

ROLE OF KSHARA KARMA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CERVICAL EROSION

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Abstract

Cervical erosion is a common condition seen in most women of reproductive age groups. Its prevalence is more than 50% of all the gynaecological conditions. It adversely affects the physiological as well as psychological health of female and even interferes in their professional life and also cause infertility. Hence it is a major problem in front of gynaecologists. So many studies have been carried out and proved the efficacy of kshara karma in the management of cervical erosion. In the present article various studies conducted are summarised to understand the role of kshara in the management of cervical erosion.

Keyword: Karnini; Cervical erosion; Kshara karma.

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INTRODUCTION

The condition in which squamous epithelium of ectocervix is replaced by columnar epithelium which is continuous with the endocervix.^[1] It is a benign condition but if left untreated may leads up to infertility and predisposes cervical malignancy. That's why it is important to detect these lesions early enough and treat them adequately if cancer of the cervix is to be warded off.

Cervical erosion may render the cervix more susceptible to infection with various organisms like HPV (Human pappiloma virus), HIV (Human immunodeficiency virus), *N. gonorrhoea*, *C. trachomatis*, because the columnar epithelium has less power of resistance to infection than the normal stratified squamous covering. Presently available modern procedure like thermal cauterization, cryosurgery, laser vaporization etc. may cause many side effects like cervical stenosis,^[2] vaginal atresia etc.

To minimize these complications, an attempt is made to find solution which may fulfil the motto of an ideal treatment that is to cure the disease and to prohibit the occurrence of secondary disease. Ayurveda line of treatment is a promising hand; by both palliative and curative aspects.

Considering the pathology and main symptoms of cervical erosion, discharge and erosion and the treatment mentioned in the texts, it can be correlated with the karnini yonivyapada. Due to straining during labour in the absence of labour pains (akala) means the vayu obstructed by fetus, with holding kapha and getting mixed with rakta produces karnika in yoni, which obstructs the passage of menstrual flow (rajaha). Due to presence of karnika this condition is termed as karnini.^[3]

Vitiated kapha along with rakta produces karnika in the yoni.^[4] On the basis of the aetiology it can be concluded that karnini is

chiefly the disease of reproductive age group, and is more commonly seen in sexually active female. Cervical erosion is a type of vrana (dictionary meaning of which is disruption of normal anatomical relationship) situated on grivamukha of garbhashaya. Its treatment mainly based on Ayurvedic principles considering dosha dushya dushti along with treatment of vrana with special attention towards its location.

So the Ayurvedic treatment having the properties of lekhana shodhana ropana stambhana kaphaghna can effectively cure this disease. In Ayurveda, kshara karma has been described by Acharya Sushruta in sutra sthan in the treatment of vrana.^[5]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this article literary reference was collected from Ayurvedic classics, commentaries, modern literature, other recently published books, research journals and internet.

RESULTS

So many studies have been carried out on role of kshara karma in the management of cervical erosion which gives significant result. Various kshara used like apamarga kshara, snuhi kshara etc. used to treat the erosion.

Apamarga kshara

Clinical evalaution of the efficacy of kshara karma with apamarga kshara and jatyadi taila pichu in the management of cervical erosion (karnini yonivyapada study carried out by Dr. Pragya Gupta at National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, results were good that is Group I- this group 15 registered patients were administered with application of 'Apamarga kshara' on cervix and 'Jatyadi Taila' Pichu in the vagina for 7 sitting alternate day in a month registered patients of Cervical erosion were administered with 'Jatyadi Taila ' Pichu in the vagina daily for 14 days in a month.

Treatment was done after bleeding phase of menstrual cycles over. Overall percentage relief was higher in group I 72.17% followed by group II i.e. 68.44%).^[6]

Snuhi kshara

The importance of snuhi kshara in the management of cervical erosion- this study was carried out by V. Saxena, D. Shukla and P.K. Bhardwaj at Rishikul state ayurvedic college and hospital haridwar on 15 patients in two groups , results showed that 75% patients were cured in group A, while 57% patients were cured in group B.^[7]

DISCUSSION

Acharya Charak says-A discussion based on shastra (Authentic documents), over any conceptual or practical oriented study definitely gives one or other fruitful conclusion.^[8] Many studies deals with Cervical erosion (karnini), here an attempt has been made to throw some more light on the present knowledge of the subject.

Cervical erosion is said to occur when a zone of columnar epithelium exists on the vaginal portion of the cervix replacing the normal stratified squamous epithelium that is usually found outside the external os. The exposed columnar epithelium looks red because of the blood vessels just below the surface.^[9]

The cardinal symptom of the disease is excessive vaginal discharge, but often the long term sequel of the disease like dyspareunia, lower abdominal pain, low back ache, sickness feeling, fatigue etc. become too much troublesome to the patients and start affecting their daily routine. So they visit the physician with these problems posing them as their chief complaint.

Differentiating between cervical erosion and CIN (cervical intraepithelial neoplasia) macroscopically is difficult.^[10] At least 17 per

cent of women with erosion have been shown to have associated CIN.^[11] Pre-cancerous lesions often develop at the squamous-columnar junction; hence theoretically, treating cervical erosion may prove to be protective against the incidence of cervical cancer. Erosion has also been shown to increase the risk of acquiring human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection by women who are partners of HIV-positive men.^[12]

Proponents of routine treatment have also argued that some sexually transmitted microorganisms such as Chlamydia trachomatis preferentially infect glandular epithelium. Thus erosion would, by exposing this epithelium aid an infective process.^{[13][14][15]}

Some arguments advanced in support of routine treatment include the relationship between squamous metaplasia and induction of squamous cell carcinoma of the cervix.^[16] That's why it is important to pay attention towards this troublesome disease and to detect these lesions early enough and treat them adequately.

Several treatment modalities have been used for cases of erosion including use of antibiotics, microwave tissue coagulation, laser coagulation, infrared light, an interferon-alpha suppository, electrocautery or cryotherapy.^{[17][18]}

The treatment modalities described in modern science have their own advantages and disadvantages. Moreover they are not cost effective and being carried at higher medical centres only. Owing to the complexities in the modern management, it is the basic need of time to develop a dependable and easily available therapeutic intervention cost effective, safe and devoid of complications or side effects.

The word 'karnini' is derived from karnin which refers to 'having ears', 'relating to ears', 'barbed', 'furnished with knots' etc. In this condition, the main characteristic feature is development of karnika, which means 'round protuberance', associated with excessive mucoid discharge, itching, sometimes even blood stained discharge.^[19]

Acharya Charaka says that karnini yonivyapada is caused due vitiation of kapha and vata, while Acharya Sushruta said it is due to vitiation of kapha. This condition can be correlated with cervical erosion. In cervical erosion, though small sprouts like structures do grow, but there is no round protuberance. If it is accepted that cervix itself becomes rounded, protuberant due to congestion, hypertrophy and nabothian cysts and assumes the shape of pericarp of lotus or karnika then congruence with classical description can be established.^[20]

Ayurveda treatment having the properties of lekhana shodhana ropana stambhana and kaphaghna can effectively cure karnini. So kshara followed by aushadha siddha ghrita or taila pichu can be used for the treatment of this disease.^[21]

The principle of treatment in cervical erosion is to destruct the overgrown columnar epithelium by use of local chemical, electrical or diathermy cauterization, cryosurgery or even excision of diseased area.^{[22][23]}

After this destruction normal squamous epithelium from basal cell grows and heals the erosion. There are two basic principles given by Acharya for the treatment of karnini which are: kaphahara chikitsa^[24] and shodhana dravya^[25]

Kshara are the substances, which act as caustic or corrosive agent for any growth when used externally. This property of kshara is due to its chedana, bhedana, lekhana and patan karma. In Ayurveda classics kshara karma is said to

be superior to any other surgical or para surgical measures.^[26] While going through the properties of the kshara,^[27] it found to be appropriate treatment for karnini as it is able to perform both of above actions.

From the treatment point of view i.e. kaphahara chikitsa, kshara has property of kaphaghna due to its ushna virya, katu vipaka, katu rasa and laghu tikshna guna.^[28] Due to pachana vilayana kapha-vata shamaka karma the kshara was responsible for samprapti vighatana of karnini yonivyapada as vitiation of vata kapha dosha are responsible for this disease.^[29]

Kshara is mentioned to have shodhana property. It is able to remove mala from body to fulfil the definition of shodhana dravya. The studies on apamarga kshara and snuhi kshara have proved the same.

CONCLUSION

The disease karnini yonivyapada described in Ayurveda classics can be considered as the clinical congruence of cervical erosion. In cervical erosion though small sprouts like structures do grow, but there is no round protuberance, if it is accepted that cervix itself becomes rounded, protuberant due to congestion, hypertrophy and nabothian cysts and assumes the shape of pericarp of lotus or karnika, then congruence with classical description can be established. As per pathogenesis, treatment for karnini should be kaphahara, shodhana. Bahirparimarjana chikitsa in the form of kshara followed by aushadha siddha ghrita or taila picu is highly effective in disintegration of the pathogenesis of the disease. The same is proved by studies conducted with apamarga kshara and snuhi kshara.

Yet large sample study should be conducted clinically to understand the role of kshara karma in the management of cervical erosion.

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