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Hypothyroidism - An Ayurveda Approach

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ABSTRACT

Hypothyroidism is the most common Endocrine disease. It is a condition in which thyroid gland is unable to make adequate amount of Thyroid hormone to meet the requirement of peripheral tissue. The prevalence of Hypothyroidism is about 4 – 5 % globally. Women are more affected than males and ratio is 6:1. Autoimmune disease and Thyroid failure following 131I or surgical treatment of Thyrotoxicosis account 90% cases, except in area where iodine deficiency is Endemic. Autoimmune, Drug induced, Iatrogenic, Congenital, Genetic are cause of Primary Hypothyroidism. While Hypopituitarism, TSH deficiency, Hypothalamic disease are causes of secondary Hypothyroidism. Clinical features comprises of tiredness, weakness, dry skin, feeling cold, hair loss, difficulty in concentrating and poor memory, constipation, weight gain, loss of appetite, hoarse voice, dyspnea, menorrhagia, puffy face, peripheral oedema. In modern science Treatment of Hypothyroidism is Levothyroxine (T4). In Ayurveda the condition has similar pictures with *Dhatwagnimandhya*, *Sthaulya* etc. In this condition *Kapha dosha Vruddhi* and Pitta *Dosha kshaya* are seen. While analysing the signs and symptoms of Hypothyroidism in Ayurvedic literature mainly Rasa and Medovaha Srotas Dushti Lakshana is observed. Based on *Dosha - Dushya* involvement *Agnidipana*, *Kapha – Medahara Chikitsa* is useful in Hypothyroidism.

Key Words: Hypothyroidism, Dhatwagnimandhya, Sthaulya, Kapha Vruddhi, Pitta kshaya

INTRODUCTION

Hypothyroidism is a common condition with various causes but Autoimmune disease and Thyroid failure following surgical treatment of Thyrotoxicosis account for over 90 % cases. It is a hypometabolic clinical state resulting from inadequate production of thyroid hormone for prolonged period or from resistance of peripheral tissues to the effect of thyroid hormone. It affect body's physiology as well as Psychology. In this situation serum T4 level is low and TSH is elevated. The rare condition of secondary hypothyroidism is caused by failure of TSH

secretion in a patient with hypothalamic or anterior pituitary disease¹.

CONGENITAL HYPOTHYROIDISM

Hypothyroidism occurs in about 1 in 4000 newborns. Neonatal hypothyroidism is due to thyroid gland dysgenesis, error of thyroid hormone synthesis and TSH-R antibody mediated of affected newborns.

The majority of infants appear normal at birth and then diagnosed based on clinical featuresjaundice, delayed bone maturation, Umbilical hernia, permanent neurogenic damage result if treatment is delayed.





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Congenital malformation especially cardiac are four times more common in congenital hypothyroidism.

AUTOIMMUNE HYPOTHYROIDISM

It may be associated with a Goiter or at a later stage of the disease-

Minimal residual thyroid tissue (Atrophic Thyroiditis). Because the autoimmune process gradually reduce thyroid function, there is a phase of compensation when normal thyroid hormone level maintained by a rise in TSH level. Though some patients may have minor symptoms called-Subclinical Hypothyroidism. Later T4 level fall and TSH level is rise further symptoms become more readily apparent at this stage referred to clinical Hypothyroidism or overt Hypothyroidism.

CLINICAL FEATURES

- Weight gain with poor appetite
- Skin become dry and decreased sweating
- Puffy face, hand and feet with oedematous eyelids
- Dyspnoea
- Nail, hair become dry and brittle
- Increased hair fall
- Blood flow is diverted from the skin producing cold extremities
- Constipation due to reduced peristalsis movement
- Hoarse voice reflects fluid accumulation in vocal cord and tongue
- Libido is decrease in both sexes, there may be oligomenorrhea or amenorrhea in long standing disease, but menorrhagia is also common

- Reduced fertility and increased miscarriage incidence
 - Thinning of Epidermis
- Increase dermal Glycosaminoglycan, Hyaluronic acid – traps water giving rise to skin thickening without pitting
- There is pallor often yellow tinge to the skin due to carotene accumulation
- Carpal tunnel syndrome is common, as is impairment of muscles function with stiffness, cramp and pain
- There may be slow relaxation of tendon reflexes and pseudomyotonia

Autoimmune hypothyroidism is uncommon in children and usually present with slow growth and delayed facial maturation, delayed puberty, myopathy with muscles swelling is common in children than in adult. There may be intellectual impairment if the onset is before 3 years and hormone deficiency is severe.

In hypothyroidism psychological symptoms also seen like, depressed mood, forgetfulness, lethargy etc.

By seeing all conditions we can not find one to one correlation with a single disease from *Ayurveda* though condition is suggestive of pathologies like *Sthaulya*, *Dhatwagnimandhya* etc.

UNDERSTANDING HYPOTHYROIDISM WITH AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH

Though the exact description of Hypothyroidism is not given in Ayurvedic classic but to understand Pathogenesis of hypothyroidism according to *Ayurveda* it is mainly due to hypo-functioning of *Agni*. Hypofunctioning of *Jathragni* which in turn

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affect *Dhatwagni* and bring out pathological sequence and ultimately the disease condition developes. Many systems are involved in the pathogenesis of hypothyroidism. Out of *AshtaninditapurushaAtihrsvata* may be compared with cretinism and *Atisthulata* may be result of hypothyroidism. All types of correlation may not satisfy the present demand. However for such problem *Charaka* has given the guidance by saying that,

विकारनामाकुशलो न जिह्नीयात् कदाचन| न हि सर्वविकाराणां नामतोऽस्ति ध्रुवा स्थितिः 2 ||

It means it is not possible to give the name to all the diseases.

AGNI

Agni include digestion of food, absorption, assimilation, cellular metabolism and regulation of hormone at the level of neurons and behind that. पुरुषोऽयं लोकसम्मितः 3 ॥

In *Ayurvedic* literature man is considered as replica of the universe, whatever found in the universe is wholly presented in human body. This living body which is made up of *Panchmahabhta* always undergo "wear and Tear" phenomenon – *Chaya* and *Apachaya*. Their balance keeps *Dhatus* in equilibrium. To maintain this balance a physician should concentrate on the factors which are responsible for all biochemical transformation in the body. This power has been termed as "*Agni*".

आयुर्वर्णो बलं स्वास्थ्यमुत्साहोपचयौ प्रभा। ओजस्तेजोऽग्नयः प्राणाश्चोक्ता देहाग्निहेतुकाः॥ शान्तेऽग्नौ म्रियते, युक्ते चिरं जीवत्यनामयः। रोगी स्याद्विकृते, मूलमग्निस्तस्मान्निरुच्यते⁴॥

JATHARAGNI

अन्नस्य पक्ता सर्वेषां पक्तृणामिधपो मतः |
तन्मूलास्ते हि तद्वृद्धिक्षयवृद्धिक्षयात्मकाः ||
तस्मात्तं विधिवद्युक्तैरन्नपानेन्धनैर्हितैः |
पालयेत् प्रयतस्तस्य स्थितौ ह्ययुर्बलस्थितिः 5 ||

It maintains life and various biophysical and biochemical factors which participates in the course of digestion and metabolism. *Jatharagni* is most important as it influences other *Agni* inside a living body. *Jatharagni* is considered between *Amashaya* and *Pakvashaya*.

BHUTAGNI⁶

Agni is present in every macro and micro particles of the universe. Each cell is *Panchbhautika*, according to *Mahabhuta* predominance, it can be named as *Parthiva*, *Apya* etc. According to our ancient science basic food converted into elemental form by *Jatharagni* is further digested by *Agni* (*Bhutagni*) leading to a complete changes in qualities and they are rendered fit to be acted upon by specific *Agni* present in *Dhatus* to get assimilated.

DHATWAGNI

Agni by means of which Ahararasa undergoes further transformation (Sukshmapaka) till it takes status of particular Dhatu is termed as Dhatwagni. Dhatu make our body stable.

त एते शरीरधारणाद्धातव इत्युच्यन्ते⁷||

According to Chakrapani *Shariradhatu* which are destroyed by their own *Agni* (catabolism) are replaced by ingestion of food (anabolism)⁸.





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Suitably processed nutrients (by Bhutagni) which result into two end products- Prasada and Kitta Bhaga. Prasada Bhagais made available to Dhatu through respective srotas and KittaBhaga is excreted out. Prasad Bhaga has divided in to 3 parts.

1) Sthayi Dhatu, 2) Upadhatu, 3) Poshakansha for the subsequent *Dhatu*⁹.

When a condition of hypofunctioning Jatharagni is created there is hypofunctioning or complete suppression of the function of the endocrine gland which are representative of Dhatwagni.

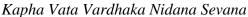
Acc. To Ayurveda function of hormones can be correlated with function of *Dhatwagni*. Normalcy of Agni is must for body function rhythmicity. Metabolic activity of is controlled by thyroid hormone secretion and metabolic process of body are under the control of Agni.

रसनिमित्तमेवस्थौल्यंकार्श्यंच 10 $\|$

Rasadhatu is responsible for Shtaulya and Karshya. Two factors are responsible for weight gain -

- i) Exogenous factor - Excessive intake of food and sleep, lack of exercise etc..
- Endogenous factor Weight gain is independent to food and exercise, Hormonal Rasa Dhatu disturbance and Dushti responsible for weight gain.

Rasadhatudushti, Nanatmaja Kapha Vikara Lakshanas are present as a sign and symptoms of hypothyroidism.





Rasa Dhatu Dushti Lakshana

चारुचिश्चास्यवैरस्यमरसज्ञता अश्रद्धा हल्लासो गौरवं साङ्गमर्दो ज्वरस्तमः तन्दा पाण्डत्वं स्रोतसां रोधः सादः कशाङगता नाशोऽग्ने**रयथाका**लं पलितानि Ш वलय: रसप्रदोषजा रोगा 38

Anneashraddha, Alasya, Apakti, Gaurava. Tandra, Angamarda, Pandutva, Srotorodha, Klaibya, Sada, Agninasha.

Atisthula Purusha Lakshana

अतिस्थूलस्य तावदायुषो हासो जवोपरोधः

कुच्छुव्यवायता दौर्बल्यं दौर्गन्ध्यं स्वेदाबाधः

क्षदितमात्रं पिपासातियोगश्चेति भवन्त्यष्टौ दोषाः 39

CHIKITSA 40,41

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Langhana,

Agnidipana,

Pachana,

Lekhana Karma,

Shothahara,

Kapha – Medohara Chikitsa – Katu, Tikta, Kashaya, Ushna, Tikshna, RukshaAharaSevana Swedana, Vyayama, Vamana, Shirovirechana

Trikatu, Triphala, Shilajit, Madhu, Vidanga, Punarnava, Gokshura, Madhu, Guggulu, Gaumutraharitaki, Kshara, Lekhana Basti, Pranayama, Asana, Meditation.

PATHYA⁴²

Kapha – Medahara, Vataghnaannapana, Yavagu, Priyangu, Shyamaka, Kodrava, Yavaka, Yava, Mudaga, Kulattha, Adhaki, patola, Madhudaka, Amalaki with Bhojana, Arishtapanaanupanarthe. Prajagarana, Vyayama, Chinta.

DISCUSSION

Due to sedentary life style today hypothyroidism is a burning issue and the present treatment is not helping much in resolving the pathology. The conceptual analysis of hypothyroidism help us to Rasa&Medodhatudushti predominantly. The treatment can be planned on the of basis DoshaPratyanikaChikitsathanVyadhipratyanikaC hikitsa. like TrikatuChurna, **Yogas** GaumutraHaritaki, Kshara, pippali preparation helps in removing Srotorodha and improves Agni (Jatharagni & Dhatvangni). The Shodhana

Chikitsa(Vamana)helps in Agnidipan and Srotoshodhana.

वमनं तु सर्वोपक्रमेभ्यः श्लेष्मणि प्रधानतमं मन्यन्ते भिषजः 43||

CONCLUSION

Hypothyroidism can be considered as condition which results due to Agnimandhya, KaphaVatadoshaVruddhi and PittaKshaya. Due Agnimandhya, Rasa dushti & Meda Dhatwagnimandhya contribute in pathology of this condition. The Chikitsa of hypothyroidism with Dosha Pratyanika will help to manage the condition better.

Table 1 Involvement of *Dosha* and *Dushya* in Hypothyroisism

Hypothyroisism	
Sign & Symptoms	Dosha & Dhatu
Weight gain	Kaphaja Nanatmaja
-	Vikara ¹¹
	Rasa Dhatu
	MedaVruddhi ¹²
Poor appetite	Pitta Kshaya ^{13,14}
	KaphaVruddhi ¹⁵
	Kaphaja Nanatmaja Vikara
	Rasa Dhatu Dushti ¹⁶
Constipation	Vata Vruddhi ¹⁷
Puffy face & eyelids	Kapha Vruddhi ¹⁸
Pale skin	Rasa Dhatu Dushti
	Pitta Kshaya
	Kapha Dushti
Nail & hair – dry, brittle	Vata Vrudhhi
Hair fall	
Decreased Sweating	Medodhatu &Kapha
	Vrudhhi
	Pitta Kshaya,
Dry skin	Vataja Nanatmaja Vikara ¹⁹
	Rakta Kshaya ²⁰
Reduced fertility	Rasa & Shukra Dhatu
	Dushti
Pulse rate reduced	Kaphaja Nanatmaja Vikara
Hoarse voice	Kapha Vata Dosha Vruddhi
Dyspnoea	Meda Dhatu Vrudhhi ²¹
Tiredness & weakness	Kaphaja Vrudhhi
	Rasa Dhatudushti
	Meda Dhatu dushti ²²
Cold extremities	Pitta Kshaya,
	Vata Kapha Dosha Vruddhi
Cold intolerance	Kapha Vruddhi,
	Rasa Dhatu Dushti
4	

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The term METABOLISM can be correlated to *Dhatupaka* in *Ayurveda*. *Kayagni* plays an important role in *Dhatupaka*. The term *Kayagni* denotes not only *Jatharagni* but it also include *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni*.

स्वस्थानस्थस्यकायाग्नेरंशाधातुषुसंश्रिताः|

तेषांसादातिदीप्तिभ्यांधातुवृद्धिक्षयोद्भव:23 ||

The part of the *Jatharagni*, which works on the *Dhatu* parlances and its exacerbation and dimination causes respective *Dhatu Vridhdhi* and *Dhatu Kshaya*.

येपाचकांशाधातुस्थास्तेषांमान्धातितैक्ष्णतः।

वृद्धिः क्षयश्रधातुनांजायते....॥

पारम्पर्येsपिदावाग्नेस्ततत्प्राप्येन्धनंशिखा॥

वृद्धिक्षयौयथायातितथाधातुपरम्परा॥

द्रव्यंतुल्यंविशिष्टंहिस्वंस्वंवृध्धैक्षयायच।

प्रत्यात्मबीजनैर्यस्माद्भुशमाशुचजायते²⁴॥

Thyroid disorders for all practical purpose are to be classified into structural changes and functional impairments. Usually both does not co-exist with Goiter (structural enlargement of thyroid gland) Hypothyroidism produces heaviness in the body, lack of enthusiasm etc. that is due to reduction in B.M.R. These are functions of *Agni* according to *Ayurveda* and changes in *Dhatvagnimandhya* results in this type of manifestation. Hyposecretion of different hormones increases body mass and its excessive secretion depletes body tissue/ *Dhatu*. So, in a case of Hypothyroidism drugs those are *Ushna Virya*, improve digestion (on cellular level – specifically *Dhatwagni*) and reduces *Kapha* and *Meda* like *Guggulu*, *Pippli* are useful in Hypothyroidism.

Table 2 Samprapti Ghataka

Dosha	Kapha – VataVruddhi, Pitta Kshaya
Dushya	All Dhatus mainly Rasa and Meda
	Dhatu
Srotas	Rasavaha, Medavaha
Srotodushti	Sanga, Vimarggamana
Agni	Jatharagni&MedaDhatwagimandhya
Adhishthana	Gala Pradesh
Udbhavsthana	Amashaya
Vyaktasthan	SarvangaSharira
Rogamarga	Bahya and Abhyantara
Chronicity	Chirakari
Sadhyata	Krucchhsadhya
a .	. 11 . 11 0

Samprapti as mentioned in table 2.

Kapha Vata Vardhaka Nidana Sevana

Jatharagnimandhya Dhatwagnimandhya Ama Uttpati Rasa Dhatu Dushti Medodhatwagnimandhya Kapha Vata चारुचिश्चास्यवैरस्यमरसज्जता अश्रद्धा Vardhaka Nidana Sevana गौरवं हल्लासो साङगमदी Rasa Dhatu Dushti Lakshana पाण्ड्त्वं स्रोतसां रोधः कृशाङ्गता





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नाशोऽग्नेरयथाकालं वलयः पलितानि च || रसप्रदोषजा रोगा....

Anneashraddha, Alasya, Apakti, Gaurava, Tandra, Angamarda, Pandutva, Srotorodha, Klaibya, Sada, Agninasha.

Atisthula Purusha Lakshana

अतिस्थुलस्य तावदायुषो ह्रासो जवोपरोधः

कृच्छ्रव्यवायता दौर्बल्यं दौर्गन्ध्यं स्वेदाबाधः क्षुदितमात्रं पिपासातियोगश्चेति भव न्त्यष्टौ दोषाः||

CHIKITSA²⁵

Langhana,

Agnidipana,

Pachana,

Lekhana Karma,

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