Review Article

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LIFESTYLE CAUSES OF ARSHA (PILES): AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW Harilal Poya^{1*}, Rajesh Singh², Akhilesh Shukla³¹Lecturer, Department of Kriya Sharira, Govt. Ayurvedic College, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India²Lecturer, Department of Dravya Guna Vigyan, Govt. Ayurvedic College, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India³Lecturer, Department of Samhita and Siddhanta, Govt. Ayurvedic College, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India

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ABSTRACT

Arsha (piles) is one of the commonest diseases of ano-rectal region which is included under the Asthamahagada (eight great diseases). The faulty dietary pattern and lifestyle, anatomical deformities and hereditary factors are the important etiological factors of this disease. Among these the increasing prevalence are mainly due to unwholesome lifestyle changes. Irrespective of age, sex, socio-economic status, the people may suffer from Arsha (piles). In the Ayurveda classics, along with hereditary the lifestyle related factors for the manifestation of Arsha (piles) are explained in detail. These factors can be well correlated with our present day faulty lifestyle pattern. The present article is intended to describe the classical view about the causative factors of disease Arsha (piles), correlating it with present lifestyle. For this the material were collected from the Brihatrayee (the great trio- Charaka Samita, Sushruta Samita and Asthanga Sangraha and Hridaya), PubMed, published article in the reputed journals and authentic internet sources. Understanding classical view on this aspect can help avoid the harmful dietary habits and lifestyle pattern. Such information will be also helpful in prevention and better management of disease Arsha (piles).

Key Words: Arsha, piles, hemorrhoids, lifestyle, Asthamahagada**INTRODUCTION**

Lifestyle diseases are our own creation and they are becoming the major cause of death and disability worldwide. Arsha (piles) is one such disease which makes human life miserable. The exact aetiology of the piles is still an unclear subject. In modern science, it can be compared with the haemorrhoids also known as piles, which is nothing but the varicosity of blood vessels found inside or around the bottom the rectum and anus¹. Lifestyle related factors are mainly thought to be the cause of increasing prevalence of Arsha (piles)²⁻³. Although haemorrhoids or piles are not fatal diseases, physical and psychological discomfort related with various symptoms of hemorrhoids such as anal bleeding, pain, and itching sensation can significantly influence quality of life (QOL) in a person with hemorrhoids⁴. Lack of fibre in the regular diet, excess consumption of meat, sitting for longer period, standing for long hours, weight gain and obesity etc. are the important factors related with Arsha (piles). Adopting healthy lifestyle and diet pattern which can help for easy evacuation of stool thus reducing the strain on the blood vessels in and around the anus is an important aspect of the management of piles. In Ayurveda

classics, there are detail information about the Aharja (dietary factors), Viharaja (activities), Manasika (psychological factors) and Agantuja (external factors) which are responsible for the manifestation of Arsha. It is included among the Astha Mahagada (eight great disease)⁵ because of the suffering it produces and also due to difficulty in its management. The present review highlights the important lifestyle related causative factors of Arsha mentioned in Ayurvedic classic along with logical interpretation from the recent studies. The stigma still associated among people with this disease are many people are ashamed of having enlarged hemorrhoids: They do not like to talk about their symptoms and might be reluctant to go to the doctor⁶, so it is important to know the factors involved in manifestation of it and to adopt healthy living pattern to prevent it.

AETIOLOGICAL FACTORS OF ARSHA (PILES)

The lifestyle related factors of Arsha (piles) which are described in Ayurveda classics, causes vitiation of Dosha and further manifestation of disease Arsha (piles) particularly in those having deficient digestive power are shown in the table 1.^{7,8,9}

Table 1: Aetiological factors of Arsha from Ayurveda Classics

Arsha Nidana (aetiological factors of piles/ haemorrhoids)			
Aharaja Nidana	Viharaja Nidana	Manasika Nidana	Agantuja Nidana
Habitual intake of heavy, sweet, cold, and food items which causes obstruction in the channels of circulation	Excessive exercise or physical inactivity	Anger,	Abnormal insertion of enema nozzle
intake of the meat of emaciated animals, dried meat and putrefied meat;	Lack of sexual act or excessive indulgence in sexual act	Anxiety	Frequent injury to anal region

Intake of pastries and preparation of milk, rice and sugar, whey	Forceful elimination of natural urge of defecation, flatus and micturition, too much straining during passing the stool	Envy	Rubbing anus by using grass, rags, clods etc
Consuming food items prepared from sesame seed and jaggery	Undesirable suppression of natural urge of defecation, flatus and micturition, which should be evacuated as soon as manifested	Sorrow	Use of rough, uneven and inflexible seats
Excessive and habitual intake of food items prepared from black gram, sugarcane juice, oil cake, dried or frozen vegetables, vinegar, garlic, cream prepared from milk or cream obtain from curd, thick or thin lotus stalk, germinated corns and pulses; freshly harvested grains and tender radish	Excessive pressure applied during the process of delivery	Mental inertia	Travelling in uncomfortable vehicle
Excess intake of fruits which are heavy for digestion, use of uncooked pickle and vegetables, fat obtain from muscle, meat of head and legs of animals, consuming stale food, putrid food items and food prepared by the mixture of verities of items, like rice, pulses and meat etc	Miscarriage		Excessive riding
Intake of curd which is not properly formed and wrongly fermented wines, drinking unhygienic and heavy water	Pressure of the pregnant uterus		rubbing of anal region
Intake of unctuous food substances in excess	Abnormal delivery		
Intake of incompatible food combinations	Frequent application of cold water		
Eating too little	Continued excessive strain, squatting position		
Eating before previous food is digested,	Sleep during day time		

DISCUSSION

Hemorrhoids are an extremely common condition, affecting approximately 10 million persons per year¹⁰. It is difficult to pin point the evident etiological factors for the dilatation of rectal or anal vein for the manifestation of piles. But nowadays the increasing incidence of Arsha (piles) is mainly due to unhealthy lifestyle habits which is prevalent in the modern society. Even for the management of Arsha (piles) avoiding etiological factors is most important.

Faulty Dietary Habits

Habitual consumption of food lacking fibre, excessive meat consumption, consuming incompatible food combination, taking food when previous meal is not digested well, regular intake of dry vegetables, dry meat, eating too little food etc. are the important cause of constipation and creates difficulties during defecation. Regular intake of these food items produces habit of straining during passing the stool and is responsible for the formation of piles.

Constipation

Hemorrhoids are a frequently occurring disorder widely believed to be caused by chronic constipation¹¹. Habitual straining in constipated person is important cause of varicosity of rectal and anal veins. Continued excessive strain due to chronic constipation is the common cause of dilatation of veins.

Faulty habits of defecation

Forceful suppression or expulsion of natural urges of defecation, flatus and micturition, too much straining during defecation, sitting in squatting position for longer time and continued excessive strain etc. are the faulty defecation habits which causes undue pressure over rectal and anal veins and produces varicosity.

Pregnancy and abnormal delivery

Piles/ haemorrhoids can occur at any age and affect both males and females. Haemorrhoids are common in young women and commoner during pregnancy and the puerperium¹². Pressure of the pregnant uterus, repeated miscarriage, abnormal or complicated delivery, type of child-birth and obstetric injuries such as sphincter tear etc. are the common causes for the manifestation of Arsha (piles).

Psychological factors

Survey study proves that hemorrhoids is independently associated with depression in both men and women¹³. It is well known that our psychological status is directly associated with the digestion of food. The most wholesome food, taken in appropriate quantity will not get digested if the person is in the state of grief anxiety, fear etc¹⁴. When the food is not digested well it causes difficulties in defecation and which ultimate leads to manifestation of Arsha (piles).

Physical injuries

Injuries to anal or rectal area by the improper insertion enema nozzle or due to rubbing by any stone, would etc of may produce piles. Injury due to such factor creates painful defecation and person may avoid passing stool, which will cause chronic constipation and further worsen the condition.

CONCLUSION

The person who follows the ideal living pattern as described in Ayurveda classics can live disease free healthy life. Consuming food lacking fibre content, faulty food habits, abnormal body posture, complicated delivery, repeated abortion, psychological imbalances and physical injury to anal region are some important factors highlighted in Ayurveda classics for the manifestation of Arsha (piles). It is one of the common lifestyle disorder affecting equally both man and women and makes

person's life miserable, as the treatment of piles is also difficult and recurrence is very common, it is always better to give utmost care our diet and lifestyle to avoid it.

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