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Mud therapy: A type of Panchbhautic Chikitsa of Ayurveda

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Abstract

Nature cure is a constructive method of treatment, which aims at removing the basic cause of disease through the rational use of the elements freely available in nature. There are five elements of Nature cure i.e. Earth (mud), Water (jala), Fire (Agni), Air (Vayu), and Space (Akash). Mud is one of five elements of nature having immense impact on the body in health as well as in sickness. It can be employed conveniently as a therapeutic agent in Naturopathy treatment as its black colour absorbs all the colours of the sun and conveys them to the body.

Mud contains important minerals which have positive effects on human health. Mud can absorb toxins from human body therefore is very useful in preventing many diseases. It is also known for its healing properties. It also helps in cooling and relaxing body as it can hold moisture for a long time.

Keywords: Nature cure, Mud therapy

Introduction

Naturopathy is a system of man building in harmony with the constructive principles of Nature on physical, mental, moral and spiritual planes of living. It has great health Promotive, disease preventive and curative as well as restorative potential.

According to the manifesto of British Naturopathic Association, "Naturopathy is a system of treatment which recognises the existence of the vital curative force within the body." It therefore, advocates aiding human system to remove the cause of disease i.e. toxins by expelling unwanted and unused matters from human body for curing diseases.

Out of the five constituent elements of this universe mud (earth) has a pivotal role to play in our wellbeing. The dark colour of mud helps in absorbing different colours and conveying them to the body, giving it therapeutic properties. Also, its shape and consistency may be modified with ease, just by changing the water content, which makes it easy to use. Under Parthiv chikitsa the use of Mrityika is being clearly explained in our Samhitas that external and internal use of Mrityika can be done in different diseases.

Types of Mud according to Ayurveda

Mud found in different parts of the world has different properties. Mud composition varies with the place of origin. Mineral constituents of mud varies with the kind of rocks found in the region and the process of soil formation. Mud property is influenced by kind of flora and fauna of the region. Therefore, it is essential to learn about properties of mud before utilizing its benefits. It is important to note that before using any type of mud it should be dried, powdered and sieved to remove any type of impurities such as stones, grass, etc.

In Harita samhita 5 types of Bhumi has been explained along with their Gunas

Bhumia Panchvidha gyeya Krishna Rakta tatha Sita

Pita Nila bhavet ananya gunaschatasam prakirtata

Krishna cha Madhura Ruksha Kashya Pitvarnini

Rakta sa cha Bhavet Tikta Madhuramla Sita Smrita (Harita Samhita 7/71-72)

1. Krishna (Black)
2. Rakta (Red)
3. Sita (White)
4. Pita (Yellow)
5. Nila (blue)

Black Mud

Practically different Mrityika was used in different patients but it was found that Krishna Mrityika can be used more because of following reasons:

- Clayey texture therefore easy to make Mrityika patti and easy to apply on patients.

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- Highly retentive of moisture, extremely compact and tenacious when wet.
- High water retaining capacity.
- This soil has high absorption property because of its black color.
- For some extent it is also reusable.
- Cracks not produced in this Mrittika as it is formed in other Mrittika patti.

Types of Muds and Benefits

Types of Muds	Benefits
Black	Poison, Skin disorders, acute and chronic cases of inflammatory & degenerative diseases reveals significant improvement. Diseases such as Cervical spondylitis, Lumbar spondylitis etc.
Red	Abdominal pain, Rheumatoid arthritis, Paralysis, Hypothyroidism. Etc.
White	Brain, Liver disorder, Essential hypertension Insomnia, Anxiety neurosis etc.
Yellow	Digestive disorder, Hepatomegaly, IBS Diabetes, Splenomegaly etc.
Sandy	Snake bite, Cholera, Gastroenteritis etc.

Principles of Mud Therapy

1. Mud has the power to absorb the toxins and eliminated from the body by skin.
2. Mud reduces rigidity of muscle and hard tissues to soften tissues.
3. Mud has great anti-inflammatory action, so it can be used in inflammation, wound, acne, arthritis etc.

Mode of Action of Mud Therapy

This is possible by the Thermal, Mechanical, Chemical and Electrical effect of mud over the skin.

Thermal Effect

1. Mud has capacity to hold the temperature [hot and cold] for the long-time effect of desired temperature over desired body can be expected through the mud or mud packs.
2. Thermo receptors over the skin carry the temperature sensation. Hot packs are used to improve the circulation, proper oxygen supply, increase the perspiration and wipe out the toxin back into blood circulation for purification.
3. Cold packs are used in most of Raktaja and Pittaja vyadhi.

Mechanical Effect

The pressure of the mud on the body surface and the osmotic changes in the skin lead to softening and resolution of pathological products.

Chemical Effect

This effect is obtained by the presence of minerals in the mud. Therapeutic Effect is obtained by:-

- Zinc (Zn) - for Fungi
- Copper (Cu) - for Allergic conditions.
- Iodine (I) - For Adhesions.
- Magnesium (Mg) - for Edema

Physiological Effect: Relief of pain and Muscle spasm.

Psychological Effect

Direct contact and pressure reduce anxiety and stress related symptoms.

Used of Mud therapy: For therapeutic purpose Mud therapy could be used in three forms.

1. Mud Pack
2. Mud Bath
3. Internal used of mud

Mud Pack

Mud packs are typically used for local application. To make a mud pack keep the wet cotton cloth in the wet mud so that the cloth is soaked with mud property. Now make the mud pack

by the multilayers of this cloth. The construct and usage of a mudpack is similar for all applications on the thickness and the size varies as per the usage. Apply this mud pack on the desired area for at least 30 minutes. If it applied in winter season, place a blanket over the mud pack.

Benefits of Mud Pack

1. **Face:** It is helpful in improving the complexion of skin and removing acne, open skin pore and eliminated dark circle around eyes.
2. **Abdomen:** It helps in all kinds of indigestion, decreasing intestinal heat, stimulates peristalsis, used in constipation, diarrhoea, gastritis, abdominal pain etc.
3. **Head:** It is applied over the fore head and helps to heal congestive headache relieves pain immediately.
4. **Others:** Muscular pain, sprain, any types of allergy and inflammation of skin.

Mud Bath:

Prepared mud is applied over the full body either in sitting or lying down position. Mud is kept for 45 to 60 minutes and ideally be exposed to sun light, at least intermittently. Remember that the head should always be covered when exposing the body to sunlight. Afterwards the person must be thoroughly washed with cold water jet spray. If person fell chilled, Luke warm water can be used. Dry the person quickly and shifted to warm atmosphere.

Benefits of Mud Bath

1. A mud bath helps in increasing the blood circulation and energizing the skin tissues.
2. Regular mud baths may be considered as natural beauty treatment procedure as it also helps in improving skin complexion
3. Reducing spots and patches, possibly the result of some skin disorder like chickenpox or small pox.
4. Mud baths are useful in many skin diseases such as Psoriasis, Urticaria, leucoderma, Leprosy and other skin allergic conditions.
5. Mud bath relaxes the patient of anxiety, hypertension, insomnia etc.

Internal Use of Mud

Some specific mud are used for internal use in many disorders like French clay is used in Rheumatism, allergy, asthma, food poisoning, chronic constipation etc. Doses are 1-2 teaspoon full in glass of water daily. The effect are due to presence of silica, iron, magnesium, calcium, zinc, enzymes and some organic compounds.

In the chapter of Shool, Bhaishjaya Ratnawali indicate the internal used of Mud

Mratikam sajalam pakad Ghanibhutam pate kshipate
Kriytya Tat Potallim Shula Yatha Swedam Nidhapayet.
(B.R. Shularoga Chikitsa prakaran 30/4)

Conclusion

Mud therapy used in the promotion of health, prevention and management of many diseases. The mud used for therapy is able to transfer heat, relaxing muscle tension, reducing pain and inflammation improves circulation and eases stiffness in joints. Due to its high mineral content, mud has a drawing effect on toxins and helps in detoxifying and healing. Since the times of Cleopatra people revered the mud for not only for its healing properties but also for beauty treatments. It's been used for dermatological conditions like ache, psoriasis, dryness of skin, eczema, dandruff. Mud pack rehydrates, deep cleanses, increase circulation of skin, making it look fresh and young. Relieves Indigestion Flatulence Constipation Insomnia Arthritis Inflammations Eye complaints stiff muscles Psoriasis Congestive Headaches Prenatal/post natal Yoga Eczema Skin Allergy Sensitive / dry skin Acne Sprain.

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