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An Ayurvedic approach in the management of Unexplained Infertility - A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Infertility is an emerging health problem that has profound socioeconomic and health implication on both the individual and society. Unexplained Infertility is defined as the inability to conceive even after one year with routine investigations of infertility showing no abnormality; with overall incidence of 10-30%. *Ayurveda* explained female infertility as *Vandhyatva* and mentioned *Garbha Sambhava Samagri* (proper union of four factors like fertile period, healthy reproductive system, nutrition and healthy ovum and sperm) and *Manasika Abhitapa* (psychological and emotional factors) as chief factors responsible for conception. In this case study patient aged 32 years who was anxious to conceive since four years of regular and satisfactory marital relationship seeking *Ayurvedic* management in Ahalia Ayurveda Medical College Hospital was taken. On detailed evaluation, vitiation of *Vatadosha*, loss of appetite, and loss of sleep was noticed. The line of treatment followed in this case was *Sadhya Virechana* (Purgation) followed *Vatanulomana* (pacifies *Vata Dosha*), *Deepana* (appetizers), *Pachana* (digestives), *Garbhasthapanam* (maintaining pregnancy), *Rasayana Chikitsa* (rejuvenative) with psychological assurance that favours conception in this couple.

Key words: Unexplained infertility, Ayurveda, Vandhyatva, Conception

INTRODUCTION

Infertility is defined as a failure to conceive within one or more years of regular unprotected coitus.^[1] Infertility is a prevalent problem affecting about 10-12% of the couples worldwide. Fertility is important physiological activity of the reproductive organ. Infertility cases are increasing due to stress, obesity,

lack of exercise, and environmental pollution. Unexplained infertility^[2] is earmarked to those couple who have undergone complete basic infertility work up and in whom no abnormality has been detected and still remains infertile. The reported incidence varies from 10-30 percent. The recommended treatment for unexplained infertility is induction of Ovulation IUI, Super ovulation combined with IUI and assisted reproductive technology.

In *Ayurveda*, unexplained infertility equated with *Vandhyatva*. *Vandhya* referred to women who is infertile and *Vandhyatva* means status of the condition called infertility. *Sushruta*^[3] has stated four factors like *Rithu* (fertile period), *Kshethram* (healthy reproductive system), *Ambu* (nutrition) and *Beejam* (healthy ovum and sperm), which is necessary for achieving the conception. *Acharya Vagbhata*^[4] has given more importance to psychological, emotional factors and mental health for *Garbhadharana* (conception). Normal functioning of

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Vatadosha, *Ojobala* (immunity), *Shadbhavas* like *Matruja* (mother), *Pitruja* (father), *Atma* (soul), *Satmya* (congeniality), *Rasa* (nutrition), *Satva* (mind) also plays an important role in fertility.

CASE REPORT

A married woman aged 32 years and her husband aged 37 years anxious to have a child approached Prasuti Tantra evum Stri Roga Department at Ahalia Ayurveda Medical College Hospital for seeking treatment. On interaction with the couple and through her treatment history, it was found that there were no contributing reasons for not having a conception after six years of active married life. Couple was under allopathic consultation for past 2 years. Her IUI attempts failed two times and advised for IVF and the couple were not willing for that procedure.

The lady had regular menstrual cycle of 32 days duration and the menstrual cycle was for 6 days. There was no contributing Family history, Personal history, Sexual history and surgical history. She had no any previous Medical or Surgical illness. No any abnormality was found in the coital history and had not taken any contraceptive measures. On general examination, her Pulse and BP was found to be 75/min and 110/70 mm of Hg respectively. No pallor or edema was found. Her weight was 55kg and height was 156 cm.

All the haematological, biochemical reports and Semen analysis were found to be normal. Per speculum examination revealed healthy cervix, normal in shape, size and position without any abnormal discharge. Per vaginal examination revealed normal sized Anteverted uterus, Fornices free, no discharge and Cervical motion tenderness was absent. Her general examination was normal and the systemic examination, CNS, RS and CVS was also normal. She did not have any kind of allergies with respect to food and medicines.

The treatment was given for both couple on the basis of *Vandhyatva*. *Sadyo Virechana* (Purgation) was

given with *Trivrit Lehya* 120gms each for couples. The lady was advised to start with

1. *Shatavari Choornam Ksheerapakam* - 2 times a day before food for 1 month
2. *Dasamoolaristam* - 15 ml three times a day after food for 1 month
3. *Phalaghrita* - 5 ml with milk at bed time for 1 month

For her husband, *Aswagandha Choorna Ksheerapaka* was advised at bedtime. Psychological assurance and counseling was given to couples at the time of visit. Couples advised to come for regular follow up after every cycle. The same medication was continued for 5 months. Finally, in the 6th month, the lady came for follow up with missed period. Urine pregnancy test was done and it showed "Positive pregnancy". Later Sonographic confirmation was made. She was advised to continue antenatal checkup at her native place, Chennai as she experienced severe nausea, and excessive tiredness during pregnancy. The pregnancy was uneventful and the couple was blessed with a male baby of 2.9kg through normal labor.

DISCUSSION

Sadyovirechana helps both couples for *Sodhana* (Cleanses the body) and also mentioned as a Pre conceptional care^[5] in *Ayurveda* which helps in conception.

Shatavari Choornam Ksheerapaka is *Balya* (Promote strength), *Vayahstapana* (Anti-aging) and is indicated for promoting fertility.^[6] It is *Vatahara* (Normalise *Vatadosha*), *Rasayana* (rejuvenator), *Vrishya* (aphrodisiac) and *Stanyajanana* (helps in lactation). *Shatavari* is Anti-abortion, Anti-inflammatory, Antiviral and has positive influence on H-P-O axis. *Shatavari* is mainly known for its Phytoestrogenic properties^[7]

Dasamoolaristam is indicated in *Vatavyadhi* (disorders due to *Vata Dosha*), *Kshaya* (consumption), *Mandagni* (diminished appetite), *Dhatukshaya* (depleted *Dhatu*s), *Vandhya*^[8] (infertility) and it act as *Deepana*

(appetizers), *Pachana* (digestives), *Balaprada* (strengthening) and *Rasayana* (Rejuvenative).

Phalaghrita helps the woman to achieve conception and is best for curing all female genital tract disorders.^[9] It is *Vatahara*, *Balya* (provides strength), *Brihmaniya* (nourishing), *Garbhada* (fertilization), *Rasayana* (rejuvenator). *Phalaghrita* significantly increased the serum estradiol level and body weight. Probably *Phalaghrita* stimulates the Pituitary - Ovarian axis indicates an increased gonadotropin secretion, which regulate the activity of enzymes involved in ovarian steroidogenesis.^[10]

Ashwagandha is *Balya* (strengthening), *Brimhana* (nourishing), *Shukrala* ((increases production of semen), *Vrishya* (aids in ejaculation). *Charaka* has mentioned *Ashwagandha* as an ingredient of *Vajeekarana Ghrita*. *Ashwagandha* improves energy and also memory by enhancing the brain and nervous function, shows anxiolytic effects,^[11] has hepatoprotective property, raises haemoglobin level and red blood cell count, improve energy level, has potent antioxidant activity, improve the cell mediated immunity, promotes vigor and vitality along with cheerful sexual life and reproductive equilibrium and act as powerful adaptogen.^[12] It is one of the best *Rasayana* (rejuvenator) and *Vajikarana* (aphrodisiac).

CONCLUSION

Infertility affects millions of peoples of worldwide and has an impact on their family and communities. Ayurveda helps in regulating menstrual cycles, enhancing general health and wellness, revitalizing sperm, reducing stress, enhancing sleep, controlling anxiety and increasing energy level, balancing the endocrine system and improving blood flow in pelvic cavity, thereby promoting fertility. This case study proves that the Ayurvedic principles are effective with systematic approach in managing unexplained infertility in a holistic and cost-effective method. This case study is merely a case report and detailed research based clinical evaluations with proper

research design is necessary for further detailed evaluation.

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