

Assessing the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatment protocol in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Management - A Case Report

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The most common neurobehavioral condition in childhood is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It disrupts social, intellectual, and vocational performance and is distinguished by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. In Ayurveda, diseases connected to psychological and behavioural problems are discussed in the Unmada chapter. So, based on the signs and symptoms, it could be associated with Unmada (Vata Pitta Unmada). The current case was conducted at Kaumarabhritya OPD & IPD of Rishikul Campus, Haridwar to evaluate the efficiency of an Ayurvedic therapy protocol in the management of ADHD in children. Ayurvedic treatments such as Kosthashodhana, Basti (Matra Basti), Pichu, and Nasya were used, and assessments were conducted before and after treatment and during follow-up visits.

Keywords: ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Unmada, behavioural disorder

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Introduction

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the psychosomatic disorders that affect children in pediatric clinics. This condition affects 5-10% of the Indian population, with men having a higher prevalence. Recent functional MRI brain studies indicate that the disorder may be caused by atypical functioning in the frontal lobes, basal ganglia, corpus callosum and cerebral vermis. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a brain disorder characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that impairs functioning or development.[1]

Inattention means that a person wanders off topic, lacks persistence, struggles to stay concentrated, and is unorganised; these issues are not caused by resistance or a lack of comprehension.

Hyperactivity refers to a person's tendency to move around continually, even in inappropriate contexts, or to fidget, tap, or chat excessively. Adults may experience intense restlessness or exhaust others by excessive activity.

Impulsivity refers to a person's fast behaviours that occur in the moment without prior consideration and may have a significant risk of injury, or a desire for immediate benefits, or an inability to wait for satisfaction. An impulsive person may be socially intrusive, excessively interrupting others, or make crucial decisions without considering long-term implications.

Diagnosis - DSM-V Criteria Hyperactivity Impulsivity (9 Criteria)

- Fidgets with hands or feet, or squirms in seat
- Leaves the seat when he should be seated
- Runs about or climbs excessively and inappropriately
- Cannot play or engage in leisure activities quietly
- Always 'on the go' or 'driven by a motor'
- Talks excessively
- Blurts out an answer before question is completed
- Has difficulty awaiting a turn
- Interrupts or intrudes on others' conversation or games

Inattention (9 Criteria)

- Careless with detail
- Fails to sustain attention in tasks
- Appears not to listen
- Does not finish the instructed tasks
- Poor at organizing tasks
- Avoids tasks that require sustained mental effort
- Loose things
- Easily distracted by extraneous stimuli,
- Forgetful in daily activities

Case Report

A 7-year-old Male child with complaints of Difficulty in speaking as per developmental age (to make proper sentence), Difficulty in hearing since 3 years of age., hyperactivity in day-to-day activities. According to patient's attendant, they noticed that patient is unable to speak properly as per his developmental age & difficulty in hearing since 3 age of, he had also complained of hyperactivity in day-to-day activities since age of 3 to 4. He took allopathic medicine, where he got mild relief, but symptoms persist. So, with these complaints, patient came to Rishikul campus for further improvement.

General Condition

General condition - lean and thin
Build & nutrition - average

Vitals

Table 1: Vital sign findings

Vital Sign	Findings
Heart rate	76/min
Respiratory rate	16/min
Temperature	98.2 F
SPO2	98%

General Examination

Developmental History

Gross motor and fine motor development were normal as per the chronological age, but Language and Social development were delayed.

Family History

Non-Consanguineous marriage. Your younger sister has no problem.

Table 2: General Examination

Height - 118cms	Expected height - 119cms
Weight - 19.2 kg	Expected weight - 22 kgs
Cyanosis - Not present	Jaundice - Not present
Anemia - Not seen	Clubbing - Not seen
Edema - Absent	Head & Face - B/L symmetrical.
Lymph nodes - Not enlarged	Tongue - Not coated
Mouth & Throat - Tonsils not enlarged, dentation proper.	Neck - Trachea centrally placed.
Nails - Smooth with no grooves, Pinkish white	Hairs - Thick & shiny black

Birth History**Antenatal History**

- No H/O gestational DM, HTN to mother.
- Mother was on regular ANC.
- Mother took all the nutrients and supplements during pregnancy.

Natal History

- Full-term NVD at the hospital.
- The baby cried immediately after birth.
- Birth weight- 2.8 kg

Postnatal History

- H/O Pneumonia
- The patient was admitted to the NICU at the age of 1 month for 5 days due to pneumonia.

Personal History**Diet** - Vegetarian diet

Qualitative - Rice, dal, chapati, vegetable, milk, fruits.

Quantitative - Breakfast: 1-2 chapati, ½ katori veg

Lunch - Dal, rice – 1 bowl

Dinner - 2 chapati, ½ katori veg, 1 glass milk.

Appetite - Normal

Bowel - Regular (Consistency - semi-solid with Frequency - 1 time/day).

Micturition - Normal**Physical Activity** - Increased**Sleep** - Sound sleep (approx. 7-8 hrs a day).**Addiction** - Mobile phone usage (3-4 hrs a day)**Anthropometry**

Weight - 19.2 kg

Head circumference - 50 cms

Chest circumference - 55 cms

Mid upper arm circumference Rt and Lt - 19 cms, 19 cms

Systemic Examination

Examination of the Cardiovascular system, Respiratory system, and Per abdomen shows no deformity. Gait was normal. Muscle tone and texture were normal.

Central Nervous Examination

The patient was conscious, inattentive, easily distracted, had poor eye contact, did not obey commands, was irritable, could not speak even two words, could not identify persons, body parts, numbers, colours, and had low memory power, and could not write.

Samprapti Ghataka

Dosha - Vata- Pitta Pradhana

Dooshya - Rasa, Manas

Agni - Vishamagni

Udbhavasthana - Pakwashaya

Adhisthana - Shiras

Vyakthasthana - Sarvashareera

Srotas - Manovahasrotas

Srotodushti - Sanga and Vimargagamana

Rogamarga - Abyantara

Rogaswabhaba - Chirakari

Sadya Asadyata - Krichra Sadhya

Asthavidha Pariksha**Table 3: Asthavidha Pariksha**

Nadi: Vata Pardhan Pitta Anubhandi
Mala: Nirama
Mutra: Samanya Pravrtti
Jiwha: Samanya
Shabda: Aspastha
Sparsha: Ruksh, Samsheetoshana
Drikka: Samanya
Aakriti: Samanya

Treatment

DOA	Panchakarma Given	Shamana Aushadi	Observation
1st visit - 02/08/2024	Shiro Abhyanga with Bala Thailam	1. Brahmi Vati - 65mg Sariwadi Churna - 65mg Bala Churna - 500mg Ashwagandha Churna - 250mg Prawal Bhasma -65mg Vachadi Churna - 65mg - 1*2 with Honey + Sauf Arka 2. Samvardhan Ghrita - 3.5 ml with Honey empty stomach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mild decrease in hyperactivity. ■ Slight increase in concentration.
2nd visit - 07/08/2024	<p>Advice for Speech Therapy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sarvanga Abhyanga with Ksheerabala Oil ■ Shiro Pichu with Brahmi Oil <p>× 15 days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shiro Abhyanga with Bala Thailam for 7 days 	1. Brahmi Vati - 65mg Sariwadi Churna - 65mg Bala Churna - 500mg Ashwagandha Churna - 250mg Prawal Bhasma - 65mg Vachadi Churna - 65mg - 1*2 with Honey + Sauf Arka 2. Samvardhan Ghrita - 3.5 ml with Honey empty stomach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Able to concentrate on particular thing for more time ■ Social activeness increased. ■ Able to follow some instructions given by parents.
3rd visit - 11/09/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sarvanga Abhyanga with Ksheerabala Oil ■ Shiro Pichu with Brahmi Oil ■ Matra basti with Brahmi Oil × 15 days 	1. Brahmi Vati - 65mg Sariwadi Churna - 65mg Bala Churna - 500mg Ashwagandha Churna - 250mg Prawal Bhasma - 65mg Vachadi Churna - 65mg - 1*2 with Honey + Sauf Arka 2. Saraswatarishta with Gold - 10 ml with same amount of water BID 3. Yeshtimadhu Ghrita 2 Drops each nostril OD 4. Brahmi Ghrita 5ml empty Stomach OD 5. Syp. Brento forte 10ml BID - for 15 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Irritability was decreased. ■ Able to spell more words than earlier ■ Concentration and memory is increased than the earlier. ■ Hyperactivity decreased
4th visit - 19/10/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sarvanga Abhyanga with Ksheerabala Oil ■ Shiro Pichu with Brahmi Oil ■ Matra Basti with Brahmi Oil <p>× 15 days</p>	1. Brahmi Vati - 65mg Sariwadi Churna - 65mg Bala Churna - 500mg Ashwagandha Churna - 250mg Prawal Bhasma - 65mg Vachadi Churna - 65mg - 1*2 with Honey + Sauf Arka 2. Saraswatarishta with Gold - 10 ml with same amount of water BID 3. Yeshtimadhu Ghrita 2 Drops each nostril OD 4. Brahmi Ghrita 5ml empty Stomach OD 5. Syp. Brento forte 10ml BID - for 15 days 6. Dadhimashtak Churna- ¼ tab BID for 3 days 7. Chitrakadi Vati 1 tab TID for 3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Obeys the commands and does the assigned work properly. ■ Concentration on particular thing has been increased a lot. ■ Able to recognize her family members and friends.



Figure 1: Shiro Pichu

Discussion

ADHD is related to *Pitta* and *Vata Doshas*, and we found that *Vata* and *Pitta* were prevalent in this case. So, the treatment approach aimed primarily to restore *Vata-Pitta* balance. ADHD is a neurobehavioral condition; hence, medicines with *Medya* characteristics were employed. We had planned for the *Sarvanga Abyanga*, *Shiro Pichu* and *Matrabasti* in each sitting.

The probable mode of action of the treatment is as follows:

Mode of action of *Abhyanga*

Abhyanga is a form of *Ayurvedic* therapy which involves massaging the whole body with warm medicated oils. Oiling the body helps in the pacification of *Vata*, which is responsible for hyperactive behavior in ADHD patients. Massage therapy has been studied in several medical and psychiatric illnesses with positive results.

It can be successfully used in ADHD patients, as it has also been shown to increase serotonin levels, which might help modulate elevated dopamine levels thought to occur in children with ADHD.

Mode of action of *Shiropichu*

Application of oil, such as *Ksheerbala*, *Ashwagandha*, in the head causes the pacification of *Vata*, which is responsible for the impulsive behaviour, and it is also called *Indriya-Prasadana* (sense organs able to function normally). In a study, significant brain functional activation changes and increased cerebral blood flow were observed in participants who received a massage. These factors may improve cerebral function and enhance alertness and concentration, especially with the *Shirodhara*, which has well-established relaxing and anxiolytic actions. In a study on ADHD patients, the *Shirodhara* procedure helped decrease auditory and visual reaction time and increase attention span.

Mode of action of *Matra Basti*

According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Basti* is regarded as *Ardha Chikitsa*, the most effective treatment for *Vata*. *Vata controls Rajoguna*[2] which is prominent in ADHD. So, if *Vata* is controlled, *Rajo Guna* will also be regulated. *Basti* operates on the entire body via the gut-brain axis and on the brain, helping to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. To manage *Vata Pitta*, we employed *Brahmi Taila*, which has *Medya* properties.

Shamana Aushadi

After purificatory measures, the morbid *Doshas* from the body will be eliminated. After that, giving the *Shaman Aushadi* containing gold, which possesses the *Medya* properties, will act on the brain cells and help increase concentration and memory power. So, we advised *Brahmi Vati*, *Brahmi Ghrita*, *Saraswataarista* with gold, etc.

- **Brahmi Vati** - Helps to balance *Vata* and gives a calming effect on the nervous system.
- **Sarivadi Churna** is used to treat hearing problems. Its antimicrobial action helps fight bacterial infections in the ear.
- **Ashwagandha Churna** - *Ashwagandha* can reduce symptoms of anxiety, improve attention and impulse control.
- **Pravala Bhasma** - They balance *Vata Dosh* and improve physical strength and immunity.

- **Vachadi Churna** - *Vacha* is highly used in neurological disorders and managing speech disorders due to its Vata balancing and *Medhya*
- **Yashtimadhu Churna** - *Yashtimadhu* balances the *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha* and is used as a *Medhya Rasayana*.

Conclusion

The case was diagnosed as *Vata-Pittaja Unmada*, and treatment has been planned accordingly. Treatment included *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Shiropichu*, and *Matra Basti*, followed by *Shaman Aushadi* with *Medya* drugs and *Pratimarsha Nasya*, along with speech therapy. As ADHD is *Yapya Vyadhi*, an attempt was made to increase the quality of life for the child and the family, and it gave satisfactory results, for which even the parents are happy.

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