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IJAPC

E ISSN 2350 0204

Vol 12 Iss 2 2020

GREENTREE GROUP PUBLISHERS (ggp)



Management of Erectile Dysfunction - Ayurvedic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Erectile dysfunction refers to a problem during any phase of the sexual response cycle that prevents the man from experiencing satisfaction from the activity. The incidence of sexual dysfunctions increases with age. The treatment available has much more side effects thus worsening the health so we need to treat disease with holistic approach and minimize the complication with help of Ayurveda. In *Samhita* Acharya have mentioned the types and treatment of erectile dysfunction accordingly but in today's era there are many new arising causes responsible for erectile dysfunction. So it's need of time to provide the appropriate Ayurvedic treatment according to evolving causative factors. Ayurveda treats a disease from all points of view such as physically, psychologically, spiritually while its treatment composes of medicines, change in lifestyle, diet, exercise which not only cures the disease but also prevents from many other diseases and smoothens your life.

KEYWORDS

Erectile Dysfunction, Klaihya, Male Sexual Dysfunction, Napunsakatva



Greentree Group Publishers

Received 04/01/20 Accepted 25/02/2020 Published 10/03/2020



INTRODUCTION

Erectile dysfunction is type of sexual dysfunction characterized by the inability to get or keep an erection firm enough to have sexual activity. It is also sometimes referred to as impotence¹. The basic etiology of Erectile dysfunction according to modern science includes physical, psychological, neurological, vascular insufficiency, drug side effects of antihypertensive drugs, anti-depressants drugs and diseases like diabetes mellitus², even many Acharya have

mentioned different causes of the *Klaibya* (similar to erectile dysfunction) likes psychogenic (manas), Chromosomal (*Beejopaghaataja*)³, Inflammatory (*Dhwajopaghataja*)³ factors. Male sexual dysfunctions are the most common of the psychosexual disorders observed in clinical practice³.

Symptoms⁴: 1] Trouble getting an erection; 2] Trouble keeping an erection.

Causes: They can be classified as in following table 1

Table 1 Classification of causes of erectile dysfunction

| Physical | Pathological | Psychological | Miscellaneous |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Injury to spinal cord ▪ Injury to pelvic organs ▪ Dyspareunia – pain during act ▪ Pain during ejaculation ▪ weakness of organ - Excess sex/ masturbation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Penile diseases ▪ Obesity ▪ Heart disease, D.M., BPH, hyperlipidemia's, ▪ Cancer: Prostate, penis ▪ Nerve damage ▪ Immune compromised status ▪ Multiple sclerosis, Parkinsonism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anxiety ▪ Fear ▪ Guilt ▪ Depression ▪ Stress ▪ Low self esteem ▪ Poor communication ▪ Relation problem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drugs like Anti depression, Antihypertensive. ▪ Addictions – Tobacco, Alcohol |

On analyzing the condition *Klaibya*, it doesn't refer to only impotency but has a broad consideration under Male Sexual Dysfunctions. *Napunsakatva* is term correlated with Impotency in general but its symptoms mentioned in *Charaka Samhita* are correlated to Erectile Dysfunction. These are explained in details in *Samhitas*. In text there are several reasons leading to *Shukra dhatu* vitiation. *Shukra dhatu* gets vitiated by several aforesaid reasons leading to impotency, erectile dysfunction, loss of libido etc. therefore offspring if

successfully produced can be impotence (genetic impotence... it is an upcoming research) thus reducing the chances of fertilization. Erectile Dysfunction /Impotency/ *klaibya* is closely related to *Shukra dhatu* in Ayurveda and *Shukra dhatu* vitiation is related to *Vajikarana* treatment. The entire Adhyaya of *Vajikarana* in *Chikitsa sthana* is explained by Acharya *Charaka* in *Charaka Samhita*. Therefore *Vajikarana* becomes an important part in treatment of erectile dysfunction. *Vajikarana* is a science of



aphrodisiac that promotes the sexual capacity and performance as well as improves the physical, psychological and social health of an individual⁵.

Types of Erectile Dysfunction according to Ayurveda are as follows:

The reference can be found in *Charaka Chikitsa Sthan 30 & Sushruta Chikitsa Sthan 26*.

Table 2 Comparison of types of Erectile Dysfunction according to Ayurveda with modern science.

| Samhita | Types | Modern Comparison ³ |
|----------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Charaka | ❖ <i>Beejopaghaataja</i> | ❖ Chromosomal/sperm abnormality |
| | ❖ <i>Dhwajopaghataja</i> | ❖ Inflammatory disease |
| | ❖ <i>Jarasambhavaj</i> | ❖ Decreased levels of testosterone |
| | ❖ <i>Shukrakshayaja</i> | ❖ Decreased levels of semen |
| Sushruta | ❖ <i>Manasika</i> | ❖ Psychological factors |
| | ❖ <i>Somadhatu kshay</i> | ❖ Diminution of semen |
| | ❖ <i>Shukra kshay</i> | ❖ Decreased levels of semen |
| | ❖ <i>Marma chedana</i> | ❖ Injury to vital parts |
| | ❖ <i>Sahaja</i> | ❖ Congenital |
| | ❖ <i>Sthir Shukra</i> | ❖ Prolong sex abstinence |

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To study erectile dysfunction with modern and Ayurvedic perspective from *Charaka and Sushruta Samhita*.

To assess the management of erectile dysfunction as per Ayurvedic perspective.

MATERIALS

Ayurvedic text *Charaka and Sushruta Samhita* & Commentaries.

- Online Articles & Journals
- Internet media.

METHODOLOGY

Literature on erectile dysfunction / *Napunsakatva/ klaibya* compiled from Ayurvedic text and Modern articles. → The factors responsible for erectile dysfunction were studied in detail. → Ayurvedic

management according to modern causes are explained.

DISCUSSION

As stated before the Erectile Dysfunction / Impotency are the most common of the psychosexual disorders observed in clinical practice and is closely related to *Shukra dhatu* which indirectly is related to *Vajikarana* treatment. Therefore *Vajikarana* becomes an important part in treatment of erectile dysfunction. According to modern science treatment⁶ to erectile dysfunction is as follows:

- **Non Medicinal treatment:** 1] Counselling of both partners. 2] Education of both partners
- **Medicinal treatment:** 1] Oral Agents – PDE 5 inhibitors Ex. Sildenafil. 2] Androgen therapy – replacement of



testosterone (transdermal patches), Enanthate and cypionate (parenteral), 17 α – alkylated derivate (orally).

- **Surgical and associated treatment:** 1] Penile Prosthesis 2] Vacuum constriction devices – they restrict venous return by forming constriction ring around penis maintaining erection.

Erectile dysfunction can be correlated with *Napunsakatva* according to *Charaka Samhita Chikitsa Sthan 30*⁷ and *Klaibya* according to *Sushruta Samhita Chikitsa Sthan 26*⁸.

According to Ayurveda treatment of erectile dysfunction is as follows:

Ayurveda gives a holistic approach for treatment. In general *shodhana* (body purification therapy) and *shamana* (Alleviating treatment) are basic treatment used. In Ayurveda the terms *Vrishya* and *Vajikarana* are used as synonyms mostly but *Vrishya*⁹ indicates the substances by virtue of which a person is capacitated to act sexually like *vrisha* (bull) whereas *Vajikarana*⁹ is a method of therapy which improves the potential of a man for getting offspring's for the continuity of his lineage, treats all types of disorders of *shukra* (semen); causes instantaneous sexual excitation, performance and nourishes the tissue element⁹. This treatment mainly depends on cause which can be classified as

| Primary | Secondary |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| ❖ Local Cause | ❖ Systemic Cause |
| ❖ Psychological factors | ❖ Miscellaneous |
| ❖ Decreased vitality / muscle power | |

❖ **Local Cause:** It may be Physical or Pathological:

- **Injury to Penis / genital regions:** Due to episiotomy, skin disorders that cause ulcers, cracks, itching or burning.

- **Injury to Spinal cord:** It directly hampers the action of body leading to restricted movements, inability to perform actions.

*Aushadi Chikitsa*¹⁰: *Bruhadvatachintami rasa, dashmul kwatha, trayodashang guggul.*

Panchakarma Chikitsa: kati basti, matra basti with ashavandgha tel, dashmul tel/ kadha, mustadi yapan basti.

Aahar – Vihariya Chikitsa: Vata vyadhi Chikitsa etc according to *avastha* (stages) of corresponding disease/injury.

- **Injury to Pelvic region:** fracture to pelvic organs.

*Bhagna Chikitsa*¹¹: From *Sushruta Samhita Chikitsa Sthan* is most applicable here

- *Anchana* (traction) with help of weights and belts made of barks,



- *Peedana* (manipulation)... *unnamama* (elevation of depressed fragments) and *Vinamana* (depression of elevated fragments) ... followed by traction and retention.
 - *Sankshepana* (opposition and stabilization)... done by experienced and skilled *vaidya*
 - *Bandhana* (Immobilization) along with this bandage applied should be in form of *samabandhana* (neither too tight nor too loose)
 - *Kapatashayana Vidhi* (Fracture bed)... method of immobilization used for dislocation of joints or for fractures of spine, ankles etc. method of artificial limbs preparation from bark of bamboo, mixture of wax, mud, grass etc.
 - *Kusha Bandhana* (Application of cast / splint)... barks of plants like bamboo, banyan, pipal were used.
 - *Asthipoorana* (bone grafting)... In major fractures missing parts were filled by *Sudha varga dravya aushadis*, *Rubia cordifolia* and latex of banyan tree were used as grafting material.
- **Dyspareunia**¹²: It means painful intercourse. It may be persistent or recurrent genital pain that occurs just before, during or after intercourse. It may be due to inadequate lubrication because of vaginal dryness (*shushka yoni*), skin

disorders that cause ulcers, cracks, itching or burning, infections like leucorrhea, trauma, genital warts etc.

Aushadi Chikitsa: Treating underline infection with Ayurvedic medicines like *chandraphrabha vati*, *gandhak rasayan* etc. accordingly.

Panchakarma Chikitsa: *Yoni dhupan* – *laksha*, *triphala*, *guggul*,

Yoni dhavan – *triphala*, *haridra*, *guduchi*,
Ayurvedic Lubrication – sesame oil (locally massage can also be done)

Aahar – Vihariya Chikitsa: Counselling and explaining the right way to do the act.

➤ **Nerve damage**¹³: symptoms can be numbness, loss of sensation, tingling sensation in and around genitals. This may be due to direct injury, disease like diabetes, multiple sclerosis. Cancer of corresponding region.

Aushadi Chikitsa: *Jatamansi*, *Bhrami*, *Ashwagandha*, *Vacha* etc. are few medicines which are used in treatment.

Panchakarma Chikitsa: *Panchakarma* especially *vataghna Chikitsa* is more effective. *Snehan* and *swedan* with herbal medicines, *kati / manya basti*, *basti* are few *panchakarma* procedures than can be used.

Aahar – Vihariya Chikitsa: Regular exercise and a healthy well balance diet with lots of fruits, vegetables etc. provides all nutrition needed.



➤ **Peyronie's disease**¹⁴⁻¹⁵: condition in which when penis becomes erect, bends abnormally due to plaques, pain and muscle weakness.

Aushadi Chikitsa: Triphala, guggul, Kanchanar guggul, Gandhak Rasayan, haridra medicines are useful in treatment.

Panchakarma Chikitsa: Snehana with *balaashwagandha oil, shri gopala oil, Nirgundi oil, Jatyadi oil* are also useful.

➤ **Excess masturbation, sex** may lead to severe weakness and inability to perform the act. This is due to over working of organ leading to loss of power, decrease in stamina, decreased energy and pain at genital region.

*Aushadi Chikitsa*¹⁶⁻¹⁹: *Vrushya dravyas* and *vajikaran yog* help to get relief from this. Entire chapter is dedicated in *Samhitas*, here are few preparation just too mentioned *medadi*.

Aahar – Vihariya Chikitsa: Herbs like²⁰ *Ashwagandha, Shatavari, Amalki, Musali, Kapikacchu, Gokshura* etc. are very effective.

❖ **Psychological factors**²¹:

Psychological factors like fear, anger, guilt, depression, low self-esteem, stress, poor communication, relation problems also have a definite impact on sexual life of a person.

Aushadi and *Panchkarma Chikitsa: Yuktivyapashrya Chikitsa (Rasayana and Vajikarana)*

Aahar – Vihariya Chikitsa: Satwavajaya Chikitsa (Charaka sutra 11) (by correcting the self-esteem of an individual psychologically) easily. It mainly involves Assurance of couple/ person suffering. Inducement of emotions opposite to those associated with cause/ feelings of a person i.e. replacement of emotions. Following are practical applicable step when done repeatedly with help of proper guidance one can get rid of psychological factors.

- *Dnyana(atma dnyana – getting to know self) ,*
- *Vidnyana (textual knowledge),*
- *Dhairya (maintenance of mental balance even under stress),*
- *Smrithi (recalling the past experience),*
- *Samadhi (focusing on spiritual dimensions of person).*

Ashtanga yoga which includes *Yam, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi* collective eliminate the psychological factors.

Appropriate counseling of a person will definitely help to face the psychological factors. Favorable conditions, suitable atmosphere help the individual to boost the



self-confidence, overcome fear and other factors.

❖ **Decreased vitality / muscle power:**

It may be directly due to severe generalized weakness, malnutrition, low power/energy, or a complication of diseases like immune compromised status, obesity etc. Here in either condition *Vajikaran* and *Rasayan Chikitsa* should be given. Multiple effective *Vajikarana* yog (formulations) are mentioned in Ayurvedic texts. Few are mentioned below:

*Aushadi Chikitsa: Bruhani gutika*²², *vajikarana ghruta*²³ etc.

Snehapana with *shatavari ghruta*, *bala ashwagandadhi ghruta* etc are practically used.

Panchakarma Chikitsa: Abhyanga with *bala ashwagandha oil*, *seasam oil* and other medicated oils. *Yapana basti*,

Aahar – Vihariya Chikitsa: Milk boiled with *kharjura*, black lentil, *shatavari*, *madhuka* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), *draksha* and seeds of *kapikacchu*²⁴. Milk of cow fed on black lentil leaves or sugarcane or *arjuna* (*Terminalia arjuna*) leaves added with sugar, honey and ghee²⁵ etc. are just a few examples.

❖ **Systemic Cause :**

➤ Diseases like **hypertension, heart disease** have high risk of creating pressure on vital organs like heart, lungs during the act leading to severe energy loss/ weakness

and increase the risk of acute onset/ aggravation of disease. In hypertensive patients the drugs taken are basically reducing the blood pressure, similar in vascular disease.

*Aushadi Chikitsa*²⁶: *Arjuna*, *pushkarmoola*, *amalaki* etc. can be used in heart disease. *Punarnava*, *sarpagandha*, *trikatu* etc. can be used for hypertension.

Panchakarma Chikitsa: Snehana, *swedana*, *hrudaydhara*, *basti*.

Aahar – Vihariya Chikitsa: Daily *Pranayama*, slight walking exercise along with healthy nutritious diet with garlic, turmeric, ginger, saffron, seasonal fruits and fresh vegetables.

➤ People under treatment of **Prostate Cancer**²⁷ are at high risk of erectile dysfunction. The drugs used for treatment are hormone based medicines such as leuprolide, gosereline and other medicines used such as flutamide, bicalutamide sometime spread beyond prostate leading to erectile dysfunction. The surgical treatment some time's caused damage to nerves and arteries partially or completely leading into complication of erectile dysfunction. In advance stages the prostate cancer can spread to the nerves and arteries necessary for erection resulting in erectile dysfunction.

*Aushadi Chikitsa*²⁸: *Gokshura*, *varuna*, *punarnava*, *shilajit* traditionally shows



relief in symptoms of *mootrakhucha* (similar to BPH/ prostate disorder}. Medicines like *chandraprabha vati*, *kanchnar guguul*, *varunadi vati* are equally effective in prostate n urine disorders. *Gokshura*, *khadir* are some drugs used as an aphrodisiac and in treatment of prostate.

Panchakarma Chikitsa: Medicated *Uttarbasti* has very good result in above mentioned diseased.

➤ **Penile disorders** like Phimosis /Paraphimosis /carcinoma of penis/syphilis /soft chancre they cause severe pain, functioning of organ is hampered.

- *Phimosis (Nirudha Prakash)* ²⁹ - *chakrataila* , *majja of varah*(pig) and *shishumar* (crocodile) is used for *parisheka*, *dwimuhi nadiyantra* are used

- *Paraphimosis (Parivartika)* ³⁰ - *snehan*, *swedana* with *ghrita* used in *parivartika*, *upanaha* with *salwanadi vatagna dravyas*, *vatagna basti*, *snighdha bhojan*.

- *Carcinoma of penis (Medhra arbudha)* ³¹ - though tough to treat, following treatment can be helpful. *Raktamoksshan*, *ghritapanpathya sevana*, *virechana* etc. Bhavprakasha advised *Abyanga* with *darvi taila*, *Rasanjan lepa* should be used.

- *Soft chancre (Upadansh)* ³² - venipuncture of dorsal vein of penis ,

application of leeches, *niruha basti* , *prapaudarikadi kwatha* for *parisheka*, *aragwadadi gan kwatha in parishek*, *surjikadi churna*, *saurashtraadi lepa*.

- *Syphilis (Firang)* – *saptashali vati*, *ras kapur*, *chopchini churna*, *dhumapan* are the drugs used to treat *Firang* by Bhavprakash.

❖ **Miscellaneous**³³:

➤ *Tobacco*: Using tobacco restricts blood flow to veins and arteries causing chronic health problems that lead to erectile dysfunction.

➤ *Alcohol and drugs*: Alcohol and drugs are becoming routine part of culture. Over time drains out Ojas, decreases vitality, disturbs entire body functioning and can lead to gravies diseases.

➤ *Stressful and hectic life*: Target oriented jobs, heavy competitions and ambitions more than age and experience have made today's lifestyle a mechanical and emotionless life. Thus losing peace of mind, and unable to enjoy life. This is becoming very common cause found for erectile dysfunction and many more diseases.

➤ *Job status*: Many jobs are responsible for erectile dysfunctions due to their schedule, job profile, e.g. some jobs demand continuous sitting like IT sectors, telephone operators, cashiers etc., some



people are working against biological clock during nights continuously, while jobs like truck / transport drivers or daily long distance driving on vehicles have to tolerate heavy jerky movements which may lead to ano-rectal pathology, pelvic and spine as well systemic disorders.

CONCLUSION

From this study it can be concluded that with the evolving time needs have changed but basic needs never change and sex in turn is a part of basic daily life. Practical and theoretical aspect of sex and its problems can never be ignored. *Klaibya* though very old disease but very hard to discuss openly as it disturbs the life of an individual completely. The factors responsible for *Klaibya* are changing, stressful, hectic life and current job profiles are becoming common factors causing great impact physically and psychologically. Diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, prostate disorders etc. causing erectile dysfunction can be controlled and treated with Ayurvedic treatment viz. *Rasayan* , *Vajikaran Chikitsa* in brief. To have a good quality of relationships and marital life sex plays one of most vital roles, and for good sexual intercourse erection plays an important role but erection depends upon physical, emotional and mental health of

individual. Ayurveda has potential to deal with all upcoming disease, its new causes and is very effective even in today's era when used appropriately without any side effects. Thus change in life style, proper sex education, counseling, and appropriate Ayurvedic treatment can surely put an end to erectile dysfunction.



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