

RELEVANCE OF TAKRA AS PROBIOTICS

Soumya.J¹ Bindu.V² Rahul.K.R³ Jyothilal.K⁴

^{1,2,3}PG Scholar, ⁴Professor & Head, Department of Swasthavritta, Amrita School of Ayurveda, Kollam, Kerala, India

ABSTRACT

Probiotics are bacteria that line digestive tract and support our body's ability to absorb nutrients and fight infection. *Takra* is a natural probiotic diet because the friendly bacteria for the intestines and the body are found in abundance in it. The balance of gut flora should be approximately 85% good bacteria and 15 percent bad bacteria. In the compendiums like *Susrutha samhita, charaka samhita, andashtanga hrdaya*, the usefulness of *Takra* is mentioned in the conditions like *grahani, udara, arsha etc.* Daily intake of *Takra* nourishes and protect our gut from diseases, so take natural probiotic for a good health.

Keywords: Probiotics, Ayurveda, *Takra*, Buttermilk

INTRODUCTION

Probiotics are microorganisms that are believed to provide health benefits when consumed¹. The term probiotic is come into more common use after 1980. The introduction of the concept is generally attributed to Nobel recipient Elie Metchnikoff, who postulated that yogurt-consuming 'Bulgarian peasants lived longer lives because of this custom². Our body is full of bacteria, both good and bad. Probiotics are live bacteria that are good for our health, especially our digestive system³. Probiotics are often called "good" or "helpful" bacteria because they help keep our gut healthy.

WHAT IS PROBIOTICS?

Probiotic, a Greek word meaning "for life", can be defined as "live microorganisms which when administered in adequate amounts confer a health benefit on the host" [WHO/FAO]⁴. Bacteria that are normally present in our intestines help digest

food destroy disease-causing microorganisms, and produce vitamins. Probiotics are bacteria that line digestive tract and support our body's ability to absorb nutrients and fight infection. Probiotics are naturally found in our body and also find them in some foods and supplements. A research paper published in Journal of the Australian Traditional Medicine Society March 2002 says – "Your expensive Probiotic powders and capsules are less effective than a dash of several brands of yoghurt", a study by Australian Naturopath J. Hawrelak⁵. According to ayurvedic view, *Takra* is considered as good probiotic. Here we discussing about benefits of *Takra* as a probiotic. In Ayurveda we get good number of references to explain the importance of *Takra* – "He who uses *Takra* daily does not suffer from diseases, and diseases cured by *Takra* do not recur; just as amrita is for the gods, *Takra* is to humans"⁶.

Takra cleanses the channels of srotas, as a result of which rasa, reaches the tissues properly. Takra is a natural probiotic diet because the friendly bacteria for the intestines and the body are found in abundance in it.

HOW PROBIOTICS WORK?

Gut flora contains both beneficial and harmful bacteria. The balance of gut flora should be approximately 85% good bacteria and 15 percent bad bacteria. An imbalance in gut flora occurs when the bad bacteria proliferate and crowd out the beneficial ones. Researchers have found that specific strains of beneficial bacteria, introduced in the form of probiotic-rich foods can help correct an imbalanced bacterial environment. Probiotic foods maintain a low pH level thereby reducing the risk of harmful bacteria invading the body⁷. In buttermilk's case, the cultures consist of lactic acid bacteria, so called because they break down lactose into lactic acid⁸. Two of the most common strains of probiotics are lactobacilli and bifidobacteria.

Benefits of probiotics:

Probiotics have immune modulator effect in the human body thus improving the immune system. Probiotics stimulate the production of anti bodies, enhance the systemic activity of macrophages and increase the number of killer cells⁹. Probiotics relieves constipation by regulating bowel movements, improves energy levels by enhancing B - complex synthesis, protects the vital organs like heart, kidney, lungs and liver with its antioxidant properties and ensures faster clinical response since it enhances drug absorption. Probiotics prevents diarrhoea, gastroenteritis and other bowel problems, supports the immune system to

battle infection, protects the urinary tract from infection, helps to heal peptic ulcer¹⁰.

Probiotics and ayurveda:

Probiotics and ayurveda together can help to maintain the natural balance of *doshas* without any side-effects. According to Ayurvedic understanding Takra (yoghurt) is a great probiotic. The present paper throws a light on importance of probiotics and concludes that the function of Takra is similar to the probiotics over the intestinal flora.

Takra as probiotic:

In Ayurveda, buttermilk is commonly known as Takra. In the compendiums like susrutha samhita, charaka samhita and ash-tanga hridaya, the usefulness of Takra is mentioned in the conditions like grahani, udara, arsha etc. According to modern science intestinal disorders are commonly due to harmful bacteria which crowded in gut flora. According to ayurveda, intestinal disorders are due to Amatwa or diminished Agni. Takra have Agni deepanaguna and Tridoshashamanaguna, so Takra will remove Amatwa from Koshta¹¹.

Types of Takra:

Depending upon the quantity of water to be added and method of preparation of Takra, it has been explained under five headings by Bhavamisra: Ghola, Mathita, Takra, Udaswit and Chacchika¹¹. Takra is churned curd; it is prepared by adding 1/4th part water. One cup of low-fat buttermilk provides 284 mg of calcium or about 28 percent of daily calcium requirements. It provides 8 g of protein per cup or about 16 percent of your daily needs. Buttermilk is low in fat and calories, but contains several important vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin B12, riboflavin, calcium and phosphorus.

DISCUSSION

Fermented products like curd and buttermilk, most of the lactose is converted to lactic acid/acetic acid by the enzymes that are found in fermenting bacteria. Hence these products are easier to digest. A report was published in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition that suggests that the type of useful bacteria present in curd vary considerably between places¹². It was also demonstrated that the Indian curd contains nearly 250 different strains of Lactobacillus.

The role of Takra in treating diarrhoea has not been scientifically proven. But it is given during diarrhoea to rehydrate, and hence it imparts some benefits. An imbalance in GI flora occurs when the bad bacteria proliferate and crowd out the beneficial ones. Preliminary research has found that specific strains of beneficial bacteria, introduced in the form of probiotic-rich foods or supplements, can help correct an imbalanced bacterial environment and alleviate a range of symptoms associated with it.

CONCLUSION

Ever increasing stress, irregular eating habits, and excessive travel, indiscriminate use of antibiotics, high alcohol consumption, high intake of packaged and processed food, and pollution are all factors that contribute to this alarming trend. People with lactose intolerance cannot drink milk because their bodies do not produce enough of the enzyme required to digest lactose, which is the sugar in milk, and drinking milk may cause diarrhea or abdominal pain. People with lactose intolerance may be able to tolerate buttermilk, however, because the lactic acid bacteria break down some of the lactose, decreasing the amount in the milk. Common Probiotic Killers are Antibiotics, Sugar, Tap Water, GMO Foods, Emotional Stress, Chemicals and medications. Modern

foods that contain preservatives; dyes, etc are not beneficial to the gastro intestinal flora, especially Probiotics. Consequently, in order to maintain and ensure proper gastro intestinal flora, continuous or periodic supplementation of Probiotics is a must. Daily intake of Takra nourishes and protects our gut from diseases, so take natural probiotic for a good health.

REFERENCE

- Hill, C; Guarner, F; Reid, G; Gibson, GR; Merenstein, DJ; Pot, B; Morelli, L; Canani, RB; Flint, HJ; Salminen, S; Calder, PC; Sanders, ME (August 2014). "Expert consensus document. The International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics consensus statement on the scope and appropriate use of the term probiotic". *Nature reviews. Gastroenterology & hepatology.* **11** (8): 506–14. doi:10.1038/nrgastro.2014.66. PMID 24912386
- Brown, Amy C.; Valiere, Ana (2004-01-01). "Probiotics and Medical Nutrition Therapy". *Nutrition in clinical care : an official publication of Tufts University.* **7** (2): 56–68. ISSN 1096-6781. PMC 1482314. PMID 15481739
- <http://www.webmd.com/> By Mary Jo DiLonardo
- Schlundt, Jorgen. "Health and Nutritional Properties of Probiotics in Food including Powder Milk with Live Lactic Acid Bacteria"(PDF). Report of a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Evaluation of Health and Nutritional Properties of Probiotics in Food Including Powder Milk with Live Lactic Acid Bacteria.FAO / WHO. Archived from the original (PDF) on October 22, 2012. Retrieved 17 December 2012.

5. Hussain Z, Quigley EM, Systematic review: Complementary and alternative medicine in the irritable bowel syndrome, *Aliment Pharmacol Ther*, 2006 Feb 15;23(4): 465-471.
6. Sri Brahmasankara Misra, Sri Rupalalaji Vaisya. *Bhavaprakasa of Sribhava Misra* including Nighantu portion-edited with the Vidyotini Hindi Commentary. 11th ed. 2004. Varanasi: Chaukhambha publications; 1992
7. Probiotics: The Friendly Microbes Manoj Goyal, Indian Journal of Clinical Practice, Vol. 23, No. 3, August 2012
8. Lactic acid bacteria in the dairy industry, M. ELISABETH SHARPE, journal of society of diary technology, vol 32, no. 1, January 1979
9. Probiotic use in clinical practice: what are the risks, Robert J Boyle, Am J Clin Nutr June 2006 vol. 83 no. 6 1256-1264
10. Potential Uses of Probiotics in Clinical Practice, Gregor Reid, PMC-ID: PMC207122, NCBI
11. Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 2/19:
12. Bhavamisra, BhavaPrakashaNigantu, TakraVarga, Sloka 1 – 7
13. Probiotics and immune health Fang Yan^a and D.B. Polk^{b,c,d}, www.ncbi.nlm.nih

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Dr. Soumya J

PG Scholar, Department of PG Swasthavritta,
Amrita School of Ayurveda,
Kollam, Kerala, India
Email: soumya.j87@gmail.com

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared