

Short Communication

Management of spastic cerebral palsy through multiple Ayurveda treatment modalities

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Abstract

Background: Cerebral palsy (CP) is a leading cause of childhood disability affecting function and development. The global incidence of CP is 2:1000. It has been reported that children with CP and their caretaker have impaired health-related quality of life (QQL). Of the many types and subtypes of CP, none has any known cure. For a detailed description of the disease CP, though, there is no one to one correlation in Ayurvedic classics; it can be taken as Vata Vyadhi as far as its etiology and symptomatology are concerned. Aim: To assess the effect of certain Panchakarma procedures in the management of CP. Materials and Methods: Total 8 patients were registered and treated with 5 days of Udvartana, 5 days of Abhyanga followed by Sarvanga Swedana and then 8 days of Yoga Basti. The same course of treatment has been repeated for 3 times with an interval of 14 days. Ashtanga Ghrita was given during whole procedures as internal medication. Results of treatment were assessed with anthropometrical measurement, developmental milestone, Modified Ashworth Scale, spasm scale, reflex scale, and muscle power grading. Result: This Ayurvedic management shows good result in CP patients, especially by improving growth (height, weight, chest circumference) and development (head holding and sitting), reducing spasticity of left upper limb and muscle spasm. Conclusion: Multisystem approach is needed to improve the condition of the patient. Panchakarma along with internal medication should be given to improve all the facets of spastic CP. Yoga Basti acts by their own mode of action and can be used freely for such disease conditions.

Key words: Cerebral palsy, Panchakarma in pediatrics, Yoga Basti

Introduction

Disabled children are of great concern to the family as well as the society. Cerebral palsy (CP) is the leading cause of chronic disability in children, [11] making them physically and mentally handicapped and socially apart. The worldwide incidence of CP is approximately 2.5 cases per 1000 live births, [21] For India, it is estimated around 3 cases per 1000 live births, but being a developing country the actual figure may be much higher. Among all the types of CP, spastic CP is the most common type, occurring in 70–80% of all cases.

Cerebral palsy is an umbrella term encompassing a group of nonprogressive, noncontagious condition that causes motor impairment by abnormalities in movement, posture, and tone. [3] It

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can be caused by any of prenatal, natal, and postnatal factors and eventual pathology is any type of injury to the developing brain.

No effective treatment for the underlying brain damage has been formulated till today. All the sophisticated technology and highly expensive and complicated therapies of the medical research field have failed to find out a definite cure for the disease.

There is no exact correlation found for CP in Ayurvedic literature. While observing the etiology and clinical features, the predominance of *Vata* is obvious and put this disease entity nearer to *Vata* dominant conditions or *Vata Vyadhi*. While considering pathophysiology and management of Spastic CP it can be taken as *Avarana Janya Vata Vyadhi* (*Kaphavrita Vata*).

Causative factors like inappropriate *Ritu* (ovulation period-menstruation period), *Kshetra* (uterus), *Ambu* (nutrition) and *Bija* (sperm and ovum), [4] *Dauhrid Avamanana* [5] (negligence of urges during *Dauhrid*-stage of pregnant women), presence of *Garbhopaghatkarbhavas* (food and regimen of pregnant lady which cause fetal anomalies), [6] incompatible *Garbha Vriddhikara Bhava* (factors responsible

for fetal growth), [7] and improper following of Garbhini Paricharya [8] may have undesirable effect on the fetus in utero. [9] Moreover Akala Pravahana (inappropriate force) during labor, Shiromarmabhighata (head injury), defect in Prana Pratyagamana (neonatal resuscitation) process, Ulbaka (a type of disease), Nabhi Nadi Vikara (diseases of umbilical cord), Graha Roga (infectious diseases), improper Shishu Paricharya, etc., may play role as causative factor, during and after birth. These hamper normal growth and development of the child and cause many diseases, deformities, and even death.

In the previous research works, it is proved that internal medication along with Panchakarma procedures is more effective in comparison with only oral medications. [10] Hence, in the present study, Panchakarma procedures like *Udvartana*, *Abhyanga*, *Swedana*, and *Yoga Basti* are taken along with internal medication (*Ashtanga Ghrita*) were undertaken to evaluate the effect of multiple Ayurveda treatment modalities in the management of spastic type of CP.

Materials and Methods

Selection of patients

Prediagnosed cases of spastic CP, attending IPD of Kaumarbhritya Department, IPGT, and RA Hospital, Jamnagar were registered, after taking informed consent from parents/guardian, for the present clinical trial. The study was approved by Institutional Ethics Committee (PGT/7-A/Ethics/2010-11/1858; Dated 1.9.10).

Inclusion criteria

- Children with spastic CP of 3-10 years of both sex
- Children with developmental disability of both physical and mental (delayed milestones).

Exclusion criteria

- Children with major congenital disorders and with other types of CP like hypotonic, dyskinetic and athetoid
- Children with other diseases such as diabetes, acute infection, etc.

Posology

Internal medication

Dose of Ashtanga Ghrita was determined by using the reference of Sharngdhara Samhita^[11] after converting the ancient unit of measurement, that is, Masha into grams. Aushadha Kala was morning and Anupana (adjuvant) was Koshna Jala (luke warm water). Ashtanga Ghrita^[12] or 58 days along with the procedures, except the days in which Basti was given.

Panchakarma

- *Udvartana*: With lukewarm Yava and Kullattha Churna (20 min) for 5 days
- Abhyanga: With lukewarm Bala Taila (20 min) followed by Sarvanga Nadi Sweda (20 min) for 5 days
- Yoga Basti for 8 days, in which 1 Anuvasana Basti in beginning and then 3 set of Anuvasana and Asthapana Basti followed by 1 Anuvasana Basti at last were given. Anuvasana Basti was given with Bala Taila and Madhutailika Basti^[13] was given as Asthapana Basti. The

dose^[14] of *Basti Dravya* for *Aasthapana Basti* are depicted in Table 1. *Anuvasana* was given ¹/₄ of the quantity of *Aasthapana Basti*.^[15]

Such three courses were repeated with the interval of 14 days between each course. Total duration of the treatment is 82 days. Test drugs were procured from the Pharmacy, Gujarat Ayurved University, Jamnagar.

Criteria for assessment

Anthropometrical measurement, developmental milestone, Modified Ashworth Scale (MAS),^[16] spasm scale to assess intensity of spasm, manual ability classification system (MACS),^[17] reflex scale to assess deep tendon reflex, and muscle power grading^[18] were taken as assessment criteria to observe the effect of therapy.

Assessment of total effect of therapy

Maximum Improvement: >75% improvement.

Moderate Improvement: >50–75% improvement.

Mild Improvement: >25–50% improvement.

No Improvement: ≤25% improvement.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis was done by using student paired t-test.

Observations and Results

Total 8 patients were registered in this study and 2 were dropped out, 6 patients completed the course of treatment. Out of 8 patients, 6 were quadriplegic and 2 were hemiplegic.

Effect of therapy on developmental milestone

It shows significant results (P < 0.05) in assessment parameters of head holding and sitting, while the rest of all parameters have shown insignificant (P > 0.05) results [Table 2].

Effect of therapy on anthropometrical measurement

It shows the significant result (\dot{P} < 0.05) in anthropometrical parameters, that is, length, weight, and chest circumference; whereas head circumference and mid-arm circumference have shown insignificant results [Table 3].

Effect of therapy on motor system components

It shows significant results (P < 0.05) in Left upper limb spasticity and all four limb spasm. Insignificant improvements

Table 1: Age-wise dose for Asthapana Basti

Age (in years) Prasruta Tola

3 1½ 12

3	1½	12	144
4	2	16	192
5	21/2	20	240
6	3	24	288
7	31/2	28	336
8	4	32	384
9	41/2	36	432
10	5	40	480

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were found in muscle power, spasticity grading (MAS) in rest of group of muscles, reflex scale, and MACS [Table 4].

Discussion

Delayed development of gross and fine motor function may be due to a problem in normal function of Vata (Pravartaka Cheshtanamucchavchanam). Hence, to achieve results in developmental disorders, function of Vata (normal physiology) should come to normal. Here, Ashtanga Ghrita might have worked on central nervous system (CNS) by crossing BBB (Blood Brain Barrier-Majja Dhara Kala) because of its lipophylic property, thus stimulating higher mental functions (Medha, Smriti and Buddhi). Udvartana had given a well platform for further procedures like Abhyanga, Swedana and Basti by removing Avarana and Srotorodha. [19] Abhyanga and Swedana caused Dosha Gati from Shakha to Koshtha, which helped in removing vitiated Dosha through Basti. Finally, Basti helped to accomplish the effect of Shodhana. Thus by the combined effect of total therapeutic measures, Avarana was removed, Mastulunga Majja got nourishment, Vata came to normalcy, and hence the proper development of milestones were achieved.

Language is more of the function of *Udana Vayu* (*Vaka Pravrutti Prayatnorja*), which is normally situated at *Uraha Pradesha*, ^[20] insignificant result in this study suggests that *Basti* along with other Panchakarma procedures do not show complete correction in the function of vitiated *Udana Vayu* within study period. As this disease entity comes under *Asadhya Vyadhi*, the study period may not be enough to show the effect on language. Individualistic *Dosha* oriented practices like *Aushadha Grahana Kala* (*Sayam Bhojana Pashchat* for *Udana Vayu*), ^[21] *Swasthana*

Table 2: Effect of therapy on developmental milestone (*n*=6)

Assessment	Mean score			±SD	±SE	t	P
parameters	BT	ΑT	Χ				
Head holding	3.16	2.33	0.83	0.98	0.40	2.07	< 0.05
Sitting	4.16	3.5	0.66	0.51	0.21	3.16	< 0.05
Standing	5.83	5.33	0.5	0.83	0.34	1.46	>0.05
Fine motor	5.16	4.83	0.33	0.51	0.21	1.58	>0.05
Language	4.5	4.16	0.33	0.51	0.21	1.58	>0.05
Personal and social	5.67	5	0.67	1.21	0.49	1.35	>0.05

AT: After treatment, BT: Before treatment, X: Difference, SD: Standard deviation, SE: Standard error

Table 3: Effect of therapy on anthropometrical measurement (*n*=6)

Components	Mean score			±SD	±SE	t	P
	ВТ	ΑT	X				
Length	82.83	84.33	1.5	0.83	0.34	-4.39	< 0.01
Weight	9.33	10.45	1.12	0.54	0.22	-5.04	< 0.01
MAC	13.5	14	0.5	0.54	0.22	-2.23	>0.05
HC	43.66	44.33	0.66	0.81	0.33	-2	>0.05
CC	49.16	50.5	1.33	0.81	0.33	-4	< 0.05

MAC: Mid arm circumference, HC: Head circumference, CC: Chest circumference; AT: After treatment; BT: Before treatment; X: Difference, SD: Standard deviation, SE: Standard error

Dosha Chikitsa, etc., might give better results in this aspect.

Personal and social development is more of the function of *Prana Vaya*^[22] (*Buddhi*, *Indriya*, *Chittadhruka*). Insignificant result in this milestone suggests that the treatment protocol did not show effect to the persistent damaged *Murdha*. This milestone starts to develop in early infantile age, so the correction of this milestone requires early and prolonged intervention.

Growth is achieved by nourishment of Rasadi Dhatus. Here Ashtanga Ghrita might cause Brumhana by Snigdha (unctuous) and Guru Guna (quality), Udvartana opened the minutes channels and improved blood and lymphatic circulation, Abhyanga provided nourishment by its property like Snigdha, Mridu, Bahala, Pichchhila which are told as properties of Brimhana Dravya. [23] Swedana caused excretion of Mala (waste metabolites). Snigdha Basti (Anuvasana with Bala Taila) is told to have Brumhana effect. [24]

Spasticity is characterized by increased resistance by passive stretch, velocity dependent, and asymmetric about joints (i.e. greater in flexor muscle at the elbow and the extensor muscle at the knee). This may happen due to Avarana of Vata, wherein, due to Avarana, Vayu cannot perform its normal function, that is, normal movement of joints (Pravartaka Cheshtanam). Initially, Udvartana helped in reduction of vitiated Avarita Kapha by its Ruksha and Srotoshodhana property. Once Avarana is removed, the aim of treatment is to pacify vitiated Vata. Vayu resides in Sparshnendriya, which is located in Tvacha, Abhyanaga is quoted as Tvachya, so Abhyanaga might work directly on Vata to bring it back to normalcy. Basti acts on CNS by stimulating ENS (enteric nervous system). [26]

Spasm was reduced significantly, which may be due to Shamana of Vata Guna like Chala and Shita by virtue of Ashtanga Ghrita, Abhyanga with Bala Taila, Bashpa Sweda, and Mrudu Shodhana Aasthapana Basti.

Total effect of therapy

In majority of patients, total effect was found near 10–15%. As this disorder is incurable, this percentage of improvement also helps the patient to improve QOL. Treatment of this kind of condition is just like a pyramid, if we are able to make small improvement in an earlier age than it will reflect its major benefit in later age in the form of developing skills.

Previously it was believed that neurons do not repair or rejuvenate after any injury, but the new concept of neuroplasticity says that CNS have the ability to repair their neurons by axonal sprouting to take over the function of damaged neurons.^[27] This improvement in patients also supports the concept of Neuroplasticity.

Hence, it is quite irrational to say "no improvement" (<25%) by following standard criteria for assessing the total effect of therapy.

Conclusion

The selected Ayurvedic treatment modality is effective in relieving the signs and symptoms and thus reducing the disability in children with Spastic CP. Available research data

Table 4: Effect of therapy on motor system components (*n*=6)

Components of motor system		Mean score			±SE	t	P
	ВТ	AT	Х				
Muscle power-left upper	3.16	2.83	0.33	0.51	0.21	1.58	>0.05
Right upper	3	2.83	0.16	0.40	0.16	1	>0.05
Left lower	3.5	3.33	0.16	0.40	0.16	1	>0.05
Right lower	3.16	3.16	0	0	0	0	>0.05
MAS-left upper	3.16	2.5	0.66	0.51	0.21	3.16	< 0.05
Right upper	2.83	2.5	0.33	0.51	0.21	1.58	>0.05
Left lower	3	2.5	0.5	0.54	0.22	2.23	>0.05
Right lower	3	2.5	0.5	0.54	0.22	2.23	>0.05
Spasm scale-left upper	3	2	1	0.89	0.36	2.73	< 0.05
Right upper	3	2	1	0.89	0.36	2.73	< 0.05
Left lower	3	2	1	0.89	0.36	2.73	< 0.05
Right lower	3	2	1	0.89	0.36	2.73	< 0.05
Reflex scale-left biceps	1	1	0	0	0	0	>0.05
Right biceps	0.83	0.83	0	0	0	0	>0.05
Left knee	1.83	1.83	0	0	0	0	>0.05
Right knee	1.83	1.83	0	0	0	0	>0.05

AT: After treatment, BT: Before treatment, X: Difference, SD: Standard deviation, SE: Standard error, MAS: Modified Ashworth Scale

and references are not enough to explain the mode of action of Ashtanga Ghrita in precise way. Panchakarma with Yoga Basti are effective in improving growth (height, weight, CC) and development (head holding and sitting), reducing spasticity of left upper limb, and spasm in patients.

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हिन्दी सारांश

स्पास्टिक सेरेब्रल पाल्सी की चिकित्सा में विविध आयुर्वेदिक चिकित्सा पद्धतीयों का अध्ययन

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विश्व स्वास्थ्य संघटन (WHO) के मुताबिक विश्व मे 90 प्रतिशत जनसंख्या और भारत में पूरी जनसंख्या में से ३.८ प्रतिशत को किसी न किसी तरह की शारीरिक अशक्तता है। उनमें से लगभग 9५-२० प्रतिशत बच्चे सेरेब्रल पाल्सी से पीडित होते है। निर्धारित आंकड़ो के अनुसार भारत में हजार जन्म लेते बच्चो में तीन बच्चे इस रोग से पीडित होते है और विकासशील देश होने के कारण अपेक्षित आंकड़ा और भी अधिक हो सकता है। आधुनिक टॅक्नोलोजी और विकसित नवजात शिशु परिचर्या के होते हुए भी बढता हुआ यह आंकड़ा एक बड़ी चिंता का विषय है। जहाँ तक चिकित्सा और बचाव के तौर को देखा जाय तो आज तक कोई भी संतोषजनक मापदंड विकसित नहीं हुआ है। प्रस्तुत शोध आयुर्वेद चिकित्सा की उपादेयता का सकारात्मक परिकल्पना पर आधारित है। इस शोध में ८ रुग्णो को पंजीकृत किया गया, अष्टांग घृत को आभ्यंतर औषध के तौर पे ६८ दिनो के लिये अन्य पंचकर्म विधि जैसे कि उदवर्तन, अभ्यंग, स्वेदन, और योग बस्ति के साथ दिया गया। प्रस्तुत शोध में वृद्धि (वज़न, उंचाई एवं चेस्ट सर्कंफेरन्स), विकास (हेड होल्डिंग, सिटिंग एवं फाईन मोटर), बाए हाथो कि स्पास्टिसिटि एवं स्पासम मे अच्छा सुधार पाया गया। यह व्याधि असाध्य है लेकिन आयुर्वेदिक चिकित्सा विज्ञान इन बच्चों के जीवन गुणवत्ता में सुधार और सर्वोत्तम जीवन प्रदान करके और अच्छी दिशा दिखा सकता है।