AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF THE LIFESTYLE DISORDER–OBESITY (STHOULYA) W.S.R. TOA AHARA-VIHAR AS PATHYA AND APThYA

Pargewar Ashwini Marotirao*1 and Ujwale Ramesh2

1PG Scholar, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, SSAM, Hadapsar, Pune, India.
2HOD and Professor, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, SSAM, Hadapsar, Pune, India.

ABSTRACT

In today's era, junk food, and a sedentary lifestyle has made man the victim of many lifestyle disorders, one of them being Obesity. Obesity can cause various non-communicable diseases, like hypertension, dyslipidemia, glucose intolerance, and some long-term complications like coronary heart disease, infertility, and diabetes. The percentage of the population suffering from Obesity is increasing daily, so awareness should be created regarding the disease and its Complications. The preventive measures for Obesity according to Ayurveda are to follow - Dincharya, Ritucharya, Pathy Aahar Vihar seven, and Shodhan Karma. Pathya Aahar vihar sevan plays an important role as that in medicine. Following righteous Aahara-Vihara as described in Ayurveda one can prevent obesity and reduce its risks to develop various fatal diseases.

Aims And Objectives: 1. To study the aspects of obesity as mentioned in Ayurvedic literature and Modern Medicine. 2. Explore the Ayurvedic management for Obesity, in terms of Pathya and Apthy Aahara-Vihara. Materials and methods: The references were collected from classical Ayurvedic texts, research journals, and reputed medical textbooks. Discussion: Obesity is most commonly caused by a combination of excessive food intake, Junk food, lack of physical activity, and genetic susceptibility. A sedentary lifestyle also plays a major role in the pathogenesis of obesity. Ayurvedic management for obesity has excellent potential, when given in the form of Ayurvedic Pathya-Apathya Aahar Vihar, exercise, etc. Conclusion: Aahara Vihar plays a major role in Swasthya Rakshana. For better Ayurvedic management of obesity, Pathya Aahar Vihar sevan needs to be focused along with medicinal treatment. Hence following appropriate Pathya and avoiding Apathya leads to better Health in case of

*Corresponding Author
Pargewar Ashwini Marotirao
PG Scholar, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, SSAM, Hadapsar, Pune, India.

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Obesity.

**KEYWORDS**: Ayurveda, Lifestyle disorder, Obesity, Pathya- Apathya Aahar Vihar Sevan.

**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda has described obesity as Sthaulya or Medoroga. The obese person has been included by Acharya Charak among Ashtouninditiya Purusha, i.e., eight undesirable constitutions. Sthaulya is described under the heading of Santarpanotha Vikara i.e., a disease caused by over-nourishment. Using a fatty diet, decreased physical activity and hereditary factors contribute to its etiology ultimately causing derangement of Agni of Medadhatu, this produces an excess of Meda or fat. Obesity is a state of excess adipose tissue mass. “Overweight” refers to excessive body weight that includes muscle, bone, fat, and water.[1]

Major causes of the increasing prevalence of obesity include behavioural and environmental factors, such as excessive consumption of energy-dense foods and a sedentary lifestyle.[2]

Obesity is a condition in which physiological equilibrium is disturbed due to abnormalities in the functioning of various body systems. This provides a platform for many ailments such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, heart diseases, impotency, infertility, osteoarthritis, depression, and anxiety. Obesity has become the main disease in many countries due to dietary changes combined with an increase in inactive lifestyles. There has been a large increase in fat and dense food consumption; accompanied by a decrease in physical activity.

**Prevalence of obesity**

120 million urban Indians are extremely obese. India ranks among the top 10 obese nations in the world. 1 out of every 10 Indian children is obese.[3] A survey conducted in cities by AIIMS, Delhi revealed that the waistline had grown by 30% more.

According to the WHO report-2016, the prevalence of obesity is as follows:[4]

- Worldwide obesity has nearly tripled since 1975.
- In 2016, more than 1.9 billion adults, 18 years and older, were overweight. Of these over 650 million were obese.
- 39% of adults aged 18 years and over were overweight in 2016, and 13% were obese.
- Most of the world’s population lives in countries where overweight and obesity kill more people than underweight.
- Over 340 million children and adolescents aged 5-19 were overweight or obese in 2016.
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
1. To study the aspects of obesity as mentioned in Ayurvedic literature and Modern medicine.
2. To explore the Ayurvedic management for obesity in terms of Pathya- Apthya Aahar Vihar.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
The references were collected from classical Ayurvedic texts, research journals, and reputed medical textbooks. This article focuses on the aspects of obesity as mentioned in Ayurvedic literature. Obesity has been studied from both a modern and an Ayurvedic perspective, with the goal of discovering Ayurvedic management for obesity in terms of Pathya- Apsyhay.

2. CONCEPTUAL STUDY
2.1 DEFINITION & CLASSIFICATION OF OBESITY (ATISTHAULYA)
Obesity is a type of disease that reduces life expectancy and is linked to an increased risk of a variety of major and minor illnesses. Obesity has a physical, emotional, and mental impact on a person. Obesity is defined as a body weight that is 20% or more above the desirable/normal weight for one's age, sex, and height. One of the clinical approaches to characterise obesity is BMI (> 25 kg/m2).

Due to extensive growth of fat and flesh, a person who is unable to work and disfigured with pendulous buttocks, belly, and breasts is called Atisthula, and the condition is termed as Atisthaulya. In Ayurveda, Acharya Charaka has described AshtaNinditaPurusha and emphasized in detail two pathological conditions viz Atisthula and Atikarshya. Atisthulapurusha is the worst among them, due to its complicated pathogenesis, variable complication, and treatment.

The international classification of obesity
The National Institute of Health (NIH) now uses BMI to define a person as underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese instead of traditional height vs. weight charts.
Table no.1: The international classification.\(^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>BMI (KG/M(^2))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal weight</td>
<td>BMI between or equal to 18.5 to 24.9 kg/m(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>BMI between or equal to 25 to 29.9 kg/m(^2) (Asian and South Asian population - BMI between 23 and 24.9 kg/m(^2))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>BMI between or equal to 30 kg/m(^2) (Asian and South Asian population - BMI between 23 and 24.9 kg/m(^2))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity class I</td>
<td>BMI between or equal to 30 to 34.9 kg/m(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity class II</td>
<td>BMI between or equal to 35 to 39.9 kg/m(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity class III</td>
<td>BMI greater than or equal to 40 kg/m(^2) (also referred to as severe, extreme, or massive obesity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Causes of obesity (Sthaulya)
According to Acharya Charka\(^6\)

1. Guru Madhura Aahara - heavy to digest, sweet foods,
2. Sheeta Snigdha Ahara – cooling and unctuous (oily) food,
3. Avyayamaat – due to lack of physical exercise,
4. Avyavaayaat – due to abstinence from sexual intercourse,
5. Divasvapnaat – due to day sleeping,
6. Harsha Nityatvaat – uninterrupted cheerfulness, happy all the time,
7. Achintana – lack of mental exercise, lack of thinking

Obesity is most commonly caused due to the lack of physical activity and intake of excessive food energy. A few cases are mainly due to genetics, medical reasons or psychiatric illness. In contrast, increased sedentary lifestyle and easily available and palatable diet, increases rates of obesity in the community. Some other identified possible contributions to recent increase of obesity are: a) insufficient sleep, b) endocrine disruptors (environmental pollutants that interfere with lipid metabolism), c) decrease variability of ambient temperature, d) decreased rates of smoking, because smoking suppresses appetite, e) increased use of medications that can cause weight gain (e.g., atypical antipsychotics), f) proportional increases in ethnic and age groups that tend to be heavier, g) pregnancy at a later age (which may cause susceptibility to obesity in children), h) epigenetic risk factors passed generationally.\(^7\)

2.3 Pathogenesis of Obesity\(^8\)
The three main factors involved in the pathogenesis of obesity:
A) Excessive lipid deposition

B) Diminished lipid utilization

C) Diminished lipid mobilization

According to Ayurveda

In Ayurveda, the Abnormal composition of Medo Dhatus is considered Medodosha & subsequently Medoroga. Sedentary lifestyle, food which increases Kapha like sweet, etc.

Derangement of Agni or digestive power production of Ama Increased snehamsha in Dhatus

Vikruta Medovruddhi-Deposition of fat in adipocytes Sroto Avarodha Disturbances in the movement of vayu towards koshta-Increases appetite abnormally Faster digestion and assimilation Kshudhaadhiyka & Trushnadhiyka Excessive eating Overload on Agni
Medodhatvagni Mandya Ama produced Medovraddhi - Sthoulya.\[^9\]

**Disabilities due to Sthoulya\[^{10}\]**

According to Acharya Charka

5. Daurgandhya – body odour.

**Complications due to obesity (Sthoulya)\[^{11}\]**

1. Visarpa (Erysepellas)
2. Bhagandara (Fistula in Ano)
3. Jwara (fever)
4. Aatisar (Diarrhoea)
5. Prameha (Diabetes)
6. Arsha (Piles)
7. Shlipada (Filariasis)
8. Apachi (Alands)
9. Kamla (Jaundice)

**Management of obesity (Sthoulya)**

According to Ayurveda

The Ayurvedic basic principles for the treatment of obesity (Sthoulya) are Nidanparivarjana, ApatarpanChiktisa, and Shaman Chikista are used in the management of Obesity.

1) Nidan Parivarjan: The first line of treatment for Obesity is to avoid the causative factor.

2) Shodhana: All Obese patients with Adhika Dosha and Adhika Bala should be treated with Shodhana therapy including Vamana, Virechana, etc.\[^{12}\] Being a syndromic condition, Shodhana therapy is highly recommended for Obese patients possessing stamina and strength. Ruksha, Ushna, Tikta Basti are also suggested by Charaka.\[^{13}\] Ruksha Udvartana is the Bahya Shodhana indicated for the management of Obesity.\[^{14}\]

3) shamana-Aushadhi-
Use of single/formulations of Ayurvedic drugs as Guggulu, Guduchi, Ginger, Chitrak, Shilajita, Agnimantha, Devedaru, Musta, Kutaki, Trikatu, Triphala, Navak Guggulu, Triphala Guggulu, Arogyavardhani Vati etc.

A lekhaniya, Dashemani Gana mentioned by Charaka can be useful in managing obesity and is responsible for reducing body weight and fat.


Pathya Apathya AaharVihar

Diet is one of the distinctive elements of every disease that is explained in detail. There is little need for drugs if a regular diet is followed and if it is not followed, medicines alone can accomplish. Heavy and non-unctuous foods, Old Rice, oats, barley, green grame, bengal grame, horse grame, red lentil, Sponge gourd, horse radish, brinjal, cucumber, ginger, radish, carrot, jamun, Bilva, Triphala, cardamom, black pepper, long pepper, citrus fruits, honey, buttermilk, lukewarm water, intake of water before meal are among the foods recommended by Ayurveda.

Table 1: Pathya Aahar.[16a]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Lattin Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prashatik</td>
<td>Setaria italic Beauv.</td>
<td>1. Foxtail Millet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Priyangu</td>
<td>Aglaia roxburghiana Mig.</td>
<td>2. Droopy Leaf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Shyamaka</td>
<td>Echinochoa Frumentae Linn.</td>
<td>3. Japanese Millet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Yavaka</td>
<td>Small variety of Hordeum vulgareae Linn.</td>
<td>4. Small variety of Barley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Yava</td>
<td>Hordeum Vulgare Linn.</td>
<td>5. Barley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jurnahva</td>
<td>Hordeum vulgare Linn.</td>
<td>6. Great Millet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Lattin Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Mudga</td>
<td>Phaseolus mungo Linn</td>
<td>2. Green gram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kulattha</td>
<td>Dolichos bifours Linn.</td>
<td>3. Horse gram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Chakra mugdaka</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4. -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Adhaki</td>
<td>Cajanus cajan Linn.</td>
<td>5. Red gram</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Lattin Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Patola</td>
<td>Tricho santhes cucumerina Linn.</td>
<td>1. Snake Guard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Lattin Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Amalaka</td>
<td>Emblica Officinalis Gaertn.</td>
<td>1. Indian Gooseberry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Lattin Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Takra</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Butter milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Lattin Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vidanga (Embeliaribes), Nagar</td>
<td>Loha Bhasma with honey and powder of Yava (barley) and Amlaki.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administration of honey along with decoction of Bilvadi Panchamula (five major roots) and Shilajatu (asphaltum/mineral pitch) along with the juice of Agnimantha (Clerodendrum phlomidis)[17]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table no.2: Apathya Aahar.\textsuperscript{[16b]}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Lattin Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ShukaDhanya (Food grain)</td>
<td>1. Godum</td>
<td>1. Wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Navanna</td>
<td>2. New Variety of Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Shali</td>
<td>3. Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Tila</td>
<td>2. Sesame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Phala varga (fruits)</td>
<td>Madhurphala</td>
<td>Sweet Fruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jala varga</td>
<td>shit jala</td>
<td>cold water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: *Pathya Apathya vihar.*\textsuperscript{[18]}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathya Vihara</th>
<th>Pathya</th>
<th>Apathya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pragajarn</td>
<td>1. Divaswapa (Day sleeping)</td>
<td>1. Divaswapa (Day sleeping)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vyavaya</td>
<td>2. Aavyayama, Aavyavaya (Less exercise and less indulgence in sexual activity)</td>
<td>2. Aavyayama, Aavyavaya (Less exercise and less indulgence in sexual activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vyayama</td>
<td>3. NityaHarsha (Happiness)</td>
<td>3. NityaHarsha (Happiness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chintana</td>
<td>4. SukhaShatiya (Comfortable bedding)</td>
<td>4. SukhaShatiya (Comfortable bedding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parishrama</td>
<td>5. Parishrama (Hardwork)</td>
<td>5. Parishrama (Hardwork)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pathya Aahar**

1. Shuka Dhanya (Food grain): Chakrapani has included Prasthantika, Shyamak, Priyangu, Jurnavha in Kudhanya.\textsuperscript{[19]} These are Kashaya Ras, Sheeta Virya, Laghu and Ruksha Guna.\textsuperscript{[20]}

Yava is Kapha Doshahar, Ruksha, Laghu, Sheeta Guna, Kashaya Ras, and has Vata Dosha aggravating properties.\textsuperscript{[21]}

2. Shami Dhanya (Pulses) - The pulses when consumed in whole grain form are Guru and Ruksha Guna. Chakrapani has viewed that Koradusha means Kodrava and mentioned as Sleshma pittaghna.\textsuperscript{[22]}

Mudga possesses Kashaya Ras mainly, Sheet Veerya, Katu Vipaka, Ruksha – Laghu - Vishad Guna, and kaphnashak karma.\textsuperscript{[23]}

Kulattha has Ushna Veerya, Kashaya Ras, and Amla Vipaka, with its kashaya ras and Ushnaveerya. It has

Kaph- Medohar properties.\textsuperscript{[24]}

Adhaki balances Kapha by increasing the level of Vata.\textsuperscript{[25]}

3. Shaka Varga (Vegetables): Generally, all kind of Shakas is Laghu, Ruksha, and Kaphvatashamak.\textsuperscript{[26]}

4. Phala Varg (Fruits) – Amalaki Rooksha, Madhur & Kashaya Balances Kapha and Pitta, having Kaphagna property which is opposite Gunas to that of the Sthaulya.\textsuperscript{[27]}
5. Dugdha Varga - Takra is a digestive, stimulant, Agnivardhak, and is recommended in Medoroga.[28]

6. Madhu Varga - Madhu is Guru but Kapha Shamak. It is also Yogvahi in nature means carries the properties of drugs added to it.[29]

**Apathya Aahar**

1. **Shuka Dhanya (Food grain)**

*Godum* - It possesses Madhura Ras, Guru, Snigdha Guna, Madhur Vipaka, and Sheeta Virya. It is Vatahara, Brumhana, etc. due to these properties it results in Obesity.[30]

*Navanna* - Navanna is Abhishyandi in nature and produces Strotorodha by aggravating the Kapha Dosha, ultimately increasing in Meda Dhatu which results in Medovruddhi.[31]

2. **Shami Dhanya (Pulses)**

*Masha* & *Tila* – Guru, Snigdha, Pichhil, and Medha Pitta Kaphapradah properties. This leads to Medo SANCHAYA in the body, causes congestion in the Medovaha Stratos, and produces Medorog.[32]

3. **Mamsa (Meat)**

*Anup Mamsa* - Consumption of excessive Anupa Mamsa aggravates the Kapha Dosha and vitiates the Medovaha Strotas causing Medodhatu Sanchaya, which leads to Medorog.[33]

4. **Jala Varga**

*Shita Jala* - Drinking Shita Jala increases Kapha Dosha, and Medsanchay lead to Meda Dhatu Vikruti.[34]

**VIHAR**

Pathya Vihar

Vyavaya (Sexual activity), Vyayama (exercise), and Parishrama (Hard work)- Increase physical Activity and stimulates Agani both at the level of Jatharagni and Dhatvagni leading to lightness, increases digestive power, and Meda Kshaya.

Apathya Vihar

Avyavaya (Lack of sexual activity), Avyayama (Lack of exercise), Nitya Harsha (Happiness), Sukha Shaiya (comfortable living without any work), and Diwaswapa (Day Sleep) — It causes Kapha Vridhi and influences the Meda Dhatu by blocking the channels, ultimately causing the creation of Obesity.
DISCUSSION
One of the main causes of Samprapti in Sthoulya is Medadhatu. Aahara Dravya, which enhances and corrects Medadhatu Agni and has characteristics like Vatahara, Medahara, Lekhana, etc., will help in reducing Medadhatu. Katu Rasa due to its Laghu, Ushna, and Ruksha Guna are indicated in Medoroga and reduces the Kapha, Kleda, and Meda. Tikta Rasa also has Ruksha and Laghu Guna with Kledahara and MedoSoshana property. Kashaya Rasa balances the Pitta and Kapha Dosha and dries up the Kleda and Meda may be of its Laghu and Ruksha Guna. So Tikta, Katu, Kashaya Rasa and Laghu, Ruksha Guna are indicated in Sthoulya. Pathya Aahar Dravyas are high in protein and soluble fiber, which is required for weight loss. Protein and fiber-rich foods are typically high-satiety i.e., they keep a person full and less hungry when dieting. These two satiating elements can help to control appetite and lose weight by lowering calorie consumption. Apathya Aahar Dravyas are Guru, Snigdha, Pichhil, Gunja, and Madhur Rasa, leading Strotorodha by aggravating the Kapha Dosha, ultimately increasing in Meda Dhatu which results in Medovruddhi Due to Medo Sanchaya, it causes congestion in the Medovaha Strotas and produces Medoroga. Hence, avoiding these may help in reducing weight and preventing weight gain.

Vyayama increased Dhatvagni stimulating the pachakagni as they are dependent on each other and regulate the process of metabolism and reduce body fat (Meda Kshaya). Prajagarn increases Ruksha Guna which is Kaphahar and Dhatushoshak and leads to Shoshan of Medodhatu.

CONCLUSION
Aahara Vihar plays a major role in Swasthya Rakshana. To prevent all types of disease, Ayurveda promotes a healthy lifestyle through Aahara, Vihar, Aushada, and various Karmas. Obesity is most commonly caused by a combination of excessive food intake, Junk food, lack of physical exercise, and genetic susceptibility, a sedentary lifestyle also plays a major role in obesity. By following Pathya Aahar vihar as described in Ayurveda one can prevent obesity and reduce the risk to develop various killer ailments. Hence, following appropriate Pathya and avoiding Apathya leads to better health in Obesity (Sthoulya).

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