Ayurvedic interventions for diabetes mellitus: a systematic review
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Record Status
This is a bibliographic record of a published health technology assessment from a member of INAHTA. No evaluation of the quality of this assessment has been made for the HTA database.

Citation

Authors' objectives
The objective of this evidence report was to conduct a search of the published literature on the use of Ayurvedic medicine/therapies for the treatment of health conditions and, on the basis of that search, to choose either a condition or a modality for a comprehensive review. Based on the results of initial searches, diabetes was chosen as the topic for the comprehensive review. The specific questions addressed in this project were: (1) What Ayurvedic therapies have been reported in the literature, for which conditions/body systems, and using what kinds of research designs? (2) What is the efficacy of Ayurvedic medicine/therapies, as reported in that literature, for the treatment of diabetes?

Authors' conclusions
There is great heterogeneity in the available literature on Ayurvedic treatment for diabetes. The overwhelming majority of studies test herbal therapy. Heterogeneity exists in the herbs and formulas tested (more than 44 different interventions identified) and in the method of their preparation.

We observed significant methodological shortcomings, specifically: there were few RCTs and CCTs; studies in general were underpowered to determine even large effect sizes: many studies had an extremely small number of subjects; in a number of studies, appropriate statistical methods were not used in reporting the results. The majority of the studies tested non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (type 2) patients only. Therefore, no definitive conclusion can be drawn on the effect of these therapies on insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (type 1) patients.

Despite these limitations, there is sufficient data for several herbs or herbal formulas to warrant further studies.

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