

Potential of Ayurveda in Lifestyle Disorders

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient medical wisdom prescribed numerous ways and means to overcome the lifestyle disorders. In the name of convenience and comfort, nuclear family with consumeristic approach and self-centric living style have affected physical, emotional and spiritual health.

An important role of Ayurveda is to identify a person's ideal state of balance, according to their *prakriti*, and to determine where and how they become unstable. The main objective of the multidimensional Ayurvedic approach regarding lifestyle disorders is to identify causative and aggravating factors of disease and check them to resolve disease process and prevent its progression along with balancing psychophysical capacity. Ayurveda offers to maintain this balance by dietary regime, *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Panchakarma*, *Rasayanas*, *Sadavritta*, *Vega dharna* and *vidharana* etc.

All these regimens are followed to achieve homeostasis and not just to counter specific symptom. That's why it outperforms conventional medicines when it comes to tackle lifestyle disorders.

Keywords: Lifestyle disorders, Ayurveda, *Rasayanas*, *Sadavritta*

I. INTRODUCTION

Lifestyle of a person is a cumulative effect of his physical capacity coordinated with psychological functioning displayed in the form of habits, behavior, dietary pattern and pattern based on his own training which start from childhood and his immediate companions including parents siblings peers etc. Thus it involves your psychological and innate control over the physical and sensory activities. When this initiation, control and coordination are disturbed it leads to the derangement of lifestyle and results in any type of Lifestyle disorder.

Automation in the name of convenience and comfort, nuclear family with consumeristic and self-centric Living Style which have affected humans physical emotional and spiritual health. Fast-paced life and excess use of junk foods modern

gadgets leading to sedentary and addictive Lifestyle causing serious Lifestyle disorders such as hypertension, Diabetes mellitus, dyslipidemia, obesity associated with cardiovascular disorders continue to be the major cause of mortality which represents about 30% of all deaths worldwide.

II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. In the management of lifestyle disorders Ayurveda offers various regimens including *dincharya* (daily regimen)[1], *Ritu Charya* (seasonal regimen)[2], *Panchakarma* (Detoxification and bio-purification)[3], *Rasayanas* (Rejuvenation therapies)[4]
2. For psychological perspective *Sadavritta* (ideal routine)[5] *Aacharya Rasayanas* (code of conduct)[6], retention of suppressible urges.
3. Various practices for gaining control over mind with strong yogic practices of *Ashtanga Yoga*.
4. According to Ayurveda, basically the cause of any life style disorder is '*Prajnaparadha*'. [7] Ayurveda narrated this phenomenon as '*Prajnaparadha*' (intellectual blasphemy) which is one of the three basic causes of any disease. There are ample of improper actions as an impact of *Prajnaparadha* which are root causes of various diseases, e.g., habit of suppression of any natural urge is a result of *Prajnaparadha* and enlisted as a cause of nearly 50% of the diseases. Reversal of any neurotransmission or improper removal of the waste products formed during metabolism leading to accumulation of toxins is the basic cause of a disease. Therefore, the habit of suppression of urge in improper lifestyle can be considered as one of the root causes of lifestyle diseases. Removal of these accumulated waste products is the first line of treatment as described in Ayurveda. (*shodhana* therapy)

III. PREVENTION THROUGH AYURVEDA:

In the management of lifestyle diseases, Ayurveda offers various regimens including Ahara

and vihar (dietary habits and daily routine). *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Panchakarma* (five detoxification and bio-purification therapies), and *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) therapies. The *Sadvritta* (ideal routines) and *Aachara Rasayana* (code of conduct) are utmost important to maintain a healthy and happy psychological perspective.

Ahara and *Vihara* play a central role in the life according to Ayurvedic classics. Ayurveda mainly emphasizes on *Ahara* and *Vihara* as measures for better living, health and wellness.

In addition to its material and biological attributes ayurveda emphasizes more on *Ahara* in comparison to other systems of medicine and also explored its emotional and spiritual significance. *Ahara* is considered as Prana (basis of life) in Ayurveda. *Ahara* has been described as one of the *Trayopastambha* (three subsidiary pillars) of life which are *Ahara*, *Nidra* (sleep) and *Brahmacharaya* (celibacy) [8]. Diet is considered as vital for a human body as it provides the basic nutrients and promotes longevity.

Ayurveda always emphasizes on consuming healthy and nutritious diet for maintaining good health. Both the living human body and the diseases afflicting it are the products of *Ahara*. Use of *hita-ahara* (wholesome diet) promotes health and longevity and *ahita-ahara* (unwholesome diet) promotes manifestation of different disorders. Unfortunately in modern era the concept of *hita-ahara* is continuously being ignored leading to the emergence of lifestyle disorders. Ayurveda also described eighteen types of dietary incompatibilities (*Viruddha Ahara*), which should be avoided to maintain health and longevity. In this way Ayurveda offers different *Pathayapathya* (do's & don'ts) regarding diet/dietary supplementations which definitely help in the prevention and management of a wide range of lifestyle disorders. *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* includes chanting *Mantras*, *Aushadhi* and *Mani Dharana* (spiritual use of herbs and gems) *Mangal Karma*, *Bali* (offering oblations), *Homa*, *Prayashchita* (ceremonial penances), *Upavasa* (fasting), *Swastyayana* (rituals for social well being) etc. All these rituals activities directly or indirectly exert a positive impact on mind (*Manas*), promote psychosomatic health; impede the psychosocial stress and leads to reduction & abolition of negative thoughts like suicidal ideations etc.

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa The author of foremost classic on internal medicine, *Charaka Samhita* defines it as a method of restraining or withdrawal of the mind from unwholesome objects (*Arthas*). Thus, the term *Sattvavajaya* implies to that

modality which is therapeutic for mental or emotional stresses and disturbances. This is secured best by restraining the mind from desire for unwholesome objects. All these measures help in developing control over the *Manas* or mind, which is usually unstable. *Dinacharya* Normal circadian rhythms are very important in day to day life to maintain biological clock. Ayurveda suggests to begin daily habits with awareness, early rising, avoid suppression of natural urges and eliminate wastes as per urge, keep the teeth & skin cleaned, regular use of massage (*Abhyanga*), regular daily bathing (bathing enhances the appetite and promotes longevity), consume suitable and wholesome diet according to the appetite and metabolic needs, since it is the basis of life and important for day to day promotion of health. Ayurveda has also suggested avoiding late night sleep, eating stale foods, having sex with inappropriate partner & at unsuitable time and position and the misuse of senses. These might lead to imbalance in the circadian rhythms and thus long term imbalance predisposes to lifestyle disorders. Therefore, one has to stay aware about this daily regimen for day to day promotion of health, boost immunity and prevention from lifestyle disorders.

Ritucharya Ritu (season) classified by different features expresses different effects on the body as well as on the environment. Ayurveda has depicted various rules and regimens (*Charya*), regarding diet and lifestyle to acclimatize seasonal enforcement easily without altering body homeostasis. The prime objective of Ayurvedic system of medicine is preventive aspect, which can be achieved by the modification in diet and lifestyle in response to change in climatic condition. *Ritucharya* represents a very important aspect of preventive measure for various illnesses including lifestyle disorders as mentioned in Ayurvedic texts.

Panchakarma (biopurification) It is the only system of medicine in the world which proposes the need of regular purification of the human biological system from gross level to the molecular level to render it suitable for self recovery and therapeutic responsiveness. The human biological system continuously undergoes wear and tear and needs to be cleansed and rejuvenated regularly. Therefore, Ayurveda advises seasonal *Panchakarma* as preventive measure for maintenance and promotion of physical as well as mental health.

Panchakarma is a collective term used to address the five principal procedures or technologies of bio-purification. These procedures are used in order to cleanse the body channels, to eliminate toxins out of the body, brings about the harmony of

bio- humors (Tridosha i.e. Vata, Pitta, Kapha, and Manasa Dosha i.e. Raja and Tama) to obtain long-lasting beneficial effects which further leads to chemical balance inside the bio- system and thus provide the normal chemical and electrical environment in brain and ultimately restore the homeostasis. When done properly, these promote psychosomatic health, rejuvenate the body and increase the receptivity and effectiveness of subsequent therapies. The five procedures of *Panchakarma* include *Vaman* (therapeutic emesis), *Virechan* (therapeutic purgation), *Asthapan Basti* (therapeutic decoction enema), *Anuvasana Basti* (therapeutic oil enema) and *Nasya Karma* (nasal medication). Ayurveda emphasizes more on the preventive aspect of the *Panchakarma* rather than curative. It also facilitates the absorption of nutrient and drugs administered thereafter in favor to attain their desired pharmacotherapeutic effects. *Panchakarma* also restore the mental health, reduces the stress and therefore, help in the prevention as well as management of many lifestyle disorders. *Panchakarma* is claimed for its preventive, promotive, prophylactic and rejuvenative properties.

Rasayana In addition to food and diet, Ayurveda propounds a separate concept of medicinal dietary supplements in the context of *Rasayana* (rejuvenative measures). It can be used as nutritional supplement as well as of medicinal value depending upon its various types. Most *Rasayanas* produce their nourishing and rejuvenating effect by promoting the *Agni*, *Bala*. It can work as direct nutrients or by the way of *Sroto-prasadan* (purification of body channels), resulting in an improved nutritional status which further leads to an improved quality of *Dhatu*s or body tissues. Although the *Rasayanas* are a generic class of restorative and rejuvenative supplements. Many *Rasayanas* could be tissue and organ specific such as *Medhya Rasayana* for the brain, *Hridya Rasayana* for the heart, *Twachya Rasayana* for the skin. Various studies on *Rasayana* drugs suggest their following action.

• Immunomodulator • Adaptogenic • Antioxidant • Nootropic • Antistress

Sadvratta and *Achara Rasayana* of Ayurveda offers some code of good conducts which can be categorizes into personal (viz. limited sexual relations, early sleeping and awakening, avoid excess exertion, avoid suppression of natural urges, regime of bathing, keeping skin clean), social (keep mercy on others, telling truth, avoid alcoholism, be soft hearted, always use cleaned and washed cloths), psychological and emotional (try to be in a steady

mental state i.e. avoid height of emotions, try to avoid to memorize if being insulted by anyone, keep patience, etc). Such type of lifestyle adaptation always helpful in the prevention and management of a wide range of lifestyle disorders.

IV. CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has proven its role and importance in the area of lifestyle disorders. Also the nutritional food and physical activity are well defined in Ayurvedic system. Unhealthy diets, smoking, lack of exercise, and stress are the major risk factors for lifestyle disorders such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and obesity etc. These result in various long term disease processes, culminating in high mortality rates attributable to stroke, heart attack, cancers, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, renal failure, and many others. Lifestyle diseases known internationally as 'non-communicable diseases' (NCD's) or 'chronic diseases of lifestyle' (CDL) emerge from inappropriate relationship of people with their environment. A persons total regimen along with homeostasis of mental factors must be maintained. From the history of treatment and preventive measures given to the persons suffering from life style diseases is that a strong criteria of Social inclusion is a protective factor for maintaining mental health. Social networks and supports contribute to one's sense of purpose, self- esteem, resilience and access to resources and information. Furthermore, community participation and civic engagement are associated with better self-reported mental health. Hence, Ayurveda has an upper edge in treating the disease with emphasis on its root cause. The Ayurvedic physician concentrates on achieving the objective of Ayurveda for promotion of health, prevention and management of disease for a healthy and happy life in the ailing society.

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