

Using Ayurveda to improve eye health in glaucoma

Glaucoma is a group of eye conditions that causes visual impairment due to malfunctioning of the optic nerve responsible for communication between brain and eyes.

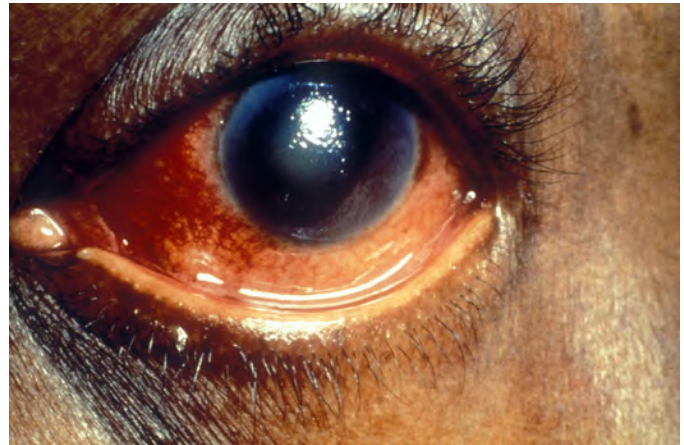
Some of the early symptoms of glaucoma are severe headache, eye pain, nausea and vomiting, blurred vision, eye redness, patchy blind spots in your peripheral or central vision. If left untreated it can cause partial or complete blindness.

As the month of January is observed as Glaucoma Awareness Month, exploring the ayurvedic route for treating the disease could prove to be beneficial in order to detect and provide appropriate treatment to reverse the condition.

Alternative therapies like Ayurveda are also effective in treating glaucoma, reports Hindustan Times. While herbal medications and Panchakarma therapies have been known to reduce eye pressure and restore its normal functioning, other Ayurvedic home remedies may also prove to be effective in treating glaucomas.

According to Dr Partap Chauhan, an Ayurvedacharya, Netra Basti may prove to be an effective remedy in treating glaucoma. It involves pouring medicated ghee over the eyes can help in removing toxins from the eyes.

Another practice known as *Snehapana* treatment involves administering ghee infused with herbs orally



for a specific period. Substances like rosewater and *gulaabjal*, which are known to have cooling properties, can be poured over the eyes. Gently washing the eyes with cold water may also improve eye health.

An ancient Ayurvedic practice called “Light” or “lamp” gazing which is meant to soothe, calm and focus the mind may also improve eye health and eyesight. The practice involves gazing intently into the wick of a candle or an earthen lamp for a prolonged period whose wick has been lit using ghee.

Other effective remedies include using cucumbers, cotton pads soaked with fresh goat’s milk, as well as pouring Castor oil on the eyes, along with oil applied on the soles of the feet.

Using acupuncture in the treatment of shingles

Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, is an infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus, which is also known to cause chicken pox. Shingles cause rashes to develop on the body, which would soon turn into blisters. Before the rash appears, one may experience pain in the affected area.

The pain and rash from shingles affect one side of the body. Areas commonly affected include: neck, face or eyes, chest, and abdomen.

Acupuncture is a form of traditional Chinese medicine that’s commonly used to provide relief from pain. In fact, there’s been some research exploring acupuncture spe-



cifically for shingles. According to Healthline, the practice involves inserting thin needles into specific parts of the body known as acupuncture points. The needles are activated by electrical stimulation by gentle movements of the hands of the acupuncturist. According to National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, acupunc-

ture can ease pain in conditions such as migraine and back pain.

A study conducted in 2011, which was published in the journal *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, acupuncture could be used for the treatment of shingles pain, or acute herpetic pain. Acupuncture may also improve quality of life and reduce anxiety in people with shingles.

Moreover, adding to such research, studies have indicated that adding acupuncture to traditional antiviral therapy shortened the time in three key phases of shingles: the pain before the blisters appeared, the time it took for the blisters to

scab over, and the time it took for blisters to stop forming.

After recovery, shingles can trigger a painful nerve condition on the areas where the blisters appeared. This nerve pain is called posther-

petic neuralgia (PHN) and can last for weeks, months, or even years.

In 2014, researchers noted in a systematic review published in *BMJ Open*, which found that nearly 140 studies had used acupuncture to

help manage PHN within the past 5 years. Other studies have shown that acupuncture may be effective at managing pain related to PHN as well as improve the quality of life.

Benefits of Kumkumadi Tailam to the skin

Kumkumadi Tailam has been a wonder weapon in the arsenal of Ayurvedic treatments. It is attributed to immense skin benefits. Invented as a “miracle elixir”, this oil is said to have properties which help in rejuvenating and renewing skin cells, brightening the skin, and giving it a youthful and healthy appearance upon regular application.

It also prevents the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. It can reduce the appearance of acne scars by regenerating skin tissue and also stimulating skin cells. It is also known to eliminate scars and wrinkles as well as fine lines and signs of ageing, according to Times of India.

Kumkumadi Tailam is prepared from a herbal paste of over 21 Ayurvedic herbs, which are useful for the skin. The most well-known ingredient of the oil is Saffron, which has been attributed to transform skin tone by rejuvenating the skin cells and promoting blood circulation. Another important constituent of the oil is Sandalwood.

Kumkumadi is recognized for its natural and age-defying capabilities, which will help keep the glow in the skin. The oil is also known to help in various skin conditions such as blemishes, treating various bacterial or fungal infections, as well as skin healing. It is also



attributed with several anti-inflammatory properties.

A constituent of Kumkumadi Tailam, licorice root extract (*Madhuyashtika*) is known to inhibit the enzyme that causes pigmentation in response to the sun.

Apart from this, the oil has been known to help in reducing acne. The oil may also help in reducing acne scars by regenerating skin tissue and also stimulating skin cells. It has found immense applications in skin problems such as psoriasis, eczema, acne, rosacea and many more. Moreover, the oil also helps in regulating the body temperature by keeping the skin cool.

Mixing Chinese herbal medicines for treating Sjögren's disease

Research has suggested that four traditional Chinese herbal medicines may help improve sleep quality in patients and reduce the levels of certain antibodies in patients with Sjögren's disease.

In Taiwan, Sjögren's syndrome affects approximately 0.8% of the population (mainly women), and over 90% of patients with primary Sjögren's syndrome are reportedly treated with traditional Chinese medicines. However, the effectiveness of these treatments remains unknown.

Primary Sjögren's syndrome is an autoimmune disorder characterized by misguided immune response against the glands that produce tears and saliva.



Currently, no effective therapies targeting the underlying cause are available, with patients relying instead on therapies that provide symptomatic relief.

According to a study conducted in Taiwan, at the Chung Shan Medical University Hospital to assess the efficacy and safety of a mixture of four frequently prescribed traditional Chinese herbal medicines called Gan-Lu-Yin (GLY), Jia-Wei-Xiao-Yao-San (JWXYS), Suan-Zao-Ren-Tang (SZRT), and Ye-Jiao-Teng (YJT).

In total, 21 patients in the Chinese medicines group and nine in the placebo group completed the trial. In total, 42 patients with Sjogren's syndrome (ages 20 to 80 years) were randomly assigned to either a placebo (14 patients) or the traditional Chinese medicines group (28 patients). The placebo had the same appearance and flavor of the Chinese medicines, but only one-tenth the dosage.

Those in the Chinese medicines group received six grams of GLY granules after breakfast, and six grams of JWXYS combined with one gram each of SZRT and YJT following dinner, every day for 12 weeks. Patients were evaluated every four weeks.

No other traditional Chinese medicines were allowed during the study. An exception was made for patients being treated with Western medicine for more than two weeks before the trial, with patients required to maintain the treatment.

The patients were assessed for changes in EULAR Sjögren's syndrome disease activity index, or ESSDAI), sleep (assessed by the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, or PSQI), fatigue (evaluated with the Multidimensional Fatigue Inventory), as well as overall health status, assessed by a physician global assessment (PGA).

At the start of the trial, the general health status of patients in the Chinese medicines group was worse than patients in the placebo group. Also, they had poorer sleep quality, as shown by higher PSQI scores — mean average of 11.25 vs. 10.57 in the placebo group.

At the end of the 12 weeks, the two groups showed no differences in the majority of lab parameters evaluated. However, the levels of IgG — a type of antibody often increased in patients with Sjögren's disease as a reflection of an overactive immune system — decreased significantly in the traditional Chinese medicines group.

The symptoms of the disease had decreased in both groups, but the decrease was more pronounced in the placebo group (decrease of 0.91) compared to the treatment group (decrease of 0.62). The researchers noted, however, that "the ESSPRI scores of patients in the treatment group were higher than those of patients in the control group" at the start of the trial.

However, no differences were seen in disease severity scores between patients treated with the Chinese medicine mixture compared to those on a placebo.

The study titled, "Traditional Chinese Medicine in Patients With Primary Sjogren's Syndrome: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Clinical Trial," has been published in the journal *Frontiers in Medicine*.

Patients treated with the mixture of traditional Chinese medicines experienced an improvement in their sleep duration compared with the placebo group, as shown by 30 minutes more sleep daily. Their blood pressure was also improved.

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