



FEMALE INFERTILITY: - A REVIEW FOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

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Article Received on 06/03/2019

Article Revised on 27/03/2019

Article Accepted on 17/04/2019

ABSTRACT

Infertility primarily refers to the biological inability of a person to contribute to conception. Infertility is an increasing condition in society which has become a challenge to the gynaecologist. Based on the census reports of India 2011, 2001, 1991, 1981 researchers show that childlessness has increased by 50% since 1981. The increase may be due to many reasons, as sexually transmitted infections, coping with stress, the way of living, job pressure, postponing parenthood, galloping urbanization, obesity etc. In women, it may also refer to the state when she is not able to carry a pregnancy to its full term. Female infertility is caused due to structural problems like blocked Fallopian tubes, defect in cervical canal, uterine fibroid or polyps. Hormonal imbalance leading to ovulation problems too can cause infertility. From Ayurvedic perspectives *Vandhya Stree* is either due to *Beeja Dosha* or other causes where she can be treated and made to conceive. *Vandhyatva* is a condition which occurs as a complication of various diseases, different *Yonivyapats*, *Jatharagnis*, *Artavadushtis*, *Beejadosha*, *Mithyaachara*, *Daiva* are various contributory factors for *Vandhya*. Many treatments have been available with different success rates. They include fertility drugs, intrauterine insemination (IUI), in vitro sperm injection (ICSI), donor insemination (DI), egg (or embryo) donation and surrogacy. Ayurveda an ancient science describes various types of treatment for *Streevandhyatava*. Ayurvedic treatment starts with *Nidanparivajan Chikista*, principals of *ahar vihar* according to *Desh*, *Rutu*, *Prakruti*, etc of patient. *Uttar Basti*, *Panchakarma chikista*. *Sthanik*, *sarvadehik chikista*. *Kashtaashadhi*, *Rasaashadi*, etc.

KEYWORDS: *Vandhya Stree*, female infertility, *Beeja Dosha*, *Yonivyapats*, *Jatharagnis*, *Artavadushtis*, *Beejadosha*, *Mithyaachara*, *Daiva*, *Uttar Basti*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurved has an ancient science who explains *vandhyatva* for male as well as in female. There is a description of *hetu*, *nidan*, *samprapti* and *chikista* according to way of Ayurveda. In modern science *vandhyatva* means infertility. It is also stated that a couple who is married with unprotected coitus for one year not achieving pregnancy, here is also both partners involved and explain about causative factors, sign and symptoms, investigation and treatment of various types. General practitioner is a key person for patient. So he must know about *vandhyatva* as well as infertility. Many of time patients are depend upon opinion of family physician. He is very familiar with patient, about their socio-economic condition.

There is huge cost difference between ayurvedic treatment and modern treatment. Then why not motivate patient for Ayurvedic treatment?

Ayurvedic system of medicine has described *Vandhyatva* as equivalent for infertility. As per the modern medicine,

consideration *Vandhyatva* correlates any major issue factor responsible for the incidence of infertility. As per Ayurveda principles, imbalance in *Artavavahasrotas* in female & *shukravahasrotas* in male is the principle cause of *Vandhyatva*.

Incidence of Infertility according to modern science

As per one study, 10 percent of couples are affected by infertility. Both men and women can be infertile. As per information from, the Centres for Disease Control, 1/3 of the infertility are due to female infertility. Similarly, rest of 1/3 of the cases are linked to male-infertility and in case of the remaining one, both partners can be the cause. In 20 per cent of cases, the reason for infertility cannot be determined.

Essential Factors for conception according to Ayurveda

For conception of a healthy foetus, Ayurveda explains four necessary elements

- 1) **Rutu** (Appropriate period for conception) – Here period indicates two things a) Age of both male and

female partners, b) Days eligible for conception depending upon ovulation.

- 2) **Kshetra** (Seat for conception) – The word Kshetra refers to the Uterus, Uterus should be in healthy state so that it can hold the foetus for upcoming 9 months and provide nourishment and safety.
- 3) **Ambu**: - (Nourishment for conceived foetus) – Ambu means water, here it specifies nourishment to the foetus growing in the womb, and this depends upon the generalised nutrition of the mother.
- 4) **Beej**: – Beej explains the need of competent male sperm and equally healthy female ovum. Both the sperm and ovum is termed as Shukra Dhatu in Ayurveda, meaning the reproductive tissue.

Ayurveda explains body is composed of seven Dhatus, of which Shukra dhatu or reproductive tissue is the seventh or last dhatu, hence it has the presence of fractions of all the previous dhatus, and so it has the capability of generating a new tissue (foetus). Healthy Shukra dhatu shows presence of beauty, bravery and valour in an individual. Conception of healthy child depends completely on the health of parental Shukra dhatu.

Essential Factors for conception according to Modern

- 1) Production of sperm
- 2) Production of the male sex hormone.
- 3) Production of ovum
- 4) Production of the female sex hormone.
- 5) Anatomy & Physiology of male & female genital organs
- 6) Chromosomal factors

Causes of Infertility According to Ayurveda

Debility of Shukra dhatu – Reproductive health of an individual depends solely upon the health of Shukra dhatu i.e reproductive tissue, Seminal fluid in males and ovum (Artav dhatu) in females. Also Shukra sthana (site) and its functioning share an equal importance. Shukra sthana in women explains anatomical structure and physiology of the uterus and associated organs, and in males it denotes the male reproductive system. Suppressing natural urges like that of urine, stools or sexual urge (Shukra Vega dharan) for long durations. Over indulgence in sex can lead to shukra kshaya i.e Qualitative and Quantitative degradation in sperm count. Abnormality in artav dhatu (female shukra dhatu) Irregular menses, PCOD, unovulation, etc.

Causes of Infertility According to Modern

1. Male factors

- a) Generalised weakness
- b) Lack of nutrition.
- c) Eating excessive spicy, oily, salty or unhealthy foods, Sleeping at very late hours.
- d) Working in extreme hot or cold conditions.
- e) Decreased or Loss of libidos.
- f) Infective pathology.
- g) Trauma to the vital organs.

h) Strenuous riding (bicycle riding, horseback riding), Handling too much of stress.

i) Medications, including androgen Drugs, alcohol, smoking,

j) Testicular factors refer to conditions where the testes produces semen of poor quality despite adequate hormonal support and include:

- Age
- Genetic defects on the Y chromosome
- Y chromosome microdeletions
- Abnormal set of chromosome
- Klinefelter syndrome
- Neoplasm, e.g. seminoma
- Cryptorchidism
- Varicocele (14% in one study)
- Hydrocele
- Mumps
- Malaria
- Defects in USP26 in some cases

A) Post-testicular factors decrease male fertility due to conditions that affect the male genital system after testicular sperm production and include defects of the genital tract as well as problems inejaculation:

- Vas deferens obstruction
- Lack of Vas deferens, often related to genetic markers for Cystic Fibrosis
- Infection, e.g. prostatitis
- Ejaculatory duct obstruction

Idiopathic oligospermia (oligoasthe-noteratozoospermia)

1) Female factors

- A) Endometriosis
- B) Congenital Anomalies
- C) Loss of Libido
- D) Ovulation Disorders
- E) Uterine Fibroids
- F) Blocked Fallopian Tubes
- G) Repeated miscarriages.

Female Infertility

There is no unanimous definition of female infertility, but NICE guidelines state that: "A woman of reproductive age, who has not conceived after 1 year of unprotected vaginal sexual intercourse, in the absence of any known cause of infertility, should be offered further clinical assessment and investigation along with her partner." It is recommended that a consultation with a fertility specialist should be made earlier if the woman is aged 36 years or over or there is a known clinical cause of infertility or a history of predisposing factors for infertility. Infertility primarily refers to the biological inability of a person to contribute to conception. Infertility may also refer to the state of a woman who is unable to carry a pregnancy to full term. There are many biological causes of infertility, including some that medical intervention can treat. Infertility has increased by 4 percent since the 1980s, mostly from problems with fecundity due to an increase in age. About 40 percent of the issues involved with infertility are due to the man,

another 40 percent due to the woman, and 20 percent result from complications with both partners. Women who are fertile experience a natural period of fertility before and during ovulation, and they are naturally infertile during the rest of the menstrual cycle. Fertility awareness methods are used to discern when these changes occur by tracking changes in cervical mucus or basal body temperature. Women are born with a finite number of eggs. Thus, as the reproductive years progress, the number and quality of the eggs diminish. The chances of having a baby decrease by 3% to 5% per year after the age of 30. This reduction in fertility is noted to a much greater extent after age 40

Treatment

In Ayurveda, libido is directly dependent upon the amount of "Shukara Dhatu" in our body. Ayurveda believes the body to be made up of seven dhatus. Rasa, Rakata, Mansam, Medam, Aasti, Maaja, Shukaram. It is believed that the diet we take is acted upon by the digestive fire of our body and Aahar Rasam is formed from the useful part of our food while the waste is thrown out of our body as the stool. Now this Aahar Rasam is acted upon by various types of metabolic fires leading to the formation of Rasa Dhatu and from there onwards upto Shukara Dhatu Respectively. If the amount of Shukra Dhatu decreases in the body due to Anuloma Kshayam(i.e. due to improper nutrition or due to disturbances in the metabolism of the body) or due to Pratiloma Kshayam (due to excessive masturbation or due to excessive indulgence in intercourse) then there occurs a loss of libido. Hence to improve the libido, we require checking this decrease in amount of Shukra Dhatu of the body. Various herbs as well as metallic preparations are helpful in improving the amount of shukra dhatu in the body and thus help to improve the libido. There is no satisfactory treatment of azoospermia in allopathic treatment system hence ayurvedic treatment is most preferred treatment for this condition. The treatment involves both medicinal treatment as well as panchkarma treatment for the same. Various herbs are known for their effects in increasing the sperm count of the patients e.g. Musli sufed, Munjatak, Makkhan, Ashwagandha, Shatavari, etc. Along with the herbs there are various classical combinations which are very helpful for treating this condition like Makardhwaj wati, Suwarna Siddha Makardhwaj, Shilajeet Adi wati, etc.

Ayurvedic Panchkarma therapies

A special panchkarma procedure known as Uttar basti is very helpful for this condition, Uttar basti should be given under the supervision of a trained ayurvedic doctor only. In Ayurveda, libido is directly dependent upon the amount of "Shukara Dhatu" in our body. Ayurveda believes the body to be made up of seven dhatus. Rasa, Rakata, Mansam, Medam, Aasti, Maaja, Shukaram. It is believed that the diet we take is acted upon by the digestive fire of our body and Aahar Rasam is formed from the useful part of our food while the waste is thrown out of our body as the stool. Now this Aahar

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