AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW OF SHEEHAN’S SYNDROME

Dr. Harshada D. Kulkarni* and Dr. S. S. Choudhari2

1P. G. Scholar, Dept. Streeroga Prasutitantra, R. A. Podar Ayurvedic College, Worli, Mumbai, India.
2Professor, HOD, Streeroga Prasutitantra, R. A. Podar Ayurvedic College, Worli, Mumbai, India.

*Corresponding Author: Dr. Harshada D. Kulkarni

ABSTRACT
Sheehan’s syndrome is remote complication of post partum hemorrhage. Severe blood loss during post partum period particularly damages the pituitary gland causing its necrosis and pituitary cannot function properly which resulted symptoms of hypopituitarism. According to Ayurveda samprapti may be considered as Raktakshaya. In Ayurvedic texts there are lot of references that explains effects of Raktakshaya leading to consequent Dhatukshaya, Agnimandya and Vatprakop. These symptoms closely resemble the symptoms of sheehan’s syndrome. This article presented a case of sheehan’s syndrome managed by ayurvedic treatment.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Sheehan’s syndrome, Raktakshaya, Pituitary, Blood loss.

INTRODUCTION
Sheehan’s syndrome is caused by ischemic necrosis of most of anterior pituitary gland which results from spasm in its arterioles, occurring at time of severe hemorrhage or shock which complicate child birth.1,4

Figure 1. Manifestation of Sheehan’s Syndrome

Causes
Caused by severe blood loss during and after childbirth.

Pathophysiology
Pregnancy results in enlargement of anterior pituitary without corresponding increase in its blood supply. Pituitary is supplied by low pressure portal venous system; this makes pituitary more vulnerable to major hemorrhage causing its necrosis.

Clinical manifestation of Sheehan’s syndrome
Acute
- Tachycardia
- No lactation
- Hypotension
- Hypoglycemia

Chronic
- Loss of axillary and pubic hair
- Oligomenorrhea
- Loss of libido
- Amenorrhea
- Hypothyroidism

Common Signs & Symptoms:
- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Slowed mental functioning
- Hypotension
- Dry vaginal mucous
- Moderate anaemia

Diagnosis
- Clinical signs and patients history
- Hormonal levels
- CT scan / MRI of Brain [targeting pituitary gland]
Management
- Lifelong HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) is the treatment option in modern Science.\(^1\)\(^\text{[1-3]}\)

Ayurvedic Aspect of Sheehan’s Syndrome
1. In Sushrut Samhita there is description of effects of severe blood loss. It states that severe blood loss affects quality and quantity of consecutive Dhatus. It vitiates Vata Dosha and also hampers digestive power at cellular level. Severe blood loss is considered responsible for oligomenorrhea or amenorrhea.
2. Vitiation of vata causes hormonal imbalance because function of coordination is carried out by vata.\(^2\)\(^\text{[5-8]}\)

This article summarizes a case of Sheehan’s syndrome and its ayurvedic management as follows:
Patient age of 20 yrs came with 2 yrs amenorrhea loss of libido along with weight loss since 2yrs and reported following details:
- Married since 5yrs
- Past menstrual history
- Menarche at 13\textsuperscript{th} yrs of age before 2 yrs regular, moderate, painless.
- Obstetric history

Examination
- CNS: conscious oriented
- Vitals: P-68/min
- BP: 100/60 mmHg
- Weight: 42kg
- On further examination, it is found that scanty axillary and pubic hair, loss of breast tissue as compared to that of before delivery, gradual weight loss.
- cervix smaller
- uterus smaller than normal size

Investigations
- Hb: 10.8gm%
- RBC: 3.57 lakh/cu mm
- WBC: 7650
- PLT: 157 lakh/cu mm
- HIV: neg.
- Hbs Ag: neg.
- VDRL: neg.

Hormonal profile
- PRL: 3.82 ng/ml (N)
- LH: 3.84 mIU/ml (N)
- FSH: 5.52 mIU/ml (N)
- TSH: 3.340 uIU/dl (N)

USG (pelvis)
- Ut: 4.5 cmx2.4cmx1.6 cm
- ET: 3mm
- Ovaries: Rt-3.2cmx1.9cmx1.3cm vol-4.2cc
- Lt-2.6cmx1.3cmx1.1cm vol-2.5cc
- Slightly small size uterus was observed.

CT Brain
- Bony pituitary fossa appears normal and shows rim of soft tissue within pituitary fossa
- Likely represents remnants of pituitary gland
- Infundibulum stalk appears normal

Management by Ayurvedic Treatment
- Shirodhara with til tail
- Raspadhakwath + Faltriakadiwath 40 ml BD

Shirodhara is classical and well established ayurvedic procedure of slowly and steadily dripping medicated oil on the center of the forehead of the patient, resting quietly on a comfortable bed. Shirodhara is deeply relaxing and induces a relaxant state; these effects are mediated by the brain wave coherence, alfa waves and a down regulation of the sympathetic outflow. The center of the forehead which was evolution wise related to third eye; is connected atavistically to the pineal gland. In shirodhara therapy prolonged and intermittent stimulation by dripping oil may provide tranquilizing effect. Thus shirodhara helps to stimulates functioning of pituitary gland and Rasapadakh wath helps to cellular metabolism.\(^1\)\(^6\)\(^\text{[7-10]}\)

Investigation observed that patient gets some relief after this treatment and study suggested that the other formulations mentioned in Aartavkshaya (oligomenorrhea) can also be used along with this therapy for the complete management of Sheehan’s syndrome.

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