

UNDERSTANDING OF SWINE FLU THROUGH AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT:

Influenza commonly referred as flu, is an acute infectious disease caused by RNA virus of family 'Orthomyxoviridae'. It is characterized by fever, coryza, sore throat and myalgia etc. It spreads around the world in seasonal epidemics resulting in death of millions annually. The causative agent viral influenza type A is known for causing endemic and pandemic. The further subdivision of type A virus on the basis of antigenic variation H₁N₁ is causing global concern as a potential pandemic threat. It causes Swine Flu, which spreads the disease in humans through pig. In severe cases patient can die due to respiratory attack. In Allopathic medical science only supporting treatments like antipyretics, antivirals, antibiotics to control secondary infections is there. In *Ayurveda*, on the basis of its clinical picture it can be co-related with *vata-kaphaj jwara*, and for which much emphasis is given in prevention, control and treatment of it. In the present article, the methods of prevention and management of swine flu is described in detail.

Key Words: Influenza, Type A virus, Antigen H₁N₁, Swine Flu, *Vata-Kaphaj Jwara*.

INTRODUCTION:

Influenza occurs in pandemics every 10-15 years due to major antigenic mutation. Epidemics tend to occur at interval of 2-3 years in case of influenza A. At present three types of influenza virus are circulating in world viz. A (H1N1), A (H3N2), and A (H5N1) causing outbreak globally for Influenza endemic and pandemic [1]. The influenza A virus have 2 distinct surface antigen – the haemagglutinin (H) and the Neuraminidase (N) antigen. The H antigen initiates infection following attachment of the virus to susceptible cells. The N antigen is responsible for release of virus from the infected cell. The influenza A virus is unique as it frequently subject to antigenic variation. A sudden antigenic shift appears to result from genetic recombination of human with animal or avian virus, causing a major epidemic or pandemic involving all age groups [2]. H1N1 is a strain of influenza A virus, also known as Swine Flu, which is causing influenza in pigs. But 2009 strain is so virulent that spread flu in humans through pig to human and human to human transmission.

In August 2010, WHO declared swine flu pandemic officially. Cases of swine flu reported in India are > 25,000- positive test case and 1370 death till march 2015 [3]. It is characterized by fever, chills, decreased appetite, nasal secretion, cough, fatigue, headache, bodyache and sorethroat. In general, the majorities (about 90-95%) of people who get the disease recover with no problems but pregnant individuals, children under 2 years of age, young adults, and individuals with any immune compromise or debilitation are likely to have a worse prognosis. Complications of swine flu may

resemble severe viral pneumonia or the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), sinus and ear infections, asthma exacerbations, bronchitis or even death [4]. Active infection with swine influenza can only be diagnosed by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assays, including sub-typing and further characterization by other special PCR assays [5]. Prevention includes vaccines viz. flu shot and nasal spray flu vaccine [6]. Treatment includes use of antipyretics, antivirals, antibiotics and personal hygiene.

In *Ayurvedic* perspective, the swine flu comes under *Aupsargik roga* (Infectious disease), which spreads through direct contact of infected person's sputum, sneezing, etc. The causes of infection are elaborated in detail in *Sushrut samhita*, where the coitus, touch, breathing and having food together, sharing garments, bedding of infected person etc. can lead to infectious disease like fever, leprosy, tuberculosis, conjunctivitis etc [7]. In *Ayurveda*, a disease is the product of an imbalance in the body and mental elements that reduce the body's resistance to diseases. If the imbalance is corrected and the body's defense mechanisms are strengthened by herbal formulas, lifestyle changes, and

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diet, then the body will resist a disease^[8]. The causes of imbalance in body humor as *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* & mental elements are improper dietary regimen habit & excessive stress, anxiety etc. respectively. These factors vitiate the *Dosha* which spreads in body channels and lodged where they get *Kha-vaigunya* or *srotodusti*. If the body is protected with proper habits of diet and regimen, regular purification of body in appropriate season, follow of *dincharya*, *ratricharya* and *ritucharya* routine, intake of *rasayana aushadhies* (immuno-modulating medicines) than the body immune system fight against the causative agents to eliminate them from body.

REVIEW OF SWINE FLU:

Understanding of swine flu in terms of Ayurveda

The *ayurveda* pays much emphasis on epidemics in terms of '*Janpadodwansh* context'^[9]. The causes of it are *vikruti*(vitiating) of 4 important factors viz. *Vayu*(air), *Jala*(water), *Desh*(earth), *Kala*(season)^[10]. The vitiating in above four can lead to same disease even in different persons of various *prakriti*. The general treatment of *janpadodwansh* is use of *panchkarma* therapy, use of *Rasayan*, and follow of *Achar rasayan* (code of conduct)^[11].

Clinical features of swine flu in terms of Ayurveda

The symptoms of swine flu as fever, coryza, bodyache, dyspnoea etc. resemble with the *Vata-Kaphaj jwara* in *Ayurveda*. Here *acharya* mentioned chills, heaviness in body, fatigue, joint pain, headache, cold, cough, fever of medium grade etc in *Vata-Kaphaj jwara* (a type of *dwandaja jwara* due to vitiating of two *dosha*)^[12].

Etiopathogenesis of swine flu in Ayurvedic view

The etiology of *dwandaja jwara* is quoted as- faulty food habits as excessive fasting or intake of wrong quantity of food or at wrong time or before the digestion of previously take food, use of contaminated water or poisonous food, improper intake of *panchkarma* therapy, reside in unpleasant and harmful environment, unnatural smell or vapours intake etc^[13].

The causative factors if injudiciously followed by the patient, than first they lead to do vitiating of *jatharagni* (digestive fire), the vitiating *agni* leads to improper digestion of food taken and formation of *Ama* rasa, which circulate in the *dhatu* (tissue). This vitiating *annarasa* is not able to nourish the *dhatu*, so *dhatu kshaya* occurs and the immunity of the body decreases. Further due to polluted air, water and contaminated food intake or breathing in infected environment can cause the occurrence of *aupsargik roga* like *jwara*, *sosha* etc. in the form of Swine flu. The lack of immunity is the type of *sroto-dusti*, which facilitate the *dosha-*

dushya sammurchana in *Prana-vaha srotas* resulting in symptoms like- dyspnoea, chest pain etc^[14].

Treatment of Swine Flu through Ayurveda

The treatment can be divided in following steps:-

1. *Nidana Parivarjana*
2. *Samana chikitsa*
3. *Shodhana chikitsa*
4. *Rasayana prayoga*
5. *Pranayam, yoga* or meditation

The prime objective of *Ayurveda* is protection of health. It can be fulfilled by following the various methods mentioned by peers. Avoidance of causative factors is the best way to escape a disease. Follow of daily regimen, night regimen, seasonal regimen, *achar rasayan* etc. are the keys to be healthy. The daily exercise including *pranayam, yoga, meditation, healthy food habits* etc. improve the immunity and strengthen the body to fight against various pathogens.

If the patient becomes victim of swine flu, than treatment includes -:

In *Kwath- Jwarhara Kashaya, Giloy Kwath, Kirat-Tiktadi Kasaya, Kantkari Kwath, Sirishadi Kwath*

In *Churna- Sudarshana Churna, Ajmodadi Churna, Sitopaladi Churna, Trikatu Churna*

Rasa Bhashm – Tribhuvan Kirti Rasa, Abhraka Bhashm, Laxmivilas Rasa, Kaphaketu Rasa

Immune-Modulators – *Giloy Sat, Regular Use of Rasayan as Chayavan Prash, Vyaghri Haritaki, Vasa-Awleha* etc.

Shodhan treatment includes seasonal bio-purification through *vaman, virechana* for removal of vitiating *dosha* from body. The daily health protection is maintained through body massage, and steam shower etc.

DISCUSSION:

The swine flu is one among the life threatening epidemic which can be prevented and managed by *Ayurvedic* means. It resembles with *Vata-Kaphaj jwara* including the features of *pran-vaha sroto dusti*, so for the treatment of that, proper purification of body time to time by *Vamana* or *Virechana* could proved to be highly effective. As it not only removes the causative element from the body but it boost the immune system and facilitate the fair absorption of *Ayurveda* medicines. The herbal medicines like *sudarshana churna, tribhuvan kirti rasa, jwarhara kwath* etc. pacify the symptoms like fever, cold and cough because they are *vata kapha shamak* in nature. The *ama* due to indigestion can be digested through *deepana pachana* medicines as *Ajmodadi churna* etc. The *vyaghri haritaki, vasa-*

awaleha helps in respiratory ailments. The *chayavan prash* enhances the immunity if taken regularly.

Mode of action of Shaman, Shodhan & Rasayana Chikitsa

The medicines primarily used in such conditions are the formulation of various herbal drugs viz. *shunthi* (*Zingiber officinalis*), *pippali* (*Piper longum*), *marich* (*Piper nigrum*), *vansalochan* (*Bambusa arundinaceae*), *mulethi* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), *lavang* (*Syzygium aromaticum*), *dalchini* (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*), *haridra* (*Curcuma longa*), *vasa* (*Adhatoda vasaca*), *sudarshana* (*Crinum latifolium*), *guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) etc, having wide spectrum of therapeutic activity like antiallergic and antihistaminic properties, thus subside the inflammation and allergic reactions to control acute respiratory infections^[15]. The medicines like *laxmivilasa rasa* is a potent medicine for *kshaya*, *kasa*, *shwasa*, *jawara*, *pandu* etc^[16]. The *tribhuvankirti rasa* is the drug of choice for all kind of *jawara*^[17]. The biopurification procedures help to eliminate the vitiated *doshas*, improves metabolism and biofire, provides protection of health, intelligence, strength, delay the aging process^[18]. It is also a fact that natural purification treatment eliminate environmental toxins and pesticide from body^[19] thus helping in restoration of health and acquiring strong immunity due fight against antigens dominating in that environment. The shodhan therapy is not the local purification of one organ rather it is a process of systemic cleansing of whole body channels, organ even the each cell of the body^[20].

The *Ayurveda* emphasizes the promotion of health with a concept of strengthening host defense against diseases. The concept of immuno-stimulation through *Ayurveda* has been used successfully in the treatment of immunocompromised conditions. That is achieved through the use of *rasayana* medicines which are believed to slow down the aging process (*jara*) and provide a defense against diseases (*vyadhi*). *Rasayanas* improve the host resistance of an individual, helping to prevent aging and diseases^[21].

CONCLUSION:

In *Ayurveda*, the occurrence of any disease is the result of vitiation in *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Srotas*. To maintain the good health, it is necessary to keep them in equilibrium by adopting right way of diet regimen, lifestyle, seasonal bio-purification, regular exercise and use of *rasayana*. By following these methods one can be escaped from this epidemic. Further if someone suffers from the disease, than there are various herbal formulations to control this fatal disease.

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