REVIEW ARTICLE

Pathyavihara and Yoga for Psychological Etiological Factors in Infertility

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1. INTRODUCTION

Infertility or Vandhyatva is a disease of the male or female reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse.[1] It is a common problem among couples which can be due to various reasons. The psychological factor is one among such factor. Advancing technologies, changing lifestyles, stressful work patterns, lack of health awareness emotional instability in relationships, etc. can be the cause of infertility too. This manuscript prioritizes the need for observance of right Dinacharya Ritucharya Sadavritta and Yoga modalities which can help in reducing these issues by managing the stress factors and relaxing mind and body along with enhancing the feeling of acceptance of oneself as a whole. Mental health is equally important for good progeny as physical health as mentioned by Acharaya Charaka that conception brings happiness while the unhappy state of mind decreases the potency of sperm/ovum.[2] Hence, there is a need to study about the role of observance of Pathyavihara and Yoga in managing the psychological factors in infertility.

1.1. Aim
The study aimed to understand the role of Pathyavihara and Yoga modalities in the reduction of psychological factors causing infertility.

2. METHODOLOGY
It is a literary Review. Ayurveda classical texts Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, etc. were searched for reviews, books on Yoga and Meditation peer-reviewed journals and articles from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and data on the internet were searched and analyzed.
3. RESULTS OF REVIEW

3.1. Infertility

Important constituents for pregnancy are time, nutrition, uterus, and sperm/ovum.[3] The Uttama Bhava Ojas decide the strength, immunity, and longevity of an individual as well as the quality of future progeny.[4] Acharya Charaka explains in Sharira Sthana that pregnancy is caused by a combination of six factors, which are related to mother, father, food, mental health, adaptability, and soul.[3] Acharya Charaka also puts emphasis on the fact that conception occurs as a combination of Shudha Yoni and Beejya and when the soul wants to enter the Garbha.[6] When there is abnormality in these factors either there is no pregnancy or if it occurs then deformations might be there. There are various types of Vandhyatva (Infertility) mentioned in classical, these are mainly three types: Vandhya: Complete sterility, Apraja: curable as women can conceive or primary infertility, and Sapraja: Secondary infertility. On the basis of symptoms, they have been classified as Garbhakosha Bhangu – uterine injury, Anapatya – primary infertility, Kakvandhya – secondary infertility, Garbastravi – repeated abortions, Mrutvatsa – stillbirths, Balakshaya – weakness originated infertility.[7]

3.2. Mental and Emotional Health in Infertility

This is the major factor in present infertility cases. The normal psychology of a couple is important in the achievement of pregnancy. The changing patterns of living, use of higher technologies, radiations improper circadian rhythm, patterns of eating food, taking Tamasika Ahara, and lack of physical activity tend to and enhanced nature of mental activity affect the mental and emotional health of any of the partners. Psychological factors such as stress, agitation, anxiety, and depression are results of a bad lifestyle, which produce abnormality at Manomaya Kosha level. Moreover, the feeling of unacceptance has been increasing in individuals these days. The lacuna of society for not being able to channelize the emotional imbalance among humans has enhanced this issue. This also leads to various other diseases too resulting in more difficulty to conceive.

3.3. Role of Pathyavihara

Acharya Charaka beautifully explained various Pathya Viharas for Everyone in Svasthachatushaka,[5] similarly, other Acharyas have given their affirmations in their texts too. Dinachaya, Ritucharya, Sadavritta, Vegadharana, and Achara Rasayana are the blessings given to us as a manual to live a life.

Dinacharya.[9] Modalities such as Bhrumahuharta Jagrana[10] help in balancing circadian rhythm and increasing oxygen take-up capacity by the cells. Regular Abhyanga helps in Vatashamana[11] which is the major cause of Mental instability, it relaxes the Mind and Body and one can get good sleep after massage. Udvartha acts as Bhayaparinirjana of malas on a regular basis helping the body cells to rejuvenate and making the body strong.[12] Washing feet, and wearing unteared clothes, and footwear enhances virility as per Acharayas[9] which is related to the planet Venus which governs the sacral and Chakra.[13]

Ratricharya.[11] Helps in a relaxation of mind and body as a good sleep activates the Healing and calms down irrelevant thoughts and emotions.

Ritucharya:[14] Provides the regimens for every season helping the body to deal with changes occurring in the environment not harm the microcosm. Shodhana Karnas not only physically clears the body but also helps in balancing the Manasika Doshas, as once the body is cleansed mind starts to feel happy and serene.

Sadvritta:[15] Most important modality for reducing the psychological factors. Worshipping the deities and following the Vedic rituals helps in calming the mind and reduces agitation, stress, anger, etc. It helps in bringing confidence and generating feelings of care, love, and peace. A good company endows with Satvika qualities, and the person will be devoid of mental and emotional disturbances. Achara Rasayana[16] mentioned by Acharya Charaka is a complete ethical code of conduct that prevents and treats psychological and psychosomatic diseases.

All these modalities help in relaxing the mind and body and coordinate them. When all these factors are managed, then the treatment of infertility will be fruitful. Both partners must come together to accept a baby in their life.

3.4. Yoga and Infertility

Yoga practice provides physical mental and emotional balance in oneself. Ashtanga Yoga by Maharishi Patanjali[11] has all the aspects for maintaining health and attaining the Moksha. It helps in alleviating the emotional trauma of infertility.[17] Not being able to conceive is dealt with as a failure in one’s life, which generates stress, emotional imbalance, depression, and low self-esteem, which can further contribute to the worsening of the condition. Sacral Chakra and Heart Chakra also play an important role. Energy blockage at these chakras tends to increase the risk of infertility. Yogic regimens, such as Yama Niyama, Pranayama, and Pratyahara Dharana Dhyana help in the reversal of affliction of Mano maya Kosha level and reconcile the mental health.[13]

3.4.1. Asanas to be practiced

Sukshama Vyayamas, Suryanamaskara, Balaasas, Malasana Trikonasana, Gomukhasana, Naukasana, Paschimottanasana, Setubandhasana, Bhujangasana, Shalabhasana, Makarasana, and Shavasana[18] These Asanas help in supporting and maintaining the pelvic muscles and maintain the hormonal levels, thereby preparing the body for conception at physical level. One will learn the coordination of the body as well as the mind.[10]

3.4.2. Pranayama

Bhrumari, Nadishodhana, Pranayama, Chandrabhedi Pranayama:[19] All these pranayamas help in balancing the feminine energy and reduce stress factors.[20]

3.4.3. Mudra

Yoni Mudra:[20] This mudra helps in keeping the Sacral Chakra aligned thereby maintaining reproductive health; it can be helpful in infertility. It calms and cools the mind and opens up the Sacral Chakra.

4. DISCUSSION

Infertility due to psychological factors can be originated in both males and females. These factors need to be addressed for a completely healthy progeny. Acceptance of oneself as a whole and embracing the fact of actually bearing a child as a couple and not merely considering it as a pregnancy can help in alleviating the psychological distress and help in actually manifesting a child. Psychological factors such as stress, agitation, anxiety, and depression are results of a bad lifestyle which produce abnormality at Manomaya Kosha level. Moreover, the feeling of unacceptance has been increasing in individuals these days. Observance of the Ayurveda and Yoga modalities can help in reducing the psychological factors involved in infertility.
Role of Pathyavihara: Dinacharya: Modalities such as Bhramamuhurta
Jagrana help in balancing circadian rhythm and increasing oxygen
take-up capacity by the cells. Regular Abhyanga helps in Vatashamana
which is the major cause of mental instability. Washing feet, wearing
untorn clothes, and footwear enhance virility as per Acharyas
which is related to the planet Venus who governs the sacral Chakra.
Ratricharya: helps in the relaxation of mind and body as a good sleep
activates the healing and calms down irrelevant thoughts and emotions.
Ritucharya: Shodhana Karmas not only physically clears the body
but also helps in balancing the Manasika Doshas. Sadvratta: A good
company endows with Satvika qualities, and the person will be devoid
of mental and emotional disturbances. Acharya Rasayana mentioned by
Acharaya Charaka is a complete ethical code of conduct that prevents
and treats psychological and psychosomatic diseases.

Role of Yoga: It helps in alleviating the emotional trauma of infertility.
Yogic regimens, such as Yama Nyama, Pranayama, and Pratyahara
Dharana Dhyana help in the reversal of affliction of Mano Maya
Kosha level and reconcile mental health. Asanas help in supporting
and maintaining the pelvic muscles and maintain the hormonal
levels, thereby preparing the body for conception at physical level.
Pranayamas help in balancing feminine energy and reduce stress
factors. Yoni Mudra helps in the removal of energy blockages at the
Sacral Chakra level.

5. CONCLUSION

Imbalance in thoughts, emotions, etc. can be the triggering factors
for stress, anxiety, and depression leading to a lack of acceptance
in relations which can be the reason for infertility in any of the
partners. This can be managed by the proper observance of Sadvratta,
Dinacharya, Ritucharya Yoga, and Pranayama in daily life.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nil.

7. FUNDING

Nil.

8. ETHICAL APPROVALS

This manuscript not required ethical approval as it is a review study.

9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

10. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for only review
purposes from principal investigators.

11. PUBLISHERS NOTE

This journal remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in
published institutional affiliation.

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How to cite this article:
Khyati. Pathyavihara and Yoga for Psychological Etiological Factors in
Available from: https://irjay.com
DOI link: https://doi.org/10.48165/IRJAY.2024.70611