

MIGRAINE SYNDROME IN AYURVED: WHY WOMEN GET MORE PRONE?

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ABSTRACT

The article outlines the experience of the person with migraine syndrome and eventual self healing with ayurved. The person had experience his mother genetic profile until discovering and implementing ayurveda health principles, and hope this information will convey simple and effective ways of self healing. This will guide how practical teachings on eating habits, lifestyle choices and hormonal balances can help to free from pain, while gaining unexpected benefits.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Migraine Syndrome, Lifestyle.

INTRODUCTION

Migraine is one of the common causes of recurrent headache. According to International Headache Society, migraine constitutes 16% of primary headaches and affects 10-20% of the general population. It is three times more common in women than men. More than 2/3rd of migraine sufferers, either have never consulted a doctor or have stopped doing so. It has under diagnosed and under treated, hence WHO ranks migraine among the world's most disabling medical illness and thus migraine is now recognizes as the chronic illness, not simply a headache. The term 'Migraine' refers a syndrome of vascular spasms of the cranial blood vessels. Symptoms of a migraine attack may include heightened sensitivity to light and sound(sonophotophobia), nausea, auras(loss of vision in one eye or tunnel vision), difficulty of speech and intense pain predominating on one side of the head. Where in these symptoms almost simulates with the condition Ardhavabhedak, which is one among the 11 types of shiroroga explained in the classics which presents with Bhedatodavat ardhaparshva shirashula having periodic attack and with Prakasha, shabda, asahishnuta. As per the text Charak

Samhita, it is mentioned that Ardhavabhedak is left untreated. It leads to deafness and blindness. Migraine does not shorten the life, but in severe cases a state of chronic exhaustion may occur. Migraine is the risk factor for stroke in both men & women, especially before age 50. About 90% of all strokes occur in people with the history of migraine. According to contemporary sciences, the treatment protocol of migraine comprises of non pharmacological treatment such as identification of triggers, medications, relaxation trainings, psychotherapy, etc. and pharmacotherapy as abortive and preventive therapy. Aspirin, Paracetamol, ibuprofen, Diclofenac, etc. are non specific abortive therapy, whereas Ergot, 5-HTreceptor agonists are specific abortive therapy. Similarly beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, Triptans, Anticonvulsing, etc but these drugs are not acceptable due to their drawbacks and also as they cause Drug dependence, drug withdrawal syndrome, relapse of headache within hours and chances of getting chronic headache. In contrast to this, Ayurveda has variety of efficacious procedure and medications with no drawbacks and incidence of recurrence in the treatment of Ardhavabhedak.

About Ayurveda

Ayurveda, the world's oldest holistic health science, holds that a human being is precipitated from the higher, subtle consciousness and has taken on 'coverings' called 'koshas' from Sanskrit, such as human body. It is said to be composed of progressively denser elements: Akash, vayu, agni, jala, prithvi. Ayurved described the tripod of life as the unity of the Body, Mind, Consciousness. Ayurveda is an individualized science more than standard one, so the migraine pain pattern & symptoms call for unique management according to the particular individual circumstances. In the classical medical scriptures of ayurveda, detailed description is given of how the body's metabolic processes of tissue building occur, first from superficial level of plasma to the deep reproductive tissue.

Case

A male, from age of 17, began experiencing regular, painful migraine headaches, just as his mother had. His mother had a drawer full of pills from the pharmacist and no relief after decades of Treatment. Genetics may be responsible, which implied there was no cure. Person started her footstep with painkillers, vaso constrictors and caffeine based pills. Meanwhile, the person continued the diet rich in white sugar, refined food and some whole foods. Milk was consumed which was processed with synthetic hormones. At about age 22, the male became vegetarian and his health improved marginally. But the painful bouts still came

several times monthly, accompanied by nausea and intensified photosensitivity. A clean hormonal pattern existed, though no self care was offered from any public or private health care source. He started increasing pattern of using over the counter painkillers & silently depleting his liver functions. A very later he heard, to needed to be healthy to restore his systems.

While raising his children, he spend about 10 years of self study in naturopathy, western herbology and dietary sciences with a view to understanding and eradicating his headache/nausea/moodiness patterns. Yet no adequate explanations or management strategy for migraine syndrome to end his suffering was found. He explored homeopathy, naturopathy, past life regression & consulted many healers & practitioners.

At age 35, he came to understand an ayurved concept, that our physiology flows from our psychoemotional & psychospiritual habits. He began to understand about alkalinity & acidity as function of ushna or shitali or virya from Sanskrit. In addition, the concept of vipak (post digestion) further revolutionized his thinking. At last he began his journey of self healing.

About 2 years were needed for body and mind to adjust to the new food choices and scheduling, as he was ill with migraine syndrome for about 20 years. Taking regular meals became an important key to be pain free living and balance blood sugar levels. This process involves a re-creation of his lifestyle & values. Perhaps, this article will help to avoid long healing curve. Focus on solution, not on the problems.

1} The Doshas: Vata(air, ether), Pitta(fire, water), Kapha(earth, water).

Migraine is a pervasive imbalance involving all body systems, notably the nervous & vascular system. Though mainly digestive in origin & cure, the structural, glandular/hormonal nervous, excretory & respiratory systems all need strengthening, according to ayurved. Migraine syndrome is considered primarily a fault of pitta doshas with vata doshas as a concurrent primarily or secondary root cause. In some cases, kapha doshas is also involved as thicker blood viscosity &/or 'ama' doshas, from poor digestion. Therefore burning of toxins (ama pachan) & implementing pitta pacifying food and lifestyle choices is a necessary first step for self healing. Therefore, treatment focused on balancing the vitiated doshas in the digestive and nervous system. This can be achieved by avoiding triggers & prescribing doshic specific diet, stress management (medication, relaxation techniques, breathing exercise, yoga) herbal formulations, lifestyle modifications, panchakarma & other

holistic modalities to create a balanced physiology. This state of complete balanced in healing the body and mind, can allow the illness to resolve & symptoms disappear.

Triggers: Why women are more prone?

Following are the possible reasons for migraine in women.

In majority of the patients Ardhavabhedak triggered by aharaj, Viharaj & manasika nidanas respectively.

1. Aharaj nidanas observed in patient were Vishamashana, Adhyashana, Anashana, Rookshaahar sevan, etc. This shows faulty lifestyle, which is accepted by todays generation leading to agnimandya and Tridosha dushti, which contributes chiefly in the pathogenesis of the disease.

2. Viharaj nidanas include Ratri jagaran, Diwaswap, atap/dhupa sevana was observed as maximum triggering factor. Bright light and other high intensity visualstimuli can causes headaches in patient with migraineheadaches.

3. Manasika nidanas includes chinta, krodha, and shoka were some which was found to trigger migraine headache. This might lead to Dhatukshaya & vitiation of vata dosha.

1) Stress: Women, more than men, are more likely to do juggling work, family and social responsibilities. Stress is therefore a key migraine trigger, making women succumb to migraine during the prone age of 20 to 45. Moreover, women are more likely to get migraine during their peak reproductive years because of high stress levels.

2) Hormones: Studies have established that more than half of all migraine experienced by women happen during their menstrual cycle. Just before, women menstrual cycle begins, the level of female hormones falls steeply. This may be the reason to evoke migraine as estrogen plays a role in the brain chemicals that regulate pain.

3) Menstrual Migrane: Increased headache around menses are correlated with fluctuations in estrogen levels. Estradiol drops from about 300 to 500 normally, around the type of menstruation. Strangely though, women with menstrual headache are reported to have fewer fluctuations of both estradiol levels and the trigeminovascular vasodilator systems than normal. It has been suggested than menstrual migraines have less aura than non-menstrual migraines. The overall prevalence of menstrual migraine in the general population is approximately 3%.

4) Medications: Particularly hormonal medications may trigger migraine. Oral contraceptives and hormone replacement therapy may increase the frequency of migraine attack of women.

5) Foods: That are high in salt or are processed may cause a migraine attack. Fasting or skipping meals is another trigger of this debilitating conditions. Food additives & preservatives (sweetner aspartame, monosodium glutamate) may aggravate migraines. Alcohol and caffeinated beverages can be the reason to trigger migraines.

6) Other reasons: Intense physical exertion, including sexual activities, can provoke migraines. Sun glare, loud sound & bright light, disturbed sleep patterns may induce migraine.

CONCLUSION

Migraine is an episodic headache disorder, usually characterised by severe pain on one or both sides of the head, stomach upset, nausea, sensitivity to light and sound. Ardhavabhedak is vatakapha pradhan shiroroga, the symptom complex of which very well correlates to that of migraine. Ayurveda enlists various nidanas which includes aharaaj, viharaj and manasika factors, etc. endocrinal and hormonal factors are the sole contribution of contemporary science. Most of the nidanas mentioned in our classics go in similarity with migraine triggers, which has an active part in the diagnosis of the conditions and as well as planning the first line of treatment i.e. Nidan parivarjana.

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