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Review Article



MANAGEMENT OF MALE INFERTILITY: AYURVEDIC APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

An estimated 5-10 percent of couples are classified as infertile, which means that they have been trying to get pregnant with frequent, unprotected intercourse for at least a year with no success. In about half the cases, male infertility is a factor. Causes of male infertility include abnormal sperm production or function and/or impaired delivery of sperm. General health and lifestyle issues such like, excessive smoking, alcohol intake, degrading environment, high pollution levels, changes in food habits, and deskbound work, stress etc. and exposure to certain environmental factors like exposure to radiation are some key factors that affect male fertility negatively. Ayurveda realized the problem of male sexual dysfunction thousands of years ago and developed a separate specialty, namely, Vaajeekarana-chikitsa (Aphrodisiac therapy). It has also recommended an appropriate use of plant-based remedies, a proper lifestyle and nutritious diet for improving overall health and treating male infertility. Current paper aims at putting forward the causes and treatment of male infertility as described in Ayurveda.

Keywords: male infertility, lifestyle issues, vaajeekarana-chikitsha, plant-based remedies

INTRODUCTION

General health and lifestyle of a man may affect his fertility, although Modern science has made commendable advancements in identifying the causes but is still unable to put forth the treatment for the problem. Some common causes of infertility related to health and lifestyle include¹.

• Alcohol and drugs

For example, Anabolic steroids, cocaine, marijuana etc.

• Emotional stress

Stress may interfere with certain hormones needed to produce sperm.

• Life style generated disorders

Like Obesity, Diabetes etc. may cause hormone and other metabolic changes which reduce male fertility.

• Electromagnetic radiation

Such like laptop, computers, cell phone, x-rays etc.

• Malnutrition

Deficiencies in nutrients such as vitamin c, selenium, zinc and folate may contribute to infertility.

Tobacco smoking

• Environmental exposure:

- 1. Indoor Pollutions Pesticides and other chemicals.
- Outdoor Pollutions Pollution due to vehicles, factories etc.

Ayurvedic causes for male infertility

Ayurveda explains following causes for male infertility².

Bija upa tapa (Congenital abnormalities)

Defects in the gamete; leading to development and structural anomalies of reproductive system. Chromosomal disorders, various developmental disorders can be considered in this group.

Sukra dosha (Diseases of sperm): Some Causes of seminal morbidity are

Food factors

Habitual and excessive use of dry, bitter, astringent, salty, acidic and hot food. Foods which are at variance with

place, time, power of digestion, quantity, habit, doshas and mode of preparation

Behavioral factors

Excessive sexual indulgence, untimely sexual congress, sexual abuse, absolute sexual abstinence, bodily exertion in excess, suppression of natural urges and sexual congress with an unresponsive woman. also behavioral habits like sleeping very late at night, hectic lifestyle leads to disparity of Rakta and Pitta Dosha, ultimately causing Shukra kshaya i.e. deficit in Shukra Dhatu qualitatively and quantitatively.

• Psychological factors

Grief, anxiety, fear, anger and lack of mutual love and confidence. Sleeping very late at night, hectic lifestyle leads to disparity of Rakta and Pitta Dosha, ultimately causing Shukra kshaya i.e. deficit in Shukra Dhatu qualitatively and quantitatively.

Klaibya (Loss of libido)

Causes like Psychic, dietary, exhaustion of sukra, old age, mental worries, debilitating diseases (like T.B, Diabetes mellitus), over strain, excessive indulgence in sex are considered as contributory factors of quantitative and qualitative diminution of sukra.

Ayurvedic concept about prevention of male infertility

In the classics of Ayurveda the following charya's (conducts) have been mentioned with which a person will be able to be healthy and cure many of lifestyle disordered such like infertility.^{3,4}

- Dinacharya
- Ritucharya
- Rathricharya
- Thrayopasthambha palana
- Sadvritha
- Achara rasayana
- Ashtanga yoga's

In the classics of Ayurveda the following karma (steps) have also been mentioned for treatment of infertility are: (In Table 1)

Table 1: Treatment Steps⁵

Purvakarma (Preliminary treatment)	Pradhanakarma (Main treatment)	Pascatkarma (Management after main treatment)
Snehana (Oleation)	Virechana (purgation) (Castor oil with milk)	Vajikarnam (specific infertility management with Vajikarna drugs)
Swedana (Sudation)	Sneha vasti (oil enema)	
	Vasti (Decoction enema) Yapana vasti (rejuvenating enema which can be used for a long time without any adverse effect.)	
	Uttara vasti (enema given through the urethral orifice)	

Herbs traditionally used for vajikarana and shukral purposes

- **Kapikacchu** (*Mucuna Pruriens* Bak.), which has been found to increase sperm concentration and motility.⁶
- Gokshura (Tribulus terrestris Linn.), which raises testosterone levels.⁷
- Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera Dunal.), which enhances spermatogenesis via a presumed testosterone-like effect.⁸
- Shatavari (Asparagus racemosus Willd.), which appears to enhance fertility by reducing oxidative stress.⁹
- Yashtimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra Linn.), found to improve semen quality.¹⁰

Apart from the above mentioned Ayurvedic plants, male infertility can be cured with various other Ayurvedic medicines, some of them being Shilajatu rasayan, Abhrak Bhasma, Agnitundi Vati, Sukumara ghritam, Amritaprasam, Asvagandhadi lehyam, Mamsa sarpi, Kusmanda ghritam, Kalyanaka ghrtam, Asvagandhai ghritum, Satavari lehyam, Madana kameswari, Chavanprasam, Dasamularistam, Draksharistam, Asvagandharistam, Chandra prabha vati, Swarna bhasma etc.

Sukra sodhana gana (drugs which help in purification of semen or sperm) Kustha, elavaluka, katphala, samudra phena, kadamba niryasa, iksu, kanda iksu, iksuraka, vasuka, usira. Sukra janana gana (drugs which help in formation of semen or sperm) Jivaka, rsabhaka, kakoli, ksirakakoli, mudgaparni, masaparni, meda, vrksaruha, jatila, kulinga.

These should be given with milk as anupan or combined with a vajikarana diet that includes urad dal, milk, basmati rice, wheat, ghee, honey and for non vegetarians, chicken soup and fish.¹¹

CONCLUSION

By addressing simple lifestyle factors and providing vajikrana remedies offered in the Ayurvedic texts, the Ayurvedic practitioners can help male clients optimize their fertility. Thus it can be concluded that there are a large number of factors that lead to impotency of males, but with the right precautions and Ayurvedic cures, this medical condition can be treated, positively. All you need is a

balanced diet, proper lifestyle habits, and correct medical assistance. Correction the life style helps in controlling other metabolic disorders like Diabetes mellitus, obesity etc. and hence related impotency too.

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