



Hypothyroidism- through *Ayurvedic* vision

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ABSTRACT-

Hypothyroidism is a clinical syndrome resulting from insufficient production of thyroid hormones, which is common endocrinal disorder seen all over the world. It is more prevalent among females. Hypothyroidism is one of the burning issues in current scenario and is affecting the life of many people on various levels. Since this condition is associated with many complications, on many systems, ranging from generalized tiredness to infertility, thereby compromising quality of life, it has become a need to study this disease critically.

This review is made with an effort to understand the disease in *ayurvedic* perspective. On reviewing the clinical presentation from all classical texts, it is found that in hypothyroidism there is

abnormality of *jatharagni* and *dhatwagni* along with abnormality of *kapha* and *vata dosha* as well as *Rasavaha*, *Raktavaha*, *medovaha*, *sukravaha* and *manovaha srotases*. *Dosh-dushyasamoorchhana* in various *Dhatus* results in systemic manifestation of the disease.

INTRODUCTION-

The concept that lifestyle is responsible for the genesis of a disease is very old and well known in *Ayurveda*. Nowadays there has been drastic change in the dietary habits and lifestyle of individuals due to modernization and influence of western culture. Unhealthy eating habits, along with sedentary lifestyle, cause various diseases including metabolic disorders.

The thyroid gland is considered to be one of the most important glands in endocrine system after pituitary gland as it regulates

nearly all bodily functions. Failure of thyroid hormone to meet the metabolic need of the body results in hypothyroidism. Lack of thyroid hormone or resistance of the body tissue to thyroid hormone with respect to metabolic demand result in disorder called as hypothyroidism. Hypothyroidism is posing major health challenge in both developing as well as developed world. Most common cause is auto immune condition. *Prevalence* rate of the disease is 2-5% in developed world.

This review is carried out to understand hypothyroidism according to the principle of *Ayurveda*. The presentation of the disease is reviewed critically by searching pathogenesis and symptoms from various research databases. The symptoms of hypothyroidism are studied in terms of imbalance of *Dosha*, *Srotas*, etc and an effort is made to obtain standard possible samprapti of the disease. Thus the line of treatment involves *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *srothoshodhana* and *kapha vata shamana*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS-

This study is done by literature search and critical review of the obtained facts. Literature search has been done by manually searching Ayurvedic texts or samhitas.

OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION-

There are two major thyroid hormones -T3 and T4 which effects all body systems either directly or indirectly at all stages of life. Thyroid hormones also promote growth as they enhance amino acid uptake by tissues and enzymatic systems involved in protein

synthesis thus promoting bone growth. Carbohydrate metabolism is also regulated by the thyroid hormone as it stimulates glucose uptake, *glycogenolysis*, *gluconeogenesis*. These actions may be compared to functions of *Rasavaha Srotas* as it supplies nutrition and energy to all body tissues. They help in fat metabolism by mobilizing lipids from adipose stores and accelerate oxidation of lipids to produce energy. Lipid metabolism can be compared to functions of *Medovaha Srotas*. Thyroid hormones also increase basal metabolic rate (BMR) in all tissues except brain, spleen and gonads. This results in increased heat production, increased oxygen consumption. This increased metabolic rate also results in increased utilization of energy substrates causing weight loss. These actions can be compared to the functions of *Agni* in the body. The adrenergic receptors in the blood vessels are also increased by the action of thyroid hormone leading to regulation of blood pressure. Thyroid hormone play a vital role in tissue growth particularly in skeletal, nervous system and reproductive system Cardiovascular action of thyroid hormones are to increase cardiac output, heart rate and contractility. They affect the respiratory system indirectly through increased BMR causing increased demand for oxygen and increased excretion of carbon dioxide. These physiological actions if looked from an *Ayurvedic* perspective are the action of *Pitta* and *Vata Dosha* in their normalcy. The Srotases affected by thyroid hormone are mainly *Rasavaha Srotas*, *Mamsavaha Srotas*, *Medovaha Srotas*, *Asthivaha srotas*, *Sukravaha Srotas*.

ETIOLOGY/ NIDANA

Hypothyroidism is classified into,

1. Primary hypothyroidism- It is due to inadequate function of the thyroid gland itself. Most common causes of Primary hypothyroidism are iodine deficiency, autoimmune thyroid disease, Congenital, drugs and iatrogenic causes.
2. Secondary Hypothyroidism- it is due to not getting enough stimulation by thyroid stimulating hormones.

PATHOGENESIS / SAMPRAPTI

Primary Hypothyroidism results from two mechanisms:

1. Deficiency of Thyroid Hormones – caused by destruction of thyroid follicles, as in Hashimoto's *thyroiditis* (Autoimmune disorder)
2. Resistance of peripheral tissues to thyroid hormones.

In Ayurveda, we can consider these two pathologies in the following way:

1. Dhatukshaya janya (Beejadoshajanya)

Due to *Apathya nidan sevana* and also *Bijadosha*, there is *Tridosha dushti* leading to *jatharagni mandya*, which causes *Dhatwagnimandya*, leading to *Uttarottara dhatu vikriti*, ultimately causing *Oja vikriti*. This *Vikrita ojas* (in this case it is often caused by the presence of *Pitta dosha*) affects the *Vyadhi kshamatva* of the body, attacking the thyroid gland and the autoimmune condition develops. Thus, it is a *Kaphapitta samsarga* condition.

2. Avarana janya

Thyroid hormone functions are similar to the functions of *Agni (Jatharagni, Dhatwagni and Bhootagni)* in our body causing transformations /tissue metabolism at various levels and thus maintaining the BMR. *Agni mandya* at any level due to *Kaphakara nidana* results in increased *Dhatugata mala sanchaya*, resulting in *Srotorodha* causing compromised *Dhatu saras* leading to both physical and mental features in hypothyroidism. *Vata* acts as a *Yogavahi* in aggravating the *Kapha dushti*. Thus, it is a *Vata-kapha samsarga* condition.

SAMPRAPTI GHATAKAS-

- *Dosha – Vata-Kapha*
- *Dushya – Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Shukra*
- *Agni – Jatharagnimandya, Dhatwagnimandya*
- *Srotodushti – Sanga, Vimargagamana*
- *Rogamarga – Bahya, Abhyantara, Madhyama*

CLINICAL PRESENTATION/ ROOPA

As discussed above, Hypothyroidism results in slowing down of the metabolic process. It usually results in a number of clinical signs and symptoms. The severity of the signs and symptoms depends on the degree of thyroid dysfunction and the time course of development of the disease. The symptoms of hypothyroid are very nonspecific. So, the common presentation of hypothyroidism along with ayurvedic perspective are tabulated below,

Signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism

Signs and symptoms	Dosha involved	Srotas involved
Fatigue, loss of energy	Vata	Rasavaha
Muscle pain, joint pain, weakness in the extremities	Vata	Asthivaha, Mansavaha
Dry skin	Vata	Rasavaha
Hair loss, coarse, brittle, straw-like hair, axillary hair, pubic hair	Vata	Asthivaha
Dull facial expression, depression, emotional liability, mental impairment, forgetfulness, impaired memory, inability to concentrate	Vata	Manovaha
Fullness in throat, hoariness	Kapha	Pranvaha
Decreased perspiration	Vata	Medovaha
Paresthesia, nerve entrapment syndromes	Vata	Rasa, meda, majja vaha srotas
Menstrual disturbance, impaired fertility	Vata	Artavaha, sukrovaha
Constipation	Vata	Purishvaha
Jaundice, pallor	Pitta	Raktavaha, Rasavaha
Lethargy, sleepiness	Kapha	Rasavaha
Weight gain	Kapha	Rasavaha
Decreased appetite	Kapha	Anavaha, rasavaha
Coarse facial features, periorbital puffiness, macroglossia	Kapha	Rasavaha
Goiter	Kapha	Rasavaha, mansavaha, medhovaha
Bradycardia, decreased systolic blood pressure and decreased diastolic blood pressure	Vata	Rasavaha, raktavaha
Hyporeflexia, ataxia	Vata	Rasavaha, raktavaha, manovaha

ANUKTA VYADHI-

Acharyas had vision of forthcoming new diseases; hence they explained the concept of understanding the new diseases i.e. Anukta Vyaadhi. Anukta Vyaadhis are the diseases which are neither elaborated or nor described in lexicons of Ayurveda. Such concepts are used to describe, understand, adopt and extend new things, such as identification of new hetu, linga and

aushadha based on existing principles of Ayurveda. To understand and appreciate the concept of anukta vyadhi, it is essential to consider basic concepts of ayurveda viz, dosha dhatu mala vijnana, agni, srotas, ojus and manas. Understanding the rasapanchaka of ahaara dravyas, is also helpful to know its effects on above factors which are responsible for the manifestation of disease. Though anukta vyadhis are not interpreted

by their names, the cluster of signs and symptoms and the underlying pathology can be understood by the basic principles stated above which not only helpful in understanding the pathogenesis but also gives a direction to think in terms of treatment for the same.

Due to innumerable diseases, the one who cannot label a disorder with some name should not feel ashamed because all disorders have no established footing by name. As disease cannot occur without involvement of doshas, hence even if the disease is not specifically mentioned, the intelligent clinician should treat the disease as manifested by the signs and symptoms of vitiated doshas. Hypothyroidism is one among them, which is a new disease also included in lifestyle disorders, which didn't possess any ayurvedic name and not found directly in Ayurvedic texts. Hence the signs and symptoms of this disease is to be understood first based on the contemporary science. by observing doshas, srotas involved, samprapti ghataks and treat thereby.

CONCLUSION-

The disease hypothyroidism has not described in classical Ayurvedic texts. So it's a anukta vyadhi. Based on its clinical presentation, samprapti (pathogenesis) can

be understood as follows,

Nidan- Santarpanottha, Dosha- Kapha- Vata, Dushya – Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Shukra, Samuthana- Amasaya, Adhithana- Sarva Sareera, Srotodushti – Sanga, Vimargagamana, Rogamarga – Bahya, Abhyantara, Madhyama, Agni mandya, Ama Rasa- Rakta.

We have come to an understanding that Hypothyroidism is primarily under activity of Agni. Due to various Hetus, there is diminished Agni at Dhatu level. There is Sanga in various Srotas. Hence, the related Dhatu functions are also impaired. Consequently, the Dhatusaras are compromised leading to both physical and mental symptoms. Hence, Hypothyroidism is mainly a Vata–Kapha samsarga condition in which Vata acts as a Yogavahi in aggravating Kapha dushti and the various systemic manifestations of the disease are due to Dosha-dushya samoorchana at various Dhatus. During the treatment of hypothyroidism all these pathogenetic factors have to be targeted with special attention to strength of body, mind, and Dosha.

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