



EXPLORATIVE AYURVEDA BASIC CONCEPTS FOR HEALTH CARE-A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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Abstract

Ayurveda is the oldest literature of medicine system to stabilized healthy life and also to normalized the disease condition. Diseases which are observed improperly by health professionals, which have not been well described by patient, which have not been examined thoroughly with proper investigation and correct diagnosis may confuse to health professionals. Health or sickness depends on the presence or absence of a balanced state of the total body matrix including the balance between its different constituents. Both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors can cause disturbance in the natural equilibrium giving rise to disease. To understand Ayurvedic medicine it would be necessary to first understand the origin, basic concept and principles of Ayurveda. Without an Ayurvedic diagnosis it is difficult for an Ayurvedic health professionals to visualized a complete ayurvedic treatment. As a basic principles of ayurveda treatment, eradication of etiological factors are mandatory which support to cure the disease with maintenance of health, to prevent the recurrence of disease. The Ayurveda treatment consists of restoring the balance of disturbed body-mind matrix through regulating diet, correcting life-routine and behavior, administration of drugs and resorting to preventive Panchakarma and Rasayana therapy.

Keywords: Ayurveda basic concept, Rasayana therapy, Panchakarama, Chikitsa Chatuspada

Introduction

Ayurveda is an ancient medicine system of the Indian subcontinent. It is said to have originated in India about 5000 years back. The word Ayurveda is a conjugation of two Sanskrit words 'Ayu', meaning 'life' and 'Veda', meaning 'science', thus ayurveda literally means the 'science of life' ⁽¹⁾. Unlike other medicinal systems, Ayurveda focuses more on healthy living than treatment of diseases. The main concept of Ayurveda is that it personalizes the healing process. According to Ayurveda, the human body is composed of four basics-the *dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala* and *agni*. There is immense significance of all these basics of the body in Ayurveda. These are also called the '*Mool Siddhant*' ⁽²⁾ or the 'basic fundamentals of Ayurvedic treatment'.

Dosha

The three vital principles of doshas are *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*, which together regulate and control the catabolic and anabolic metabolism. The main function of the three doshas is to carry the byproduct of digested foods throughout the body, which helps in building up the body tissues. Any malfunction in these doshas causes disease.

Dhatu

Dhatu can be defined as one, which supports the body. There are seven tissue systems in the body. They are as *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja* and *Shukra* which represent the plasma, blood, muscle, fat tissue, bone, bone marrow and semen respectively. Dhatus only provide the basic nutrition to the body and it helps in the growth and structure of mind.

Mala

Mala means waste products or dirty. It is third in the trinity of the body i.e. *Doshas* and *Dhatu*. There are three main types of malas, e.g. stool, urine and sweat. *Malas* are mainly the waste products of the body so their proper excretion from the body is essential to maintain the proper health of the individual. There are mainly two aspects of *Mala* i.e. *Mala* and *Kitta*. *Mala* is about waste products of the body whereas *Kitta* is all about the waste products of *Dhatus*.

Agni

All kinds of metabolic and digestive activity of the body takes place with the help of the biological fire of the body called *Agni*. *Agni* can be termed as the various enzymes present in the elementary canal, liver and the tissue cells.

The Body Matrix

Life in Ayurveda is conceived as the union of body, senses, mind and soul. The living man is a conglomeration of three humours (*Vata*, *Pitta* & *Kapha*), seven basic tissues (*Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mansa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja* & *Shukra*) and the waste products of the body such as faeces, urine and sweat. Thus the total body matrix comprises of the humours, the tissues and the waste products of the body. The growth and decay of this body matrix and its constituents revolve around food which gets processed into humours, tissues and wastes. Ingestion, digestion, absorption, assimilation and metabolism of food have an interplay in health and disease which are significantly affected by psychological mechanisms as well as by bio-fire (*Agni*).

Panchamahabhutas

According to Ayurveda all objects in the universe including human body are composed of five basic elements (*Panchamahabhutas*)⁽³⁾ namely, earth, water, fire, air and vacuum (ether). There is a balanced condensation of these elements in different proportions to suit the needs and requirements of different structures and functions of the body matrix and its parts. The growth and development of the body matrix depends on its nutrition, i.e. on food. The food, in turn, is composed of the above five elements, which replenish or nourish the like elements of the body after the action of bio-fire (*Agni*). The tissues of the body are the structural whereas humours are physiological entities, derived from different combinations and permutations of *Panchamahabhutas*.

Health and Sickness

Health or sickness depends on the presence or absence of a balanced state of the total body matrix including the balance between its different constituents. Both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors can cause disturbance in the natural equilibrium giving rise to disease. This loss of equilibrium can happen by dietary indiscrimination, undesirable habits and non-observance of rules of healthy living. Seasonal abnormalities, improper exercise or erratic application of sense organs and incompatible actions of the body and mind can also result in creating disturbance of the existing normal balance. The treatment consists of restoring the balance of disturbed body-mind matrix through regulating

diet, correcting life-routine and behavior, administration of drugs and resorting to preventive *Panchakarma* and *Rasayana* therapy.⁽⁴⁾

Diagnosis

In Ayurveda diagnosis is always done of the patient as a whole. The physician takes a careful note of the patient's internal physiological characteristics and mental disposition. She or He also studies such other factors as the affected bodily tissues, humours, the site at which the disease is located, patient's resistance and vitality, his/her daily routine, dietary habits, the gravity of clinical conditions, condition of digestion and details of personal, social, economic and environmental situation of the patient. The diagnosis also involves the following examinations⁽⁵⁾:

General physical examination

1. Pulse examination
2. Urine examination
3. Examination of the faeces
4. Examination of tongue and eyes
5. Examination of skin and ear including tactile and auditory functions.

Treatment

The principal objectives of Ayurveda include maintenance and promotion of health, prevention of disease and cure of sickness.⁽⁶⁾

Treatment of the disease consists in avoiding causative factors responsible for disequilibrium of the body matrix or of any of its constituent parts through the use of *Panchakarma* procedures, medicines, suitable diet, activity and regimen for restoring the balance and strengthening the body mechanisms to prevent or minimize future occurrence of the disease.

Normally treatment measures involve use of medicines, specific diet and prescribed activity routine. Use of these three measures is done in two ways. In one approach of treatment the three measures antagonize the disease by counteracting the etiological factors and various manifestations of the disease. In the second approach the same three measures of medicine, diet and activity are targeted to exert effects similar to the etiological factors and manifestations of the disease process. These two types of therapeutic approaches are respectively known as *Vipreeta* and *Vipreetarthkari* treatments.

For successful administration of a treatment four things are essential. These are⁽⁷⁾:

1. The physician
2. The medicaments
3. The nursing personnel
4. The patient

Performance of Prompt & Complete Treatment

वैद्यो व्याध्युपसृष्टश्च भैषजं परिचारकः। एते पादाश्रिकित्सायाः कर्म साधन हेतवः॥ गुणवद्भिस्त्रिभिः
पादैश्चतुर्थो गुणवान् भिषक्। व्याधि अल्पेन कालेन महान्तम् अपि साधयेत्॥

Su.Su.34/15-16

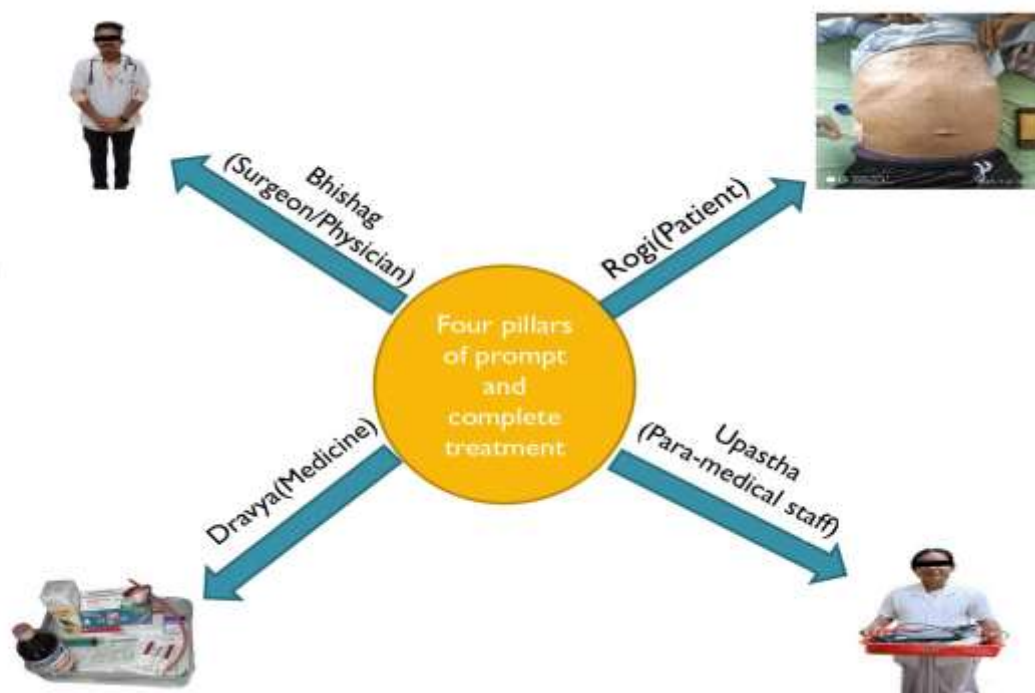


Fig 1. FOUR PILLARS OF PROMPT AND COMPLETE TREATMENT

In health care practices, *Bhishag* (surgeon/physician), *Rogi* (patient), *Dravya* (Medicine) and *Upastha* (para-medical staff) are the four pillars of prompt and complete treatment (*Chikitsa Chatuspada*). The surgeon/physician effectively competent for the management of serious and complicated disease to achieve complete and permanent cure with low economical expenses in early time span with contribution of the best qualities by patient, medicine and para-medical staff.

The physician comes first in order of importance. She or He must possess technical skill, scientific knowledge, purity and human understanding. The physician should use his/her knowledge with humility, wisdom and in the service of humanity. Next in importance comes food and drugs. These are supposed to be of high quality, wide application, grown and prepared following approved procedures and should be available adequately. The third component of every successful treatment is the role of nursing personnel who should have good knowledge of nursing, must know the skills of their art and be affectionate, sympathetic, intelligent, neat & clean and resourceful. The fourth component is the patient himself who should be cooperative and obedient to follow instructions of the physician, able to describe ailments and ready to provide all that may be needed for treatment.

Ayurveda has developed a very vivid analytical description of the stages and events that take place since the causative factors commence to operate till the final manifestation of disease. This gives this system an additional advantage of knowing that possible onset of disease much before the latent symptoms become apparent. This very much enhances the preventive role of this system of medicine by making it possible to take proper and effective steps in advance, to arrest further progress in pathogenesis or to take suitable therapeutic measures to curb the disease in its earliest stage of onset.

Types of Treatment

The treatment of disease can broadly be classified as;

Shodhana therapy (Purification Treatment)

Shodhana treatment aims at removal of the causative factors of somatic and psychosomatic diseases. The process involves internal and external purification. The usual practices involved are *Panchakarma* (medically induced Emesis, Purgation, Oil Enema, Decoction enema and Nasal

administration of medicines), *Pre-Panchakarma* procedures (external and internal Oleation and induced sweating). Panchakarma treatment focuses on metabolic management. It provides needed purificatory effect, besides conferring therapeutic benefits. This treatment is especially helpful in neurological disorders, musculo-skeletal disease conditions, certain vascular or neuro-vascular states, respiratory diseases, metabolic and degenerative disorders.

Shamana therapy (Palliative Treatment) ⁽⁸⁾

Shamana therapy involves suppression of vitiated humours (*Doshas*). The process by which disturbed humour subsides or returns to normal without creating imbalance of other humours is known as *Shamana*. This treatment is achieved by use of appetisers, digestives, exercise and exposure to sun, fresh air etc. In this form of treatment, palliatives and sedatives are used.

Pathya Vyavastha (Prescription of diet and activity)

Pathya Vyavastha comprises indications and contraindications in respect of diet, activity, habits and emotional status. This is done with a view to enhance the effects of therapeutic measures and to impede the pathogenetic processes. Emphasis on actions such as dos and don'ts of diet is laid with the aim to stimulate Agni and optimize digestion and assimilation of food in order to ensure strength of tissues.

Nidan Parivarjan (Avoidance of disease causing and aggravating factors)

Nidan Parivarjan is to avoid the known disease causing factors in diet and lifestyle of the patient. It also encompasses the idea to refrain from precipitating or aggravating factors of the disease.

Satvavajaya (Psychotherapy)

Satvavajaya ⁽⁹⁾ concerns mainly with the area of mental disturbances. This includes restraining the mind from desires for unwholesome objects and cultivation of courage, memory and concentration. The study of psychology and psychiatry have been developed extensively in Ayurveda and have wide range of approaches in the treatment of mental disorders.

Rasayana therapy (use of immunomodulators and rejuvenation medicines)

Rasayana therapy deals with promotion of strength and vitality. The integrity of body matrix, promotion of memory, intelligence, immunity against the disease, the preservation of youth, luster and complexion and maintenance of optimum strength of the body and senses are some of the positive benefits credited to this treatment. Prevention of premature wear and tear of body tissues and promotion of total health content of an individual are the roles that *Rasayana* therapy plays.

Diet and Ayurvedic Treatment

In Ayurveda, regulation of diet as therapy has great importance. This is because it considers human body as the product of food. An individual's mental and spiritual development ⁽¹⁰⁾ as well as his temperament is influenced by the quality of food consumed by him / her. Food in human body is transformed first into chyle or *Rasa* and then successive processes involve its conversion into blood, muscle, fat, bone, bone-marrow, reproductive elements and *Ojas*. Thus, food is basic to all the metabolic transformations and life activities. Lack of nutrients in food or improper transformation of food lead to a variety of disease conditions.

Discussion

As we all know that according to *Charaka*, *Prayojan* of Ayurveda is “*Swasthasya Swastha Rakshanam / Aturasya Vikar Prashanam*” // That means initially maintain the health of each and every people And if diseases occurs to particular subjects then treat accordingly. *Acharya Charaka* emphasizes aim of Ayurveda towards basic theme, “prevention is better than cure”. According to *Sushruta* ‘the father of surgery’

“*Vyadhi Upasrushtanam Vyadhi Parimoksha/ Swasthasya Rakshanam Cha*” // su.su.1/13

Means first give importance to treat the disease condition with the help of surgical modalities and if any complication occurs with treatment modalities then treat that complication and maintain the health of patient. That's why it is the most basic ethic to understand the theory of *Acharya Charaka* and *Sushruta* regarding aims of Ayurveda that Sushruta emphasis on management of pathological condition followed by restoring the health .

Health professionals who knows theory of science only but is not skilled in practice ,becomes confused on approaching the patient. From above quotation it can be said that “To study the phenomenon of disease without books is to sail an uncharted sea, while to study books without patient is not to go to sea at all.”

Diseases which are observed improperly by surgeon, which have not been well described by patient, which have not been examined thoroughly with proper investigation and correct diagnosis may confuse the surgeon.

As per our teaching experiences with the influence of modernization new medical practitioner are commonly using Expensive investigations instead of basic criteria like history, examination, and observation. To break the pathogenesis, detailed history, physical and clinical examination, common and economical investigation, proper observation and regular follow ups are strong pillars for the correct diagnosis and prompt management of disease rather than expensive investigations.

“*Sankshepatah Kriyayoge Nidan Parivarjanam* “ / su.u.1/25

to cure the disease with maintenance of health, to prevent the recurrence of disease, and to achieve this goal of successful outcome from disease, eradication of etiological factors are mandatory.

Similarly Charaka quoted basic principle for treatment like

“*Jayante Hetu Vaishamyaat Vishamo Deha Dhatavah/*

Yetu Samyaat Sama Tesham Swabhawoparma Sada “// cha.su.16/25

To cure the disease and to restore the normal health by “micro chip”, and i.e. eradication of etiological factors (Visham Hetu) as per pathological condition (Samprapti). So consumption of abnormal etiological factors produces abnormal cells in the body and disease condition occurs but according to *Charka's* “*SWABHAWOPARAMAWAD*” disease condition may be reversed to its normal state of body with help of normal *Ahara Vihara*.

Conclusion

1. Ayurveda's aim is to maintain and equilibrium between body, mind, Social and soul to increase immunity and enable the body to develop the ability to fight and cure diseases.
2. The Ayurvedic practices chiefly that of diet, lifestyle and panchakarma aim to maintain the Dosha, Agni, Dhatu and Mala in equilibrium state.
3. Food is basic to all the metabolic transformations and life activities.
4. Lack of nutrients in food or improper transformation of food lead to a variety of disease conditions.
5. Prevention of premature ageing process of body tissues and promotion of cheerful health possible with Rasayana therapy.
6. Present article is single candle of light which will help to give light from candle to candle and one day there is brightness as like the sunlight in the form of knowledge for next generation.

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