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### Safe And Easy Non-Conventional Therapies For Leucorrhoea

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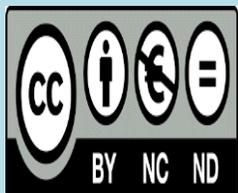
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#### ABSTRACT

Leucorrhoea or white discharge is a complaint with which each woman suffers at least once in a lifetime .It refers to the white or yellowish discharge from the vaginal canal in women. It is also a sign of normal reproductive activity in all females and is due to hormonal changes in the reproductive system. But it is also caused due to inflammation and infections of the genito-urinary tract. Although the severe and chronic cases require long term treatment with antibiotics, mild cases can be effectively controlled by non-conventional therapies. Along with Ayurveda, it can be treated by diet, yoga, Naturopathy and homeopathic medicines. Leucorrhoea in Ayurveda is known as *Shweta pradar* is predominantly due to *Kapha Dosh*a and which is a symptom not a disease. *Shweta pradar* can be treated both by external applications and internal medications as described in literature. In this article an effort has been made to compile all non conventional therapies available to treat Leucorrhoea. The nature of this work is review type based on traditional Indian wisdom, the materials were collected from Ayurvedic Samhitas like Charak & Sushruta Samhita, traditional hatha yogic texts like *Hatha Pradipika* & *Gheranda Samhita*. The texts books on Gynecology were also reviewed to make the work relevant. Various researches on leucorrhoea were reviewed using search engines like Pubmed to assess the efficacy of various interventions used for leucorrhoea.

**Key Words:** Leucorrhoea, Ayurved, Yoga, *Shweta pradar*



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## INTRODUCTION

A woman's body is constantly changing and developing from puberty to menopause. Overall health in a woman includes her reproductive or gynecological health as well. A sound gynecological health can only ensure a sound reproductive health, which will result in healthy progeny. Women of reproductive age come across a number of issues relating to gynecological health. Many of the conditions that affect gynecological, reproductive, and sexual health may be detected early which provides for a more positive prognosis and successful treatment. Though conventional treatments for gynecological health problems are more popular among physicians and women, scientists are finding scope for safer and long lasting remedies which are not only cost effective but also free from side effects. Some researchers have already worked to establish the efficacy of home remedies, herbs, natural treatments, yoga and exercises in management of gynecological problems. With advancement in education and efforts of community health workers, medical problems associated with women are being brought into focus by women themselves or medical practitioners associated with women health care. Woman today is aware about her health. She maintains reproductive hygiene, immediately notices any variation from normal and seeks medical advice.

One of the many health issues related to

reproductive health is Leucorrhoea, commonly known as White discharge. Leucorrhoea is known as “*Shweta pradara*” in Sanskrit. It is formed by union of two words *Shweta* (white) and *pradara* (discharge) *Shweta pradara* is not mentioned as an independent disease in twenty types of *yonirogas* (Vaginal disorders). *Kaphaj yonirogas* (Phlegmatic vaginal disorders) in which *yonigata* (vaginal) white discharges have been included. According to a paper published in Indian Journal Public Health (Oct-Dec 2005) by R.N. Kulkarni et al., leucorrhoea is very common among Indian women with an incidence of 24.47% females. The incidence is more in married women especially among lower socio-economic status. Many researchers have been published about leucorrhoea regarding the effects of conventional drug but negligible amount of work has been done in the field of non-conventional therapies like Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Naturopathy and Yoga. This article is an effort to evaluate the effects of natural remedies in the management of leucorrhoea.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present work was undertaken after consistent observation in clinical practice. As the nature of this work is review type based on traditional Indian wisdom, the materials were collected from Ayurvedic Samhitas (texts) like Charak & Sushruta Samhita, traditional hatha yogic texts like Hatha Pradipika & Gheranda Samhita. The

texts books on Gynecology were also reviewed to make the work relevant. Various researches on leucorrhoea were reviewed using search engines like Pubmed to assess the efficacy of various interventions used for leucorrhoea.

**Leucorrhoea is a medical term that denotes a thick, whitish or yellowish vaginal discharge.**

**(Commonwealth)** According to Shaw's textbook of Gynecology, the term leucorrhoea should be restricted to only those patients in whom the normal vaginal secretion is increased in amount.<sup>[1]</sup> Some clinicians use the term leucorrhoea to describe any white or yellowish-white discharge from the vagina, strictly excluding the presence of blood. This type of vaginal discharge is not always abnormal. It sometimes occurs in young girls before onset of menarche, the first period and is therefore a sign of onset of puberty. This may be due to increased vascularity of the genital tract and is temporary. Leucorrhoea can be broadly classified into Physiological and Inflammatory Leucorrhoea.

**Physiological Leucorrhoea** is mainly due to estrogen stimulation. It is commonly seen during puberty, pregnancy, at the time of ovulation and during the premenstrual phase of menstrual cycle. This is because of increased mucus discharges from the hypertrophied premenstrual glands of the endometrium in some women. Female infants may have leucorrhoea for a short time after birth due to their in-uterine exposure to estrogen.

**Inflammatory Leucorrhoea** is due to the inflammation or congestion of vaginal mucosa. This could be due to organic bacterial infections, sexually transmitted diseases etc.

In a number of cases, after delivery, leucorrhoea

is accompanied by backache and foul smelling lochia which may suggest the failure of involution of uterus due to infection.

leucorrhoea has also been described on the basis of site of origin. These include **Cervical leucorrhoea** which is a mucoid discharge due to conditions of cervix like chronic cervicitis, cervical erosion etc. On the other hand, **Vaginal leucorrhoea** is secretion of a transudate secreted through the wall of vagina due to bacterial infections.

The main causes of leucorrhoea include local congestive states of pelvic organs such as pregnancy, prolapsed congested ovaries, chronic pelvic inflammatory diseases, chronic constipation, sedentary occupation, sexually transmitted diseases, unhygienic conditions and frequent abortions.

In most women, leucorrhoea is manifested by symptoms like white or yellowish discharge from vaginal passage, itching on the vulvae area, pelvic pain, low back ache, frequent headaches and generalized weakness.

It is very important that pathological leucorrhoea should be differentiated from physiological one. A detailed case history taking can give us a clue about the frequency, time and nature of discharge. Examination of external genitalia may also provide clue for the site and type of leucorrhoea. Leucorrhoea must be distinguished from specific vaginitis by bacteriological examination. The main investigations carried out to diagnose leucorrhoea include wet smear, pap smear, gram stain culture, biopsy, complete blood picture, random & microscopic urine analysis.

Conventional management is commenced after confirming a pathological leucorrhoea, which involves of medicines to be taken orally and broad spectrum (antifungal & antibacterial)

ointments for local application are given in order to relieve local symptoms like itching etc. In case of infections diagnosed through lab investigations, antibiotics are given. Nutritional supplements are usually added to improve general health. With growing awareness among women about their reproductive health, the need to adopt safer methods of management of leucorrhoea is arisen. This has increased the popularity of non-conventional or alternative therapies. A lot of works are also being done to establish the efficacy of non-conventional therapies like ayurveda and yoga. These ageless therapies have proved their effectiveness as being cost effective, easy to practice and safe. Though more clinical trials are required, their presence and impact in Indian lives cannot be overlooked. Ayurveda is ancient Indian system of treatment based on correcting the imbalances in the body. According to the principles of Ayurveda, the first line of treatment is *Nidan parivarjanam* or following certain restrictions and moderations in terms of diet and lifestyle. This means that to avoid etiological factors such as junk food, salty food, spicy food and excess amount of *madhur rasa*. The main prescriptions suggested under Ayurvedic treatment regime include not only administration of *dravyas* or medicines but also life style modifications. As leucorrhoea is *kaphaj vyadhi* (phlegmatic disorder), the *chikitsa* (treatment) is done by *ruksha* (dry) and *ushna dravyas* (warm medicines). The other medicines which are advised in Ayurveda include:

1-*Pushyanug churna*, *Patrangasava*, *Chandraprabhavati*, *Amla*, *Mulethi* and *Pradrantak churna* etc. which aim at moderating the frequency of excessive white discharge.

2-*Kankola (kabab cheeni)* can be given in the treatment of leucorrhoea in the form of *churna*. *Kankola (PIPER CUBEBA)* has a *kapha*

*shamaka* property along with *katu and tikta ras* with *ushana veerya* property.<sup>[2]</sup>

3-It reduces excessive production of *kapha* and removes obstruction of *strotas*. It relieves *yonikandu* (vaginal itching), *yonidaurgandhya* (foul smelling in vaginal area), *daurbalya* (weakness) and reduces *pichil srava* (mucoid discharge) in *yonis* (vagina). The volatile essential oil is also used through to small extent in genitourinary diseases like cystitis, leucorrhoea.<sup>[3]</sup>

4-According to Acharya Charak, *The Amalki* (gooseberry) juice mixed with honey is also given in the treatment of leucorrhoea.<sup>[4]</sup>

5-In the *yonivyapad chikitsa adhyay* (Vaginal disorders and their management chapter) of charak chikitsa sthana, the paste of *Amalki Beej* (gooseberry seeds) can be given along with honey and water.<sup>[5]</sup>

6-The root of *chakramard (sicklepod)* mentioned in *yogratnakar* pasted with rice water cures leucorrhoea.<sup>[6]</sup>

7-*Nagkesar* (Ceylon ironwood) with butter milk followed by diet on only cooked rice.<sup>7</sup> The stems and seed oil of *nagkesar* have a great medicinal value. The hemostatic property of *nagkesara* is very cardinal and use to arrest bleeding in ailments like piles, menorrhagia, dysentery and *raktapitta* (blood bile). It works well with butter milk.<sup>[7]</sup>

8-In Ayurvedic literature, external applications are also mentioned along with internal applications such as *Karanj tail pichu dharana* (treatment with *Milletia pinnata oil*), *Kasisadi tail pichu dharana* (treatment with *kasisadi oil*), *yonidhavana* (vaginal washing) with *Panchvalkal kwath* (*panchvalkal* decoction) and *Triphla kwath* (*trifala* decoction), vaginal irrigation with *kashaya* (decoction) of *Lodhra twak* (*symplocos bark*)<sup>[8]</sup>

9-*Majuphal* (*Quercus infectoria*) also known as magic nut helps to control the symptoms of leucorrhoea when used internally. *Majuphal* has *Kashaya ras* (bitter essence) along with *tridosh shamak* (reduction in three humors) property. It contains Tannic acid which is used to arrest bleeding. It helps to control the aggravated *kapha* (phlegm) and reduce the symptoms of leucorrhoea. *Majuphal* used in the form of *churna* (powder) with the dosage of 1 – 1.5 gm.<sup>[9]</sup>

A pharmacological study of *Majuphal* and *Kankol* W.S.R to their effect on *Shweta pradar* (leucorrhoea) by Dr. Savita Prajapati 2017-2020. With the significant results the dosage of *Majuphal* and *Kankola churna* (*Piper cubeba powder*) should be given as 1- 1.5 gm twice daily. Ayurveda considers use of Coriander and Fenugreek seeds important in the treatment of leucorrhoea. Coriander seeds should be taken in the form of infusion. Fenugreek seeds can be taken in the form of decoction internally or a neutral douche of fenugreek seeds should be administered to the patient for 1 week.

10-Along with medications, diet restrictions play an important role in management. Ayurvedic medicines work to their utmost potency if taken along with certain diet restrictions. Therefore, one should avoid spicy and junk food and should maintain the proper lifestyle by taking *Satvik Aahar*.

11- Yoga, primarily developed as a system of spiritual advancement to attain liberation, has emerged as an effective, economical and safe system of therapy for a vast range of health issues including Leucorrhoea. Yoga therapy has been established as a holistic approach to promote health on all aspects, prevent adverse health issues and treat them if encountered.<sup>[10]</sup> Yogic practices caters to all the needs linked to different

aspects of person. They improve circulation & oxygenation, regulate body physiology, boost up immunity and maintain mental poise. In leucorrhoea, regular yoga should be advised to the women as it improves blood circulation to the pelvic area & tissue oxygenation thereby controlling the spread of anaerobic pathogens.<sup>[11]</sup> Improved immunity further prevents the re-occurrence of infections. The yogic practices include:

**12-Shatkriya** like *Dhauti* and *Basti* are effective in maintaining homeostasis in overall physiology. They cleanse the upper and lower GIT and maintain the normalcy of Gut flora which has also been linked to normal reproductive health. *Kapalbhati* improves pelvic circulation and thereby tissue oxygenation. It also keeps weight in check. Overweight is often responsible for disturbances in estrogen-progesterone levels which can disturb normal pH and may play a role in inflammations & infections.<sup>[12]</sup>

**13-Asana** preferably sitting series of asanas which include squatting in various postures help in strengthening the pelvic musculature improve circulation and regulate the hormonal balance.<sup>[13]</sup>

**14-Yogic Diet** advocates that the patients should follow the yogic principles of *Mitahara* (moderation). They are advised to include fresh fruits and raw vegetables, steamed sprouts, freshly cooked bland diet.

**15-Pranayama**, the yogic breathing regulation involve practice of balancing pranayama like *Nadi shodhana* which helps in maintaining normal Sympathetic-parasympathetic activity, thus preventing any deviation from normal. On the other hand, practice of cooling pranayama helps to control inflammation.

**16-Meditation**, a therapeutic intervention proven to attain a calm mind facilitates equipoise in overall physiological functions.

17-Patients are also given Counseling about Yogic life style modification which includes moderation in diet, following hygienic practices through *niyama* i.e. *Shauch* (Purity or cleanliness). The patients should be regularly counseled for a regulated daily routine, proper diet and consistent physical exercise. They should be taught about maintaining personal hygiene.

Naturopathy or Nature cure, a holistic therapeutic system which is being rediscovered in the light of modern advances works on the principle of detoxification while being in harmony with nature. Natural therapies in leucorrhoea can be administered with the objectives of detoxification of the body<sup>[14]</sup>, controlling the infection and inflammation, improving circulation to the pelvic area and relieving local symptoms. A number of natural hygienic measures can be employed beneficially such as:

- **Neutral Compress to lower abdomen** will help to relieve pain and soothe the nerves.<sup>[15]</sup>
- **Neutral neem water enema** helps to remove accumulated toxins and also relieve back ache associated with leucorrhoea.
- **Hot neem water & turmeric sitz bath** to remove the source of infection.
- **Neutral neem water vaginal douche** for a germicidal effect on the affected area.

Apart from these, homeopathic remedies have also been found very effective in treatment of leucorrhoea. *Pulsatilla Nigrican* and *Sepia* are found to be effective remedy for leucorrhoea.<sup>[18]</sup>

Natural Home remedies are being used by Indian mothers since primitive times and have been found effective. Kitchen sometimes can be a very

good doctor if used judiciously. Many of the age old home remedies propagated through the elders of home can prove very effective in management of leucorrhoea.

Along with these, subtle changes in daily routine can help in controlling this issue. Some of them are increasing the fluid intake which will maintain the pH of body fluids and flush out the excess toxins and also heat, inclusion of plenty of fruits and raw vegetables in the regular diet particularly bananas, oranges, lemons, green leafy vegetables, cranberry etc., using alkaline foods like boiled vegetables, raw vegetable juices are also effective in maintaining homeostasis in body.<sup>[16]</sup>, using spices such as ginger, garlic, fenugreek and coriander s regularly in diet, and consuming an infusion of coriander seeds every day, avoiding foods such as eggs, sweets, bread, non-vegetarian food, mushrooms etc.<sup>[17]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Leucorrhoea is a condition which troubles almost every woman at least once in a lifetime. At the same time, there are a lot of myths about white discharge. Therefore, It is important that the physician should rule out normal or physiological white discharge so that unnecessary intake of antibiotics can be prevented. As a result of this review work, it becomes evident that if prudent differential diagnosis is employed, a majority of cases of white discharge can be categorized as physiological. This not only will reduce the burden on health care but will also provide freedom from fear of white discharge created due to prevalent misconceptions. Ancient ayurvedic texts provide vast information about effective treatment of leucorrhoea. On the other hand, yoga, if practiced regularly under guidance offer supreme prophylactic care owing to its wide range of benefits on whole psycho-physiological

machinery. Naturopathy treatments have been proven efficient & safe in controlling most cases of leucorrhoea whether presented as a chief complaint or associated with other complaints. Along with above, Counseling also has proven effective in the therapy.

## CONCLUSION

Gynecological disorders form major portion of all the health issues being consulted for. This has become possible only because of increase in awareness among the females about matters concerned with their health. Role of different Government and Non government organizations is also worth appreciation. Asha workers play an important role in spreading awareness about gynecological health issues among females and motivate them to seek consultation whenever required. It is important to teach women about leucorrhea and complications associated with its neglect. Training of reproductive hygiene, especially in rural areas and lower socio-economic sections will form a strong base for sound reproductive health, thereby improving the productivity and contribution of women in building a strong nation.

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