

QUALITIES OF THE PHYSICIAN MENTIONED IN BRIHATTRAYI -A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: *Ayurveda* is one of the ancient traditional life science and medical science of Indian legacy. *Ayurveda* is the most sacred science beneficial to the human being not only for this life but also the life beyond. **Materials and Methods:** As *Ayurveda* deals with the health of the society, the diseases and the patients – much more emphasis is given to the qualities of the physician, especially in *Brihatrayi* viz. *Charaksamhita*, *Susrutsamhita* and *Ashtanghridaya*. Therefore, in this review article attempt has been made to explain the importance of the qualities crucial for the genuine physician as mentioned in these texts which indeed is the need of present era. **Results and Discussion:** In the recent era, we observe the mal practice by most of the physicians, which we can say as a nuisance to the society. Very often the poor patients suffer more, economically and physically both. As per *Ayurveda* medical profession is a noble profession, the ultimate goal of this profession is not to attain the wealth only, but it is for the welfare of all the living beings. A physician should be a learned scholar and should have efficacy in both- theoretical as well as practical knowledge. Only the real physician is able to fulfill both the aspects of *Ayurveda* i.e. *Swasthasyaswasthyarakshanam* – the preventive aspect and *Aaturasyavikaaraprashamanam* – the curative aspect.

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, *Brihatrayi*, Physician, Qualities

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the eternal science of life, propounded by *Brahma* with a view to give long and healthy life to the mankind, to eradicate the diseases and for the attainment of *Chaturvidhapurushartha* i.e. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kaama* and *Moksha*. *Ayurveda* is not merely the med-

ical science but it is the science of life, as it has the philosophical background, the ultimate goal of life is *Moksha* – liberation from the bondage of birth and death. Medical profession should not be just for earning wealth, but it is par excellence than any other profession

as it gives life to the patients and maintains their health. So the physician having spiritual qualities ultimately succeeds in attaining *Chaturvidhapurushartha*. The term 'Ayu' stands for the combination of the body, sense organs, mind and soul.¹ Mind and body are integrated and having great influence on each other. *Ayurveda* deals with the holistic approach, which is not only concerned with the absence of disease, but it is a positive state of being. So to understand the disease and to cure it, mere the anatomy, physiology, pathology etc. are not enough, but a physician should be aware of mind and soul also, as he is the donor of the life. As per *Ayurveda* the imbalance of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* leads to the disease and its equilibrium maintain the health. Health and disease are also defined as pleasure and pain respectively.²

To maintain the equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*, our *Acharyas* have mentioned *Dincharya*, *Rutucharya*, *Sadvritta*, *Pathyaapathya* etc. To cure the diseases four factors with their qualities are essential, which is described as *Chikitsa chatushpaada* i.e. *Bhishaga*- the physician, *Dravya* – the medicine, *Upasthata*- the attendant and *Rogi* – the patient.³

Though quadruped of therapeutics equipped with sixteen qualities are responsible for success in treatment, yet the physician, by the virtue of his knowledge, administrative position and as a coordinator, occupies the most important position among them.⁴

Most of the physicians of the present era have put this noble profession to the lowest level such as malpractices, exaggerated expenses, unnecessary operations and investigations, even removing and stealing organs; which in-

dicates the degradation of this noble profession. Various physicians having negative qualities are also mentioned in *Ayurveda* literature: *Chhadmachara* – pseudo physician, *Siddhasadhit* – feigned physician, ⁵*Agna-Ignorant* etc. In this review article we have focused on positive qualities of the physician.

Materials and Methods: References has been collected and relevant matter is compiled from *Brihatrayi* i.e. *Charaksamhita*, *Sushrutasamhita* and *Ashtangahridya*. Available commentaries of *Brihatrayi* are also reviewed. All Compiled matter is reorganized and critically analyzed for the discussion and attempt has been made to draw some fruitful conclusion.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Vaidya- Genuine physician: The physician who knows the principles governing their correct application regarding place, time and individual variation, should be regarded as the best physician.⁶ As *Ayurveda* treat the patient as per *Prakruti*, the same disease in different *Prakruti* person would have different treatment. The physician who can relieve his patients from their disease is the best one. Accomplishment of all the objects i.e. preventive & curative implies the proper application of the medicine. Success also implies the physician endowed with best qualities.⁷ Here the cause and effect theory is applicable. If the disease is cured, it simply implies that a proper treatment is given by the learned physician. As diseases are of innumerable varieties depending upon their distinctive features like *Rujapain*, *Varna* – colour, *Samutthana* – etiology, *Sansthana* – site of its origin and manifesta-

tion and nomenclature; it is not possible to enumerate all of them. So if a physician is not able to name a particular disease, one should not feel ashamed on that account as it is not always possible to name all types of diseases in definite terms. Hence a physician who initiates the treatment after observing above features of diseases and by following the authoritative instructions would never fail in therapeutic procedure.⁸ At present we observe that at the time of epidemic, particular disease becomes hazardous to the society and physicians belongs to *Ayurveda* treat that disease in very well manner without concerned about the name of the disease, such as chickengunya, swine flu, dengue etc. As *Susrutsamhita* deals with *Shalyatantra* – surgery, *Acharyasusruta* has mentioned somehow different qualities of physician – surgeon, regarding surgery; such as fearlessness, swiftness, sharpness of instruments, absence of perspiration, trembling and confusion.⁹ For surgical operation these qualities are essential, if the physician is coward, he will not be able to initiate the surgery; by swiftness the patient does not suffer long, sharpness of instruments does not cause pain and surgery will be done in an easy way within time. It suggests the well preparation by the physician. Absence of confusion helps in making the decision for the proper time for surgery. If the ignorant physician incises the immature – *Apakvavrana* and neglects the mature – *Pakvavrana*, both these acting should be indecisively regarded as outcast.¹⁰ The genuine physician is one who knows the *Sanchaya* – accumulation, *Prakopa* – aggravation, *Prasara* – spreading, *Sthansansraya* – localization, *Vyakti* – manifestations and *Bheda* – perturba-

tion of the *Doshas*. These are the six stages of the disease for treatment known as *Kriyakala*. As earlier as the treatment is started, disease will be cured very easily. If the doshas are eliminated in the first stage i.e. *sanchay* – accumulation, it will not attain successive stages. *Doshas* become stronger as they proceed further.¹¹ The genuine physician should have properly studied the scriptures with its interpretations, should have undergone the demonstrations, should have practiced himself, should be of light hand, having purity, courageous, equipped with essential equipment and drugs, having presence of mind, intelligent, professional, expert and devoted to truth and virtue.¹²

Chikitsa prabhrutvaidya: Especially this type of physician has been mentioned regarding *Shodhana* therapy. *Shamana* – alleviating therapy and *Shodhana* – eliminating therapy are the two main therapy administered by *Ayurveda* physicians. As *Shamana* therapy does not produce much complications, it is easy to administer rather than *Shodhana* therapy. As *Shodhana* therapy eliminates the vitiated *Doshas* from the body, there is no chance of recurrence. *Shodhana* therapy is used for both purposes; for preventive aspect as well as curative aspect. Hence much emphasis is given to *Shodhana* therapy in *Ayurveda*. *Acharyacharak* has given the simile of tree; unless the tree is uprooted from its root, it may grow up again anytime. Such is for the vitiated *Doshas*, unless they are eliminated from their very root, they will go on causing diseases.¹³ *Shodhana* therapy includes *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Nasya*, *Basti* and *Raktamok-*

shana – bloodletting. After keen observations of the factors such as disease, *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Bala*, *Sattva*, *Avastha*, *Vaya*, *Koshtha*, *Agni* etc. the required dose for the patient should be decided. If the physician is not aware about such factors, he may administer very less or excessive dose, which will lead to complications instead of cure. Hence only genuine physician should practice the *Shodhana* therapy. By virtue of his ability to bestow physical fitness, physician is verily regarded as a donor of *Dharma* – virtue, *Artha* – wealth and *Kaama* – desires regarding this world and the world beyond.¹⁴ The physician who is well acquainted with the principles of treatment, intelligent, having classical knowledge and prompt in action, when administers proper emesis and purgation therapy, the patient surely attains happiness and health. On the other hand, same therapy given by pseudo physician, the patient would subject themselves to further complications, as the pseudo physician is ignorant about the proper dose, he may administer inadequate or excessive dose.¹⁵ The physician's utmost duty is to treat the patient and give relief, if one is not capable for that at least one has no right to harm the patient.

Yuktigyavaidya: *Yukti* is one of the four *Pramanas* – the means to achieve actual knowledge and one of the ten *Paradigunas* mentioned by *Acharyacharak*. It is the valuable contribution given to *Ayurveda* literature by *Acharyacharak*. The intellect which perceives things as outcomes of combination of multiple causative factors, valid for the past, present and future, is known as *Yukti* – reasoning.¹⁶ *Yukti* - Propriety depends upon the dose of

the medicine and the time of its administration. Success of the treatment depends upon the propriety. A physician, proficient in the principles of propriety is always superior to those who are acquainted with the drugs only.¹⁷ It is not enough to know all the diseases and all the medicines, but one should prescribe the medicine after keen observation of the factors such as *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Desha* – habitat, *Bala* – strength of the patient, *Kaala* – season as well as the stage of the disease, *Anala* – digestive power, *Prakruti* – body constitution, *Vaya* – age, *Sattva* – mind power, *Saatmya* – habituates and *Ahaara* – food habits etc. would never fail in treatment.¹⁸ *Acharya Charakhas* also mentioned *Yuktivyapashraya chikitsa* – therapy based on reasoning. According to this therapy, the administration of proper diet and medicines are prescribed, after the keen observations of the above factors such as *Dosha*, *Dushya* etc. These factors are very subtle to observe, therefore the physician should make all the efforts to enhance his knowledge so that he can be able to give the life to his patients.¹⁹ The physician should continuously study these principles of *Ayurveda* and examine the patient carefully in all investigative aspects and then initiate the treatment and administer the appropriate dosage of the specific drug to bestow the health successfully.²⁰ Even though an acute poison if properly administered can become an excellent drug, where as an effective drug if not administered properly, becomes an acute poison. So a wise patient desirous of longevity and health should not accept any medicine prescribed by a physician without *Yukti*-ignorant about the principles governing its application. The *Yuktigya*-

vaidya endowed with good memory, having profound knowledge of the causative factors of the diseases and health, self controlled and having presence of mind is entitled to practice with the combination of various drugs.²¹

Praanaachaarya: After the completion of the medical education, the physician is entitled *dvitijati* - having second birth and is called 'Vaidya'. After that the physician is certainly endowed with either *Brahma sattva* or *Rishi sattva*, hence he is known as a *Dvij* and a *Vaidya*.²² The physician who is endowed with good character and intellect, *dvijati* completed medical education and well versed in scriptures, may be considered as a preceptor and offered respectful regards by all the living beings. Such type of physician is known as *Praanaachaarya*.²³ A person who pursues medical profession just out of compassion for the living being and not for *Artha* – wealth, or *Kaama* – worldly desires, excels all others. Patients suffering from serious diseases are dragged towards death by *yama* – the god of death; the *Praanaachaarya* gives them life by cutting the noose of the god of death. Hence, in this world, there is none equal to a physician who can help an individual with both *dharma* and *artha*. There is no other gift which excels the gift of life. Compassion for the living beings is the *dharma* – righteousness par excellence. A physician, who initiates medical profession by keeping this ideal view, accomplishes his objectives best and gets happiness par excellence.²⁴ Such types of physician are having dominancy of *Sattvaguna* which is essential for this noble profession. Even any one text of *Ayurveda* does not com-

prehend all the concepts and principles of *Ayurveda*, so a wise physician should expand his knowledge by exploring several texts. All the eight branches of *Ayurveda* are inter related, hence thorough knowledge of all the branches is essential to understand the basic principles of *Ayurveda*.²⁵ The knowledge of other allied science such *Jyotisha*, *Yogadarshana*, *Vyakarana*, modern patho-physiology, modern diagnostic tools will be helpful for proper interpretation of *Ayurveda* texts. In present era, as the life style is totally changed, less physical work and more stress, pollution, the food products having more chemicals and every one rush towards the luxurious life – our life is disconnected from the nature, new diseases are occurring now and then, so the physician should be a life-long student and researcher to update his knowledge; so as to remain as *Praanaachaarya*.

Praanaabhisara Vaidya: A physician who is duly engaged in the study of medical science, in mastering the actual implications, in the right application of the treatment with practical experience is known as *Pranabhisaravaidya* saviour of life.²⁶ There are ten important sites of life, i.e. *Shankhau* - two temple regions, *Marmatrayam* - three vital parts – Head, Heart and Bladder, *Kantha* - throat, *Rakta*- blood, *Shukra* - semen, *Ojas* and *Guda* -rectum. The learned physician who is well acquainted with all these ten important resorts of life, all the motor and sensory organs, consciousness -the soul, causative factors of the diseases, sign and symptoms of the diseases and its treatment – is known as the savior of life.²⁷ The physicians who are born in noble families *Kulaprasakta-*

prakruti, learned, having vast practical experience, skillful, pure, infallible in various practical aspects, self controlled, having all essential equipments, endowed with healthy sense organs, acquainted with natural manifestations, having presence of mind are known as *Pra-nabhisara* – saviors of life and destroyers of diseases. They are well versed with the anatomy, physiology, embryology, origin and evolution of the universe, causative factors of the diseases, premonitory signs and symptoms, actual signs and symptoms as well as the treatment of the diseases which are easily curable, curable with difficulty, Palliable and incurable.²⁸ The physician endowed with such qualities can handle any critical condition very easily, no matter disease may be related with any system of the body, there may be any stage of the disease, such physician will try his best to give the life to his patient.

Raja vaidya-Royal physician: The physician well acquainted regarding the causative factors of the diseases, sign and symptoms of all the diseases, its treatment and prevention of re-occurring of the diseases should be appointed as a royal physician.²⁹ According to *Acharya-susrut*, a physician well versed in theory and practice both, will qualify to be a royal physician. In ancient time, there was a great importance of the physician appointed by the king in his palace to look after his health. As one can be vigilant with all the things at all times to protect the life of the king, specially from the poisonous food which may be given by the enemies³⁰ or the *Vishakanya*- women desiring favour can administer poisonous formulations to the king, or the king himself may be victim

by enjoying a poison girl and leave out his life within moments.³¹ Happiness and wellness of the people depends upon the healthiness and happiness of the king, hence great efforts were made to protect the life of the king, which was the utmost duty of the royal physician.

Qualities of the physician: In *Brihatrayi*, *Acharya* has mentioned four essential factors with their qualities, known as *Chikitsachatushpada*, responsible for the treatment viz. the physician, drug – medicament, the attendant and the patient. As rest of the three is dependent on the physician, much more emphasis is given to the qualities of the physician. Without physician, the other three limbs, inspite of having good qualities are useless. Alone the meritorious physician is able to carry out the patient through any critical conditions even in absence of attendants³². *Acharya Charaka* and *Vagbhatt* have mentioned the similar qualities of the physicians; Excellency in medical knowledge, vast experience in practical aspect, skillfulness and purity are the four qualities required for the physician³³. The physician, who possesses the six qualities, viz.; knowledge of the classics, critical approach, insightful understanding, sharp memory, perseverance and practical knowledge, will never fail in the treatment of the curable diseases. Any one of these qualities is enough to justify the word ‘*Vaidya*’. The one who combines all these qualities within himself deserves to be called ‘Genuine physician’, who bestows health and happiness to all the living beings.³⁴

Excellency in medical knowledge: *Ayurveda* literature caters the need of the medical student to become proficient in medical science –

Ayurveda. *Acharyacharak* has mentioned three fold method to get Excellency in medical knowledge i.e. *Adhyayan-* to learn, *Adhyapan* – to teach and *Tadvidyambhasha* – discussion with the peers and scholar physicians “*Vaidyasamuhonihshanshayakaraanaam*” which improves knowledge and clarifies the doubts³⁵. So the physician should frequently participate in the seminars and symposium to update his knowledge. A person who just reads the text without understanding its meaning is like an ass with a load of sandalwood on its back that only bears the burden without enjoying the fragrance³⁶ Understanding of the text is possible only with its full interpretation of principles and its discussion. To learn by small increments will be helpful as *Ayurveda* is very vast and complex. The classification of *Dravya* – substances as having *Rasa* – taste, *Guna*– qualities, *Virya* – potency, *Vipaak* – post digestive taste etc. are very subtle; also the body parts having *Marma* – vital spots, *Raktavahini* – blood vessels, *Snayu* – ligaments, *Sandhi* – joints, *Asthi* – bones, etc. are very complex; that of *Karma* – procedures such as the extraction of foreign bodies, various treatment of fractures; that of the curability, palliability and incurability of a disease is very difficult. These concepts are enough to baffle even a great intellect, not just an average intelligent person. Therefore it is essential that a medical student should learn every word, every quarter verse, every verse interpreted by the preceptor.³⁷ The knowledge of *Tantra-yuktis* enable the physician to critically analyze the merits and demerits, and comprehend the real implications of statements of *Ayurveda*. As a badly handled weapon de-

stroys the person himself, similarly a badly understood treatise causes harm to the ignorant user. On the other hand, properly handled weapon protects the user from the enemy, likewise the treatise well understood by the scholar may be beneficial to treat his patients and cure the diseases.³⁸ *Acharya charak* has given simile regarding intellect and classics. The classical texts of *Ayurveda* are likened to the light for the purpose of illumination and one’s own mental faculty to the eye. A physician endowed with both of them i.e. knowledge of the classics and his own intelligence will never commit mistakes during treatment. Here the principle of success in medical profession has been shown. Very often it is observed that even a gold medalist medical student also could not be a good practitioner. Application or utilization of the theoretical knowledge is more important.³⁹

Vast experience in practical aspect: Beside the knowledge of text-theory, he should also have a vast practical experience. Knowledge pertaining to various types of gems and metals etc. can be obtained through constant observation of the same, likewise only the classical knowledge is not sufficient to identify various stages of the disease, hence practical knowledge is equally essential to become a successful physician.⁴⁰

Skillfulness:-To identify the drug, to prepare the medicine, to apply *Shashtra*, *Kshaara*, *Agnikarma*, *Raktamokshana*, *Vaman*, *Virechan*, *Nasya* and *Basti*–dexterity or skillfulness is must .

Purity: *Ayurveda* has given the utmost place to medical treatment as a noble and sacred profession, purity in mind, body and speech is must. Having this quality the physician certainly gets popular in the society..Nowadays, It is not possible to treat the patient without any fees, but with these qualities, physician deserves adequate fees.

Vaidya-vrutti–Attitude of the physician : A physician should be very friendly and sympathetic towards all his patients, should be concerned with those who are likely to be cured and should ignore those who are towards death.⁴¹ Here, doctor patient relationship is mentioned, which plays an important role in cure of the disease. When the patient comes to the physician for the treatment purpose, one comes with a great faith and one believe the physician as a god who is capable to destroy one's disease and give one's life. So patient should feel very familiar to explain his complains to the physician, one could ask anything regarding one's disease and health, do's and don'ts etc. Physician should give enough time and attention to his patient as like a family member. Unfortunately, at present these types of physicians are rarely to see. *Acharyacharak* has mentioned that a physician who distinguishes between curable and incurable diseases and initiates treatment at proper time with all his knowledge will definitely accomplish his object. On the other hand a physician who undertakes the treatment of an incurable disease would undoubtedly subject himself to the loss of name, fame and money⁴²

CONCLUSION

To fulfill the motto of *Ayurveda*, many types of good physicians such as *Vaidya* Genuine physician, *Chikitsa prabhrtvaidya*- having specialty in *Shodhana* therapy, *Yuktigya-vaidya*- having sharp reasoning power, *Praanaachaarya*- having spiritual attitude, *Praanaabhisaravaidya* – ability to handle critical conditions and *Raja vaidya*- Royal physician-expert in preventing poisonous conditions are described subtly. All these qualities mentioned in *Ayurveda* are desirable not only for *Ayurveda* physician but for all the physicians regardless of pathy, but qualities such as knowledge of the classics, critical approach, insightful understanding, sharp memory, perseverance and practical knowledge should be must in physician. As *Ayurveda* deals with the health of the society, the diseases and the patients; the genuine physician is able to fulfill both the aspects of *Ayurveda* i.e. *Swasthasyaswasthyarakshanam* – the preventive aspect and *Aaturasyavikaaraprashamanam* – the curative aspect.

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