



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Ayurveda

IMPORTANCE OF DIET IN DIABETES MELLITUS IN THE LIGHT OF AYURVEDA

KEY WORDS: Diabetes mellitus, prameha, diet, pathya

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ABSTRACT

The prevalence of Lifestyle diseases are showing an increasing trend in both developing and developed countries. Lifestyle diseases or Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are also known as chronic diseases. The main types of NCD's are cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes. Dietary habits and sedentary lifestyle has contributed mainly for the increasing incidence of cases of diabetes mellitus in developing countries. Diabetes mellitus is a metabolic disease which causes inadequate control of blood glucose levels. Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medicinal system is one of the oldest medical systems. It is a science of life with a holistic approach to health and personalized medicine. Diabetes mellitus may be correlated to Prameha in Ayurveda classics. Pathya ahara that is dietary modification has an important role in the treatment of prameha .Pathya ahara includes specific foods and drugs from natural sources, that are beneficial in the therapy of diabetes.

INTRODUCTION

Diabetes mellitus is defined as 'a metabolic disorder of multiple etiology characterized by chronic hyperglycaemia with disturbances of carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism resulting from defects in insulin secretion, insulin action, or both' The classification of Diabetes Mellitus adopted by WHO is as follows⁽¹⁾

Clinical classification of diabetes mellitus

- 1) Diabetes mellitus
- a) Type 1 or Insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus
- b) Type 2 or Non- insulin dependent diabetes mellitus
- c) Malnutrition-related diabetes mellitus
- d) Other types (secondary to pancreatic, hormonal, drug-induced, genetic and other abnormalities)
- 2) Impaired glucose tolerance (IGT)
- 3) Gestational diabetes mellitus

Prameha refers to repeated (Prakarsha) excessive (Prabhoota) and turbid (avila) urination in terms of frequency, quantity and clarity. Diabetes mellitus may be correlated to Prameha in Ayurveda classics. Acharya Caraka explains it as a life style disorder, due to over indulgence in heavy and richly nutritious food, day time sleep, lack of exercises, other sedentary habits and not doing seasonal purifications. (Ca Su 17/78-80)

Role Of Dietary Factors In The Causation Of Prameha As Per Ayurveda Classics

Kaphaja prameha ahara nidana⁽²⁾

Frequent and excessive intake of:

- Newly harvested grains like hayanaka, yavaka (a variety of *Hordeum vulgare* Linn), cinaka, uddalaka, naishadhaka, itkata, mukundaka, mahavrihi, promodaka, and sugandhaka;
- Newly harvested pulses like harenu (*Pisum sativum* Linn.) and masha (*Phaseolus radiates* Linn.), consumed with ghee;
- The meat of domesticated, marshy and aquatic animals;
- Vegetables, tila (*Sesamum indicum* Linn.) oil, cakes of tila, pastries, payasa (milk-based pudding), krisara (gruel prepared of tila, rice, and black gram), vilepi (a type of thick gruel), and sugarcane-based food preparations;
- Milk, new wine, immature curd (curd which is mostly liquid and sweet);
- Various dietary regimen that produces excess kapha, fat, and urine;

Pittaja Prameha Aharaja Nidana⁽³⁾

- Intake of hot, sour, saline, alkaline and pungent foods;
- Intake of food before the digestion of the previous meal;

- Exposure to excessively hot sun, heat of the fire, physical exertion and anger; and
- Intake of mutually contradictory food articles.

Vataja Prameha Aharaja Nidana⁽⁴⁾

- Excessive intake of astringent, pungent, bitter, rough, light and cold things;

Aharaja Nidana Of Madhumeha

Nidana are Guru, Snigdha, Amla, Lavana, Navaannapana, excessive indulgence of Nidra, Asyasukha, not taking Vyayama, Chinta and Samsodhana. By excess intake of heavy, unctuous, sour and saline tasting food, freshly harvested rice and freshly prepared wine.

Recommended Ayurvedic Dietary Regimen For Diabetes

Few dietic treatments of madhumeha are mentioned in Ashtanga Hrdaya cikitsasthana.

- Various preparations of yava should be taken with honey.
- Yava should be soaked overnight with decoction of triphala again dried the same in daylight and roasted later. The flour of this roasted yava should be mixed with honey and taken with water or with sidhu.
- Roasted yava, mudga and amalaki
- Decoction of triphala
- Bitter vegetables, honey
- Meat of animals that live in desert regions can be consumed after roasting and drying in sunlight.
- Drinking water should be prepared from the drugs of asanadi gana, darbha or honey water.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda considers food as the first among the tripods of life(trayopasthambha). Moreover, Ahara is considered as mahabhaishajya. Thus diet plays a very important role in maintaining health especially in a disease like diabetes mellitus. Public awareness should be made about the importance of Ayurvedic diet in effectively managing DM, as it is one of the major threat to public health resources affecting the society.

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