



## *Sthoulya* (Obesity): A Comprehensive Review of Ayurvedic Etiopathogenesis and Management

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**Abstract:** *Sthoulya* (Obesity) is a metabolic disorder characterized by the abnormal and excessive accumulation of *Medodhatu*<sup>[1]</sup>. It is currently ranked among the top ten global health risks. In *Ayurveda*, the management of *Medoroga* focuses on alleviating the *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha doshas* while enhancing *Medodhatvagni*<sup>[2]</sup> to deplete excess adipose tissue. This review examines the etiological factors, ranging from sedentary lifestyles and dietary habits to genetic predisposition (*Bijadosha*), and highlights the importance of *Pathya-Apathya* (healthy vs. unhealthy habits) in enjoying life optimally without lifestyle diseases.

**Keywords -** *Sthoulya*, *Medodhatu*, *Bijadosha*, *Adravya chikitsa*, *Pathya-Apathya*.

### I. INTRODUCTION

*Sthoulya* is a critical issue in the modern era<sup>[3]</sup>. It is defined as a state where excessive accumulation of *Meda* (fat) and *Mamsa* (muscle) leads to the flabbiness of the hips, abdomen, and breast<sup>[3]</sup>—a condition categorized as '*Atisthoulya*'. According to *Ayurvedic* classics, an *Atisthula* person is included under *Ashta Nindita Purusha* (eight censurable persons) who are prone to many diseases. The foundation of health depends on the equilibrium of the "Tripod of Life" *Ahar* (diet), *Nidra* (sleep), and *Bramhacharya* (abstinence)<sup>[4]</sup>. Rapid modernization has shifted individual lifestyles toward sedentary habits and fast food, leading to the impairment of metabolism<sup>[5]</sup>.

### *Nidana*<sup>[6]</sup> (Etiological Factors)

*Ayurvedic* texts classify the causes of *Sthoulya* into four primary groups:

#### 1. *Aharatmaka Nidana* (Dietary Factors)

- Ati-Guru Sevan*- Excessive intake of heavy-to-digest foods increases *Kapha* and affects *Medodhatu*.
- Madhura & Ati-Snigdha*- Frequent consumption of sweet, oily, and fatty foods results in the production of *Ama* (toxins), which obstructs the *Strotas* (Body's channels).
- Adhyasana & Ati Bhojan*- Overeating or eating before the previous meal is digested impairs *Pachakagni* (digestive fire), leading to *Medo Sanchaya* (fat accumulation).

## 2. Viharatmaka Nidana (Lifestyle Factors)

- Avyayama*: Lack of physical exercise is a leading cause of *Kapha* increase and fat deposition.
- Diwaswapna*: Daytime sleeping obstructs channels and contributes significantly to *Medoroga*.

## 3. Manasa Nidana (Psychological Factors)

- Achinta & Nitya Harsha*: A lack of mental exertion (freedom from anxiety) and constant excessive joy can lead to *Kapha* dominance and subsequent obesity.

## 4. Anya Nidana (Other Factors)

- Bijadosha*: Genetic factors or hereditary components where the sperm or ovum carries obesity-producing traits, it affects the future child.

## Samprapti <sup>[7]</sup> (Pathogenesis)

The development of *Sthoulya* follows a "vicious circle" of metabolic impairment.

- Strotorodha*: Obstruction of the *Strotas* (Channels) by excessive *Meda*.
- Agni Stimulation*: This obstruction causes the aggravation of *Samana Vayu* in the *Koshtha*, which hyper-stimulates *Jatharagni* (digestive fire).
- Vicious Cycle*: The individual digests food quickly and becomes a voracious eater (*Kshudhati Matra*), yet the nourishment is improperly converted into even more *Medodhatu*.
- Dhatu Depletion*: Because of this focus on *Meda*, other *Dhatus* (tissues) are not nourished properly, leading to flabbiness and depletion of subsequent tissues.

Component	Description
<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Kapha (Kledaka), Pitta (Pachaka), Vata (Samana)</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	<i>Rasa, Meda</i>
<i>Strotas</i>	<i>Medovaha</i>
<i>Adhithana</i>	<i>Sarvanga (Specially Sphik, Udara, and Stana)</i>

## Clinical Manifestations (*Rupa*) <sup>[8]</sup>

- Chala Sphika Udara Stana*: Pendulous movements of the buttocks, abdomen, and breasts.
- Javoparodha*: Instability and lack of strength that hamper movement.
- Kshudra Swasa*: Increased respiratory movement or dyspnea after slight exertion.
- Daugandhya*: Foul body odor caused by sweat mixing with *Kapha*.

## Management (*Chikitsa*) <sup>[9]</sup>

Ayurvedic management utilizes both medicinal (*Dravya*) and non-medicinal (*Adravya*) approaches:

### *Dravya Chikitsa* (Medicinal)

- Herbal Preparations: *Guduchi, Bhadramusta, Triphala, Shilajatu, and Guggul*.
- Classical Formulations: *Takrarishta, Vidangadi loha, and Amrutadi guggul*.
- Panchakarma: *Lekhan Basti* (medicated enema for scraping) and *Ruksha Udvartan* (dry powder massage).

### **Adravya Chikitsa (Non-Medicinal)**

- Vyayama* (Physical exercise) and *Vyavaya* (sexual activity)
- Mental stimulation through *Chinta* (worrying or anxiety) to counteract *Kapha* and *Prajagarana* (staying awake at night).
- Aims to reduce *Meda* through *Apatarpana chikitsa* (depletion therapy).

### **Pathya-Apathya <sup>[10]</sup> (Dietary and Lifestyle Regimen) (Do's and Don'ts)**

Category	Pathya (Recommended)	Apathya (Avoid)
Cereals	<i>Yava</i> (Barley), <i>Kodrava</i> (Kodo millet), <i>Purana Shali</i>	<i>Godhum</i> (Wheat), <i>Naveen Dhanya</i>
Pulses	<i>Mudga</i> (Moong), <i>Kulatha</i> (Horse gram), <i>Masur</i> (Red lentil)	<i>Masha</i> ( <i>Urad Dal</i> ), <i>Tila</i> (Sesame seeds)
Liquids	<i>Madhu</i> (Honey), <i>Takra</i> (Buttermilk), Warm Water	<i>Dugdh</i> (Milk), <i>Dadhi</i> (Curd), <i>Ekshu rasa</i> (Sugarcane juice)
Lifestyle	<i>Shrama</i> (Physical work), <i>Jagarana</i>	<i>Divaswapa</i> (Day Sleep), <i>Sukha Shaiya</i>
Mental	<i>Chinta</i> (Anxiety), <i>Krodha</i> (Anger)	<i>Nitya Harsha</i> (Constant joy, Lack of worry)

### **Conclusion**

*Sthoulya* is a predominant metabolic disorder rooted in sedentary habits, fatty food intake, and genetic predisposition. By adopting healthy food habits and specific *Ayurvedic* treatments, an individual can enjoy an optimal life free from lifestyle diseases.

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