

Ayurvedic Methods to Treat Malnourished Children

Abstract

Malnutrition in children is a dangerous threat to any civilization. The reasons for this condition are complex. This issue is being addressed with extraordinary diligence. In this present circumstance Ayurved can assume a conclusive part and hence an undertaking was considered targeting working on the heaviness of malnourished kids. Charak samhita-a pillar for treatment reason in Ayurved has described fifty gatherings, each containing ten therapeutic plants, known as dashemaani that are profoundly unambiguous, condition situated plants. In the present study, as per principles of Ayurved, the malnourished children were considered in Kaarshya condition/ Ras, Rakta, Maansa dhatu kshaya i.e condition of depleted muscle and fatty tissue and treated in that congruence. Nine children were selected for the study. To rectify it Vidarikand-Ipomoea digitata, a herb indicated in Brimhaniya-(drugs which increase weight of body) and Snehopag (drugs that increase the unctuousness and which oleate the body) dashemani and Yashtimadhu-Glychrhizza glabra indicated in Jivniya (which increase vitality of body) and Snehopag dashemani were selected. A trial of combination of Yashtimadhu and Vidarikand for treatment of malnutrition hasn't been carried out before but various research pointing towards their potential have done in an individual manner. Sonia et al in their paper "Ksheervidar (Ipomoea Digitata) an underutilised medicinal plant- an update " have stressed its multiple use along with its nutritional values. In a similar way, a number of studies have been conducted on Yashtimadhu, such as Debrata das et al.'s paper "Protective effect of Yashtimadhu against side effects of radiation/chemotherapy in head and neck malignancies" (its counteracting effect against radiation). However, no study has been conducted solely on Yashtimadhu's effect on weight gain, so the study was designed. In the ongoing review the outcomes got were very uplifting. Five kids were overhauled weight wise and different youngsters also showed moderate

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weight gain. An improvement in subjective criteria revealed drugs' holistic effects. The aftereffects of this pilot project shows the immense potential Ayurved can propose in tackling in this grave issue and its enormous scope study and execution would be truly commendable.

Keywords

Malnutrition • Children • Medicinal plant

Introduction

It's said that "Baalo hi Balam Rashtrasya" i.e . Children are the real strength of any nation. The current status of children of Gujarat from nutrition angle isn't rosy at all. As per March 2016 data, 6% of children in Gujarat are malnourished and 41.6% children are having stunted growth. Now these data aren't acceptable at all. Ample efforts are being carried out by the authority for resolving this problem but still we are away from desired results. Malnourished children become a liability instead of an asset and they pose a serious threat for a healthy society- physically, mentally, socially as well economically. Ayurveda has much to offer in this condition hence a pilot project was designed for the same [1].

Methodology

Malnutrition can be considered as a condition similar to Kaarshya, a condition associated with Ras, Rakta and Mamsa Dhatu kshaya. Malnutrition is not simply underweight but it is accompanied by loss of vitality and vigour [2]. In such condition taking underweight and lack of vitality as a benchmark, drugs having vyadhi pratyani properties (ailment specific properties) for the same were selected i.e. drugs which are helpful in gaining weight and vitality were sought for Children of aanganwadi of Vasvel village, Ta. Waghodiya, Dist. Vadodara were the subjects of the study.

- Inclusion criteria: Nine children coming in yellow grade i.e. underweight children with reference to their age were included.
- Exclusion criteria: Children having severe protein calorie deficiency were excluded from the study.
- Criteria of assessment: Increase in weight, was taken as benchmark for the study. Subjective symptoms like increase in health status was also observed and assessed.

The dashemaani dravyas described by Acharya Charak are highly potent in the respective indications. Considering the condition of kaarshya in context of ras, rakta and mamsa dhatu kshaya, drugs from jivniya and brimhainiya dashemaani were selected as shown below:

- Jivniya dashemaani-Yashtimadhu
- Snehopag dashemaani – Yashtimadhu, Vidarikaand
- Brimhainiya dashemani – Vidarikaand

The additional benefit of both the above drugs is their good palatability.

Dose /duration: Above formulation in 3:1 (Vidarikaand: Yashtimadhu) proportion in powder form was given. The dosage was 3 gms /day for 3-6 months.

Out of the selected nine subjects, 5 were male while 4 were female. All subjects belonged to 3-5 yrs of age group. All children were from lower socio-economic class. The Agni of all children was good. No other specific disease was found in any of the children.

Results

Sr. No.	Child	Sex	Age group	Weight (B.T) in kgs	Weight (A.T) in kgs
1	a	M	3-5 yrs	11.2	13.8
2	b	F	3-5 yrs	11.4	13
3	c	F	3-5 yrs	12.6	13.9
4	d	F	3-5 yrs	11.7	12
5	e	M	3-5 yrs	10.9	11.8
6	f	M	3-5 yrs	11.2	13
7	g	M	3-5 yrs	9.4	11.5
8	h	M	3-5 yrs	10	11.5
9	i	F	3-5 yrs	11.8	11.9

Table 1. Drug dosage of different age group.

Discussion

Malnutrition in children is a serious threat in our society. The data shows that its proportion is quite alarming. In the present study malnourished children were considered as Kaarshya condition/ ras-rakta-maansa dhatu kshaya (equivalent to depletion of muscle tissue-fat tissue and nutritive components of body) and treated in that congruence. The Dashemaani drugs given by Acharya Charak are highly specific and have potent vyadhi pratyani properties (ailment or symptom specific properties). In present study the dashemaani drugs were selected for the same. To rectify it Vidarikaand indicated in Brimhainiya - (drugs which increase weight of body) and Snehopag (drugs that increase the unctuousness and which oleate the body) dashemani and Yashtimadhu indicated in Jivniya (drugs that increase vitality) and Snehopag dashemani were selected [3].

The results obtained were quite encouraging. Five children were upgraded weight wise and other children too showed moderate weight gain. Improvement in subjective criteria shows wholistic effects of drugs [4].

As per modern research various isoflavones like puerarin, genistein, diadzein and tuberosin have been found in Vidarikaand and *in vivo* and *in vitro* studies have proven its traditional use as a tonic, immuno-modulator and an antioxidant drug. A study on vidarikaandadi yog comprising Vidari Godhum and Yava in sports children has given promising results in weight gain and stamina [5].

As per modern research Yashtimadhu is rich in sugar, starch, amino acids and essential oils. It is good source of vitamin B complex group and vitamin E. It is also a rich source of phosphorus calcium, choline, iron, magnesium, potassium, selenium, silicon and zinc. It is rich in isoflavones, saponins and flavonoids which could be responsible for the various therapeutic uses attributed to it. Yashtimadhu is also found to enhance cortisol activity which leads to increased energy level.

Conclusion

Drugs mentioned in Acharya Charakokta Dashemaani viz Jivniya, Brimhaniya and Snehopag types were found to

be very useful in treatment of malnourished children and a lot could be achieved with its justful use in solving this burning issue. The results obtained in this pilot study were encouraging and the thinkline behind it was also found fruitful. A large scale study is supposed to give promising results.

Acknowledgement

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Conflict of Interest

The author has no affiliation with any relevant organizations.

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