



Role of Douching (Yoni Prakshalan) with Herbal decoction in Leucorrhoea

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Received: 21.06.2015

Revised: 25.08.2015

Accepted: 12.09.2015

Abstract

Leucorrhoea is a very common problem faced by women. Leucorrhoea is defined as a whitish or yellowish discharge of mucus from the vagina. It is often accompanied by other symptoms like feeling of weakness, pain in the back and calves, pruritis on and around the vulva, thighs etc. There are many causes of leucorrhoea, the usual one being oestrogen imbalance. The other pathological causes which increase vaginal secretions are bacterial, fungal infections or STDs etc. Most women are highly embarrassed by this problem and also avoid discussing the problem with their medical health care providers, which is why its treatment could be a bit of a challenge. Many women also avoid and show negligence in taking oral medication. Douching with herbal decoctions is very effective in curing physiological as well as pathological leucorrhoea. Yoni Prakshalan is an Ayurvedic therapy of cleaning vaginal area with medicated decoctions or oils. It is seen to be quite effective in leucorrhoea even in those caused by inflammation, infections etc.

Keywords: Shweta Pradar, Yoni Prakshalan

Introduction

Leucorrhoea, also known as vaginal discharge is a very common condition that has been experienced by most women of all ages, at some time or the other. It can be quite an uncomfortable condition, which leads to symptoms such as foul smelling vaginal discharge, fatigue, backache etc. The vaginal discharge plays an important role in maintaining a healthy vagina. The secretions are designed to flush out bacteria and other tiny organisms to prevent infection. The normal vaginal fluid is watery, white in colour, non-odorous with pH around 4.0. Microscopically, it contains squamous epithelial cells and a few bacteria. Leucorrhoea is a symptom of various gynaecological conditions. The excessive discharge may be physiological, pathological infective or non-infective. Most women are highly embarrassed by this problem and prefer to opt for home remedies instead of consulting the problem with their medical health care providers. Douching with herbal decoctions provide significant relief in leucorrhoea.

Leucorrhoea –Disease Review

Leucorrhoea is defined as a whitish or yellowish discharge of mucus from the vagina. It is often

accompanied by other symptoms like feeling of weakness, pain in the back and calves, pruritis around the vulva, thighs etc.

There are two types of leucorrhoea, physiological and pathological. The physiological leucorrhoea is mainly due to oestrogen stimulation, which is a natural defence mechanism of the vagina to maintain its chemical balance and to preserve the flexibility of the vaginal tissue. There are many causes of pathological leucorrhoea as it usually shows symptoms in association with other illness. The most common and important causes include hormone imbalance, poor nutrition and anaemia, improper hygienic conditions, sexually transmitted diseases, use of contraceptives, sprays, lubricants or jellies and bacterial, fungal or parasitic infection of genital tract. Bacterial, fungal and viral infections change the environment in the vagina and make it alkaline. An alkaline media results in formation of abnormal vaginal discharge. Infection of vaginal mucosa by *Trichomonas vaginalis* and *Candida albicans* is the most common cause of leucorrhoea. The menstrual cycle also affects the vaginal environment i.e. pH of vagina. Increased wetness and clear thick discharge is seen around mid-cycle. The pH balance of the vagina fluctuates during the cycle and is the least acidic on the days just prior to and during menstruation. Infections, therefore, are most common at this time. The factors like increasing age, illiteracy, low socioeconomic status,

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high parity, induced abortion, poor hygiene and place and method of delivery are all contributory for the occurrence of vaginal discharge. Leucorrhoea is not a disease, but a symptom of so many diseases. Sometimes this symptom becomes so severe and it overshadows the other symptoms of actual disease and patients come to O.P.D. for the treatment of only this symptom.

Ayurvedic aspect of Leucorrhoea

In ancient Ayurvedic texts, all gynaecological disorders come under the heading of *Yonivyapada*. For abnormal white vaginal discharges, the word *Shweta Pradar* has been described in Ayurvedic texts like *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *Bhava Prakash*, *Yoga Ratnakara* and in commentary on *Charaka Samhita* by *Chakrapani*. *Ayurveda* is enriched with the knowledge of gynaecological disorders related to vaginal discharges which may be blood stained or pinkish, mucoid, purulent, white-thin, thick, curdy or watery. In Ayurveda *Shweta pradara* is a condition characterized by white vaginal discharges not associated with pain, burning sensation, thus it seems to be the description of leucorrhoea. The patient feels weak, run down, has pain in the back and calves, itching on and around vulva, thighs. According to Ayurveda, *Shweta Pradara* is a *Kaphaja* disorder of female genital organ because *Kapha dosha* is main causative factor for any discharge. *Kapha* gets aggravated due to its own vitiating factors, produces white and painless vaginal discharges due to dominance of its liquid property by vitiating the *Rasadhatu* of reproductive system in the presence of causative factors such as excessive coitus, abortion, faulty lifestyle and dietetics during menstruation along with non-cleanliness of vagina. Vaginal discharge is a symptom which is found in all *Yonivyapads* (Gynecological disorders) those are arising due to vitiation of *Kapha* and *Vatakapha*

Concept of Yoni Prakshalan (Douching)

Douching refers to vaginal irrigation, the rinsing of the vagina by introducing a stream of water or medicated solutions into the vagina with a help of a device. In Ayurveda, *Yoni Prakshalan* is a procedure which is quite similar to douching. It is very effective in curing leucorrhoea. *Yoni Prakshalan* is a method of Ayurvedic cleansing of

the vaginal area with *kwatha* (decoctions) and medicated oils. *Yoni* means female genital and *Prakshalan* means washing or bathing. This procedure is prescribed for gynaecological disorders, inflammations, erosions, infertility. It also provides strength to vaginal muscles. In addition to treatment of pathological conditions it can also be used as a general cleansing measure of genital organs to avoid bacterial or fungal infections.

Drug Review

Contents of decoction for Douching (*Yoni Prakshalan*)

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|---|---------|
| 1. <i>Azadirachta indica</i> (Margosa) leaves | - 30gm |
| 2. <i>Curcuma longa</i> (Turmeric) | - 10gm |
| 3. <i>Potassium alum</i> (Alum) | - 2gm |
| 4. Water | - 2 ltr |

Procedure of making decoction

1. Place the water into the utensil made from non – reactive metal such as stainless- steel.
2. Add the contents in the amount mentioned above to the water.
3. Turn on the heat to medium .Simmer the decoction until the volume of water is reduced by one -fourth.
4. Remove from heat and strain off the materials.

Procedure of douching (*Yoni Prakshalan*)

1. Explain to patient the nature and necessity of the treatment.
2. Let patient void first before giving the douche.
3. Patient should be placed in the dorsal recumbent position on the bedpan.
4. Position and drape patient. Flush external genitalia.
5. A device called douche can be used to introduce a stream of decoction into the vagina
6. Alternatively, it can be done using a 50ml syringe and a simple rubber catheter.
7. Around 50ml decoction is taken in a syringe.
8. Syringe is attached with catheter. Insert the catheter gently downward backward in the vagina
9. Decoction is pushed in the vagina. When the decoction comes out, again the decoction is
10. Around 250ml decoction is used for one sitting.
11. Two such sittings should be done per day.



Mode of action of drugs

1. *Azadirachta indica* (Margosa leaves)

Biologically active principles isolated from different parts of the plant include: Azadirachtin, meliacin, gedunin, nimbidin, nimbolides, salanin, nimbin, valassin, meliacin. Biologically most active compound is azadirachtin. Due to astringent property of Margosa, it helps in cessation of vaginal discharges. According to various studies done on *Azadirachta Indica* it's a proven anthelmintic, antifungal, antibacterial, anti-viral, insecticidal, analgesic & anti-inflammatory, thus beneficial in Leucorrhoea (*Shweta Pradar*).

2. Haridra (*Curcuma longa*)

Curcuma longa (turmeric) has a long history of use in Ayurvedic medicine as a treatment for inflammatory conditions. Turmeric constituents include the three curcuminoids: curcumin, diferuloylmethane, demethoxycurcumin, and bisdemethoxycurcumin, as well as volatile oils (tumerone, atlantone, and zingiberone), sugars, proteins, and resins. Turmeric has anti-microbial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, which have been attributed to curcumin, thus, helping in leucorrhoea caused by bacterial/fungal infections and cures chronic cervicitis, chronic pelvic inflammation etc.

3. Sphatika (Potash alum)

Chemical Formula- $K_2SO_4 \cdot Al_2(SO_4)_3 \cdot 24H_2O$

It is an astringent, thus help in cessation of excess vaginal discharges. It is an anti-septic and has an anti-inflammatory action.

Conclusion

Shweta pradar (Leucorrhoea) is one of the major problems encountered in practice. It's a common complaint in reproductive age and women are less

likely to seek treatment for the morbidity which can have bad effects on their general and reproductive health. Treatment of *Shwetapradara* is mainly based on the use of drugs which are having astringent and *Kapha* subsidying property. In addition to this the contents present in the decoction have anti-inflammatory and anti-septic properties. Therefore, the use of decoction mentioned above for Douching (*Yoni Prakshalan*) is quite effective and gives a complete relief to the sufferer. However, there is a strong need for creating community awareness about health care facilities and instil self concern in women for their own health needs.

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