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Obesity & its homoeopathic approach

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Abstract

Obesity is a condition where a person has accumulated so much body fat it might have a negative effect on their health. If a person body weight is at least 20% higher than it should be he/she is considered obese. Excess of weight increases the mortality due to the complications arising out of it. Obesity also acts like a precursor of many dangerous systemic illnesses like Diabetes Mellitus, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases, etc. and thus knowing its cause and treatment is of prime importance. 5% to 10% weight loss can significantly improve health, quality of life, and economic burden of an individual and a country as a whole. Homoeopathic medicines don't have any side effect on the body unlike conventional treatments. Homoeopathic medicines are extremely effective in reducing weight by speeding up the metabolic rate. This article emphasis on incidence, etiology, pathogenesis, clinical features and management of Obesity with discussion on homeopathic medicines indicated in this clinical condition.

Keywords: Obesity, Body Mass Index, Homoeopathic Treatment, Constitutional, Weight Reduction

Introduction

According to WHO overweight and obesity are defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health. A crude population measure of obesity is the body mass index (BMI) [1].

Recent studies have reported that globally, more than 1.9 billion adults are overweight and 650 million are obese. Approximately 2.8 million deaths are reported as a result of being obese. In India, more than 135 million individual were affected by obesity. The prevalence of Obesity in India varies due to age, gender, geographical environment, socio-economic status, etc. According to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) -INDIAB study 2015, prevalence rate of obesity and central obesity are varies from 11.8% to 31.3% and 16.9% - 36.3% respectively. In India, abdominal obesity is one of the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease [2].

Types of obesity

In individual, two types of phenotypes appear:

- Generalized obesity (pear shaped)
- Abdominal obesity (apple shaped) [3].

Teenage obesity: Obesity in teenagers mainly due to their inactivity and diet. Teenage obesity cannot only create medical problems but may also lead to psychological problems. [4]

Aetiology

Some of the major causes are:

- **Environmental factors-** lifestyle behavior (sedentary lifestyles).
- **Overeating-** a person eating a high fat or a carbohydrate diet tends to store more access calories.
- **Slow metabolism-** women have less muscle than men as result women have a slower metabolism than men.
- **Culture-** food habits depends upon the culture of society.
- **Psychological factors-** people feel that they cannot control how much they eat (depression).
- **Economic background-** it is common amongst the rich in our country who consumes lots of proteins, fats and carbohydrates.
- **Pregnancy-** during pregnancy, a woman may develop adiposity increasing the body

Weight to about 4-5 kg and this may go on increasing a subsequent pregnancy.

- Certain medication.
- **Endocrinal cause** - Hypothyroidism, Cushing's syndrome, Insulin resistance, PCOS, Congenital disorders, Diabetes etc.

Genetic factors

- Genes can make one or more person susceptible to gain weight.
- Genes affects the hormones involved in fat regulation (leptin), metabolic rate, blood glucose, metabolism, fat storage etc ^[5].
- Leptin in typical obesity: The vast majority of obese people have increased leptin level but do not have mutations of either Leptin or its receptor. They appear, therefore, to have a form of functional 'Leptin Resistance' ^[6]

Clinical Features

- Body weight progressive increases.
- Alteration in the contour and configuration of body.
- Uniformly deposition of fat throughout the body.
- Adiposity is marked in the legs and extends upto the waist.
- As the body becomes heavier, the movements are slow and due to low vital capacity, slightest exertion may give rise to Dyspnoea.
- Menstrual disturbances.
- Difficulty in sitting in squatting position, getting up or sitting in a chair or a vehicle.
- Clothes feeling tight and needing a larger size ^[5].

Diagnostic criteria for obesity

- Body weight >20% above the ideal body weight.
- Ponderal index <12.
- Waist circumference- women >35 inch and men >40 inch are considered as obese.
- A fat fold thickness >2.5cm at the tip of scapula in males or mid triceps in females

BMI = weight (kg)/ [Height (m)]² (m = mass, h= height)^[5].

Normal values:

BMI	Nutritional status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5-24.9	Normal weight
25.0-29.9	Pre-obesity
30.0-34.9	Obesity class I
35.0-39.9	Obesity class II
Above 40	Obesity class III ^[1]

Investigations

Some baseline investigations for obesity to exclude possible underlying causes of obesity.

- Biochemical Profile
- Full Blood count
- Fasting lipid Profile
- Fasting plasma glucose
- Serum uric acid
- Serum T_s & TSH

Further investigation depending on clinical picture-

- 24 hours urine free cortisol

- ECG & chest X ray
- Respiratory function Tests ^[7].

Management

- **Diet**-Take low fat and very low calorie diets.
- **Exercise**- walking, running and cycling are the most effective to reduce body fat.
- **Weight loss program**-promote lifestyle changes and diet modification.

Treatment

Conventional treatment

- Medication.
- Surgery- Bariatric surgery for severe obese (BMI>40) ^[8]

Complications

- Mechanical- Due to heavy weight of the body, weight bearing joints osteoarthritis changes.
- Infection- Due to exaggeration of skin creases cleanliness cannot be maintained.
- Cardiovascular- atherosclerosis may develop.
- Metabolic- Diabetes, Cholesterol, Calculus, etc.
- Psychic complications.^[5]

Homoeopathic viewpoint

Homoeopathy has a great scope in the management of obesity because of its DYNAMIC, INDIVIDUAL AND HOLISTIC concept. Homoeopathy treats the psychosomatic disease, more effectively and successfully than any other systems. Homoeopathic treatment is more advantageous in cases of functional disturbances like obesity and effective in preventing and treating complications associated with it. Obesity and its homoeopathic treatment must be in the context of the triad (remedy, diet and exercise/sleep).

Dr. Samuel Hahnemann recognized the intrinsic role of sensible eating in maintaining good health ^[3].

Homoeopathic Treatment

Constitutional medicines can help one lose weight by improving digestion, elimination and metabolism.

There are numbers of drugs in our materia medica which we can use therapeutically. Some of these important medicines with their characteristics symptoms are as follows:

1. Antimonium carbonicum

This remedy is found in rather stout patients who are always tired and weary, catches cold easily. Obese patients with a weak heart, wheezing, feel suffocated. Sleepiness with many condition.

2. Antimonium Crudum

Chronic indigestion. Patient can have a big appetite, eat beyond the capacity of his digestion. Gastric derangements, with tongue coated thickly white, with different complaints. Exceedingly weak condition of the body.

3. Baryta carbonica

This remedy brings aid to scrofulous children, especially if they are backward mentally and physically, are dwarfish, do not grow and develop, have scrofulous ophthalmia, swollen abdomen, take cold easily, and then always have swollen tonsils.

4. Calcarea carbonic

Constitution is fair, fatty, and flabby. Impaired nutrition being the keynote of its action, the glands, skin, and bones, being instrumental in the changes wrought. Increased perspiration, swelling of glands, scrofulous and rachitic condition, ravenous hunger.

5. Capsicum Annuum

Persons with light hair, blue eyes, nervous but stout and plethoric habit. Phlegmatic diathesis; lack of reactive forces, especially with fat people, easily exhausted; indolent, opposed to physical exertion, get homesick easily. Burning and smarting sensation in GIT.

6. Cinchona Officinalis

It is used specially for obesity treatment to reduce gluttonous appetite; indigestion after taking raw fruits and vegetables. Basically, it is used for those people who are internally very weak but obese. For stout, swarthy person; for system once robust, which have become debilitated "Broken down" from exhausting discharges. Indifferent, taciturn, gloomy.

7. Ferrum Phosphoricum

Is often prescribed in person who is oversensitive and flushes easily.

8. Fucus vesiculosus

A remedy for obesity and Non-toxic goitre; also exophthalmia. Digestion is furthered and flatulence diminished. Obstinate constipation; forehead feels as if compressed by an Iron ring. Thyroid enlargement in obese subjects.

9. Graphites

Patients who are rather stout, fair complexion with tendency to skin affections and constipation, fat, chilly and costive, with delayed menstrual history. Pressure and burning in stomach causing hunger. Tendency to obesity.

10. Ignatia Amara

Is generally prescribed in anxious and fearful, and who feel simply like eating when tense and nervous. Easily excited nature; dark hair and skin but mild disposition, quick to perceive, rapid in execution. Empty feeling in stomach not > by eating.

11. Kali Carbonicum

It is often indicated if patients are fleshy, aged people with dropsical and paretic tendencies Tubercular diathesis. Sensitive to every atmospheric change, and intolerance of cold weather. Dark hair, lax fibre, inclined to obesity.

12. Lycopodium clavatum

It is mainly used to treat the disturbed liver and digestive functions to decrease the craving for sweets. Corresponds to Grauvogel's carbo-nitrogenoid constitution. Functional power weakening, with failures of the digestive powers, Earthy complexion, uric acid diathesis, etc.

13. Natrium sulphuricum

A liver remedy especially indicated for the so-called hydrogenoid constitution, where the complaints are such as are due to living in damp houses, basements, cellars. Feels

every change from dry to wet; cannot even eat plants growing near water, nor fish. Always feels best in warm, dry air^[9-11].

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