An open label prospective observational study to assess the effectiveness of Integrative whole system approach in the management of Sandhigatavata (Osteoarthritis)

Dr Shreelatha Kulal

BACKGROUND: Sandhigatavata (Osteoarthritis) is the most common cause of pain and disability in elderly. Most patients opt for Ayurveda management of this degenerative disease. Studies thus far have shown single/polyherbal formulations or therapies in isolation, for managing pain and disability caused by Sandhigatavata. However, a comprehensive whole system Ayurveda intervention has not been evaluated thus far. The current study aimed to evaluate the effect of an Integrative whole system Ayurveda treatment approach in the management of Sandhigatavata, specifically knee Osteoarthritis (KOA).

MATERIAL AND METHODS: We conducted an open label prospective observational study of patients attending Institute of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine (I-AIM), Bangalore. Fifty three patients (Male - 17, Female - 36; mean age: 60.42 ± 8.32 yrs; mean duration of illness 53.83± 52.39 months) who were receiving Ayurveda treatment from consultants at I-AIM were enrolled in the study. The study was approved by the Institute Ethics Committee and all patients gave informed consent for participation. Interventions included external therapies like abhyanga, pichu and internal medications like lakshadiguggulu, balarishta, gandhataila capsule etc. Patients were assessed at baseline and at regular intervals (at 31.21±28.27 and 63.55± 32.43 days) after the intervention using Visual Analog Scale (VAS), Time Up and Go (TUG) test and Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Arthritis Index (WOMAC). Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS 20.0.

CONCLUSION: There was a statistically significant reduction in VAS score (Right knee F=36.64, p<0.001; Left knee F= 37.06, p<0.001), WOMAC score (F = 27.79, p<0.001) and TUG test (F= 7.71, p= 0.001) following the whole system Ayurveda intervention compared to baseline.
There is evidence from the current study that a multi-modal whole system Ayurveda approach can effectively reduce the symptoms of sandhigatavata. Further studies incorporating objective analysis of the underlying repair mechanisms like MRI etc. may be designed for a more comprehensive understanding.