

Ayurvedic Approach to Restless Leg Syndrome: A Case Report

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Abstract

A 26 years old female diagnosed with Restless leg syndrome with complains of irresistible urge to move lower limbs during night times, difficulty in falling asleep during night times, fatigue during day time, and depression for 2 years has visited Travancore Ayurveda, a panchakarma clinic. Based on clinical features it was considered under Vata vyadhi. This condition occurs more frequently in females and common in young age. There are no specific tests for RLS, but non-specific laboratory tests are used to rule out other causes such as vitamin deficiencies. In the present paper we are presenting a case successfully treated with different Ayurvedic treatments for a period of 28 days. After the treatment patient was on oral medications for a period of 90 days. After the treatment the patient is feeling much better and relieved from above complains.

Keywords: Restless Leg Syndrome; Vata Vyadhi.

Introduction

Restless legs syndrome (RLS), also called Willis-Ekbom Disease, causes unpleasant or uncomfortable sensations in the legs and an irresistible urge to move them. Symptoms commonly occur in the late afternoon or evening hours, and are often most severe at night when a person is resting, such as sitting or lying in bed. Since symptoms can increase in severity during the night, it could become difficult to fall asleep or return to sleep after waking up. Moving the legs or walking typically relieves the discomfort but the sensations often recur once the movement stops. RLS is classified as a sleep disorder since the symptoms are triggered by resting and attempting to sleep, and as a movement disorder, since people are forced to move their legs in order to relieve symptoms. It is, however, best characterized as a neurological sensory disorder with symptoms that are produced from within the brain itself [1].

There is no medical test to diagnose RLS, it is

diagnosed based on patients symptoms. According to the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, four symptoms are used to confirm the diagnosis [2].

- Strong urge to move the limbs, usually associated with unpleasant or uncomfortable sensations.
- It starts or worsens during inactivity or rest.
- It improves or disappears (at least temporarily) with activity.
- It worsens in the evening or night.
- These symptoms are not caused by any medical or behavioural condition.

Treatment of restless legs syndrome involves identifying the cause of symptoms when possible. The treatment process is designed to reduce symptoms, including decreasing the number of nights with RLS symptoms, the severity of RLS symptoms and night time awakenings. Improving the quality of life is another goal in treatment. This means improving overall quality of life, decreasing daytime sleepiness, and improving the quality of sleep.

According to Ayurveda, this condition can be considered as vata vyadhi (a disease which manifest due to vitiation of vata dosha). We can find the involvement of pitta and kapha in later stages of the disease. Here presenting a case successfully treated with Ayurvedic panchakarma therapies for a period of 28 days followed by Ayurvedic internal medicines for a period of 90 days.

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Case Report

A 26 years of female patient presented with complains of irresistible urge to move lower limbs during night times, difficulty in falling asleep during night times, and fatigue during day time for 2 years. Because of this she started to develop psychological symptoms such as depression and she started using anti depressants. The patient was not feeling any change and her condition was getting worsen and later she consulted for Ayurvedic management in the above said condition for further management. Patient does not have any history of Diabetes and hypertension.

Investigations and treatment

Laboratory tests: Blood routine, blood glucose levels, thyroid profile, iron levels, Vitamin B 12 were within normal limits. Treatment: Both bahir parimarjana and Antarparimarjana chikitsa were administered.

Table 1: Showing the treatment details

Day	Treatment	Medicine
1-3	Abhyangana and Bhaspa sweda	Bala Ashwaganda tailam
4-11	Anuvasana and Kasaya basti	Erandamooladi kashaya basti Kalyanka grutam
12-16	Pada abhyangana and nadi sweda	Ksheera bala tailam
17-22	Sirodhara	Brahmi tailam
23-28	Sirolepa	Vacha churna

Observation and Results

After the treatment patient was feeling much better. Symptoms such as irresistible urge to move lower limb during night times, difficulty in falling asleep during night times, and fatigue during day time has reduced to a great extend. Along with this patient was feeling much confident and depression has come down. Then she was advised to take oral medicines for a period of 90 days (follow up was done after 30 days and 60 days). After the entire treatment the patient was relieved from symptoms and occasionally she was getting urge to move the legs which was not troublesome as earlier.

Discussion

The symptoms seen are in favour of the diagnosis of Restless leg syndrome. According to Ayurveda

this condition can be considered as vata vyadhi. Though vata plays predominant role in causing the disease in later phases there is also involvement of pitta and kapha. As vata is considered as main factor for causing the symptoms the treatment was planned to control the vitiated vata. Treatments suggested were Abyangana, bhaspa swedam, Pada abhyangana, Nadi swedam, Sirodhara, Siro leepam, Anuvasana vasti and kashaya vasti.

Abhyangana and swedana karmas are generally considered as the poorva karma which is performed before the shodhana chikitsa. Abhyangana plays an important role to control vata and also helpful to reduce pain, numbness and other neurological symptoms. It soothes the nerves and reduces their irritation. Swedana plays an important role in controlling vata [3]. It also helps muscles and nerves to relax, which removes stambhana, gourava, saitya from body it leads the body to perspire [4].

Vasti: Vastikarma possesses a unique place among pancha karma, as it is used for curing all vataja diseases [5].

Shirodhara and Siroleepam: It is usually carried out in conditions like manasa roga (Neurological, Psychological and Psychosomatic). Shirodhara and Siroleepam are also effective in treating mental conditions such as depression, anxiety, insomnia and mental stress.

Conclusion

As this is a single case report, many such cases needs to be treated successfully to arrive at conclusion.

References

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