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A Comprehensive Physiological Review of the Role of Udana Vayu in Respiratory Dysfunction Associated with Obesity

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ABSTRACT: In Ayurveda, the physiology of respiration is described scientifically, with Prana Vayu, regulating the inspiration, while Udana Vayu, regulating the expiration. The inhalation of air is termed Nishwas¹, while exhalation is referred to as Uchchwas or expiration.

Many conditions like Obesity can alter regulatory functions of Udana Vayu in the form of dyspnoea, fatigue, reduced body stamina etc which are linked with lung fitness.

Obesity², is termed as "Sthaulya"³ in Ayurvedic texts, is described in detail in the Charak Samhita, Sutrasthana, Chapter 21, outlining its pathophysiology and manifestations.

Individuals with a Body Mass Index (BMI)⁴ above 25 are classified as overweight, and those with a BMI of 30 kg/m² or more are considered obese. Medo Vruddhi⁵ refers to the disorder of Medo Dhatu, characterized by the accumulation of excess fat⁶, particularly around the belly, which can lead to obesity if coupled with a sedentary lifestyle and excessive consumption of heavy, sweet, and unctuous foods.

Exertional dyspnoea, or breathlessness, often observed in obese and overweight individuals without respiratory disease, is indicative of an imbalance in Udana Vayu. This condition is discussed in Ashtanga Hridaya⁷, Chapter 11, "Doshadi Vidnyaniya Adhyaya." This review explores the pathophysiology of exertional dyspnoea in the context of Udana Vayu⁸, aiming to establish a connection between dyspnoea and Medo Vruddhi, as well as its effects on the functioning of Udana Vayu. It also discusses how a multidisciplinary approach can enhance respiratory health in both obese and non-obese individuals.

Keywords: Udana Vayu, Medo Vruddhi, Uchchwas, Expiration

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