

AYURVEDA AND MODERN VIEW ON INGUINAL HERNIA AND ITS THERAPEUTIC MANAGEMENT

Dr. Saraf Naimish Kishor

Professor - Shalya Tantra ,Siddhakala Ayurved Mahavidyalaya , Sangamner

ABSTRACT

Hernia is an abnormal protrusion of an organ or tissue through a defect in its surrounding walls which most commonly involves the abdominal wall, particularly the inguinal region. In the present manuscript we are discussing regarding the role of Ayurveda for therapeutic management of Inguinal Hernia.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Inguinal Hernia



INTRODUCTION

A hernia can be a hereditary condition, some factors that contribute are:

- Persistent coughing
- Excess pressure while passing feces
- Straining abdominal muscles by lifting heavy objects
- Obesity

“Hernia” is derived from the *Latin* word for rupture. It is defined as an abnormal protrusion of an organ or tissue through a defect in its surrounding walls.[1] It may be operationally defined as the abnormal protrusion of a structure through a defect in the tissues that normally contain that structure.[2] Although hernia can occur at various sites of the body, these defects most commonly involve the abdominal wall, particularly the inguinal region. Abdominal wall hernias occur only at sites when the aponeurosis and fascia are not covered by striated muscle. These sites most commonly include the inguinal, femoral, and umbilical areas, the linea alba, the lower portion of the semilunar line, and sites of prior incisions. The “neck” or orifice of a hernia is located at the innermost musculoaponeurotic layer whereas the hernia sac is lined by peritoneum and protrudes from the neck. There is no consistent relationship between the area of hernia defect and the size of hernia sac.[1]

Inguinal hernia is due to weakness of the abdominal muscles which holds the organs in their original positions. So the organ gets protruded through inguinal canal and sometimes to scrotum. The causes for inguinal hernia are congenital weakness or the developmental defect in

the abdominal muscles or ligaments, unexpected pull while handling heavy item, which split the muscles and ligaments, elevated intra-abdominal pressure, flabbiness of the abdominal muscles and obesity.

There are a number of other lifestyle reasons such as increasing vata due to improper food intake, lifting heavy weights, suppression of urges like urine or feces. The increased vata weakens the intestine and pulls it down which leads to an inguinal hernia. If the hernia does not get the treatment, it may grow in size causing more pain and discomfort. A part of intestine sticks in the abdomen which causes pain and swelling in the surrounding area.

The problem occurs when the trapped intestine does not get proper blood flow which leads to strangulation which becomes life-threatening.

Ayurveda Treatment for Hernia

Hernia ayurvedic treatment involves procedures such as snehana, virechana, niruha basti and topical application of medicines with oral intake of herbs. Ayurveda medicines for hernia especially herbs strengthen intestine and promote healthy digestion.

Snehana

- In this procedure, warm essential oil is used to massage the body to dislodge and remove toxins from the body channels.
- Sesame oil or *ghee* is to treat the increase in vata whereas mustard oil, canola oil or flaxseed oil can treat kapha dosha.

This process continues for 7 days to see the effective results.

Virechana

- This process is to treat excess *pitta* from gallbladder, liver or small intestine.
- Triphala, amalaki (Indian gooseberry), pipali (long pepper), shunthi (dried ginger) and maricha (black pepper) are for cleansing and to treat swelling due to *kapha dosha*.
- Purgatives such as rock salt, isabgol and ginger may eliminate *vata dosha*.
- After purgation, you must take light food to fire up digestion.
- You can feel the lightness and the downward movement of gas after *virechana*.

Niruha basti

- The procedure involves herbal enema decoction anema mixing with milk and oil. This is a highly beneficial treatment for *vata* disorders, weak tissues and enlarged scrotum.
- It clears out toxins from the tissues and cleans the colon by flushing feces from the system.
- It heals and rejuvenates the complete body by cleaning the intestines.

Ayurveda Medicine for Hernia

Triphala Guggul

This medicine constitutes triphala, trikatu and guggul as its prime components.

Triphala guggul works as:

- Digestive
- Laxative
- Bowel tonic
- Antispasmodic
- Purgative

This also has analgesic properties and is useful in managing post-operative pain

after hernia surgery. The benefits of triphala guggul not only include hernia but it can also be used for weight loss, infection, corn abscess, piles, constipation, and fistula.

Gandhak Rasayana

It consists of *shuddha gandhak* (brimstone) along with *dalchini* (cinnamon) and Indian rose chestnut. It is very useful to pacify *vata* and *pitta doshas*. Also, it increases the digestion and reduces the excess pressure on the intestinal muscles. Moreover, similar to guggulu, *gandhak* is helpful in managing post-operative hernia pain.

Ayurveda Herbal Treatment for Hernia

Ayurvedic herbs for treating hernia are:

Hingu

It is to improve digestion and increase hunger. It is one of the best herbs to treat *vata* disorder, cramping, and abdominal pain. The most common complaint in hernia is constipation which *hingu* treats successfully.

Kutja

It helps increase appetite and assists in digestion by healing hernia. It helps in diminishing pathogens and harmful bacteria from the gut.

Senna

Senna helps in healthy bowel movement and regulates the intestinal muscles. It relieves the excess pressure from the abdominal wall.

Manjishtha

The roots of *manjishtha* are good for blood purification. It treats *kapha* disorder connected to swelling in the hernia. It also helps in tissue healing after hernia surgery.

Karanja

It helps in breaking down of food and absorption of necessary nutrients by stimulating intestines. It also prevents bloating.

Ayurvedic Formulations of Hernia

Bala-Eranda

A decoction prepared with Eranda Taila (Castor oil) and Bala is very effective in curing hernia pain and sensation. This also help to alleviate distention and flatulence.

Radnadi Kwatha

Mixing castor oil with any of the following ingredients can help get relief from symptoms of hernia-

- Rasma- Pluchea lanceolata
- Yashtimadhu- Licorice
- Guduchi- Tinospora cordifolia
- Erandamula- roots of the castor plant
- Bala- Sida cordifolia
- Aeagwadha- Cassia fistula
- Gokshura- Tribulus Terrestris
- Patola- Pointed gourd
- Vasa- Adhatoda vasica

Vishala Kashaya

Some people have reported that after using decoction prepared with powder of roots of Citrullus colocynthis mixed with castor oil/milk has been effective.

Pippalyadi Lepa and Devadarvadi Pralepa

Some pastes made from long pepper, cumin seeds, jujube, dried cow dung, help in preparing pippalyadi lepa can also help in getting relief from a hernia.

External Treatment for Hernia in Ayurveda

Pathya

- Samshodhana
- Vasti Karma- Therapeutic enemas

- Raktamokshana- Bloodletting
- Sweda karma- sweating therapy, sweating or sudation
- Lepa- appointments, application of medicinal pastes
- Vankshana Daha- Giving heat near the bulging area.
- Bahu sira vyadha
- Shastra vidhi
- Eranda taila
- Aruna or red variety of rice
- Vamana
- Dhanwa amisha
- Ushna jala
- Takra

Dietary and Lifestyle changes for Hernia Patient as per Ayurveda

Surgical treatments such as open surgery and laparoscopic surgeries are available in modern science. However, Ayurveda medicines for hernia have been helping patients from the long run if followed strictly. Ayurvedic guidelines to prevent hernia are as follows :-

- *Break your meals*
Ayurveda says to divide your meals into small portions rather than eating large meals twice a day.
- *Take time to eat*
Make sure you chew every bite properly before swallowing. It doesn't matter how hungry you are or if your fellow companion finishes up early.
- *Keep yourself hydrated*
Water is an essential component of our body and to maintain that natural balance it is advisable to drink lots of water and other non-alcoholic & non-aerated fluids.
- *Stop drinking water in-between your meals*
Drinking water between meals can interfere with normal digestion. It is better

to have a glass of water five minutes before your meal and only an hour after the meal.

- *Combination*

It is important to keep a check on the food combination. Avoid eating raw and processed food together. Moreover, the cooked food should not be overcooked as it destroys the essential vitamins.

- *Vegetable and fruit juice*

In your daily food habits, indulge in having fresh vegetables and fruit juices.

- *Wholegrain foods*

In addition to vegetables and fruit juices, include more fiber, whole grains, and cereals in your diet rather than processed foods.

- *Physical activity*

In this sedentary lifestyle, take some time out to perform some physical activity such as walking, climbing stairs, yoga or exercise.

- *Sleep*

Do not sleep just after having your meals and only after 2 hours.

Conclusion

This quasi-experimental trial studied the effect of yoga therapy in subjects with reducible inguinal hernia. The result shows that yoga therapy is significantly effective in the management of reducible inguinal hernia in males.

Taylor *et al.*, concluded that surgical site infection after groin hernia repair is common and large clinical trials are required to determine whether the use of prophylactic antibiotics reduces the incidence of infection.[4]

Kalliomaki *et al.*, concludes that the possibility of long-term pain as an outcome after hernia operations should be taken into consideration in the decision making prior to operation for hernia since in majority of patients pain in the operated groin interfered with daily activities.[5]

Bay-Nielsen, *et al.*, concluded that one year after inguinal hernia repair pain is common and is associated with functional impairment in more than half of those with pain. The question of postoperative pain needs to be discussed with patients when considering surgical intervention for an inguinal hernia.[6]

Bay-Nielsen, *et al.*, concluded that chronic pain is common after primary inguinal hernia repair in young males and there is no difference in the pain associated with open and non-mesh repair.[7]

The results of some studies[4-7] explain the complications associated with surgical repair of hernia. So hernia can be better treated without surgery if it is not an acute health threat. Ancient health science will be much helpful, cost effective and can be used as an adjunct to physiotherapy or medical practise. The results of current study are also supported by the following articles.

Millikan K and Deziel D concluded in their study on the cost-effective management of hernia that exercises are more beneficial than any kind of modern surgery available for the management of hernia. When compared with cost effectiveness and complications, exercises are the best methods of treatment for hernia.[9,10]

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