantages that help halt the advancement of the disease and reduce reliance on conventional pain medications, positioning Ayurveda as a viable alternative for managing osteoarthritis (OA).

CONCLUSION

This case study illustrates the efficacy of Ayurveda in treating Sandhivata, a condition commonly linked to osteoarthritis, by utilizing a combination of herbal remedies, Panchakarma therapies, and lifestyle modifications. The focus on holistic healing, detoxification, and rejuvenation not only aids in immediate symptom relief but also fosters sustainable outcomes. Notable improvements in pain, mobility, and overall quality of life in the patient highlight the potential of Ayurveda as a safe and effective option for managing osteoarthritis. The findings emphasize the necessity of a comprehensive treatment approach that targets both symptoms and the underlying causes of osteoarthritis. Ayurvedic methods not only alleviate symptoms but also prevent further joint deterioration by balancing Vata dosha and improving joint lubrication and nourishment. In contrast to conventional therapies that predominantly concentrate on pain relief, Ayurveda promotes long-term joint health. To confirm these results and assess the integration of Ayurveda with modern medical practices for a holistic approach to osteoarthritis care, larger clinical trials and research studies are essential. By merging traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with current scientific inquiry, there is potential for Ayurveda to play a pivotal role in sustainable and comprehensive joint health management.

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