

## Tackling Obesity (*Sthaulya*) through lifestyle awareness and dietary management

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### Abstract

The increased modernization and industrialization has played a major role in adopting the sedentary life style and faulty diet has made man the victim of many life style disorders, one of them being obesity. According to National family health survey-5 (2019-2021), 1 out of every 4 person is obese now and the incidence is increased to 16.9% in 20-29 years of age and 32% in 30-39 years of age. Obesity is an increasing global health issue as it is the leading risk factor of various non-communicable diseases like hypertension, diabetes, dyslipidaemia, coronary heart disease etc. So, the prevention and management of obesity by creating awareness for adopting healthy lifestyle and dietary habits is much needed in present era. Obesity is a result of heredity, faulty lifestyle and diet. Since factors like heredity cannot be avoided but managing lifestyle (*Vihara*) and diet (*Ahara*) play important role. *Acharya Charaka* has considered *Sthaulya* as an *Santarpanjanya Vyadhi* and treated with *Guru* and *Aptarpanjanya Ahara*. *Ahara* recommended in *Sthaulya* are *Yava*, *Kulattha*, *Purana Shali*, *Shastika*.

**Keywords:** *Sthaulya*, *Santarpanjanya Vyadhi*; Lifestyle disorder; Metabolic disorder

### 1. Introduction

Ayurveda is the science of life which primarily preaches about promotion of health as described in the Charaka Samhita. "The purpose of Ayurveda is to protect the health of the healthy and to relieve the disorders of the afflicted." Before disease mitigation, it shows the way of health protection or disease prevention through disciplined routine (*Dincharya*), night routine (*Ratricharya*) and diet (*Ashta Aharavidhi Visheshayatana*). It paves the way for a disease-free life. *Ahara Rasa* taken in balanced quantity provides proper nutrition to the *Rasa* and all other *Dhatus*. If a person consumes unhealthy diet due to ignorance, then the *Dhatusamyata* is affected, due to which the quantitative increase of certain *Dhatus* occurs. For example, there is an excessive increase of *Meda Dhatu* in obesity. *Acharya Charaka* has described about *Ashtanindaniya Purusha*<sup>1</sup> in which a very obese person is also considered *Nindaniya* from the physical point of view, because in a *Medashvi Purusha*, only *Meda* (Fat) is excessively anabolised. Due to the excess of *Meda* in a *Medashvi Purusha*, there is no further formation of *Majja* and *Shukra*, *Acharya Charaka* while defining obesity said that a person in whom excessive and abnormal increase of *Medo Dhatu* along with *Mamsa Dhatu* is found, which result into pendulous appearance of buttocks, belly and breasts is called as *Sthaulya*<sup>2</sup>. The increased bulk is not matched by corresponding increase in energy. Obesity is a burning problem of the 21<sup>st</sup> century which is due to lack of time, not being able to take proper care of the body and not following the dietary rules described in Ayurveda literature. In today's era, there is a large section of the country's population that consumes oversaturated foods such as pizza, burgers, snacks (crisps, chips, etc.), and dairy products. According to Ayurveda Samhita, the people of *Aanoopdesha* are *Vatakapha Pradhan*<sup>3</sup> because there is predominance of *Guru* and *Shita Guna* in the water and food consumed by them. Due to obesity, various fatal diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and deformity of arteries are affecting the human being. According to the World Health Organization, the prevalence of obesity in adults is considered to be BMI greater than 30. The prevalence rate of obesity in India is 3.9 percent in both sexes aged 18 years and above (Age- standard Estimate). In

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India, 9.8 million men and 20 million women are obese, which is 3.7 percent and 5.3 percent of the world population. There have been 2.8 million deaths. If this trend continues, by 2025, the global obesity prevalence will reach 18 percent among men and 21 percent among women. *Samksheptah Kriya Yogo Nidana Parivrjanam* that is, *Nidana Parivarjana Chikitsa* can prevent from suffering from obesity by the use of balanced diet, exercise, proper lifestyle etc.

### 1.1. Aims & objectives

Ayurveda advocates sound way of life through *Ahara*, *Vihara*, and various types of *Karmas* to forestall all sort of diseases. By following righteous *Ahara* as depicted in Ayurveda, one can keep himself away from excess weight gain and lessen its dangers to foster different executioner afflictions which will be talked about here.

## 2. Material and methods

Review from diverse Ayurvedic literatures, medicine books, research journals, magazines and publications.

### 2.1. Importance of *Pathya-Apathya*

Consideration of *Pathya-Apathya* in the course of treatment of any disease is an important feature of Ayurvedic medicine. Ayurveda believes that proper dietary system is to be followed simultaneously along with medicines.

*Pathya*- The food which is not going to cause harm to the *Strotus* (channel) and it is not harmful to the mind and body, it is called *Pathya*.

*Apathya*- Just as '*Pathya*' is the basis of human body, in the same way '*Apathya*' is the basis of disease, due to consumption of unhealthy diet, it creates imbalance of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* and cause diseases.

### 2.2 *Aharatmaka Pathya-Apathya*<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1** *Aharatmaka Pathya-Apathya*

Sr.	Ahara Varga	Pathya	Apathya
1.	Shooka Dhanya	Purana Shali <sup>6</sup> , Kaudrav, Yava, Shayamak, Priyangu, Kanguni	Godhuma <sup>7</sup> , Naveen Dhanya
2.	Shami Dhanya	Mudga, Rajmasha, Kulattha, Chanaka, Masoora, Aadhaki	Masha, Tila
3.	Shak Varga	Patola, Patra Shak, Shigru, Tripusha	Kanda Shak
4.	Phala Varga	Kapittha, Jambu, Aamlaki, Bibhitaki, Haritaki, Bilva	Madhura Phala
5.	Mamsa Varga	Rohita Matasya	Anoopa, Aaudak, Gramya Mamsa Sevana

### 2.3 *Viharaja Pathya-Apathya Sharirika*<sup>8</sup>

**Table 2** *Viharaja Pathya-Apathya Sharirika*

Sr.	Pathya	Apathya
1	Shrama	Sheetal Jalsevan
2	Ratrijagrana	Divaswapna
3	Nitya Bhramana	Sukhashayya
4	Ashwarohana	Atiasana
5	Vyavaya	Avyavaya

## 2.4 Viharaja Pathya-Apathya Mansika<sup>9</sup>

**Table 3** Viharaja Pathya-Apathya Mansika

Sr.	Pathya	Apathya
1	Chinta	Nityaharsha
2	Shoka	Achintya
3	Krodha	Mansonivritta

## 2.4 Kaphamedanashak Chikitsa<sup>10</sup>

There is an increase *Kapha* and *Meda* in *Sthaulya*. This *Kapha* and *Meda* is reduced by exercise, *Samshodhana Chikitsa*, *Virechana Karma*, *Arishtapana*, *Gomutrapana* and use of *Haritaki*.

## 3. Discussion

The dietary preparations made in *Sthaulya* mainly contains *Kashaya Rasa*. *Kashaya rasa* is *Kaphashamaka* and have *Guru*, *Ruksha* and *Shoshaka* properties. Acharya Charaka described barley and Millets useful in obesity. Millets is a good source of fibre. There is a soluble fiber called Beta Glucan in *Yava*<sup>11</sup> which makes it gel-like in the stomach and slows down the digestion and absorption of carbohydrates and nutrients, which does not produce hunger very fast. These all the positive grains have low glycemic index. High fiber content is found in *Kanguni* (Foxtail millet) and *Shyamaka* (Barnyard millet). Millets have antioxidants, phenolic acid, avenanthramides, flavonoids, lignans, phytosterols, Vitamin B Complex<sup>12</sup> found which cooperate in controlling metabolism. All *Pathya Vihara* are *Kapha* and *Meda Dhatu Shamaka*. In this way, diseases can be cured by the diet and exercise regimen.

## 4. Conclusion

The *Nidana* of any disease is its cause and obesity can be easily relieved by dieting and exercise (*Nidana Parivarjana Chikitsa*). In the present era, our lifestyle and food habits have changed, due to which the number of obesity patients has increased day by day, but by following *Pathya*, obesity not only can be avoided, but also can be cured.

## Compliance with ethical standards

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### Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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