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Low Back pain – Ayurvedic Management

By Dr.Shashikant Patwardhan

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Low back pain is one of the most common pain disorders today .It is a chronic condition characterized by a persistent dull or sharp pain per the lower back. It may be also associated with burning, stiffness, numbness or tingling with the pain shooting down the buttocks and the legs.

When we stand, the lower back functions to hold most of the weight of the body. When we bend, extend or rotate at the waist, the lower back is involved in the movement. Low back ache is often precipitated by moving, lifting objects or twisting of the waist. Severe pain in the low back can be quite debilitating to patients. Pain in the lower back restricts activity and reduces work capacity and quality of enjoyment of everyday living and turns daily life into a misery.

Survey indicates that 70 per cent of the people suffer from low back pain at some time in their lives. The highest rate of back pain occurs among the 45 to 64 year age group. The incidence of low back pain is greater among women. In 90 per cent of the patients, low back pain resolves within six weeks, i.e. self limited. In another 5 per cent the pain resolves by 12 weeks. Less than 5 per cent of back paid account for true nerve root pain.

Causes

One of the common causes for the backache is poor posture habit. Balanced posture decreases stress on your back by keeping the muscles, bones and other supporting parts in their natural position. Any change from normal spinal curve can stress or pull muscles. This leads to increased muscle contraction, which causes pain. Low back pain can result due to health problems like osteoporosis, scoliosis, spinal stenosis. Sprain or strain of muscles or ligaments in the area can also manifest in low back pain. Other possible causes include fibromyalgia and benign or malignant tumours. A fall or blow to the back can strain or tear tissues around the spine, or even break a bone leading to back pain. Lack of exercise or incorrect exercise can also lead to low back pain. Too much weight or overweight also is a cause of low back pain.

Treatment

Conservative treatment is the most likely course of action for most patients. Treatment options include rest, Traction, Short wave diathermy, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, weight control, steroid injections in step by step order.

If a patient does not get relief after 8 to 12 weeks of conservative therapy surgical intervention is considered. The most common surgical procedure is a discectomy, which involves removing the soft gel-like material in the disc. This procedure returns the disc to a more normal shape, relieving the pressure on the nerve. The neurosurgeon can also perform a foraminotomy, which is a procedure designed to expand the opening the nerve travels through.

Drugs and knives don't always work because from 60% to 90% of disease is not the result of structural injury, but rather of the mind-body response to stress

Ayurvedic Perspective

Ayurveda holds that low back pain is a result of vitiation of one of the three principal 'doshas'. 'Kateegraham'/'Prishtasoola' or low back pain is an indication of Vata aggravation and bone and muscle weakness.

Ayurvedic Treatment

Treatment in Ayurveda is to bring the vitiated 'dosha' back to the state of equilibrium and thereby to the state of health. For treating low back pain, internal as well as external treatments are done. Herbal preparations like 'Asthavargam' are administered internally. Daily purgation is recommended to restore the vitiated 'dosha' to the state of normalcy.

Ayurvedic Panchakarma treatments like Abhyanga (oil massage), Basti (meditated enema) are very much helpful in relieving backache and correcting abnormalities. Drugs like Yogarajaguggulu, Lakshadiguggulu, Triphala Guggulu, Maanarayana tailam are useful in this condition.

Yoga and Yogasana

The source of the pain is due most often to pushing oneself beyond physical or emotional capacity. The spine needs stability and, therefore, the mind must first be steady. So, the first step is to learn to relax the mind and focus on the specific areas of back pain. With practice, you can redirect the body's energy and affect the pain.

Among the Yogasanas, when there is pain, start with simple back-bends, such as Locust, Cat, and Sunbird. To keep the spine aligned practice Hero Pose.

Caution- Before trying any of these postures, consult with a yoga teacher or therapist to determine the best postures for your condition.

Dr. Shashikant Patwardhan is practicing as 'Ayurvedic Consultant' for last 25 years at the city – Sangli, Maharashtra – India. He has done his graduation in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery [B.A.M&S] and post graduate Fellowship of Faculty of Ayurvedic Medicine [F.F.A.M.] From Tilak Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Pune University, India, during the years 1970–1976. He is a chief editor and Ayurvedic Consultant of a 'Comprehensive website on Ayurveda –

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Living With Chronic Low Back Pain

By Robert Gould

Living With Chronic Low Back Pain

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They tell me my diagnosis is pretty common, that millions of Americans suffer with low back pain. I've also heard that next to the common cold, missing work from low back pain is the biggest reason. With these two major known facts, I then wondered why getting the correct treatment for low back pain is so difficult.

After being diagnosed with a herniated disc and bone disc degenerative disease, I was immediately scheduled to see a surgeon. The surgeon suggested I have back surgery. To make a long story short, after a lot of prayer, a lot of thought, and after talking to many people who already have had surgery with my same diagnosis, I chose against surgery.

After deciding against surgery, I found I was immediately cast in a different light, by my doctor, and the medical community in general. I found my pain was then not taken seriously. I felt disbelieved about how much I hurt. I actually felt like a drug addict when asking for something for the pain. It appeared my physician felt back surgery was the end all cure all to my back & leg pain. To the contrary studies have shown, back surgery may actually cause more pain, complications, and even damage that requires more follow up surgery.

Knowing physicians and surgeons are already aware of these statistics, it really makes you wonder why they would put you at such risk. I wish some of these healthcare professionals would just once switch places with me for one day living with chronic low back pain. Im not saying all physicians are practicing like this, but seeking treatment for chronic low back pain in general seems to be an ever loosing search to find someone who truly understands your pain, and willing to help you in treating your pain. God bless those physicians who do.

Author is a chronic pain sufferer dedicated and committed to helping other chronic pain sufferers get the medical treatment necessary to live a more productive and better quality of life by living as pain free as possible. For more information, go to:

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