

Ayurveda: A Promising Therapy for Dyslexia

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ABSTRACT

Dyslexia is quite a common learning disability. It is defined as the inability of a child to attain the language skills such as reading, writing and spelling with respect to their age and level of intelligence. Dyslexia negatively affects the esteem of the child, his peer and family relations and child's ability to grow and develop in a normal healthy fashion. Ayurveda offers a support system for the management as well as hampering further development and eventually reversal of dyslexia in most cases.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Dyslexia, Disability

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INTRODUCTION

Dyslexia is a very common learning disorder. It is the inability of a child to learn language skills of reading, writing, spellings, comprehension etc. in accordance with his age and level of intelligence. Dyslexic children find it difficult to relate an alphabet to its sound hence making it difficult for them to comprehend a word. Reversing letters for instance b for d, q for p is a common practice. It has been reported that approximately 10 percent of school children suffer dyslexia while actual prevalence is said to be at 28 percent in all.

The exact cause of dyslexia is still unknown. It is believed that apart from family history, premature birth or low birth weight, exposure to certain drugs during pregnancy or some kind of infection may also interfere with brain development in fetus. This results in troubled learning specially a foreign language. Signs of dyslexia are difficult to recognise before a child goes to school. It is mostly in schools that we are able to compare a child's progress with the rest of others. Here, the dyslexic symptoms become more apparent. Since there is still no known cure for dyslexia early assessment and recognition really helps.

Ayurveda gives much hope and promise as compared to the popular system of medicine. It applies its basic philosophy here as well. Ayurveda believes that Learning is a process of coordination of various cognitive and motor organs, senses, psyche and intellect. All these functions of the body are governed by three doshas namely Vaata, pitta, and kapha and three gunas i.e. Satv, Raj, and Tam.

Ayurvedic Medicines Benefitting Learning Process and Memory Enhancement:

BRAHMI:

1. In an experimental study in Gandhi Colony, Chandigarh, 10 special learning disabled kids were given different doses of brahmi powder orally for different periods of time. They were also given Brahmi squash for occasional consumption. Their progress was monitored over different periods of time. A significant improvement started showing after a period of 3 months; though fatigue relief showed even earlier. The subsequent results showed improvement in associative learning as well as recall.
2. A study was conducted in a large family of 12 where kids as well as adults were given BRAHMI extract twice daily, according to their age and body weight. They were observed for a period of six months and evaluated on various psychological attributes. The outcome was quite encouraging. The family improved on immunity overall, with less anxiety in everyone, reporting more clarity in mind, improvement in concentration and a significant reduction in behavioral issues.
3. Based on the above study, another study was conducted over a large group of normal individuals of age group 60 plus, where 60 subjects of both sexes were chosen randomly. Out of these 60, thirty five showed some extent of memory loss whereas the rest were normally aging. The subjects from both the groups were given Brahmi extracts along with a single daily dose of Giloy syrup and consumption of Jyotishmati Oil in milk for six months. The results showed remarkable improvement in mental as well as physical health of both the groups, especially in the memory deficit group. There was a noticeable reduction in the behavioral issues as well, in the people suffering from memory malfunction.

SHANKHAPUSHPI

Shankhapushpi is known with many other similar names. It is easily available in the market in various forms like tablets, capsules, powder, juice, oil or syrup; but syrup is the most popular one. The syrup is a compound with four parts shankhapushpi and one part brahmi.

A controlled group of 12 adults aged between 60 to 70; eight females and four males, with age related mental issues such as fatigue, forgetfulness and poor concentration; was taken. They were all given 1 gram of shankhapushpi in two doses daily. Over a period of twelve weeks, all these adults reported improved focus and retention, reduced anxiety, a boost up in problem solving ability and other cognitive abilities.

The outcome inspired for a subsequent study that was conducted on dyslexic children in the age group of 7 to 11 years, in Divya Special School, Panipat. Out of 78 kids, 60 children were taken. Each one of them was given 2 spoons of syrup twice daily with water, after meals. The results after six months, were significant not only for dyslexics but also for the children with other type of disorders specially ADHD. The syrup improved them in different ways and in various degrees. It improved their physical health by boosting their immunity. There was a reduction in their hyperactivity and nervousness and depression. The herb acts on brain and nerves enabling to calm the mind and lowering anxiety. It also stimulates the intelligence quotient at the same time. Thus, the powerful combination of the two ayurvedic herbs (shankhapushpi and brahmi) acts as a super 'brain stimulant'.

JATAMANSI

It is more of a memory restorative medicine that is generally used for elderly people with dementia. Studies show that it acts positively on dyslexics; helping them recall better than before i.e. before the intervention of the medicine.

ASHWAGANDHA

Ashwagandha is a common Ayurvedic herb that is generally used as a stress -buster; However, it can also boost brain functioning. Ashwagandha can be given to individuals of all age groups. In Dyslexics, it acts as a brain -tonic.

GUDUCHI (GILOY)

GiLOY can boost mental health. Many researches show that the extracts of GiLOY consumed can enhance dopamine levels, reduce pressure on the brain giving soothing effect. It helps in repairing the damaged brain cells due to its strong anti-inflammatory properties. Therefore, it has the ability to reverse brain damage. This shows a whole lot of

promise, not only for dyslexics, but any type of brain dysfunction. GiLOY, along with other ayurvedic drugs, has proven to be a 'wonder drug' for dyslexics.

JYOTISHMATI

Jyotishmati oil has been used for memory disorders since time immemorial. The soothing impact on the nervous system is caused by its properties to affect Neurotransmitters and dopamine level in the brain. Jyotishmati oil was administered to 45 children of Divya Special School, Panipat. Depending on the age and body weight, a dosage of 5 to 15 drops was administered in milk; twice daily for a period of 16 weeks. A significant improvement in the attention span and recall of memory was noted. Also, there were less behavioral issues.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Dyslexia is a learning Disability where a child is unable to grasp language skills of reading, writing, comprehending despite of repeated teaching.
2. It is due to the unusual brain functioning for causes still unknown.
3. According to Ayurveda, it can be managed, treated and reversed, following the basic TRIGUNA and TRIDOSHA philosophy.
4. All the intellect promoting drugs can be successfully used individually or in combinations and as compounds; for treating Dyslexia.
5. The above Report indicates that intellect promoting drugs like Brahmi, GiLOY, Ashwagandha, Shankhapushpi, Jyotishmati etc. hold a strong promise to successfully manage and treat Dyslexia.

This Report can be used for further clinical researches.

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