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Diabetic retinopathy: Management of acute visual loss with herbal (Ayurvedic) medicines

Diabetic retinopathy is a common complication of chronic uncontrolled diabetes. The occurrence of diabetes is on a rise, so are its complications. Retinopathy counts as the second most common cause for blindness, around the globe. Features of retinopathy include microaneurysms of retinal capillaries, hemorrhage, hard exudates and cotton wool spots. Although, retinopathy is a chronic condition, acute visual loss sometimes occurs due to sudden bleeding into vitreous or bleeding in and around macula. Western medicine usually adopts laser photocoagulation in such conditions. Since it damages the retina to a certain extent, it is usually avoided in cases where macula is involved. Such acute visual loss cases due to hemorrhage are treated with a special procedure called Sirodhara (pouring of medicated water, oil, milk etc., on the forehead in a continuous stream). The herbal medicines used are *Madhuca indica*, *Santalum album*, *Vetiveria zizanoides*, *Embllica officinalis*, *Symplocos racemosa* along with lac (resinous material secreted by *Laccifer lacca* insect). Milk is specially prepared with these drugs and used daily as a continuous stream on forehead for one hour for a continuous period of 7 days. 15 patients were included in this clinical trial till date. Ophthalmoscopy and visual acuity tested before and after the treatment. In all the patients, hypoglycemic drugs were given along with the procedure. The hemorrhage was seen well controlled and completely absorbed in ophthalmoscopy. The visual acuity also improved remarkably.

Biography

Jeena N Janardhanan is a Doctor (Ayurveda) specialized in ENT and Ophthalmology. She has been in the field of research, academics as well as administration for the past 14 years. She is presently an Associate Professor and HOD at Vaidyaratnam P S Varier Ayurveda College, Kerala University of Health Sciences, India. She has been in the field of Ayurveda, treating patients for the past 20 years.

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