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Review Article

ROLE OF MUSTADI-UPNAHA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SNĀYU-VIKĀRA (TENDINOPATHY) WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TENNIS ELBOW: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Tennis elbow or lateral epicondylitis is the tendinopathy affecting the lateral epi-condylar region of the elbow. This leads to feature of pain, tenderness and other related features in the affected region. Systemic & local anti-inflammatory measures along with other treatment measures are advised for its management, but with debateable outcome. This condition could be correlated with the snāyugata vāta mentioned in various Ayurveda texts. Extensive & elaborate description is available in the Ayurveda concerning the Snāyu, snāyugata vāta & its management. The condition may require a thorough review in concern to have effective management by incorporating principles of Ayurvedic Science along with the contemporary science.

Keywords: Tennis elbow, Snāyu, Snāyu gata vāta.

INTRODUCTION

Humeral lateral epicondylitis which has been cited in literature as early as 1873 by Runge is overuse injury affecting elbow. The name Tennis Elbow for this condition is derived from Lawn tennis arm described by Morris in the lancet in 1882. It affects 1-3 % of the total population and is the commonest tendinopathy of the human body mostly affecting the dominant limb. It often arises from strain of the fibres of the common extensor tendon at its origin owing to both degenerative and inflammatory process.

The condition is marked with the excruciating pain occurring in the region of lateral epi-condylar region of humerus with radiation towards forearm (in few cases) and other associated features.

Anti-inflammatory drugs are advised routinely for both oral intakes as well as for local application along with tennis elbow brace. Local infiltration with corticosteroids and autologous blood, various type of manipulations under anaesthesia, physiotherapies, para-surgical (including Agni karma) and surgical treatments are advised for its management. Despite of the significant advancement in the field of health science the outcome of management in tennis elbow is still debatable.

Tennis Elbow is a commonest tendinopathy. As far as modern medical science various treatment modalities are available for the management of Tennis Elbow but with debatable out-come. Various therapeutic measures are mentioned there in Ayurveda in the form of local treatments for snāyu-vikāra. So the present study has been undertaken to review the available texts of Ayurveda concerning the local management of the condition in concern to have some effective management for the tennis elbow.

Objectives

- To scrutinise various texts concerning the description of Snāyu & Snāyu-gata vāta (Tendinopathy) in Ayurvedic texts.
- To scrutinise various texts concerning the sign/symptoms & management of Snāyugata-vāta (Tendinopathy) in Ayurvedic literature.
- To find out efficacious management of Tennis elbow by incorporating principles of Ayurvedic management with contemporary science.

OBSERVATIONS

On thorough screening the reference texts it could be ascertained that:

- The term Snāyu is used for fibrous structures, tendons & ligament^{1,2,3}
- Snāyujalani, Snāyu prataana is also used for such structures^{4,5}
- Snaya is also mentioned in few texts^{6,7} for the structures having the similar anatomical description.

As per the symptoms Tennis elbow could be correlated with Snāyu- vikāra or snāyu gat vāta-vikāra particularly affecting lateral epi-condylar region of elbow as mentioned various Ayurvedic classics^{8,9} Some description is also available with Ashatanga Haridya¹⁰

While mentioning the treatment various measures (particularly the local measures) have been cited¹¹

Local Treatment through Oileation (Snehana), Sudation (swedana), Poulitice (Upnaha), Cautry (Agnikarma) could be an effective measure in the management of the condition.

Similar description of its management have been described in Bhaishajya Ratnavali¹² and in ChakraDutta¹³

Local treatment principle using Mustadiupnaha has been described in Charak Samhita¹⁴

Table 1: Ingredients of Mustadi Upanaha

S.No.	Drugs	Botanical Name	Part Used	Quantity
1	Mustaka	<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>	Rhizome (Kanda)	1 Part
2	Kushtha	<i>Saussurea lappa</i>	Root	1 Part
3	Surahva (Devdaru)	<i>Cedrus deodara</i>	Kandasara and oil	1 Part
4	Natam (Tagara)	<i>Valeriana wallichii</i>	Root	1 Part
5	Tila	<i>Sesamum indicum</i>	Seed, Oil	1 Part
Others contents used in Mustadi Upanaha				
S.No.	Drugs	Description	Part Used	Quantity
1	Lavana (Saindhav)	Himalayan Pink rock salt	Whole	2 Parts
2	Kinva (Surakitta)	Yeast	Whole	½ Part
3	Dadhi	Curd	Whole	QS
4	Kṣīra	Milk	Whole	QS
5	Chatur sneha ¹⁵	Ghṛta (cow's ghee), Taila, Vasā, Majja	Either of these or all together mixed in quantity as described in text	QS

QS: Quantity sufficient

Table 2: Ayurveda pharmacological Properties of Mustadi Upanah

SN	Drug	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Doshagnata
1	Mustaka	Tikta, Katu, Kashaya	Laghu, Ruksha	Śīta	Katu	Kapha-Pitta Śāmaka,
2	Kushtha	Tikta, Katu, Madhura	Laghu, Ruksha, tīkṣṇa,	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kapha-Vāta Śāmaka,
3	Surahva (Devdaru)	Tikta	Laghu, Snigdha	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kapha-Vāta Śāmaka,
4	Natam (Tagara)	Tikta, Katu, Kashaya	Laghu, Snigdha	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kapha-Vāta Śāmaka,
5	Tila	Madhur (Anurasa- Kashaya, Tikta)	Guru, Snigdha,	Uṣṇa	Madhura Vipākī	Vāta Śāmaka,
6	Lavana (Saindhav)	lavana	Snigdha, Tikshna	Uṣṇa	Madhura Vipākī	Vāta śāmaka,
7	Kinwa (Surakitta)		Guru	Uṣṇa	Katu	Vāta propka
8	Dadhi (Curd)	Madhura, Amla,	Snigdha, Manda	Uṣṇa	Amla	Vāta śāmaka,
9	Kṣīra (Milk)	Madhur	Guru, Snigdha,	Śīta	Madhura Vipākī	Vāta-pitta śāmaka,
10	Chatur sneha Ghṛta (cow's ghee), Taila, Vasā, Majja)	-	Snigdha,	Śīta	Madhura Vipākī	Tridoṣa, śāmaka,

DISCUSSION

As per the fundamentals of Ayurveda the pain & inflammation in any part is always associated with vitiation of body humors (Physiological homeostasis). Most of the contents of mustadi-upnaha pacify the alleviated humors hence the application is prove to be effective in the management of condition Tennis elbow.

Method of composition

Fine to coarse powders of Musta, Kushtha, Devdaru, Tagar, Til are utilized in equal quantity for composing the Mustadi-upnaha.

In Step I- Saindhava lavana double in amount than the other constituents is heated over mild flame with any of one or all the constituent of Chatur sneha (Ghṛta (cow's ghee), Tail, vasā, Majja all taken together or either of these taken in sufficient amount required for this.

In Step II Musta, Kushtha, Devdaru, Tagar, Til are commixed with above composed amalgamation & are stirred exhaustively over medium flame till the constituents become golden brown.

In Step III Kinva, Dadhi (Curd) & milk are integrated to the composition & stirred well for few minutes to have a uniform mixture with the consistency of thick paste.

Method of Application

The constituted composition is used around the temperature of 40 degree centigrade.

It is used preferably in the evening hours (owing to more vitiation of vāta) over the lateral epi-condylar region of elbow secured well with the crape bandage.

The application should be held for minimally 4-6 hours. The paste should be removed later by using lukewarm water.

Better results are observed when the patient is advised to wear tennis elbow brace over the affected limb while doing the routine works.

CONCLUSION

The term Snāyu is used for fibrous structures, tendons & ligament. Tennis elbow being a tendinopathy could be correlated with the condition Snāyu gata vāta as described in Ayurveda. Different conservative/surgical as well as specific measures like autologous blood¹⁶ injections/duloxetine¹⁷/Extra corporal shock wave¹⁸ therapy have been mentioned for its management but with debateable outcome. Treatment through local Oeolation (Snehana), Sudation (swedana), Poulitice (Upnaha), and Cauty (Agnikarma) could be an effective measures in the management of the condition. As per the principles of Ayurveda poulitice is

advisable to be used in evening hours well secured with bandage minimally for 4-6 hours. Treatment principle Upnaha (Poultice) could be explored further for the effective outcome. Poultice could also be incorporated along with other measures like Tennis elbow brace.

Following these references a systematic clinical study has been undertaken to evaluate the efficacy of Mustadi-Upnaha in Tennis elbow with results awaited.

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