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# Ayurvedic Management of Nontoxic Nodular Goitre with Haemorrhagic Nodules, Calcification and Atypia – A Case Report

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Ayurvedic treatment has been beneficial in treating disorders related to metabolism. In this case report, a condition involving thyroid gland, manifesting haemorrhagic nodules with the presence of atypical cells was treated with Ayurveda. It showed encouraging results in this case study. Ayurvedic herbomineral preparations used here proved effective in correcting the morphology of the thyroid cells from atypical nature to normal and also healing the haemorrhagic status of the nodules. The probable hazards of the condition and related management including removal of thyroid gland were prevented. A long term ayurvedic management was planned for better results. This is an observation based case report and has limitations in comparison to a clinical trial. Ayurvedic management can be effective in conditions that can be considered as new-age diseases when appropriate thought process is applied. Thyroid disorders are few of these conditions. Similar plan can be thought of in various such unmentioned disorders in ayurveda. This may be a guiding case report.

Key-words: Ayurveda, Thyroid disorders, atypical cells, haemorrhagic nodules,

## **INTRODUCTION**

Presently, thyroid disorders are more prevalent in comparison to the previous decades. The present case was presented with non-toxic goitre having haemorrhagic nodules. There was also the presence of calcification and changed morphology showing atypia in thyroid cells. The patient was suggested thyroidectomy by the western medicine practitioner. That would have involved the medication of synthetic thyroid hormones for lifetime and also the possibility of hormonal imbalance. The number of thyroidectomy surgeries is more than 150,000 cases every year in the USA.<sup>1</sup>

Ayurveda has been effective in conditions that are not mentioned in ancient ayurvedic texts. With a proper understanding of the *Agni*, and imbalance of *Doshas*, *Dhatus* and *Malas*, such conditions can be well-treated. In this case study, a patient opted for Ayurvedic treatment in an effort to avoid thyroidectomy. Nevertheless, the treatment was aimed at healing the haemorrhagic nodules and the atypia especially thus preventing the chances of malignancy.

In this case study, ayurvedic principles were used for understanding the condition on the basis of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*. This case has also shown encouraging results where, not only the symptoms disappeared but morphology of the cells was also improved which otherwise could have manifested into serious complications with a possibility of thyroidectomy.

## METHODS

#### **Case history**

Forty six year old non-smoker, non-alcoholic Indian female patient presented to my clinic at Pune for growth in her neck region suspecting thyroid swelling, which has been present for three to four weeks. Along with this, the patient also experienced generalized weakness.

#### **Past History:**

As part of medical history, patient did not have any thyroid related condition. However, patient suffered from chronic sinusitis and occasional pain in lumbar area. The patient has been overweight with an average BMI of 28 for approximately six years. There were no other conditions or significant family history. Menstrual history did not present any unusual pattern.

The previous investigations demonstrated following findings –

Ultrasound sonography of abdomen and pelvis done in February 2013 showed –

- mild fatty liver
- left ovarian corpus luteal cyst
- retroverted uterus with possibility of Nabothian cyst
- a renal cortical cyst in left kidney

MRI revealed, there is Mucosal thickening at maxillary and ethmoidal sinuses; a cyst in nasopharynx with few nonspecific lymph nodes at both parotid regions.

There was moderate lumbar spondylosis  $L_{3-4}$ ,  $L_{4-5}$ ,  $L_5S_1$  with a mild subcutaneous soft tissue oedema at posterior aspect of  $L_2$  to sacral region.

On colonoscopy, rectal polyps were found and the HP examination of the polyps revealed that these were hyperplastic polyps without any evidence of malignancy.

#### Diagnosis and assessment

In the course of the investigation, an ultrasound of the thyroid gland done in February 2013, showed that enlarged thyroid gland with multiple hypoechoic lesions that were solid in nature. The thyroid also divulged multiple calcifications in the middle pole. Overall, the picture was suggestive of nontoxic nodular goitre. Moreover, bilateral small sized, upper internal jugular lymph nodes were also noted on ultrasound. On FNAC it was observed that the patient had haemorrhagic cystic lesion with scanty atypical cells.

On blood work, leucocytosis and thrombocytosis with low haemoglobin were observed. Thyroid profile including T3,

T4 and TSH were found to be within normal limits.

#### Examination

Ayurvedic clinical methods such as Pulse and abdominal examinations were done as a part of physical examination. With these examinations, the status of *Doshas* was estimated. Apart from generalized weakness and loss of appetite, patient did not present any specific symptoms. She had well maintained blood pressure 124/78 mm of Hg. (Table 1)

#### **Ayurvedic Diagnosis**

The closest disease/condition to thyroid disorder/goitre mentioned in Ayurveda can be Galaganda.<sup>2</sup> As per Ayurveda (Madhav Nidan), it is an immovable swelling in the neck area which is solid and protruding. It is also seen as Ekang Shotha. As far as ayurvedic diagnosis is concerned it was diagnosed as Kaphaj Galaganda. Overall, prognosis of the condition was bad and the condition was difficult to cure. It was also observed that a chronic status of Agnimandya and DhatvAgnimandya has led to unhealthy replenishment of Dhatus making them vulnerable for various other conditions. This was observed through the symptoms such as generalized weakness, Katishula, and Jeerna Pratishyay as symptoms. Moreover, through MRI, it was also revealed and confirmed that there has been weakness in Mansa and Asthi Dhatu primarily manifesting the lumbar spondylitis.

#### Therapeutic focus and assessment

Reinstating the status of metabolism (*Agni*) and health of *Dhatu* were the goals of the ayurvedic treatment and it was expected that achieving these goals would help the thyroid tissue rectify its pathology in the most natural way. Ayurvedic Treatment was started with following herbs' combinations –

Phalatrikadi Guggul<sup>3</sup> Shwadanshtradi Guggul<sup>4</sup> Laghu malini Vasanti<sup>5</sup> Heerak Bhasma<sup>6,7,8,9</sup>

*Phalatrikadi Kwath*<sup>10</sup> is a formulation from *Charak Samhita* – in *Prameha* (diabetes) chapter. This formulation is effective in liver disorders and diabetes. In the lineage of *Panchabhautik chikitsa*, this is modified in a guggul formulation with a slight change in the herbs. In the present case, this formulation was mainly used for improvement in *Agni* and *DhatvAgni* with a cleansing action over kapha and *Kleda*. Similarly, *Shwadanshtradi Guggul* is a variation of *Gokshuradi Guggul* by adding *Pashanbhed* and *Dhamasa* to it. It was used specifically for *Shotha* and *Vatanuloman*.

*Laghumalini Vasant* was planned for improving *Agni* and reducing the excess *Kapha* and *Kleda*, *Dhatu Shaithilya* and subsequent *Shotha*. (Table 2)

A diet plan aimed at pacification of *Kapha* and improvement in the metabolism was advised. Heavier food items, yogurt<sup>11</sup>, black gram<sup>12</sup> were mainly refrained from the patient's diet.

## RESULTS

Ayurvedic Treatment was continued for one year with Skype/phone and in-person follow ups. There has been a noticeable improvement in her general condition. Appetite was improved with a transformation in overall feeling of wellbeing. In addition to this, there was a weight loss of five kilos over a period of one year. The investigations **Table: 3** were done again after 12 months. It showed certain specific changes in the thyroid gland. On investigations, the thyroid gland showed complete absence of atypical cells and there were no signs of haemorrhagic nodules; though several typical benign nodules were present.

## DISCUSSION

Thyroid disorders are the diseases related to the metabolism.<sup>13</sup> From Ayurveda's perspective, it is evident that impaired metabolism turns out to be the precursor for these disorders.

Ayurveda considers five main components of a disease and they are –

- Causative factors,
- Prodromal symptoms
- Main symptoms
- Pathogenesis &
- Factors affecting the prognosis.<sup>14,15</sup>

A thorough information about these factors guide better in the management of any disease.

In any disease process, the primary focus is on the derangement of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*. The disease process gets triggered when the *Agni* (the digestive capacity) starts malfunctioning and shows some deficit in its physiological activities.<sup>16</sup> Re-establishing, the equilibrium of bodily tissues and normalizing the *Agni* are considered to be the main aspects in the treatment of any disease. The Ayurvedic management for any disease is to recreate the equilibrium of *Doshas* and *Dhatus*.<sup>17</sup> The treatment focuses on increasing the weakened *Agni* (*Jatharagni*, *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni*) and that helps to

keep a check over *Doshas*. There is no specific information about 'thyroid gland' in *Ayurveda*, except the condition *Galaganda* which is a swelling in the neck area. This resembles exactly with the goitre. Here it is hypothesized that, by improving the status of *Agni* and pacifying *Doshas*, the thyroid gland will re-establish its healthy status by improving the functioning.

Keeping these threads in mind, Ayurvedic Treatment was planned. In the present case, due to weakened Agni (Agnimandya and Dhatvagnimandya) and the impairment of metabolism, there is accumulation of kapha in form of Shotha at the site of neck manifested as Galaganda. The focus was mainly on ayurvedic diagnosis and the investigations were used as the tools for assessment of efficacy of the treatment. That is the reason, why other investigations were not suggested. Phalatrikadi Guggul is a potent formulation that helps to boost the Agni by reducing excess of earth and water elements from the body. The actions of *Phalatrikadi Guggul* are well-known in the areas of liver where it helps to channelize Pitta from the Rakta Dhatu and liver. This leads to a cleansing action over Pitta Dosha and Rasa Dhatu specifically. Thus, enhancing the functions of Rasagni in a better way. The same cleansing action is desired in this case and will be helpful in the management of Shotha<sup>18</sup> (oedema). Laghumalini Vasant is a combination that works in two specific ways in this case - improvement in Agni and the cleansing of Srotas. This helps in reducing Shotha (oedema) and strengthening the Dhatus. It has a drying effect which is helpful in reducing excessive accumulation of the fluid.<sup>19</sup>Shwadanshtradi guggul works on regulation of Aap Mahabhut by supporting the urine formation. It also has an action to channelize vata by regulating Apan Vata.<sup>20</sup> Heerak Bhasma is the medicated calx (Bhasma) preparation of diamond. It is understood to be beneficial in boosting the quality of *Dhatus* and especially *Sarvadehik* Shukra Dhatu. This specific action enhances the strength of Dhatus mainly and thus reducing the vulnerability in them. This acts as a crucial action in the pathogenesis of such deep-rooted diseases. It's been showing encouraging results in various cancer conditions.<sup>21,22,23</sup>Taking the known actions into consideration, it can be stated that these preparations may have helped to improve the status of Agni at the level of Jatharagni as well as Dhatvagni, leading to an overall positive effect over the metabolism. This stimulus to the metabolism has effectively shown improvement in the status of every Dhatu and Dosha. As per ayurvedic thought process, no disease can escape Dosha, Dhatu and Mala. With this plan of management, a

remarkable improvement in the disease state was observed.

## CONCLUSION

From the efficacy observed in this case, it suggests that the ayurvedic treatment planned as per the *Dosha* and *Dhatu* can help in conditions such as thyroid gland imbalances. It can be hypothesized that ayurvedic treatment can be planned for the management of thyroid disorders where the histopathological appearances are exhibiting abnormality. This case study exhibiting encouraging results may be a guiding study for the researchers working in this area even though there could have been a scope for a few more investigations.

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Table	1
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Patient	
Pitta-Kapha	
Kapha, Pitta	
Madhyam	
Avara	
Vishama Sharira (Sthool)	
Avara	
Madhyam	
Uttam	
Avara	
46 years	

## Table 2

Ayurvedic Preparation	Dosage	Timing	Duration
Phalatrikadi Guggul	1gm per day	3 times a day in divided doses	1 year
Shwadanshtradi Guggul	1gm per day	3 times a day in divided doses	1 year
Laghumalini Vasant	250 mg per day	Twice a day	1 year
Heerak Bhasma	10mg per day	Once a day	First 3 months

## **Table: 3 Investigations**

Date	Test	Findings
7 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2013	Complete blood count	WBC – 12.7 * $10^9$ /L H Haemoglobin – 11.6 gm/dl L Platelets – 477 x $10^9$ /L H
	TSH	1.34 uIU/mL WNL
08/02/13	Ultrasound – upper abdomen	Mild fatty liver
	Ultrasound – pelvis	3.55x3.28x3.08 cm left ovarian haemorrhagic corpus luteal cyst
	Ultrasound thyroid	Enlarged thyroid gland; Nontoxic nodular goitre Left middle pole has multiple small calcifications Multiple hypoechoic lesions are solid in nature Left middle pole 1.13cm is suspicious Bilateral small upper internal jugular lymph nodes are present Adv FNAC
	HP report (Sample of 08/02/13) Specimen – rectal polyps from colonoscopy	Hyperplastic polyp – no hyperplasia or malignancy
26/03/13       Left thyroid FNAC         MRI brain       MRI brain         MRI lumbar spine       MRI lumbar spine         MRI lumbar spine       MRI lumbar spine	Left thyroid FNAC	Haemorrhagic cystic lesion with scanty atypical cells seen. Possibility of papillary thyroid carcinoma cannot be excluded in view of the finding of atypical cells.
	MRI brain	Mucosal thickening at maxillary and ethmoidal sinuses. Cyst in nasopharynx Few non-specific lymph nodes at both parotid regions
	MRI lumbar spine	Moderate lumbar spondylosis L <sub>3-4</sub> , L <sub>4-5</sub> , L <sub>5</sub> S <sub>1</sub> Mild subcutaneous soft tissue oedema at posterior aspect of L <sub>2</sub> to sacral region. Retroverted uterus with possibility of Nabothian cyst Left renal cortical cyst
	MRI lower abdomen	Bulky & retroverted uterus with uterine fibroids and Nabothian cyst
11/03/14	Ultrasound thyroid	Several typical benign nodules in the thyroid gland Typical of benign adenomatous nodules

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Name         PA         Referred Dector         1         1272 DL (POON EDWYN           Referred Dector         1         1272 DL (POON EDWYN         1272 DL (POON EDWYN           NEN No.1         6005590         1272 DL (POON EDWYN         1272 DL (POON EDWYN           HEM No.1         6005590         Exam Dete         1         60.02 2013           HEM P         1         0.0505163         Clinic (Ward Bed 1         0.0 E000 E000 E000)	FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATION CYTOLOGY Accession No: Cl3001171 Specimen Left thyroid FNAC	
Exam: US THYROID	Clinical Summary ? Haemorrhagic nodule Hyposchoir nodule	
REFORT:  Thyotal grant is signify onlarged. Providing our is solution to a standard of the sta	Specimen Preparation Details Approx. 20ml, pinkish slightly turbid fluid ThinPrep 1 Cytospin 2	$\mathcal{C}$
0.84cm maximal diameter hypotechoic lesion and 0.71cm maximal diameter similar leaion are seen in the right upper and lower poles respectively. The right upper and lower poles respectively. Male or over idencements the without amplication scalarity, Male or over idencements the without amplication scalarity. Only the fit middle pole has multiple small califications. Bilancial small upper internal application types nodes.	Microscopic Description The ThinPrep smear and cytospin preparations yield mainly co- lesion which comprises abundant haemosiderin-laden mail cluster inflammatory cells and red blood cells. Only a few small cluster muclear grooves. One intranuclear pseudoinclusion is identified. Si in the background.	ophages admixed with some rs of thyroid follicular cells are relear membrane and occasional
IMPRESSION:	Comment: The possibility of papillary thyroid carcinoma cannot finding of atypical cells. However, further cytological assessment these cells. Please correlate with clinical and radiological findings.	t is limited by the scantiness of
Non-toxic nodular goitre. Multiple hyposchoic lesions are solid in nature. Only the left middle pole 1.13cm one is suspicious. Suggest ultrasound guided FNAC for further assessment. Thank you for your kind referral.	Diagnosis Left thyroid nodule, ultrasound-guided FNAC - Haemorthagic cystic lesion with scanty atypical cells seen. (Please see comment.)	
	(*) Copy to Dr. Cheung Yu Keung (2011)	
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DR. YAU CHI KWONG FRANCIS Printed Date: 08 02 2013 10/33	101 10	-
CONSULTANT RADIOLOGIST Typed By: 90216 MBB(conton), PREAM(Radiology) Page 1 of 1	Date : 26/03/2013 16:04 Page 1 of 1 P De Epstemology & PDE Epstemology &	HKCPath, FHKAM (Pathology), P Div EID (CUHK).
IKBXR1300376288T	Lab Episode No. C00002888	

USG Thyroid Before treatment

FNAC Before treatment

