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## Review on Classical Ahar Dravya For Medoroga (Obesity)

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#### **Abstract:**

The incidence of lifestyle diseases like Hypertension, Diabetes mellitus, Dyslipidemia, and overweight/obesity associated with cardiovascular diseases is high on the rise. Worldwide, at least 2.8 million people die each year as a result of being overweight or obese. Obesity is a social, psychological and somatic disorder leading to miserable life and a challenge to the physician in treatment since it exacerbates a large number of health related problems, independently and as an involvement with other diseases. The etiological factors mainly vitiate the Meda-Kapha and this vitiated Meda obstruct the path of Vata, which results into provocation of Vata. In the pathogenesis of obesity two factors are of prime significance, Tikshna Jatharagni (Intense metabolism) and Medodhatvagni-mandya (Reduced fat metabolism). Irrationality between two levels of Agni makes the disease Krichhra Sadhya (Difficult to treat). In the context of obesity, it has been recommended by earlier studies that it must be treated on the lines of Guru Apatarpana and the Ahara administered must pacify Vata, Kapha & Meda. Wide range of Ahar dravya having the above mentioned properties have been illustrated in Charaka Samhita viz. Nagar, Yava, Yavaka, Mudga, Kulattha, Adhaki, etc. Hence detailed review on these Ahar dravya in perspective of obesity is done. Owing to the importance of multigrain concept as recognized by Ayurveda thousands of years ago and also endorsed by modern science, need is felt to promote these Ahar dravya's which are pivotal for complete & balanced physical & psychological development of humans besides considerable immunological support.

**Keywords:** Obesity, Apatarpana, Medodhatvagni, Ahar, multigrain.

#### **Introduction:**

Due to sedentary lifestyle, the prevalence of obesity is increasing these days. Worldwide at least 2.8 million people die each year as a result of being overweight or obese, and an estimated 35.8 million (2.3%) of global DALYs are caused by overweight/obesity. Obesity is the leading cause of variety of health issues viz. High Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Heart Disease, High Cholesterol Levels, Infertility, Back pain, Cancer, Skin infection, Ulcer, Gall stones<sup>1</sup>. The World Health Organisation<sup>2,3</sup> and the National Institutes of Health has defined overweight as having a BMI between 25 & 29.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>; and obesity as having a BMI greater than 30 Kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

## **Disease Description in the classics:**

It is quoted as *Sthaulya* or *Medoroga* in classical texts which is one among the eight despicables mentioned by *Acharya Charak*<sup>4</sup> the reason being the 8 defects caused by them- Shortening of life span, hampered movement, difficulty in sexual intercourse, debility, foul smell, over sweating, too much hunger & excessive thirst<sup>5</sup>. The word *Sthaulya* is derived from the word '*Sthula*' which in turn is made from the sankrit word '*Sthula Paribrumhane*' meaning *Vriddhi*. Thereby, the word *Sthaulya* depicts excessive *vriddhi* of *Shareera*<sup>6</sup>. A person in whom there is excessive accumulation of *Meda* (fat/adipose tissue) and *Mamsa* (flesh/muscle tissue) leading to flabbiness of hips, abdomen, and breast has been categorized as *Atisthula*<sup>7</sup>.

Medas is body tissue predominant in Prithvi and Ap Mahabhutas similar to Kapha Dosha<sup>8</sup>. It is characterized by Snigdha (unctuous), Guru (heavy), Sthula (space occupying), Picchila (slimy), Mridu (tender/soft) and Sandra (dense) guna (qualities)<sup>9</sup>. Sneha (oleation), Sweda (production of sweat), Drudhatva (compactness), and Asthipushti (nourishment of bones) are the main function of Medodhatu<sup>10</sup>.

Consumption of *Sheeta* (cold), *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Madhuradi* and *Guru* (heavy to digest) *Kaphavardhaka* (sweet and *Kapha* increasing) drugs along with lack of exercise and sedentary life style result in excessive nourishment of *Medas* while other bodily elements (*Dhatus*) are deprived of nourishment. Disproportionately increased *Medas* is accountable for several serious consequences reported in *Charaka Samhita* like *Ayurhasa* (decrease of life span), *Javoparodha* (decrease in enthusiasm and activity), *Krichravyavayata* (difficulty in sexual act), *Dourbalya* (decrease of strength), *Dourgandhya* (bad odor), *Swedabadha* (excess perspiration) and *Kshut Pipasadhikya* (excessive hunger and thirst)<sup>11</sup>.

*Mandotsaham* (less activity referring to sedentary lifestyle), *Atisnigdham* (excessive intake of fatty substances), *Atisthaulyam* (gross obesity), and *Mahashanam* (excessive eating) constitute for causation of *Prameha*<sup>12</sup> (urinary diseases including Diabetes) and these etiological factors may also initiate Dyslipidemia.

Acharya Susruta says that rasa is responsible for Sthaulya & Karshya of body. When one constantly takes diet increasing Kapha, indulges in eating when the previous meal is undigested, avoids physical exercise & sleeps in the day the ahara rasa being undigested & more sweet circulating in the body, due to excessive unctuousness, produces Meda which causes obesity. It's channels are obstructed by kapha & Medas; due to which successive dhatus are not nourished leading to low vitality and lastly dies being a victim of one of the severe diseases like carbuncle, fever, fistula-in-ano, abcess & vatika disorders<sup>13</sup>.

Ample literature is available regarding effect of *Lekhaneeya* drugs mentioned for *Sthaulya* but its other facet, *Lekhaneeya Ahar dravya* in context of *Sthaulya* still remains unexplored. But, administration of *Lekhaneeya ahar dravya* may prove as a good alternative nutritive therapy for *Medorog*. So, a critical analysis of the classical texts have been done regarding the same.

Acharya Charaka has prescribed Guru Aptarpana for Sthaulya<sup>14</sup>. Further, he advises for food & drinks alleviating Vata & reducing Kapha and Meda<sup>15</sup>. Acharya Sushruta mentioned Virukshana & Chedaneeya dravya for Sthaulya<sup>16</sup>.

Some Ahar Drayyas for Sthaulya mentioned in the Classics have been tabulated below.

Table 1: Ahar Dravyas for Sthaulya mentioned in the Classics

S. No	Ahar Dravya	Botanical/ English Name	Family	Rasa	Guna	Veerya	Vipak a	Effect on dosha	Referenc es(Classi cal)	Resear ches- Refere nces
1	Madhu	Honey	-	Madhura, Kashaya	Laghu (Susruta), Guru (Caraka), Ruksha, Pichila, Yogavahi	Sheeta	Katu	Pitta prasaman, Shleshma prashman, Vata pittaghna	[17,18, 19]	[20,21, 22]
2	Nagar (Ardraka)	Zingiber officinale Rosc.	Zingiberaceae	Katu	Guru, Ruksha, Tikshna	Ushna	Madh ura	Kapha- Vata Shamaka	[17,23]	[24,25]
3	Yava	Hordeum vulgare Linn.	Poaceae	Madhura, Kashaya	Ruksh, Ishat Guru	Sheeta		Kapha Shamaka, Vata Vardhaka	[17,18, 26]	[27]
4	Prashatik a (Udika)	Hygroryza aristata Nees	Poaceae	Kashaya Madhura	Ruksh	Sheeta	-	Vata vardhaka, Kapha pitta Shamak	[28,29]	-
5	Priyangu	Setaria italic (Linn.)	Poaceae	-	Guru, Ruksh	-	-	Vata vardhaka,	[30,31]	[32]

		Beauv						Kapha Nashaka		
(	Shyamaka	Echinochola frumentacea Linn.	Poaceae	Kashaya Madhura	Ruksh	Sheeta	-	Vata vardhaka, Kapha pitta Shamak	[30,18, 33]	[34]
	Yavaka	Inferior varieties of Yava like grains which are smaller & awnless	-	-	-	-	-	-	[30, 35]	[32]
	Joorna	Sorghum vulgare Pers.	Poaceae	Kashaya Madhura	Laghu, Ruksh	Sheeta	-	Kapha pitta Shamak	[30, 36]	[37, 38]
<u>(</u>	Kodrava	Paspalum scrobiculatu m Linn.	Poaceae	Kashaya Madhura	Laghu, Ruksh	Sheeta	-	Vata vardhaka, Kapha pitta Shamak	[30, 18,39]	[40]
10.	Mudga	Vigna radiata (Linn.) Wilczek	Leguminosae, Papilionatae	Kashaya Madhura	Laghu, Ruksh, Vishad	Sheeta	Katu	Kapha- pitta hara	[30,18, 41]	[42]
11.	Kulattha	Vigna unquiculata (Linn.) Walp. Syn. Dolichos biflorus Linn.	Leguminosae	Kashaya	Laghu, Sara	Ushna	Katu	Kapha- Vata hara	[30, 43]	[44,45]
12.	Chakamu dgaka (Makushth a)	Vigna aconitifolia (Jacq.) Marechal	Leguminosae, Papilionatae	Madhura	Ruksh	Sheeta	-	Vata vardhaka, Kapha pitta Shamak	[30, 41,46]	-
13.	Adhakee beeja	Cajanus cajan (Linn.) Millsp.	Leguminosae, Papilionatae	Kashaya Madhura	Laghu, Ruksh	Sheeta		Vata vardhaka, Kapha pitta Shamak	[47,48]	[49]
14.	Uddalaka (Kuttu)	Paspalum scrobiculatu m Var. commersoni i Stapf.	Poaceae	Kashaya Madhura	Laghu, Ruksh	Ushna	-	Vata vardhaka, Kapha pitta Shamak	[18, 50]	-
15.	Gavedhuk a	Coix lacryma jobi Linn.	Poaceae	Kashaya Madhura	Laghu, Ruksh	Sheeta	-	Kapha Nashaka	[51,52]	[53]
16.	Chanaka	Cicer arientinum Linn.	Leguminoseae, Papilionateae	Kashaya Madhura	Laghu, Ruksh	Sheeta	Madh ura	Vata vardhaka, Kapha pitta rakta shamaka; Ghritsamy ukta tridosh shamana	[54,55, 56]	-
17.	Masoora	Lens culinaris Medic	Leguminoseae, Papilionateae	Madhura	Laghu, Ruksh	Sheeta	Madh ura	Vatala, Kapha pitta shamaka;	[54,57, 58]	[59]

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								Raktapitta hara		
18.	Laja	Dhana ki kheela	-	Madhura	Laghu, Ruksh	Sheeta		Pitta kapha chhida	[54,60]	-
19.	Dagdh Vartaku phala	Solanum melongena Linn.	Solanaceae	Madhura	Laghu	Ushna	-	Kapha Vata shamaka	[61,62]	[63]
20.	Sarshapa taila	Brassica campestris Linn. Var. Sarson prain	Cruciferae	Katu	Laghu, Teekshna	Ushna	Katu	Kapha Vata shamaka; Rakta Pitta kopaka	[64,65, 66]	-
21.	Til Taila	Sesamum indicum Linn.	Pedaliaceae	Madhura, Kashaya anurasa	Guru, Sookshma, Vikasi, Vishada, Vyavayi	Ushna	Madh ura	Vata Kapha Nashak;R akta Pitta karak	[64,67, 68]	-
22.	Ela	Elettaria cardamomu m Maton	Zingiberaceae	Katu, Madhura	Laghu, Ruksh	Sheeta	Madh ura	Tridoshha ra	[64,69]	-

#### **Discussion**

Defective dietary habits and lifestyle are main cause of obesity. The adoption of *Pathya Ahara* is the best management of the disease as it is easily available without a prescription, more easily accepted than a professional consultation with a physician or a nutritionist, 100% natural origin and perception that natural products are free from side effects. The diet with *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Kaphamedohara* and *Srotoshodhana* property should be ingested while avoiding *Guru*, *Snigdha*, *Kaphamedokara* and *Abhishyandi* foods. Most of the *Ahar Dravya* prescribed possess *Kashaya Madhura Rasa*; *Laghu Ruksh Guna & Vata kapha Nashaka* property, thereby exerting *Lekhaneeya* effect. This diet plays a crucial role in the alteration of pathophysiology of the persons thereby in the prevention and treatment of the *Medoroga* (Obesity).

#### Conclusion

In the emerging scenario where obesity has become the major health issue in India and across the globe, there is a need to emphasize management of obesity and also exploring the feasibility of introducing traditional systems of medicine such as *Ayurveda*, integrating with conventional medicine to achieve better healthcare. Further integration of Ayurveda and other Traditional system of medicine possibly offer safe and effective management of obesity. Owing to the importance of multigrain concept as recognized by *Ayurveda* thousands of years ago and also endorsed by modern science, need is felt to promote these *Ahar dravya* which are pivotal for complete & balanced physical & psychological development of humans besides considerable immunological support. The potential leads form *Ayurveda* texts may be taken forward for further development of safe and effective and user friendly nutritional forms through systematic clinical studies.

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