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Case Study

AN AYURVEDA APPROACH IN THE MANAGEMENT OF BELL'S PALSYP: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Bell's palsy is a unilateral lower motor neuron facial paralysis of acute onset that has no discernible cause. It is the most common form of facial paralysis. As per Ayurveda classics this condition can be correlated with Ardita which is the result of vitiated vata dosha. Objective was to observe the efficacy of Ayurveda treatment in the management of Bell's Palsy. A 58 year old male patient presenting with sudden onset, asymmetry of face, pain and loss of movement on right side of face, difficulty in chewing and closing right eye came to OPD of our institute. History and examinations leads to the diagnosis of idiopathic facial nerve paralysis i.e. Bell' palsy. So patient was treated according to principles of Ardita chikitsa with Nasya therapy and Shamana chikitsa using various Ayurveda formulations. Remarkable results were observed in the form of improvement in all the chief complaints of the patient. Ayurveda treatment has valuable effect in the management of Bell's palsy & enhancing its speed of recovery.

Key words: Bell's palsy, Ardita, Nasya therapy

INTRODUCTION

Bell's palsy is an acute, unilateral paresis or paralysis of the face in a pattern consistent with peripheral nerve dysfunction, without detectable causes. Additional symptoms may include pain in or behind the ear, numbness in the affected side of the face, hyperacusis and disturbed taste on the ipsilateral anterior part of the tongue. It is the most common form of facial paralysis. The incidence is around 23 per 100,000 people per year.¹

As per Ayurveda classics, the sign and symptoms of Bell's palsy simulates with Ardita which results due to aggravated Vata Dosha. Therefore the treatment principle given by Acharya Charaka mainly concentrates on Vata pacification i.e. nourishing type of inhalation therapy should be given and the head should be anointed with medicated oil. Nadi sweda and Upanaha prepared with the meat of animals inhabiting marshy lands are useful for the cure of this ailment.² Up to 30% of patients with Bell palsy fail to recover facial function completely. Thus, thousands of patients with Bell palsy are left with permanent, potentially disfiguring facial weakness each year. Modern science found drugs like steroids and anti virals etc. for it, also surgical and other treatments are available for facial paralysis. Yet, its recurrence and synkinesis are also reported. Acc. to Ayurveda Nose is said the gateway of cranial cavity. And it is also said that all diseases of supraclavicular part can be managed by Nasya karma. Keeping in view all the particular reasons, the case study had been carried out to analyze the effect of Nasya therapy along with Shamana therapy.

CASE REPORT

A 58 year old male patient presented himself with sudden onset, asymmetry of face, pain and loss of movement on right side of face, pain in right ear, unable to speak clearly, difficulty in chewing and closing right eye from fifteen days duration. At the onset of presentation, he had not taken any treatment. Clinical examination revealed absence of right nasolabial fold, deviation of angle of mouth to the left, inability to close the right eye, inability to lift brow and asymmetry of face at rest. All these features suggested grade IV facial nerve palsy according to House-Brackmann grading of facial palsy.³ Ooscopic examination revealed normal external auditory canal and intact tympanic membrane bilaterally.

Pure tone audiometry revealed normal hearing. Taste perception sensation was intact.

Routine investigations like Hb, TLC, DLC, ESR, FBS and LFT were with in normal range.

As per the principles of Ardita chikitsa, the patient was treated with –

Nasya therapy which comprises

1. Poorva Karma – Snehana with Bala taila followed by Swedana
2. Pradhana Karma – Navana Nasya with 8 - 8drops of Ksheerbala (101) taila for 7 days with three days gap in between three sittings.
3. Paschat Karma – Kavala dharana with warm saline water.

Shamana chikitsa with

1. Dashmoola kwatha 40 ml twice a day for 1 month
2. Rasona kalka one karsha once a day for 1 month

RESULTS

After one month of therapy there was significant improvement in the complaints like- complete absence of facial and ear pain, no difficulty in speaking and chewing, absence of facial asymmetry at rest. Clinical assessments were made from the subjective symptoms and gradation of scoring pattern. Before starting the treatment the House-Brackmann grading of facial nerve function score measured was Grade IV and after commencement of one month treatment it was Grade II that is there was overall noteworthy progress in symptoms of Bell's palsy. There was no side effect observed during the treatment as well as after the completion of treatment.

DISCUSSION

Nasya karma is one among the five types of Panchakarma therapies. According to Ayurveda, before giving Nasya, patient should receive Snehana and Swedana because modern studies had proved that application of heat and muscular exercise accelerates drug absorption through vascular path by increasing blood flow. Moreover Bala taila Abhyanga followed by Swedana stimulates the sensory nerve endings and provide strength to the facial muscles by their Balya, Ushna, and Vatahara guna.

Ksheerbala (101) Taila is prepared with Bala kalka and Kashaya and Ksheera with Taila in equal quantity to milk. After it is prepared, this taila is again processed with the above ingredients for 100 times. It is prescribed in all vata disorders and having Jeevana, Brihana, Rasayana and Indriyaprasadana properties¹. The synergistic action of all the components thus may have potentiated its neuroprotective effect. As nose is the gate way of Shiras. So the drugs administrated through nose stimulate the higher centers of brain which shows action on regulation of nervous system functions². Therefore Navan nasya with Ksheerbala (101) taila alleviates the vitiated vata dosha and provides nourishment to the nervous system thereby helps in improving the symptoms of Bell's palsy.

In Paschat Karma, Kavala dharana with warm saline water increases the efficacy of the treatment as well as removes

remaining Doshas and helps in improving the facial muscle strength.

As per Bhavaprakasha, Dashmoola kwatha and Rasona kalka are indicated in Ardita management. Dashmoola kwatha have Vata Shamaka and Sothahara properties and thus alleviate pain and inflammation. Rasona has Guru, Snigdha Guna, Ushna veerya and Kapha-Vatahara action and it helps in enhancing the speed of recovery in patients of Ardita⁶. On the basis of these properties, it helps in relieving the symptoms of Bell's palsy.

CONCLUSION

This case study reveals that patients with Bell's palsy can gain significant relief in symptoms with minimal risk and high patient acceptance through Ayurveda management. Despite the limitations of this case study, the therapy may be an effective option in the treatment of Bell's palsy. Further study should be carried out in larger sample group.

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