

Effect of an Ayurveda Treatment Protocol in Managing Autism: A Case Study

O.T.M.R.K.S.B. Kalawana¹, J.A. Nirosha², A.D.S. Rupasinghe³, M.K.M.P. Perera³

¹Faculty of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

²Postgraduate Institute of Indigenous Medicine, Sri Lanka

³Ayurveda National Hospital, Borella, Sri Lanka

Autism spectrum disorder is characterized by difficulties with social interaction, communication, and atypical behavior patterns. According to the WHO, one in 100 children worldwide has autism. Management of autism spectrum disorder typically includes speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. This study focused on the effect of an Ayurveda treatment protocol for autism. A four-year, three-month-old boy with a pre-diagnosis of autism was brought to the *Balaroga* Outpatient Department of Ayurveda National Hospital. He exhibited 2-3 single-word speech, communication disturbances, poor eye contact, and hyperactivity for 2 years. He was admitted for inpatient treatment. In the first week, the treatment included *Trikatukadi kasaya* (1/4 Patha), *Chandrakalka 1 Madata* with *Mahadalu anupana*. Following this, 14 *Anu thaila pratimarsha nasya* treatments were started, followed by 10 sessions of *Shirodhara* and 10 *Shiro basti* treatments with *Divyanganadi oil*. The child also received *Vacha choorna* (1.25 g), *Kaluduru-thippili leha*, and *Brahmi Mandukaparni kashaya* (1/4 Patha) continuously. Finally, *Datri choorna* (2.5 g) and 5 *Matra basti* treatments with 50 ml *Narayana oil* were administered. Progress was evaluated based on professional observations of the child's signs and symptoms and the mother's reports of the child's progress. During the *Nasya karma* treatment, significant improvements in speech were observed, with the child learning 12-15 new words, beginning to read, and forming two-word sentences. Attention improved, and hyperactivity was gradually controlled. In autism, changes are in the brain. According to Ayurveda, the nose is considered the entryway to the head; thus, medicine administered through the nasal route reaches the brain, regulates functions, while removing morbid *doshas*. Further, the medicine used in this treatment has *Agni deepana*, *Sroto shodhana*, *Medhya* properties, which control disease by correcting *Agni*, *Tridosha* and enhancing *Dhee*, *Druti*, *Smriti*. This case study demonstrates the efficacy of Ayurveda treatment in managing Autism. Further studies with larger sample are necessary to scientifically validate these findings.

Keywords: Autism, Nasya Karma, Anu Thaila, Balaroga