

EMPOWERING THE HEALING JOURNEY: A CASE STUDY ON SUPPORTIVE
AYURVEDIC APPROCHES IN BREAST CANCER

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women. Initial signs of cancer start in the lymph nodes located under the arm, within the breast, and near the collarbone. Many promising remedies for breast cancer are included in Ayurveda, the Indian system of medicine. Nowadays, multi-targeted herbal medications are employed as an adjuvant therapy in conjunction with traditional medicine to treat breast cancer. Purpose: Breast cancer has ranked top most cancer with age adjusted rate as high as 25.8 and mortality 12.7 per 100,000 Indian females. For Indian women, breast cancer risk is significantly increased by young age. There are numerous issues that might emerge in traditional medicine. The ayurveda treatment helps as supportive treatment and with the changing demand and awareness among these days, the role of ayurveda is an emerging reality. It is beneficial in reducing the harms of chemotherapeutic agents and enhances their efficacy as supportive care. Brief case history: A 56-year-old female, retired teacher by occupation at india, came to the P D PATEL AYURVEDA hospital, nadiad in February 2021 with confirmed diagnosis of invasive ductal carcinoma. She went through chemotherapy and radiotherapy and was on remission in 2021. She had weakness, disturbed sleep, loss of appetite the side effect from the breast cancer treatment. After trying the conventional treatment, she was not satisfied, she came to hospital looking for alternative therapy to help over all symptoms, cope up with weakness and overall mental and physical wellbeing. The *Ayurveda* treatment involved oral medication, *Rasyana* medication to increase strength and overall wellbeing. The patient was not on any other treatment and medication during the entire treatment. After uninterrupted treatment for six months there was decrease body pain, improvement in sleep & appetite in along with increase in energy level. The patient case study is an attempt to provide Ayurveda as an alternative/supportive treatment for remission management breast cancer patients. **Result:** she got an excellent result with complete relief from all symptoms and improves body strength. Her body weight was increased.

KEYWORDS: Breast Cancer, Supportive therapy, *Rasyana chikitsa Ayurveda*.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, around two million women are diagnosed with cancer and among the diagnosed, breast cancer being a major contributor and most common A study conducted by the Hai-Rim Shu et al showed the breast cancer mortality among the western countries such as United Sates and UK are showing declining trends whereas among Asian women, the incidence is increasing in Singapore, being the highest as compared to others regions of the Asia Treatment of breast cancer include mastectomy which was used since early 19th century,^[1] with advancement of technology and knowledge of breast cancer, treatments such as chemotherapy, aromatase inhibitors, are being used and are currently in use Recent days, much more advanced techniques of

targeted chemotherapy and radiation therapy are also being used for the treatment of breast cancer. But with these heavy treatments of chemotherapy and hormonal therapy, there is a huge toll on the other organs of the patient receiving treatment especially post-menopausal women as the prevalence of breast cancer is highest in these population Considering post-menopausal women whose Bone Mineral Density is increased, receiving these treatments would lead to bone loss with increased risk of the fractures and leading to osteoporosis.^[2]

The treatment of breast cancer, even though highly advanced, yet it leads to series of psychological and social despair among the survivors. Studies shows that majority of patients, experience treatment-related

distress, fear of recurrence, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder. Cancer, as both disease and psychological distress needs to be recognised and addressed not only to increase life span but also Quality of Life.^[3]

This suggests that, in spite of the advanced science and technology, the conventional sciences could not reduce the incidences in the society. In this scenario Ayurveda can add on a better cancer management and prevention through its holistic approach.

The anxiety and post-traumatic stress impact the patient's body in various ways such as psychological, neurological and immunological imbalances. The hypothalamic-pituitary- adrenal (HPA) axis is altered by prolonged stress, which can lead to hypercortisolism or glucocorticoid resistance. As a result, the growth hormones that cause osteoporosis and promote bone loss are greatly reduced. Alendronate, zoledronic acid, and ibandronate (all of these drugs belong to the bisphosphonate group) are available to treat osteoporosis patients in such situations, but they come with a number of side effects including back pain, musculoskeletal pain, headache, dizziness, palpitation, and more. A patient who has overcome cancer will not be able to bear such negative side effects, and there will be a decline.

According to Ayurveda, Due to abnormal vitiation of *Dosha* and *Dushya* may cause excessive abnormal growth of cells which may develop in any part of the body, these types of growths are multiple in numbers, because of their different locations in the body and clinical features, they are named and classified into different types. These all types of growth are called "*Granthi*" and "*Arbuda*". *Acharya Charaka* explained these types in the chapter of "*Shotha*".^[4] There are many types of *Granthi*, but the *Granthi* present in the *Stana* is "*Mamsaja Granthi*". *Charaka* described it as "*Mamsaja Granthi*" which is a big and painless structure,

correlated with fibroadenoma. According to the classical text of Ayurveda, it is mentioned to treat *Mamsaja Granthi* similar to *Kaphaja Granthi*.

Ayurveda being a holistic approach towards the line of treatment gives complete satisfactory results without any complications, hence, to find a long-lasting solution with not many adverse effects is the need of the hour. Considering the above facts, this ailment has been selected to pursue its perfect cure through Ayurveda.

CASE REPORT

A 56-year-old female, retired teacher by occupation at India, came to the P D PATEL AYURVEDA hospital, Nadiad in February 2021 with confirmed diagnosis of invasive ductal carcinoma. She went through chemotherapy and radiotherapy and was on remission in 2021. She went for conventional treatment of chemotherapy and radiotherapy for osteoporosis which helped her with very unsatisfactory minimal improvement. Patient was on necessary supplements. Finally, in early 2021, she decided to look for complementary therapy. She was operated for left-MRM with on 19/02/2021 and immunohistochemistry confirmed as TNBC on 23/05/2008. Patient underwent 5 cycles of chemotherapy during June to September 2021. Patient was asymptomatic till February 2022. Patient came to the hospital with complaints of body ache, joint pain, giddiness, and weakness due to chemotherapy sessions. The intervention began in 12/02/2022 after screening and consultation by the doctor in our hospital.

CLINICAL FINDING

Systemic examination

Pain and tenderness were noticed in the lower abdomen during a gastrointestinal examination. There were no signs of aberrant respiratory, cardiovascular, or nervous system function.

ASHTAVIDHA PARIKSHA

ASHTAVIDHA PARIKSHA	
NADI	70 / min, Pittadhi vata
MUTRA	Samyak, 6-7 times /day
MALA	2-3 times/day
JIHVA	Sama
SABDHA	Prakrit
SAPRSHA	Prakrit
DAK	Singhdha
AKRUTI	Madhyam

[TABLE -3] ASHTAVIDHA PARIKSHA

Personal history

- Diet: mixed (veg)
- Addiction: not any
- Job: retired teacher
- Past history: known case of breast cancer
- Family history: father has CANCER OF MOUTH

- Surgical history: operated for left-MRM with on 19/02/2021

TREATMENT SCHEDULE

SR. NO	DATE	MEDICINE	DOSE	ANUPANA
1	12/2/2022 To 12/08/2022	Varunadi kwatha	40 (twice a day)	-
2		Kanchanara Guggulu	3 tab (3 time/day)	Jala
3		Shudhha bhallatak	50mg (2 time/day)	Jala
4		Shudhha hira bhasma	20mg (2 time/day)	Jala
5		Bhramharasayana avleha	10gm (2 time /day)	Dhugdhsaha

OUTCOME AND FOLLOW UP

SR. No.	Symptoms	Starting of Treayment	After 2 Months	After 4 Months	After 6 Months
1	Weakness	Sever	Moderate	Mild	Mild
2	Loss of appetite	Present	Improved	Good appetite	Good appetite
3	Body ache	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent
4	Disturbed sleep	Present (2-3 hours/night)	4-5 hours/night	5-6 hours/night	5-6 hours /night
5	Weight loss	Present(45 kg)	Absent(46kg)	Absent(48 kg)	Absent(51kg)

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

She was operated for left-MRM with on 19/02/2021 and immunohistochemistry confirmed as TNBC on 23/05/2008. Patient underwent 5 cycles of chemotherapy during June to septmber 2021. Patient was asymptomatic till February 2022.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda has been used to complement against adverse effect of post chemotherapy conditions of cancer. Chances of developing osteoporosis is one of the common conditions for which calcium rich food, supplements along with medications like Raloxifene, Teriparatide, Denosumab and many more have been introduced for better recovery. Recovery needs a better support of complementary medicine and lifestyle change which can increase the absorption of calcium and can decrease the loss of electrolyte. With this clinical study we aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of an Ayurveda medical treatment approach is seen as follow up condition during post cancer treatment. After 24 weeks Ayurved integrative treatment led to a significantly greater and clinically relevant improvement in all symptoms when correlated with complaints to pre-condition and instructions suggested by conventional guideline-based care with group differences maintained over few months.

This single case study is the first to evaluate the effectiveness of a complex multi-modal Ayurveda integrative medicine approach as a complementary medicine. It is a comparison of following only conventional medication with respect to adding with conventional medicine.

The integrative treatment approach along with the conventional care were carefully designed with the aim of best practice for the patient with proper interim analysis by using VAS during treating the patient. The multi-modal integrative treatment was used as per studies which have been done for osteoarthritis and osteoporosis.

India has been reported to have a rising incidence of breast cancer. Approximately, 10– 15% of breast carcinomas are known to be of TNBC sub-type,

characterized by onset at a younger age, high mean tumour size and higher-grade tumours. Ayurveda therapy which includes heat and smoothening system of herb can be one of the causes of improved repair mechanism by increasing the blood flow carrying nutrition to the joints. Stress being one of the causative factors of loss of mineral in post chemotherapy condition can be very well managed by rasyana therapy and meditation. Ayurveda supplements and therapy increases the nutrition absorption in the body along with relaxation of muscle from tensed condition which can decrease cramps and discomfort. Ayurveda supplements as part of diet as an instrument to work on neuroendocrine level has been the major key in many studies and same can be seen in this case. Looking into all these studies and the results gives us a vision to keep this case-report as an idol and can project for a bigger study in post cancer patients.

The word “Rasayana” is made up of two words: “Rasa” and “Ayana.” “Rasa” primarily means essential seven vital tissues (*Saptadhatu*, e.g., Rasa, Rakta, Mansa, Meda, Asthi, Majja, and Shukra). “Ayana” means the path or channel. Hence, *Rasayanas* are those that bring about proper uptake, growth, and improvement of essential *Dhatus*. According to *Acharya Charaka*, use of *Rasayanas* results in disease-free long life (*Dirghamaayu*), *Smiriti* (Recapitulating power), *Medha* (Intellect), *Aarogyam* (healthy well-being), *Tarun Vaya* (Youthfulness), *Prabha* (Blaze), *Varna* (Complexion), *Swara* (Voice), and *Dehaindriya Bala* (Strength).^[5] According to *Acharya Sharangdhara*, various drugs, diet, and regimens which promote longevity by delaying aging and preventing diseases are called *Rasayana* such as *Amrita*, *Guggul*, and *Haritaki*.^[6]

Brahma Rasayana is one of the most valuable Ayurvedic formulations made with 45 herbal ingredients, which claims to improve intelligence, memory, and immune power and for use against stress and tiredness.^[7] *Brahma Rasayana* is mentioned in “the Ayurvedic formulary of India” for the treatment of drowsiness, fatigue/lethargy, tiredness without exertion, mental weakness, senility/progeriasis, aging, and disturbed memory.

Oral ayurvedic medicine was in the form of *Dosha - Dhatu* alleviating (*Shamana chikitsa*) and immunomodulatory (*Rasayana chikitsa*) treatment in the form of various combinations of herbs, minerals and metals. *Shamana chikitsa* is beneficial for maintaining equilibrium of *Dosha* and *Dhatu* by improving appetite and digestion, reducing generalized toxicity, imparting anti-inflammatory effects and improving quality of life. *Rasayana chikitsa*, additionally, exerts

immunomodulatory effect and strengthens *Dhatu*. *Panchakarma* treatment detoxifies body by eliminating vitiated *Dosha*.

Various reported uses of these specific medicines and their constituents are summarised while the important rationale in selecting these combinations is discussed below.

SR.NO	DRUG NAME	INGRDIEANT	MODE OF ACTION
1	Varunadi kwatha	Varuna Sairayaka Sathaavari Agni Murva Ajaji Bilva Brihati Karanja Pootikaranja Jaya Pathya Darbha Rujakra	• Anti-inflammatory (<i>Shothanashak</i>) • Anti-tumour activity • Increases strength by improving appetite and digestion. Improves functions of female genital organs especially of mammary glands and thus, effective in various breast disorders including breast cancer.
2	Kanchanara viii Guggulu	Kanchanara twak Varuna Triphala Tikatu Guggulu	• <i>Triphala</i> – Anti-cancer activity especially in breast cancer • <i>Guggulu</i> – Anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant and anti-cancer activity • <i>Pippali</i> – Anti-tumour activity
3	Shudhha bhallatak	bhallatak	• Improve appetite (<i>Deepana</i>), promote digestion (<i>Pachana</i>) and hepatoprotective
SR.NO	DRUG NAME	INGRDIEANT	MODE OF ACTION
4	Shudhha bhasma hirak		• Immunomodulator (<i>Rasayana</i>), vitality enhancer (<i>Ojovardhan</i>), possesses detoxifying property (<i>Vishapaha</i>), improves appetite and digestion (<i>Deepana and Pachana</i>), thus promotes proper nourishment (<i>Bruhana</i>) • anti-oxidant activity, immune-stimulant activity
5	Bhramharasayana Avleha ^{ix}		• <i>Brahma Rasayana</i> is mentioned in “the Ayurvedic formulary of India” for the treatment of drowsiness, fatigue/lethargy, tiredness without exertion, mental weakness, senility/progeriasis, aging, and disturbed memory. • An immunomodulator is a drug used for its effects on the immune system.

Informed Consent

Written permission for publication of this case study has been obtained from the patient.

Support: Nil.

Conflicts of Interest: Nil.

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