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A study on the role of Mud therapy for the maintenance of health

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ABSTRACT

The elements of nature are Earth, Water, Space, Fire and Air. All these elements are linked to the possibility of human life on Earth, and also contain compounds, minerals and nutrients that can improve our health. Mud, soil or Earth is one of the most important elements of these and contains a lot of vital nutrients and minerals, essential for the body. Mud therapy is very simple and effective treatment modality. The mud used for this should be clean and taken from 3 to 4 ft. depth from the surface of the ground. There should be no contamination of stone pieces or chemical manures etc. in the mud. Mud is beneficial for our health and also it plays an important role in women's health.^[1]

Key words: Mud, Mud therapy, Health & Women's Health.

INTRODUCTION

Mud corresponds to *Prithvi* (earth), one of the elements among *Panchamahabhutas*. It is considered as one of the ancient wisdom of universe in curing sickness and also for rejuvenation of health. Mud therapy in Naturopathy involves scientific use of moistened earth in a proper manner; so as to benefit the body from within. History suggests the usage of mud for its therapeutic characteristics hails back to the ancient medieval age. At that time it was used as a valuable therapeutic agent. Emanuel Felke, a German therapist tried to restore the Mud Therapy and nicknamed it as 'Clay Pastor.' Adolf Just, one of the pioneers of natural cure believed that all diseases

will be cured on the basis of sleeping and lying on earth. Italian scientists used thermal mud from hot spring in arthritic patients.^[2] Between the 17th and 19th centuries, mud therapy became popular in Europe to treat chronic illness made with mineral waters and mudpacks. During the second half of the 20th century, pharmacology developed the idea of Mud Therapy to be considered as an alternative medicine and used in spa treatments.^[3] The use of mud from the Dead Sea in Israel is known from millions of years ago prescribed for arthritis patients and psoriasis.

Egyptian Queen Cleopatra always experimented with natural beauty resources, established her own spa on the shores of the Dead Sea. Father of Indian Naturopathy Mahatma Gandhi was found to be a firm believer of Naturopathy in treating diseases with nature. He used to apply mud directly on the affected parts of body and to relieve constipation. These days, naturopathy practitioners are increasingly making use of mud or moistened earth for treating various health problems. It has been found to be effective in curing a wide variety of disorders, such as conjunctivitis, congestion, headaches, skin problems, glaucoma etc. Mud therapy in naturopathy involves scientific use of moistened earth in a proper manner, so as to benefit

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the body from within. Read on and find out how it actually works.^[4]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To analyze the importance of mud therapy in general health promotion and to highlight a research on its role in infertility.

Mud Bath

Mud may be applied to the patient in sitting or lying position. This helps to improve the skin condition by increasing the circulation and energizing the skin tissues. Care should be taken to avoid catching cold during the bath. Afterwards, the patient must be thoroughly washed with cold water jet spray. If the patient feels chill, warm water should be used. The patient is, then, dried quickly and transferred to a warm bed. The duration of mud bath may be 45 to 60 minutes.

Benefits

- The effects of mud are refreshing, invigorating, and vitalizing.
- For wounds and skin diseases, application of mud is the only true bandage.^[5]
- Mud therapy is used for giving coolness to body.
- It dilutes and absorbs the toxic substances of body and ultimately eliminates them from body.
- Mud is used successfully in different diseases like constipation, headache due to tension, high blood pressure, skin diseases etc.
- Gandhiji used to take mud pack to get rid of constipation

Preparation of Mud Pack

Mud packs are made with clay that is obtained from 10 centimeters under the earth. It is made sure that the mud does not contain pebbles, compost or any impurities. It is poured into warm water to form a smooth paste.^[6] The mixture is left to stand in order to cool and spread afterwards into a cloth strip that can vary in size as per needs. Generally, black soil

from around water bodies is regarded as suitable for mud therapy.^[7]

How is it applied?

Cooled mud is poured into a cloth strip and made into a bandage. This is placed over the affected area of the body, and covered with a protective material such as flannel. For adults, the mud pack can be around 20 X 10 X 2.5 cm in dimensions. The dimensions of the mud treatment cloth should vary on the basis of the patients' needs. The body region that is to be treated thus has to be fomented at first for around 5 or 10 minutes until it is heated up well enough. It is then that mud is directly applied over the affected area for 5 – 15 minutes, based on the response that is needed.

Why it works?

Excess amount of heat places stress on the system and gives rise to various disorders. Soil is found to retain moisture for a longer period, and when applied on the body it can cool down the system. It technically soaks up heat from the system. It is found to be effectual in eliminating excess heat from the body. It helps in the degeneration of morbid matter.

Mud therapy helps detox and improve digestion.^[8]

Mud, when applied to the body, cools down the body, and dilutes, absorbs and eliminates toxins from the body. Mud therapy improves metabolism and increases circulation, and keeps problems like heat strokes away that are commonly caused due to summer heat.

Mud therapy relieves headaches and fever

Headaches can be caused due to dehydration, spending long hours in the heat, and can also be a symptom of a heat stroke. Mud therapy can be used to relieve headaches. They cool down the head, and a thick mud pack on the head is recommended to relieve headaches immediately caused due to excessive heat. Mud therapy can also be used to provide relief from other symptoms of heat strokes like high fever by applying a mud pack of the abdomen, apart from the forehead.

Good hair conditioner

The dry heat of the summer season can make hair dry, and cause breakage, hair fall and damage to the hair. The heat can make your hair devoid of any moisture, making them frizzy. Mud therapy can be used as a conditioner to provide moisture and nourishment for your hair and improve hair health.

Mud therapy important for skin health

Mud therapy can prevent and treat damage caused to the skin due to excessive heat. Exposure to high heat can cause acne, blemishes, dark spots, tanning, early signs of ageing, skin allergies, rashes, redness, etc. all these problems can be prevented and treated by the use of a mud pack on the skin, especially the face. Multanimitti, is one of the most popular mud face packs used to treat such skin problems.^[9]

Natural fertility treatments made using healing mud and water from a warm lake in Romania are helping hundreds of women a year to get pregnant.^[10]

- Research by former IVF doctor shows a pregnancy success rate of more than 30% in patients treated using the Romanian mud.
- Dr. Vasilescu George has pioneered the fertility treatments and research into them over the last six years for Ensana – a group of specialist health spas that fuse professional medicine with local natural resources like thermal waters and muds.
- The all-natural treatments use the healing mud and water from Bear Lake in Sovata, Romania, which is Europe's largest naturally-warm lake known as the "Transylvanian Dead Sea".
- The treatments involve both external and internal treatments for women including bathing in the unique waters and applying a natural tampon made with mud from the lake.
- Bear Lake contains naturally occurring human-like Estrogen and Progesterone hormones, as well as high amounts of salts, minerals and organic substances. These enhance the female reproductive system and boost fertility.

- Romanian patients have been coming to Sovata for almost a century to benefit from the anecdotal fertility-enhancing properties of the lake, but this is the first time the naturally-occurring fertility benefits have been documented in detail.

Research by the gynecologist for Sovata Ensana Health Spa Hotel suggests fertility treatments for women, made using natural healing mud and waters from a warm lake in Transylvania, Romania, could be helping as many as 1 in 3 women treated, to conceive. Dr. Vasilescu George, who is a former IVF doctor, has tracked data over a six-year period between May 2013 - November 2019, Dr George has treated 1904 patients for infertility issues, and 508 (30.9%) of them have conceived as a direct result of the treatment. In 2011, tests on the mud and waters from Bear Lake analyzed by a lab in Budapest revealed that it contained human-like Estrogen and Progesterone hormones, which are critical in fertility treatment because they modulate the female reproductive system. Subsequent blood tests on patients treated using the lake's natural resources revealed a correlating increase not only in their Estrogen and Progesterone levels, but also in their levels of FSH - the human egg growth hormone They also revealed an anti inflammatory effect on female reproductive organs, which is especially beneficial for women with fertility issues linked to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease. Tests have also revealed that the high salt levels of the lake's water, which is also used to treat fertility issues alongside the mud, have an anti-inflammatory effect - enlarging fallopian tubes, removing adhesions, increasing immunity - all of which have been confirmed using ultrasound. All patients who visit the team at SovataEnsana Health Spa Hotel in Sovata first have a consultation with a qualified doctor before being prescribed a course of treatment. Typically, patients are encouraged to stay for 10 days where they will experience a range of treatments including vaginal mud tampons, salt water vaginal irrigation (using highly concentrated salt water from Bear Lake), salt water baths, external mud packs and massage. "Mud tampons" are key to the treatment. The mud taken from Bear Lake is mixed and heated in

a special device in order to obtain a sterile cream, then a small amount is inserted and shaped into a small cotton bag. This 'mud tampon' is then introduced into the vagina and it ensures a slow, gradual release of the mud in contact with the walls of the vagina.

CONCLUSION

Earth being one of the *Pancha Mahabhootas* it is a part of human body. Black mud is very chief, it absorbs all the colours of the sun and conveys them to the body. Its four thermal, mechanical, chemical and electrical effects, help in preventive, promotive and treatment in many diseases. As mud is scientific and evidence-based research are need of the day.

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