



Case Report

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Langhana (Fasting), a potent measure for improving visual acuity: A case report

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ABSTRACT

The importance of Langhana (Fasting) in treating refractive errors is always under looked. Special importance has been emphasized on various healthy effects of langhana in Ayurveda. This is a case report of a child of 9 years with a diagnosed case of astigmatism (refractive error) both eyes who gained 50 % unaided visual acuity within one week of langhana (fasting). Langhana should be considered as a potent measure in treating refractive errors, where the underlying cause is a srotorodha (block to the channels of nourishment) caused by consumption of abhishyandi dravyas (materials of such kind which brings blockage).

Keywords: Langhana (Fasting), Refractive errors, Astigmatism, Visual Acuity.

INTRODUCTION

Refractive errors, especially astigmatism, are on a very high side in school going children in urban population. The main cause for this, from an Ayurveda point of view, is the improper nourishment pattern of children. Excessive oily, cold, heavy and untimely food has become a part of their lifestyle. These basic causes along with exclusively dedicated school hours and home works with time bound pattern increases the work load of eyes. Net result is sprouting up of refractive errors. Langhana (fasting) which is a most simple but potent tool is always under looked in the case of treatment of eye disorders. It may be because of ignorance of its healthy effects or due to disbelief on account of lack of evidences. Hence, this case is reported as an evidence base for highlighting the tremendous effect of langhana on improving visual acuity.

CASE REPORT

A 9 years old female child, a diagnosed case of high astigmatism, presented to our institute with a hope of getting ayurveda treatment for her eyes to remove the spectacles she was wearing. On examination, her unaided visual acuity was found to be 6/60 LE and 6/60 RE (20% visual acuity) ^[1], which according her guardian was constant since a year. Her anterior segments of both eyes were normal. Dilated fundus examination of both eyes was performed which did not show any pathological changes. Her PH was 6/18 LE and 6/12 RE. On interrogation with her guardian, it was revealed that she was fed boiled and cooled undiluted buffalo milk twice a day; morning and at night. She had a habit of drinking cold water too.

She was prescribed Saptamruta Lauha Tab 1 bd and Agnitundi Vati 1 bd on empty stomach one hour before breakfast and dinner. She was strictly advised not to be fed with milk and cold water and was asked to give only warm water for 1 week and was advised for review.

After 1 week, on review, she had a 50% improvement in her visual acuity. Her vision improved to 6/18 RE and 6/18 LE (70% visual acuity) ^[1]. There was no considerable improvement for PH. PH RE became 6/12 and PH LE remained the same. This considerable improvement was due to the effect of stoppage of buffalo milk and cold water, and initiation of Saptamruta lauha and Agnitundi vati, which acted as langhana here.

DISCUSSION

This case report supports the notion that buffalo milk is guru, i.e. very heavy to digest, slows down the digestion process and is maha abhishyandi. It is agni nashakara (deranges the digestive capacity) in nature ^[2]. It when drunk especially at night creates srotorodha (blockage) to the physiological channels of nourishment, the rasavaha srotas, to eyes. The effect was augmented (along with sheeta (cold) nature of buffalo milk) and by drinking cold water (having sheeta guna) which created sthambhana (physiological

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reduction) in the movement of nourishments to eyes. When srotorodha happens to the nourishment channels to eyes, they do not perform their function perfectly. In the case of eyes, aksha patava (Clarity of vision or visual acuity) is the karma (function) of vata [3]. So, when srotorodha happens to the nourishment channels of eyes, its karma, i.e. aksha patava gets heena, in other words, unaided visual acuity gets reduced. Here, as only rasa is affected, no anatomical change is observed. In such condition, where vata has karma heenatva or kopa due to the srotorodha from abhishyandi and guru dravya, the best mode of treatment is langhana [4]. Upavasa is one form of langhana. Upavasa has two meanings: total abstinence from diet and controlled diet [5]. Here, diet control was advised by avoiding the heavy, cold and abhishyandi buffalo milk and cold water.

The effect of langhana is augmented by supplementing Agnitundi vati and Saptamruta lauha. Agnitundi vati helps in removing the srotorodha and performing pachana, which is again one among langhana karma [6]. Saptamruta lauha helps in two ways. One, as it is having lauha and teekshna dravyas it shall help in lekshana (scarification) of the srotas through which it moves, thus clearing up the srotorodha. Second it is netrya, i.e. it has a direct action over the channels of eyes. Hence, it can be interpreted that, it clears up all the srotases of nourishment (rasavaha srotas) to eye and allows normal movements of nutrients through it to nourish them properly, which made vata to perform its function normally to a considerable extent that resulted in increased visual acuity.

CONCLUSION

Langhana is a definitive form of treatment for refractive errors caused due to srotorodha from abhishyandi and guru dravya, resulting in vata heenatva. Other form of treatments like triphala, ghee and honey or nasya or any other as described in the texts should follow this langhana once the srotorodha is removed. In other words, they should not be prescribed initially when srotorodha is present.

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