

SHORT COMMUNICATION

**NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OF NASAL POLYP :
A CASE REPORT**

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Abstract : Nasal polyp causes difficulty in breathing due to blockage of nasal passage. The pathogenesis of nasal polyposis is not known. The primary medical therapy available for nasal polyposis is steroid administration. Antihistamines, decongestants and cromolyn sodium provide little benefit. With this background of nasal polyp pathophysiology and the existing management, a case of nasal polyp was treated with the cleansing process of yoga i.e. neti kriya and naturopathy with good result. This isolated case report warrants a need for controlled clinical trial of neti kriya to establish its role in the management of nasal polyposis.

Key words : yoga naturopathy neti kriya

INTRODUCTION

Nasal polyps are caused by over production of fluid in the cells of the nasal mucus membrane resulting from conditions such as allergic rhinitis. They are harmless but if sufficiently large, can obstruct the nasal airway to make the breathing difficult. They can also lead to headache or facial pain if the ostia of sinuses are blocked with the polyp (1).

Besides surgery, there is no satisfactory medical treatment available to manage the condition (2). Oral and topical nasal steroid administration is the primary medical therapy for nasal polyposis. Antihistamines, decongestants, and cromolyn sodium offer little benefit. Immunotherapy may be useful

to treat allergic rhinitis, but when used alone, does not help resolve the existing polyps. CT and MRI scan can help diagnosing a nasal polyp (3, 4). With this background, a single case of nasal polyp was treated with non-pharmacological methods involving yoga and naturopathy and has shown good improvement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Case report

A 55 year male arrived at yoga and naturopathy clinic for his complaints of nasal obstruction and difficulty in breathing for 2 years. He was investigated and pre-diagnosed for nasal polyp and on conventional medical therapy. A recent CT scan and a follow-up

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ENT consultation was in favor of the diagnosis and a functional endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS). He had been advised pre-surgical steroidal nasal spray.

Unwilling to go for surgery, the patient visited Yoga & Naturopathy OPD functioning at the same Hospital. On examination, he was found to have blocked nose, breathlessness, constipation and disturbed sleep. CT-PNS revealed an irregular soft tissue thickening in right maxillary sinus and minimal mucosal thickening in left maxillary and frontal sinuses. There was soft tissue thickening in anterior, middle and posterior ethmoidal sinuses. The case was diagnosed as bilateral maxillary, ethmoidal and frontal sinusitis leading to formation of nasal polyps.

Treatment

The patient was advised yogic shodhan (cleansing process) through jala neti (saline nasal irrigation) along with shavasana and pranayam. A one week follow-up found the patient partially relieved. In the following week, practice of surya namaskar (a flowing series of 12 yoga postures) was also recommended. Breathing was considerably improved in the second week. A further addition of suryabhedhi pranayam was done this time with dietary advise consisting of high fibre, fresh vegetables, sprouted moong and fruit juices (Table I).

The regimen was continued for 6 months followed by a subsequent follow-up. Besides improvements in his vital signs (i.e. no constipation, normal BP, normal sleep), there was no discomfort in breathing during the follow-up period. A repeat CT scan did not

TABLE I: Summary of the treatment.

	<i>Primary treatment</i>	<i>Additional treatment</i>
1st week	Jala neti, shavasana, pranayam	
2nd week	Jala neti, shavasana, pranayam	Surya namskar
3rd week	Jala neti, shavasana, pranayam, surya namaskar	Suryabhedhi pranayam, diet advise
4th week onward	Jala neti, shavasana, pranayam, surya namaskar, suryabhedhi pranayam, diet advise	

reveal any abnormality of nasal mucosa. He was again referred to the ENT expert, who seeing no obvious pathology in his nasal cavity, cancelled the surgery.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Neti is one of the shatkarma (six cleansing practices) of yoga, practiced for internal cleansing. Jala neti is a procedure in which saline water is used to clean the nasal passages. A detailed account of the procedure is given in ancient texts and also in some recent references (5, 6, 7). Presumed benefits of jala neti include removal of mucous and pollutants from the nasal cavity allowing unobstructed flow of air. It may help in prevention and management of upper respiratory tract diseases and relieve allergies, colds and sinusitis. Mouth breathing in children can be reduced by practicing jala neti.

Jala neti relieves muscular tension of the face, nervous tics, and Bell’s palsy and helps the practitioner to maintain a fresh and youthful appearance. It has a cooling and soothing influence on the brain and is beneficial in the treatment of epilepsy and

migraine. It alleviates anxiety, anger and depression, removes drowsiness and makes the head feel light and fresh. Jala neti stimulates nerve endings in the nose, improving the activities of the brain and overall health of the individual. A balance is brought about between the right and left nostrils and the corresponding left and right brain hemispheres, inducing a state of harmony and balance throughout the body and the systems governing circulation and digestion. Most importantly, neti helps to awaken ajna chakra.

As described in yoga texts, neti kriya is highly effective in treating ENT disorders. The technique is commonly used in all the yoga and naturopathy hospitals in India. In the present case, jala neti reduced the size of nasal polyp by gentle cleansing and hence the nasal obstruction was

removed paving the way for a clear airway. Jala neti, besides cleaning the nasal passage, also helps in acclimatization of nasal mucosa to the various temperature and humidity changes to enable the nose to adjust its vasomotor rhythm in tune with weather changes.

Inspite of neti being the most recommended therapy in yoga and naturopathy clinics, very little work has been done to support its efficacy. We have attempted jala neti in an isolated case of nasal polyp and found complete clinical improvement and regression of the polyp. This case report suggests that jala neti is a possible mode of therapeutic intervention in nasal polyps. Our study suggests the need for controlled clinical trials of the effectiveness of jala neti in various nasal conditions.

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