Successful Ayurvedic management of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy: A case study with long term follow up

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Abstract
Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy is an inherited progressive myopathy called as X linked recessive disorder commonly known as Pseudohypertrophic muscular dystrophy. It is considered as incurable myopathy and death is the final outcome of the disease at the age of 20-25 years. Modern science has limitations to treat the disease but Ayurved has great potential to treat such incurable disorder. Here is the case study of Duchenne Muscular dystrophy successfully managed for last 7 years by Ayurvedic treatment. This child has now become an adult completed his Animation Software Diploma and moving independently on scooter for hundreds of Km. His total CPK value has come to normal that was unprecedented in the history of such incurable disease. This case study will infuse a ray of hope to thousands of sufferers of this disease who are frustrated in awaiting early death.

Keywords: Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Ayurvedic management, Pseudohypertrophic muscular dystrophy.

Introduction
Muscular dystrophy is a group of diseases that cause progressive, unremitting muscular weakness and loss of muscle mass. Duchenne Muscular dystrophy (D.M.D.) is commonest of these diseases, which is an inherited, X- linked recessive progressive myopathic disorder. Females are the carriers, but very rarely suffer with mild course of disease and males are the main sufferers. The incidence of Duchenne Muscular dystrophy is ~1 per 5200 males born. As per one study, the prevalence of D.M.D. was found to be 15.9/100,000 live births. It is mostly detected early in childhood at the age of 5. Child experiences difficulty in walking and running. Child walks on toes. There is hypertrophy of calf muscles. Pseudo-hypertrophy is misnomer. There may be spinal deformity like lordosis or scoliosis. There is waddling gait. The weakness in limbs is progressive, by the age of 12 years the child has to be dependent on wheel chair and by the age of 20, he becomes bedridden. Death is the tragic outcome around 20-25 years of age. Death occurs due to pneumonia, respiratory paralysis due to weakness of diaphragm or by cardiac complications. As this is a genetic disorder, there
is deletion in the dystrophin gene on X chromosome (Xp-21). Dystrophin is the part of large complex of sarcolemmal proteins and Glycoproteins. Dystrophin-glycoprotein complex confers stability to Sarcolemma. Due to primary deficiency of dystrophin, there is disruption of Dystrophin-glycoprotein complex that weakens sarcolemma leading to muscle necrosis, muscle fibres break down and muscle fibres are replaced by fat and connective tissues. Contracture of joints is very common. Shortening of Tendo Achilles occurs. Cardiomyopathy is common though it is not that common as observed in Becker muscular dystrophy which occurs in teen-age, with comparatively mild course. In Duchenne Muscular dystrophy there is intellectual impairment and the average I.Q. is observed to be ~1 Standard Deviation below the mean. Serum Creatine Kinase levels are increased 20-100 times but tend to decline late in the disease as there is reduction in muscle mass. EMG reveals features of myopathy. The diagnosis of Duchenne Muscular dystrophy is definitely established on Dystrophin deficiency in muscle biopsy or mutation analysis on blood leucocytes.

**Treatment**

It is well established that Glucocorticoids delay the progression of the disease up to 3 years. However due to side effects of steroids like weight gain, toxicity to liver and kidney, increased risk of fractures, steroids are to be withdrawn. Many researchers tried Creatine supplements, Tricyclic compounds like Clomipromine/ Imipramine, Benzodiazepines, Taurine with limited success. Gene therapy and stem cell therapy are promising but are still in experimental stage.

**Case Study**

This boy started walking late at the age of two and half years. The child used to fall and started walking on his toes but that was ignored by the parents. At the 7 years of age, he was referred to neurologist in Pune. Gower's sign was positive. Needle EMG/NCV study of Lt. Tibialis anterior done on 24th Jan 2006 revealed AMUP amplitudes within range of 400-600 mv. There were multiple polyphasics and complete inter reference pattern suggestive of primary myopathic illness. His CPK value was 11785 U/L (Normal range 24-195 U/L). Molecular studies revealed that Dystrophin gene deletions were observed in exons 45 and 47. He was diagnosed as a case of Duchenne Muscular dystrophy. His parents were explained about this genetic disorder by the neurologist but unfortunately father of the patient made it an excuse to take divorce. That was a great blow to his mother but she accepted it a challenge to bring up her child. His mother, teacher by profession took every care of her son so that he would not miss his father.

He was treated by corticosteroids for some period and withdrawn gradually due its side effects. He was referred to Ayurved Research department of Sassoon General Hospital, Pune on 8/5/2013 and was admitted from 8/5/2013 to 7/6/2013. On admission he had C/o Difficulty in walking, walking on toes with support. He had developed lordosis. His mid- circumference of Rt. calf muscle was 32.5 cm and that of Lt side was 32.6 cm. Deep tendon reflexes were absent in upper extremities.

Patellar reflex +

Tendo Achilles reflex +

His CPK value was 8160 U/L.

In Ayurved, this type of genetic disorders is referred to as 'Sahaj vyadhi.' Charakacharya mentioned that Mauns (Muscle) is embryologically derived from Matruj avayav/bhav therefore the defective gene transferred/deleted may be said to be from mother i.e. X chromosome.

It may be called as Maunsgat Vata.

...... Vranascha Raktago Granthin Sashulan Mauns-sanshrithah I

Tatha Meda: shrit Kuryad Granthin Mandaruvo Vranan II ² Su. Ni. 1/26

The great Acharya Sushruta directed the line of treatment of Maunsgat Vata (Myopathy) by
following Snehan, Abhyanga, Upnaha, Mardan, Alepan and Raktamokshana.

Sneh-Abhyango Upnhascha Mardana Lepanani cha I
Twaka Mansa Sruka Siraprapte Kuryat Cha Sru Mokshanam II 7 Su. Chi. 4/7

Similarly great Acharya Charaka directed that Maunsgatvata has to be treated by Virechan, Niruh, Basti and Shaman chikitsa.

Vireko Maunsmeda: stha Niruha Shamanani Cha I 8 Cha.Chi. 28/93

Therefore in treating this Maunsgat Vata (Myopathy), we combined most of the treatment principles as advocated by Sushrutacharya and Charakacharya.

Sushrutacharya advocated that basti, which is said to be Ardha chikitsa, nourishes all dhatus of body, improves complexion (Varna), increases Bala/ Strength, Aarogya and increases life span by reducing Vata.

Follow up photographs of D.M.D. patient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of treatment</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deepan-Pachan</td>
<td>8-5-2013</td>
<td>14-5-2013</td>
<td>Sitopaladi + Avipattikar churma/powder 2gm each BD (Rasa shala,Pune)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarvang Abhyang</td>
<td>11-5-2013</td>
<td>7-6-2013</td>
<td>Mayurpichamashi + Takra siddha Sarshap/ Mustard oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarvang Pind-sweda</td>
<td>11-5-2013</td>
<td>7-6-2013</td>
<td>Decoction made from Dashmool, Deodar, Ashwagandha, Shatavari and Bala and in that specially cropped rice 2 parts + Black gram dal 1 part skinned off + 1 TSF black Seasame was cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogabasti (Medicated enema)</td>
<td>11-5-2013</td>
<td>17-5-2013</td>
<td>Nirooh with Dashmool + Erandmool+ Bala 450 ml (3 times) Anuvasan with Narayan tail/oil 40 ml (Four times)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiktoolir basti A/D</td>
<td>18-5-2013</td>
<td>6-6-2013</td>
<td>Kshirpak made from Guduchi,Deodar Ashwagandha, Shatavari and Kavachbeej 100 ml + Tiktaghrit 10 ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majabasti A/D</td>
<td>19-5-2013</td>
<td>7-6-2013</td>
<td>Kshirpak made from Guduchi,Deodar Ashwagandha, Shatavari and Kavachbeej 100 ml + Tiktaghrit 10 ml + Majja 15 ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasya</td>
<td>11-5-2013</td>
<td>21-5-2013</td>
<td>Panchendriya vadhana tail 2 drops in each nostril alternate day by Kshirbala tail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abhyanter chikitsa (Oral medication)</td>
<td>8-5-2013</td>
<td>7-6-2013</td>
<td>Maunsgachak vati 1 BD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pranayam</td>
<td>11-5-2013</td>
<td>7-6-2013</td>
<td>Anulom-Vilom, Bhramari and Dhyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogasana</td>
<td>11-5-2013</td>
<td>7-6-2013</td>
<td>Bhujangasana, Tadasana and Pavanmuktasana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Balam Alam hi dosha haram" I
When the disease is of long duration/ Chronic/ Sahaj, the Dosh bala is strong while Dhatu bala has become Kshin, therefore, for treating such Chronic disease, dosha bala has to be alleviated & Dhatu bala has to be increased. When Dhatu bala is strong, Dosha bala cannot produce any disease. The Aarogya is dependent on Bala & Dhatu is dependent on upchay of Dhatu; particularly Mauns dhatu. While increasing Dhatu bala we should be cautious to see that Dosha bala will not increase.

Therefore we attempted to reduce Dosha bala, and to increase the Dhatu bala, we used Tiktaghrita basti. This type of treatment said to be Rajyapan basti was used by the great Ayurved scholar Vaidya Haridas Kasture in 40 cases of Muscular dystrophy and barring 3, most of the cases showed good improvement 9. Further we added Majja bone marrow from the bones of male goat in the Tiktaghrita basti which was then called as Majjabasti, that further increased the Dhatu bala and reduced the dosha bala.

Chikitsa/ Treatment:-We decided to treat this case by following treatment principles:-

1. Deepan-Pachan 2. Vatanoamlak chikitsa. 3. Bruhan chikitsa

After Deepan-Pachan & Anuloman by Yogbasti, the child was given Daily Sarvang Abhyanga (Full body medicated massage) by Mayur-pichhamashi & Takra siddha Sarshap/ Mustard oil (Oil specially made ash from peacock feathers and Takra) followed by

Pind sweda with Rice (Sathesali) + Black Til (Sesame) +Udad (Black gram skinned) cooked in Decoction of Dashmool (Ten roots of certain plants), Deodar (Cedrus deodara), Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) and Bala (Sida cordifolia) Daily Nasya (facial massage by Narayan tail and local steaming to face) followed by instilling 2 drops of Panchendriya-vardhan/ Kshirbaka tail in each nostril.

Majjabasti- Deodar (Cedrus deodara), Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera), Shatavari (Asparagus racemosus), Bala (Sida cordifolia), Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia) and Kavachbeej (Mucuna pruriens) made Siddha-kshir 100ml. with addition of 10ml of Tiktaghrita & Bone marrow15ml.

Tiktakshir basti by Deodor (Cedrus deodara), Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera), Shatavari (Asparagus racemosus), Bala (Sida cordifolia), Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia) and Kavachbeej (Mucuna pruriens) made Siddha-kshir 100 ml with addition of 10 ml of Tiktaghrita. We administered 10 Majjabasti and 11 Tiktaghiri basti during his one month period of admission.

He responded very well to the treatment. He started walking without support. His gait improved. His I.Q. was above average. On the day of discharge, his CPK value was reduced to 232 U/L which was just marginally higher than the normal value.

At the time of discharge, he was advised to take following treatment:
1. Tab Suvarna malini vasant 1OD
2. Tab Mauns pachak vati 1 BD
3. Abhyanga (Full body massage) by Mayur-pichhamashi & Takra siddha oil & Narayan oil A/D.
4. Siddha Kshirpak made by Arjun (Terminalia arjuna), Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia), Bramhi (Bacopa monnieri), Haridra (Curcuma longa), Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) Shatavari (Asparagus racemosus) & Sunthi /Dry Ginger (Zingiber officinale) one cup twice daily. There is risk of cardiomyopathy in D.M.D., therefore we administered Arjuna which has therapeutic protective effect on heart. Bramhi is specially used for brain for increasing I.Q. and preventing impairment of brain which is very common in D.M.D.. Ashwagandha & Shatavari (Ballya & Rasayan) is effective in Vata-Kapha vikaras; administered for increasing strength to Dhatu for alleviating to Vata-vikar and specially giving strength to the weakened muscles. Guduchi is a well-known Rasayan draya which rejuvenates the body by it’s ‘Dhatwagni pradipak properties.
5.Nasya with Panchendriya vardhan tail/Kshirbaka 101tail to be continued 7 days in one month.
6. **Pranayam**: Anulom- Vilom, Bhramari, 5-10 times each daily, followed by Dhyan/ Meditation

7. **Yogasana**: Bhujangasana, Pawanmuktasana, Tadasana

When the child was admitted in Ayurved ward, we had taught the mother about the procedure of *Abhyanga, Pindsweda, Majjabasti, Tiktakshir basti* etc. His mother was asked to follow the sequence of treatment as follows:- Two days Tiktakshir basti consecutively followed by Majja basti till 21 Majja basti gets completed. She was asked to repeat the cycle every year till child gets fully benefitted.

Her mother was teacher and could not get the leave frequently; therefore after one month of follow up following treatment was advised:-

1. *Ashwagandha* 250 mg +*Guduchi* 250 mg + *Arjun* 250 mg + *Kumari* (Aloe vera) Swaras 2 TSF twice daily.
2. *Sukshmaoushdhi of Prawal Bhasma & Suvarna bhasma* was given twice daily
3. *Rasaraj rasa* 3 gm+ *Brihatvat chintamani* 1 gm + *Malla sindur* 3 gm + *Praval Panchamruta* 6 gm +*Kriminudgarasa* 6 gm +*Guduchi satva* 50 gm are mixed together and equally divided in to 60 sachets; one sachet to be consumed along with *Madhu* (Honey) twice daily.
4. *Abhyanga* 3 times in a week
5. *Pind sweda* twice weekly.
6. *Nasya* with Panchendriya vardhan tail/Kshir bala 101 tail to be continued 7 days in one month..

**Meanwhile author was transferred to Nagpur and there was gap in communication.** The mother continued the treatment in the same sequence as advised every year till 2018, when she approached again to the author in Ayurvedic OPD of Sassoon hospital, who was again transferred back to Pune. The child had grown up as an adult of 19 years. He had completed his 10+2 and was pursuing Software Computer Diploma in Animation.

It is pointed out here that till date the patient is under treatment for maintaining his health. The treatment continued is as follows:

1. Tab Madhumalini vasant 1 BD
2. Kshirpak made from *Ashwagandha+ Shatavari + Deodar + Arjun + Haridra* -One cup daily. 3. *Sarvang Snehan* and Pindasweda 2-3 times in a week.
4. *Nasya* by Kshirbala/Panchendriya vardhan tail alternately - 7 days in one month
5. *Laghu supachya aahar _-_Healthy and digestible food*

He is fully independent, he drives 2 wheeler Scooter, has completed the Computer Animation Software Diploma course, and now searching for the job in film industry. His latest CPK value was 105 U/L, which is very well within the normal range. It shows that Ayurved has not only halted the progress of the disease but the biochemical damage was also corrected to a great extent.

**Conflicts of interest- None**

**Funding source- Nil**

**References**


