



Case Report

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Ayurvedic management of generalized anxiety disorder – A case report

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ABSTRACT

Generalized Anxiety Disorder is a common and disabling disorder characterized by persistent worrying, anxiety symptoms and tension about a variety of everyday problems for a period of at least 6 months [1]. The symptoms of this disease shows resemblance with the Chittodwega (Excited state of mind) which is one among the Manovikara (disease of mind) explained by Acharya Charaka. The contemporary management of this disease employs anxiolytics to be used in long run which is not conducive to health. This a case of 57 year old gentleman who presented with persistent anxiety and inability to relax. Based on signs and symptoms he was diagnosed as a case of GAD according to the ICD 10 F41.1 criteria. Treatment planned was Nasya (nasal administration) and Abhyanga (massage) followed by Shamanaushadhis (internal medicines). Brahmi gritha (medicated ghee) is widely practised as Paana (internal administration) but in this case we have used it for nasal administration as it is the easiest way of delivering the potency of a drug to brain. Assessment of the condition of the patient before and after the treatment was done using Hamilton's Anxiety Rating Scale to evaluate efficacy of treatment. After the completion of schedule of one week of IP treatment and further 21 days of OP level administration of medicine, a significant reduction in score from 18 to 13 on Hamilton's Anxiety Rating Scale and improvement in symptoms was observed.

Keywords: Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Nasya, Brahmi gritha, Sraswatha choornam, Chittodwega.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a science of life and being holistic in approach, not only gives importance to physical health but also to mental, social and spiritual well being of an individual. In this world of competition, people are always under constant stress. This make people fall prey to a number of mental infirmities and GAD is most common among them. It greatly affect the quality of life of the patient. The disease shows resemblance to *Chittodwega* which is one among the *Manovikara* explained by *Acharya Charaka* [2]. The conventional treatment for this condition include short to long term administration of anxiolytics which on continuous use may cause other health issues and dependence [3].

CASE REPORT

A Hindu, married, 57 years old male patient visited the outpatient department (OP) of Amrita School of Ayurveda, Kollam on 14/03/2018 with complaints of inability to relax, persistent worry, lack of sleep, occasional muscle tension, palpitation and increased sweating Since 3 years.

Clinical findings

Patient complains of feeling 'stressed' all the time and constantly worries about work related stress. He had these for a long time but his anxiety has become much worse in the past one year since he got transferred to Jammu Kashmir and was away from his close friends. He feels unwell and he no longer feels that he can control these thoughts. When worried, he feels palpitation, sweating breathing difficulties, altered bowel habits and outburst of emotions feels. His quality of sleep is poor and often feel difficulty getting off to sleep due to constant worrying and frequent wakening. He also feels restlessness and irritability most of the time. He has a positive family history of depression from maternal side. He has no history of any alcohol or drug abuse and has no suicidal or homicidal tendencies.

Personal history revealed his bowel habits are normal with normal appetite. No difficulty in micturition was reported. He had reduced sleep. No allergies or addictions where reported.

Dasavidha pareeksha (Ayurvedic ten fold examination) revealed that the patient had *Vata Kapha Prakriti*

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(built and temperament) with *Madyama Sara* (constitutional essence), *Samhana* (compactness), *Pramana* (measurements), *Aharashakti* (power of assimilation) and *Vyayama Shakti* (power of exercise). He possessed *Avara Satwa* (inferior psyche) which was evident from his nature of constant worrying.

Diagnosis

Based on signs, symptoms and examination, he was diagnosed as a case of Generalized Anxiety Disorder as per ICD 10 F41.1 criteria [4] and treatments were started. Assessment of the patient before and after the intervention was done using Hamilton's Anxiety Rating scale [5].

The symptoms of GAD including excess thinking, irritability, palpitations etc can be correlated to *vata prakopa lakshanas* [6] and

Therapeutic intervention

Table 1: Interventional schedule

Treatment	Days	Duration	Drug	Dose
1. <i>Nasya</i>	7	20 mins	<i>Brahmi Ghritha</i>	4ml each nostril
2. <i>Abhyanga</i> followed by hot water bath (avoiding head bath)	7	40 mins	<i>Ksheerabala Tialam</i>	120 ml

RESULTS

After the treatment schedule of 7 days, patient had considerable relive in sleeping difficulty and anxiety. He also reported that he is feeling relaxed. After 21 days of internal medication, on follow up, patient was able to sleep for 6 hours without discomfort and he felt much relived about tensions. Also, he reported to have reduction in muscle cramps he used to feel often and increased clarity in sense of smell and vision. The assessment is given in below table.

DISCUSSION

Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is a disorder characterized by persistent worrying and anxiety producing many bodily symptoms in addiction to affecting mind. *Chittodvega* is a *manovikara* characterized by *Udvega avastha of mansa* (excited state of mind) which denotes increased *Rajas* (quality of mind) and the increased state of *Vata* and *pitta dosha*. As *Vata Pitta* is vitiated and main symptoms is *athi chintha* and *bhaya*, we adopt *Snehana* (oleation) as first line of treatment which is *Vata Pitta Shamana* (pacify *Vata* and *Pitta*) in the form of *Bruhmna nasyam* (nasal administration). *Brahmi gritha* [11] was the selected drug which is *medya* (intellect promoting) and all its four ingredients namely *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri* (L.) Wettst) [12], *Vacha* (*Acorus calamus*) [13], *Kusta* (*Saussurea lappa*), *Sankhapuspi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*) [14] have proven anxiolytic effects. *Abhyanga* is said to be *Vata Hara* (pacify *vata*) and maintains health of skin, [15] which is again the seat of mind. Also massage is proven to reduce subjective stress symptoms in body. [16] *Ksheerabala tailam* [17] was selected for *Abhyanga* which has the property of *Indriya prasdana* (clarity of sense organs), more over the main drug *Bala* (*Sida cordifolia*) is well known to reduce *Vata*, which increased the therapeutic effect.

Since it is chronic disease, it requires intellect promoting medicines and counselling to be taken for some time. Here the patient was administered *Saraswatha choornam* [18] for a period of 21 days. Maladdaption in a situation is the main reason for anxiety and *Aswaghandha* being one of the ingredient of this *choorna* is classified as an adaptogen which help stabilize body's response to stress. [19]

altered bowel habits, fear, anger etc to *pitta prakopa* [7]. Considering the dhatus involved in the disease, *athi chinta* or excess thinking is a causative factor for *rasa dhatu dusti* [8] which again manifest both bodily and mental symptoms. Considering location of mind, it is explained that *hridaya* [9] to be seat of mind. Also Acharya Charaka explained that *twak* (skin) and mind have *Samavayi sambandha* (inseparable relation) and hence where ever skin is present, mind is also present [10]. Hence the *vata kopa* occurring due to *rasa kshaya* along with *pita* will take its abode in *shiras* and *hridaya* where there exist a *khavaigunya* (vitiated body channels) and manifest symptoms throughout the body. This *kha vaigynya* is generated due to the repeated thoughts and worry for long time accentuated with the perpetuating factors like stress and difficult situations of life leading to the disease "*Chittodvega*".

GAD is a disease with symptoms of both mind and body. Both these aspects have been covered through this protocol.

Table 2: Assessment of symptoms

S. No.	Parameter	BT	AT
1	Anxious mood	3	2
2	Tension	3	2
3	Fear	1	1
4	Insomnia	3	1
5	Intellectual	1	1
6	Depressed mood	1	0
7	Somatic (muscular)	0	0
8	Somatic (sensory)	0	0
9	Cardiovascular symptoms	1	1
10	Respiratory symptoms	2	2
11	Gastrointestinal symptoms	1	1
12	Genitourinary symptoms	0	0
13	Autonomic symptoms	2	2
14	Behaviour at interview	0	0
15	TOTAL SCORE	18	13

No adverse and unanticipated results were observed

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