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MANAGEMENT OF STRESS THROUGH PANCHKARMA A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT:

In the present fast paced life stress and strain are increasingly becoming contributory factors for health hazards. Researches have shown that today we have fewer friends than we used to and live in a more fragmented, isolated society with lower levels of social support, which is an important buffer of stress. In Ayurveda, Acharya Charak have explained that worries are the main reason of a constantly ill person.

Stress is now an integral part in the modern lifestyle, due to hectic schedule and the need to balance our personal and professional life. The idea of banishing stress from life seems impossible, especially in these modern times, a more important area of focus is to manage that stress. This is possible with Ayurveda techniques, especially when done with key lifestyle changes. The Panchakarma therapy of Ayurveda is comprised of five basic types of advanced treatment for the evacuation of vitiated Dosha (toxic materials) from the body. There are so many subtypes of this therapy and different types of herbal massages, fomentations such as steam, external oil treatments, Vasti (medicated enemas), Virechana (purgation through herbs), Vamana (emesis through herbs), Nasya (nasal administration of oils) etc. are also incorporated. These practices are extremely helpful in relieving stress as well as being beneficial for maintaining and improving physical and mental health.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Health hazards, Lifestyle changes, Panchakarma, Stress

INTRODUCTION

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Stress can be described as a mental or emotional disruptive condition that occurs as a response to some adverse situation¹. It is the greatest threat to the wellbeing of people and ultimately affects

our health, manifesting itself in the form of increased heart rate, raised blood pressure, irritability, anger, fear or depression. Stress has become a common reality in our culture but the truth is that *Rajas* has overwhelmed our culture and societies. According to *Acharya charak* one who indulges in activities which are beyond ones performing capacity, puts too much strain on oneself in excess perishes like a lion trying to drag an elephant .i.e., putting too much of stress on a system leads to disastrous effects on the body².

According to *Ayurved*, stress is considered to be linked with *Ojas*, which is the essence of the immune system and is produced within the body itself when food is consumed and proper digestion takes place³. *Ayurveda* advocates that a lifestyle that is based in harmony is a stress-free lifestyle. The principles of *Ayurveda* are applicable both to the mind and the body.

TREATMENT METHODS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

After the diagnosis, the doctor sets out to treat the patient in a very systematic manner. This would include a set of appropriate *Panchakarma treatments* and *Rasayana therapies*. The *Panchakarma Treatments* are meant to flush out the toxins, They are classified as

pre-purification, main purification and post purification phases and include various types of therapies like oil massages, fermented liquid massages, medicinal enemas, herbal purification methods⁴. The *Rasayana Therapies* are meant to nourish the body, to bring the doshas back to balance and to regenerate the body. These comprise diet regulations, daily regimens, intake of oral medicines and a stress free life.

PRE-PURIFICATION THERAPIES

The following pre-purification methods are adopted in the treatment of Stress Management These techniques are the first one applied to loosen the toxins, open up the circulation channels and get the body ready for discarding these wastes. These methods are highly relaxing for the body and mind.

SNEHAPANAM

It is an oleation therapy and consists of oral intake of medicated ghee in empty stomach. Common ingredients eg: sandalwood, neem, amaltas, ginger, mustard, gooseberry etc .are used.

TAILADHARA

It means continuous pouring and massaging of the whole body with warm medicated oil for active perspiration. The

oil is a blend of highly effective herbs as sida, deodar, white leadwort, malabar nut, nutmeg, liquorice and sesame oil, castor oil and milk.

LEPAM

Application of a specially prepared paste made of medicinal herbs, on the body or on specific parts of the body. Dry ginger, vitex, sesame etc are some of the herbs commonly used in the paste.

SHIRODHARA

Shirodhara works mainly in the *Manomayakosha*, or mental sheath. It is here that the mind holds onto past impressions that create imbalanced desires (*Vasanas*) and habitual patterns of behaviour (*Samskaras*). The uninterrupted flow of warm oil stimulates and activates the brain cells and nervous system and gives good relief to nervous disorders.

KSHEERADHARA

Continuous pouring of herbal milk in rhythmic ways over the forehead or over the entire body for about 30 to 40 minutes. Medicinal herbs and spices such as gooseberry, nut grass tuber, winter cherry, bala, sandalwood etc are used in this medicated milk.

Siropichu Done by placing cotton pad soaked in medicated oil on the head vertex for nearly an hour. Generally, sida and

asparagus are the medicinal herbs used at the pre purification treatment stage.

The commonly adopted *Panchakarma treatments* for Stress Management are: *Nasyam, Virechanam, and Vasti*.

NASYAM

It involves the pouring of herbal oil into the nostrils. This opens up the head channels and enables the herb extracts to act directly on the central nervous system.

Treatment lasts for twenty to thirty minutes. The commonly used herbal oil is a mixture of sesame oil and herbs such as sida plants, bael and vitex.

VIRECHANAM

It is the purgation using oral intake of safe herbal medicines. This eliminates poisonous wastes through the anal route.

Generally, the herbs used are embellia fruits, dry ginger, cardamom, long pepper, cinnamon etc.

VASTI

It is enema therapy; the colon cleaning *Panchakarma* treatment. Special medicines are introduced through the anal route for the evacuation of accumulated toxins and metabolic wastes. Commonly used forms of *Vasti* are *Matra Vasti, Shiro Vasti* etc⁵..

CONCLUSION

Following a healthy life style with sufficient rest and avoiding over indulgence in all our activities will help maintain the *Ojas* in perfect condition in an individual. *Panchakarma* therapies help

to expel the toxins and other poisonous substances (*Ama Dosha*) out of the body , improve the blood circulation and there by removing the negative energy out of the body and mind which causes stress.

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