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Sthulta (obesity) an *Agnijanya vyadi* and its management through Ayurveda-A Review

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ABSTRACT:

Sthulta (Obesity) critical impacted on physical, mental and social wellbeing of a sufferer, could complicate mild diseases and a major reason of high mortality of a serious illness. Improper practicing of *Ahar* (diet) and *Vihar* (life style) are responsible to alter normal functioning of *Agni* consequently in place of *Prasad bhag* (nourishment), *Ama* (raw or toxin) is produced which has potency to disturb normal functioning by varying the *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* thus cause various ailments. Three major forms of *Agnis* i.e., *Jathragni*, *Bhutagni* and *Dhatuagni* have potential to execute all bodily functions from cellular and systemic level. *Dhatuagnis* responsible for regular successive *dhatu* formation get power from *Jathragni* through *bhutagni*. Disturbing state of *Agni* may be of hypoactive, hyperactive or improper/disturbed type. In *Sthulta* hypoactive *Medoagni* cause to produce *Ama meda* which tend to accumulate and obstruct the *Medovah strotas*, which pollute internal environment. *Sthulta* is considered as chronic and hardly to cure type of ailment, therefore it has to be managed. *Nidan parivarja*, *Aptarpana* techniques, and *Lekhaniya mahakashya* help to assimilate *Ama* and normalise *Meda dhatu*. This article presents elaborated description of *Sthulta*, its causative factor *Agni* and details of management is explained through fundamentals mentioned in Ayurveda.

Keywords: *Sthulyta*, *Agni*, *Ama*, *Medoagni*, *Aptarpana*, *Lekhaniya mahakashya*

INTRODUCTION

Sthulta (obesity) is the reason of various other systemic illness and is the major cause behind escalated morbidity and mortality. It seriously affects physical and mental health of the sufferer by impacting his personal and social life. *Acharya Charka* has mentioned it under *Ashtaunindaniya purusha* (eight serious disorders)¹. Unnaturally over accumulation of *Meda* (fat) and *Mamsa* (muscles) cause to deform buttocks, abdominal region, and breast so they become heavy, descended and loose, beside these morphological features improper nourishment of other organ and low level of energy is also notice in *sthula*

(obese)². Various factors are responsible to cause *sthulata* (obesity) considered as *nidana* for instance inappropriate practices of *Ahar* (diet), *Vihar* (life style), and other issues. *Ahar* includes excess intake of *Shleshmic* (fatty) food, *Vihar* (life style) categorized on the basis of cessation in physical and mental activities, other issues include genetic factors, physical ailments, age, gender, socio economic status and side effect of some medicine. These causes tend to generate and accumulate excess amount of *Meda Dhatu* (*fat*), consequently others *dhatu*s remains under nourished. Furthermore, excessive *Vayu* tends to upsurge



Agni which evident through *Medoagni vaikriti*(irregularity). So, this imbalance state of *Agni* is the reason behind various complications and abnormalities.

Literary Review

Concept of *Agni*

Agni along with optimal state of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* plays a vital role to govern bodily functions smoothly and considered as basic essential of life, so acquired earliest place under *Dwadash Prana*. It is the foundation of healthy life³, in appropriate condition it is the reason to healthy long-life span, attractive complexion, strength, health, nourishment, immunity, appearance, immunity and intelligence otherwise is prime factor to cause systemic illness⁴. And symbolised by *Pitta Dosha* in body, in equilibrium state is accountable for quantity and quality of health^{5,6}. *Doshas* have peculiar role in physiology and pathology as *Doshas* (vital factors) are evident characteristic features of universal *Panchmahbhutik* module, responsible to conduct all functional and physiological purposes in body. As *Kapha dosha* is prepared by *Pritvi* with *Jala Mahabhut*, *Pitta* by *Agni* with *Jala* and *Vata* through *Vayu* with *Aakash Mahabhut* thus inner and outer world looks aligned. *Inside the body Agni* is the symbol of warmth and radiant appearance and its categories from three to thirteen types on the basis of its site i.e., *Jathragni* (related to digestion) is the chief fire or macro fire, *Bhootikagni* (related to five elements) and *Dhatuagni* (related to tissue system)^{7,8}.

According to Ayurveda, being chief fire of body *Jathragni* nourishes both the remaining *Agnis* or micro fires⁸. It helps in proper metabolism to nourish body tissues its deprived state is the reason for improper formation of *Dhatu* (tissue system)⁹. On the basis of its digestive strength and appetite pattern is found in four styles *Visham Agni* (irregular), *Tikshana Agni* (moderate), *Manda Agni* (mild), and *Sama Agni* (balanced/ proper). *Dhatuagni* get the share of chief *Agni* via *Bhootagni* hence, fire exists systemic to cellular level Food is initially digested by foremost *Jathragni*, further *Bhutagnis* helps to assimilate it by evaluating its *Panchmahbhutik* (major elemental) content, subsequently progressive *Dhatu* formation occur through involvement of *Dhatuagnis*(cellular fire). *Following Bhutagni* relates to five elements i.e., *Prithavi Agni* (related to earth), *Apya Agni* (related to water), *Tejas Agni* (related to fire), *Vayu Agni* (related to air), *Aakash Agni* (related to ether). Finally last category of *Dhatuagni* is comes which have seven functional and physiological components entitled as *Rasagni* (related to plasma tissue), *Raktagni* (related to blood tissue), *Mamsagni* (related to

muscles or flesh tissue), *Medagni*(related to fat or adipose tissue), *Asthiagni*(related to bone tissues), *Majjagni*(related to bone marrow tissue), and *Shukragni*(related to semen or reproductive tissue,

Dhatu formation is a gradual process where previous one after being digested properly produced three materials *Prasad Bhaga* (best part) is the source to generate subsequent one, second part entitled as *Dhatu Ansh/Poshya Rasa* helps to nourish another *Dhatu* so is supposed to get continuous nourishment and third part is the *Kittansha*(unwanted/excretory). Disturbed functioning of *Dhatuagnis* followed by improper *Jathragni* cause various related ailments by disturbing the normal function and physiology. There are three pattern of functioning 1. *Dhatuagni Mandata* (mild form/ hypoactive) causes *Ama Dhatu Vridhi* (excess accumulation of intermediate product of digestion) 2. *Dhatuagni Tivrtta* (moderate form/hyper active) causes *Dhatu Kshaya* (deprivation)(Hemadri) 3. *Dhatuagni Vaishmyata* (irregular). This law is universal for entire range of *Dhatu* system and there is possibility to develop associated disorders.

Concept of *Sthulta* (Obesity)

Sthulta is considered *Ahar Rasa Nimitaja* (causative factor)¹⁰and disturbed *Medoagni*. Improper practices of *Ahar*, *Vihar* and other factors responsible for all process to produce *Amameda*(deformed fat) subsequently improperly excess fat get deposited in body and termed as *Stulta* (obesity). *Sleshama* part of *Meda* causes *Strotorodh* (channels get obstructed) consequently body does not get proper nourishment so merely unnatural over accumulation of *Meda* (fat) and *Mamsa* (muscles) occur. *Ahar* (diet) includes excess intake of *shleshmic* (fatty) food, *vihar* (life style) considered on the basis of cessation in physical and mental activities. And other factors could be genetic, due to other physical ailments, age, gender, socio economic status and side effect of some medicine are also accountable. In early stage of *Stulta* signs and symptoms are so mild only obvious indications of *Kapha* could be noticeable. Avoidance at initial stage results into evident symptoms as excess accumulation of fat on various part like abdomen, buttocks, breast, *Aruchi* (dysphagia), *Kshudhadhikya* (high appetite) *Shwaskrichha* (dyspnoea), *Trishadhikya* (excess thirst), *Nidradhikya* (excess sleepiness), *Guruta* (heaviness), *Durbalta* (weakness), *Swedadadhikya* (excessive sweat), and *Aangamard* (body ache) Eight complications related to these ailments are *Ayushohras* (short of life span), *Javoprodha* (less active), *Krichvyavata* (sexual dysfunction), *Durbalyta* (weakness),

Durgandhyata (unpleasant body odour), *Swedabadha* (reduced sweating), *Kshuda atimatra* (high appetite) and *Pipasa Atimatra* (excess thirst)¹.

Description of Samprapti sanghtana of Sthulta (Obesity)

- ❖ *Dosh* (vital factor): Mainly *Kapha Dosha* along *Vata* and *Pitta*
- ❖ *Strotas* (channels): *Medovah Strotas*
- ❖ *Dushya*: *Meda*
- ❖ *Strotodushti* (pattern of disturbance): *Sanga* (occlusion)
- ❖ *Adhishtha* (site): Whole body
- ❖ *Udbhav Sthan* (causation site): *Amashyothoth* (digestive system)
- ❖ *Vyaktisthan* (apparent site): Buttocks, Abdomen and Breast
- ❖ *Agni* (state of fire): *Agni Mandya*, *Dhatuagni Mandya*
- ❖ *Swarup* (conduct): *Chirkari* (chronic/ long lasting)
- ❖ *Prabhav* (impact/ affect): *Daruna* (difficult to treat)

Because body is a complex structure therefore, single pathological condition could interrupt its normality and cause various *Upadrav* (complications). In *Sthul* (obese) *Madumeha* (diabetes mellitus), *Bhagandar* (fistula), *Jwara* (fever), *Pidika* (skin disorders), *Vidradhi* (abscess) and *Vatavyadhi* (c. s.) etc. are detected as chief complication.

Management through applying Ayurveda fundamentals

Line of treatment depends on strength of involved *Doshas* and *Dushyas*, quantity of symptoms, existence of complication and time duration. In general, two methods are applied to treat any ailments depending on the tendency of influencers *Santarpan* (proliferating) or *Aptarpana* (depleting). Although it is also mentioned that *Sthulta* is not treatable¹¹ but after analysing the predisposing factors it is considered as *Rasaj* (diet) therefore, *Nidana parivarja* (abstinence) by sensible practice of *Ahar* (diet) and *Vihar* (life style) changes have been advised. As this ailment belongs to *Amashya* (digestive system), *Langhanam* (starvation therapy) and *Lekhanam / Karshan* (scraping techniques) are another methods¹².

Acharya *Charak* has mentioned ten *Lekhaniya Mahakashay* attributing *Tikta rasa* (bitter in taste) *Ushana virya* (hot potency), *Laghu* (light) and *Ruksha* (dry), *Katu vipaka* (intensive), so act as *Medoghna* (reduce fat/ lipid), *Kaphagna* and *Vataghna* and helps to intensify *Mandta* (mild/hypoactive) *Medoagni* (fire to digest fat/ lipid).

Lekhaniya Mahakashya¹³

1. *Nagarmotha* (*Cyprus rundus*)
2. *Kushtha* (*Saussurea leppa*)
3. *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa*)
4. *Daruharira* (*Berberis aristata DC.*)

5. *Vacha* (*Acorus Calamus Linn*)
6. *Ativisha* (*Aconitum heterophyllum Wall.ex.Royle*)
7. *Kutukui* (*Picrorrhiza kurroa Royle. Ex Benth.*)
8. *Chitraka* (*Plumbago zeylanica Linn.*)
9. *Chirbilva* (*Holoptelia interifolia*)
10. *Haimvati* (*Iris aristata*)

Beside this additional fascinating technique is also mentioned *Guruchaptaroana* (heavy diet which cause depletion)^{14,15}.

Aptarpana (depleting therapy) includes *Langhanam* (starvation therapy), *Swedanam* (sudation therapy) and *Rukshana* (dehydrating therapy), it either effective through *Shaman* (pacifiers) methods like *Pipasa* (thirst therapy), *Marut* (wind/breeze therapy), *Atap* (sun bath therapy), *Pachan* (digestion of *Ama*), *Deepan* (enhancing digestive power), *Kshut* (hunger therapy), *Vyayam* (physical exercises) and *Shodhan* methods like *Vaman* (induced vomiting), *Virechana*, (therapeutic purgation) *Niruha* (enema therapy), *Nasya* (inhalation therapy), *Raktmokshan* (blood-letting technique). These wholesome approaches systematically strengthen the *Agni* to improve balance among all internal factors responsible for healthy living, later their actions help to manage ailments and their complication finally health began to establish through stable internal environment.

DISCUSSION

Sthulta (obesity) is a consequence of disturbed *Agni* by involvement of various factors which initially disturb the food digestion further alter *Dhatu* production.¹⁶ From cellular to systemic level all functions are impacted resulting in enormous range of symptoms. *Medoagni* actively works on *Medo Dhatu* in abnormal state is refer as *Medoagnimandya* (Mild form/ hypoactive) which is the reason to produce and accumulation *Ama* (toxin) or *Amameda* and obstruction in *Strotas*.¹⁷ Excessive accumulation of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* successively treated by *Aptarpana* (subtraction). *Nidana Parivarjan*, *Langhanan* (starvation therapy) regular *Lekhanam* (scraping techniques) and management through guru (heavy) and *Aptarpana* (deprivation therapy) are the procedures for management of *Sthulyata*.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

Obesity affects women more than men. Life style changes based on classical texts, such as following *dinacharya* and *ruksha udavrtana* in the context of *sthaulya*, can be beneficial in avoiding *sthaulya*. *Shodhana* techniques such

as *vamana in vasanta rItu* performed according to traditional methods will undoubtedly aid in the prevention of obesity.

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