



Review Article

ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN MANAGEMENT OF DIABETES MELLITUS

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ABSTRACT

Diabetes mellitus has now become most common among all the diseases in present era. In India, this disease is increasing very fast and it seems that India is going to be capital of diabetes in next coming years. It can be correlated with Madhumeha in Ayurveda. In charaka samhita, Madhumeha has been described as a type of Vataja prameha which is characterized by passing of honey like urine in excess amount. It is said to be a curable disease in Ayurveda which seeks complete management of this disease along with the prevention ideas and different types of daily activities which are of extreme importance. The blood sugar level reduces slowly and progressively with continuous use of Ayurvedic drugs which are very safe because these drugs do not lead to hypoglycemic episodes. Ayurveda is boon for diabetic patients if handled by a good Ayurvedic physician.

Keywords: Madhumeha, diabetes, sweet urine

INTRODUCTION

The term diabetes mellitus describes a metabolic disorder of multiple etiologies characterized by chronic hyperglycemia with disturbances of carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism resulting from defects in insulin secretion, insulin action, or both. The micro vascular complications of diabetes mellitus are called “triopathy” which includes retinopathy, nephropathy and neuropathy whereas macro vascular complications include peripheral vascular disease, cerebro vascular disease and cardiovascular disease. Four types of diabetes have been recognized viz. type-1 (beta cell destruction-autoimmune/idiopathic), type-2 (defect in insulin resistance or insulin secretion, impaired glucose tolerance), type-3 (from specific etiology) and type-4 (gestational). Type-1 diabetes accounts for 5 % to 10 % of all cases of diabetes. Its risk factors include genetic, autoimmune and environmental factors. Type-2 diabetes accounts for 90 % to 95 % of all diagnosed diabetes cases.

Etiological factors

In Ayurveda, excessive intake of heavy, unctuous and saline taste foods, new cereals and fresh wine consumption in large quantity, sedentary life style, not indulging in any sort of physical and mental exercise and not undergoing for bio-purification of body are said to be etiological factors for madhumeha¹.

Samprapti (Aetiopathogenesis)

The etiological factors aggravate kapha, pitta, meda and mansa and obstruct the normal pathway of vata. Agitated vata carries the ojus to basti (urinary bladder) and manifest madhumeha which is difficult for management².

Lakshana (Symptoms)

Patients pass urine having sweet taste and smell of body resembling like honey³. The urine is astringent, sweet, pale and unctuous⁴.

Types

It is of two types⁵ - Dhatukshaya janya and Marga avaran janya. In both of the above types, vata is aggravated which results into madhumeha.

Management

Ayurveda clearly defines this disease and its line of treatment. Sushrut has described a whole chapter on treatment of this disease which indicates that its treatment was known at that time⁶. This major disease can be managed by giving comprehensive attention to four aspects which are Nidan parivarjan, Ahara (diet), Vihara (exercise) and Aushadha (medicine). The role of ahara and vihara are equally or even more important to control blood sugar level as well as to prevent complications of this disease. In all the classics, ahara dravyas are described in detail and they cover all the food groups specially yava, godhooma, bajara, mudga, tikta shaka, amla, nimba, karavellaka, patola, guduchi, tulsi, gudmar, vijaysara, chirayta, manjistha, haridra, rasona, jambu, methika, bimbi etc. According to Charaka⁷, this disease get immediately cured by different type of exercises, ruksha udvartana, avagaha and parisek snana along with application of ointment made of aguru, chandan, usheer, ela etc. and if they are used always, person will never be its victim. Exercise enhances insulin delivery to muscles and open up previously non perfused capillaries, these increase both the effect of insulin and the surface area of for glucose transport. Exercise also increases peripheral and hepatic insulin sensitivity and decreases the risk of CVD (cardiovascular disease) and PVD (peripheral vascular disease). According to Ayurveda, the line of treatment of madhumeha is strictly based on individual constitution. In general, type 1 Diabetes Mellitus (Vathaja prameha) patients are advised to have Bhrimhana (i.e. medication and diet which increase dhatu in the body) along with Shaman chikitsa. In type 2 Diabetes (obese diabetic), patient with optimal body strength having intense increase of doshas, bio-purification (shodhan chikitsa) of the body is advised after Snehana karma completion. This depends on dosha predominance (Kaphaja are advised emetics, Pittaja are advised purgation). Generally swedana is contra indicated in this disease because it induces kleda which is a causative factor for this disease.

The herbal drugs used in the management of madhumeha should have katu (pungent), tikta (bitter) and kasaya (astringent) rasa (taste) because the drug has to check the extra fluidity of dhatus and give them good strength with compactness. In other words, katu, tikta and kasaya rasa having attributes against madhur rasa. Katu rasa maintains pachakagni so it corrects metabolism. Tikta and kasaya rasa are useful to check excessive urination by their sthambhan property. So the management approach of madhumeha in Ayurveda is completely dependent upon the strength and digestive power of patient, type of vitiated and predominant dosas, nature of therapy and season of time of administration of therapy.

CONCLUSION

Madhumeha which can be correlated with diabetes mellitus was well known to Indian physicians who have not described only the sweet taste of urine as one of the major symptoms but also the relationship of disease with obesity and consequences of biochemical abnormalities in the body creating dyslipidemia in glucose metabolism (metabolic syndrome). The reduction of sugar level is slow and progressive with continuous use of Ayurvedic drugs. They are safe because these drugs will not lead to hypoglycemic episodes. Ayurveda is boon for diabetic patients if handled by a good Ayurvedic physician.

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