

**CARDIAC DISEASES AND AYURVEDA - A REVIEW****Soni Anamika<sup>1</sup>, Soni Surendra<sup>2</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

The incidence of heart diseases is increasing at an alarming rate in our society due to change in concept of diet and life style as an impact of western culture and civilization. According to latest data of American heart association, cardiovascular disease including heart attack & stroke, remain the No. 1 killer of men & women causing 36 percent of all the deaths per year. Changes in diet pattern, dietary habits and life style, lack of physical exercise, increased mental & physical stress, certain social and environmental changes (e.g. Pollution) has lead to us in the era of Hypertension, Hyperlipidemia, obesity, cardiac diseases and many more diseases. Though, in this era of modern medicine, various advance diagnostic techniques and modalities of treatment are available for the patients of cardiac diseases but these all measures put a lot of mental, physical & financial pressure on the patients and their family. There are a number of drugs and medicinal preparations described in the texts of Ayurveda like *Arjuna* (*Terminalia arjuna*), *Tagar Valeriana welchi*, *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Tambula* (*piper betel*), *Brahmi* (*Centella asiatica*) etc, having wonderful effects in Hypertension Hyperlipidemia, Angina pectoris, IHD etc. Various techniques of Yoga like various *Asna* (Postures), *Pranayama* (Breathing practices), Spiritual upliftmen (*Sattavajaya*) are having wonderful preventive and therapeutic effects on Anxiety, Hypertension, Hypercholestremia, Atherosclerosis etc which are main risk factors of heart disorders.

**Key Words:** Hypertension, IHD, Atherosclerosis, *Hridroga*, *Rasayana*, *Arjuna*, *Pranayama*

**INTRODUCTION**

The incidence of heart diseases is increasing at an alarming rate in our society due to change in concept of diet and life style as an impact of western culture and civilization. Every year 1.5 million Americans suffer from heart attack. In India, study of current trend, reveals that the cases of CVD may increase from about 2.9 crore in 2000 to about 6.4 crore in 2015 The prevalence is more in urban population and in rural population will reach 13.5% in 2015. The prevalence rate among

younger population 40 or above are also likely to increase. The cardiovascular diseases has largest share in non-communicable diseases (31%).<sup>1</sup>

Changes in diet pattern, dietary habits and life style, lack of physical exercise, increased mental & physical stress, certain social and environmental changes (e.g. Pollution) has lead to us in the era of Hypertension, Hyperlipidemia, obesity, cardiac diseases and many more diseases.<sup>2</sup> 'Ayurveda' as known from

the ancient times is serving the society not only by its specific measures of cure but by its most powerful aspect of 'Swasthyarakshanam' and this is exactly applicable in the context of cardiac diseases and its associates. Ayurveda teaches & enriches us with such a wonderful diet and Living pattern (*Ahara- Vihara, dincharya, Ritucharya*) and Codes of conduct (*Achara Rasayana*) that are very effective in prevention of heart diseases. The term 'Hridroga' is described in the Ayurvedic texts but it seems that many cardiac diseases have been included in the description of *Shwasa roga* and *Shotha roga*. *Hrid- Gulma* 'is a unique concept of Ayurveda medicine where the underlying pathology of the Cardiac distress or symptoms remain obscure, the basic cause is *Gulma* formation is *Hrid-Pradesha*. So, the treatment on the principles of *Gulma Chikitsa* provides relief to the patient.

There are a number of drugs and medicinal preparations described in the texts of Ayurveda like *Arjuna, Tagar, Haritaki, Tambula, Brahmi* etc, having wonderful effects in Hypertension Hyperlipidemia, Angina pectoris, IHD etc. Various techniques of Yoga like various *Asna* (Postures), *Pranayama* (Breathing practices), Spiritual upliftment (*Sattavav-*

*jaya*) are having wonderful preventive and therapeutic effects on Anxiety, Hypertension, Hypercholestremia, Atherosclerosis etc which are main risk factors of heart disorders.

### Etiology of Hridroga<sup>3</sup>

#### General

**Dietary Factors** – Excess & frequent consumption of substances having *Ushna-Tikshna* (Spicy), *Guru* (Heavy diets), *Ruksha* (dry), *Kashaya* (Astringent) properties.

#### Life style related factors

- Excessive / strenuous physical exercise or activity (*Vyayama*)
- Excessive purgation, emesis or enema (*Basti*)
- Supression of natural urges
- *Chinta, Bhaya, Krodha* etc. factors related to emotional & mental stress
- *Abhighata* (Physical and mental trauma)
- *Adhyashana* (Overeating), *Vishmashana* (Irregular dietary habits)

#### Other causes

- Weakness due to other chronic disorders (*Atikarshana*)
- As a complication of other systemic diseases like Hypertension, Pulmonary edema etc. (*Gadatichara*)

### Comparative study of the Pathogenesis Of Hridroga (Ayurveda VS. Modern Science)

**Kulaja Vikara (Familial factors)**

style)

↓

**Samchya**

**Prokopa**

**Prasara**

↓

**Sathanasamshrya**

**chayam)**

↓

**- Lead to Hypertension, Coronary artery disease**

**Mithya Ahara – Vihara ( False diet & life**

style)

↓

**Hypercholestremia (Ama formation & Rasa – dushti)**

↓

**Atherosclerotic Changes ( Sroto sangra / Dhamni – Prati-**

↓

↓

**Vyaktavastha**



**Updrava**

'Ama' ( comparable to Hyperlipidamia, toxic complexes etc. ) plays an role of important risk factor in the pathogenesis of heart diseases by causing *Srotosanga* and *Dhamnipratichya* (Arteriosclerosis, Atherosclerosis) which are important pathological factors for the development of cardiac diseases like Ischemic heart disease or coronary artery disease<sup>4</sup>. *Acharaya Charaka* has decribed specific pathogenesis of *Krimija Hridroga* . The aetiological factors produce a *Granthi* (nodule ) in the heart . Vitiated *Rasa* lead to the formation of *Kleda* in that (*Granthi*) resulting into the development of *Krimi* ( microorganisms ), later they attack on the entire Heart.

**General Symptoms of Hridroga<sup>5</sup>**

*Vaivarnaya* (Cyanosis / Pallor) ,*Murcha* (Syncope) , *Javara* (Fever), *Kasa* (Cough), *Shwasa* (Dyspnoea / Orthopnoea ) *Hikka* (Hiccup) , *Ruja* (Pain / Angina) , *Trisha* (Excessive thirst), *Utklesha* (Nausea), *Chardi* (Vomiting), *Aruchi* (Anorexia) ,*Asyavairasaya* (Bad taste)

**Types of Hridroga and their Specific Symptoms – 5 types**

- *Vataja Hridroga* - Different types of pains- Stretching/ tearing/ Crushing/pricking pain and Palpitations
- *Pittaja Hridroga* - Excess thirst, Fever, Burning pain, Fatigue, Dryness of mouth
- *Kaphaja Hridroga* – Heaviness, Anorexia, Nausea, Excessive salivation, Indigestion
- *Sannipataja Hridroga* – Mixed symptoms
- *Krimija Hridroga* - Sharp pain, Edema, Nausea, Anorexia, Itching, giddiness.

**Hridroga ( Cardiac diseases )**



**Complications of cardiac diseases**

**PREVENTION OF HRIDROGA ( CARDIC DISORDERS )**

Ayurveda mainly rely upon the principle of 'Prevention is better than cure'. So, the preventive aspect of the diseases has given first & prime importance in the management of all the diseases including *Hridroga* as well.

1. '*Pariharya Visheshen manso-dukh hetavah*'<sup>6</sup>- The deep vision of *Acharya Charaka* has laid the prime importance on avoidance of the factors that cause Emotional and mental upsets i.e *supression of dharniya mansika vega* like anger, fear, worry etc.
2. '*Tat-Tat Sevayam Praytnena Prashmo Gyanmev Cha*'<sup>6</sup>- The second most important factor for the prevention of cardiac and associated problems like Anxiety, Controlling the Lust / desires (*Indriyajaya*) and spiritual enlightenment (*Satyabuddhi / Gyan*)of self.
3. **Ahara ( Diet ) & Vihara ( Life style) modifications** – Avoiding the etiological factors
4. **Rasayana Drugs for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases**

Specific Rasayana drugs for heart (*Naimittika Rasayana* ) like *Arjuna twak* , *Pushkarmula*, *Tambula* have cardioprotective and cardiotonic properties thus their daily use decrease the tendency to develop cardiac diseases. Drugs like *Amlaki* , *Haritaki* have antihyperlipidemic & anti hypertensive property which are important risk factors for Coronary artery disease , ischemic heart disease and heart attack.. Beneficial *Rasayana* preparation for prevention of cardiac diseases are *Amalaki Rasayana*, *Brahm Rasayana*

Agastaya Haritaki rasayana  
,Chayavanprasha rasayana & Shilajeet Rasayana

### Ayurvedic Principles of Management of Cardiovascular diseases<sup>7</sup>

1. **Nidana parivarjana**- Avoiding the aetiological & risk factors ( Diet and life style modification ). Reduction of weight in obese patients is important.

#### 2. **Samshodhana ( Purification ) Therapy**

a. **Vamana Karma** – Though it is contraindicated in heart diseases but can be induced in *Kaphaja Hridroga* and strong patients.

b. **Virechana Karma** – Beneficial in Hyperlipidemia, hypertension and *Krimija Hridroga*

c. **Basti** therapy –

- **Lekhana Basti** - Hyperlipidemia, Obesity
- **Tikta Basti** – Hypertension , Ischaemic heart diseases, CHF
- **Brinhana & Ksheera basti** – Cardiac arrhythmias

**Other measures** – **Abhyanga, Shirodhara & Hridbasti** are beneficial.

#### 3. **Shamana ( Pacifying ) Therapy**

• **Vataja Hridroga** - *Tailapana* – Oil cooked with drugs like *Sauviraka, Takra, Gomutra, Lavana, Bijaura nimbuka rasa* is beneficial.

• **Pittaja Hridroga** – *Ghritapana* – Ghee cooked with *Draksha, Madhuka, Sugar, Honey etc pittahara* drugs and *Sheeta Parisheka*- With *Ghrita* or decoction of *Pittashamaka* drugs has been indicated.

• **Kaphaja Hridroga** – *Langhana, Ama- Pachana* , Use of *Katu* Drugs

• **Vamana Karma**

• **Krimija Hridroga** – *Virechana*, followed by use of *Krimihara* drugs like *vidanga* is indicated.

### Group of Drugs useful in the treatment of cardiac diseases<sup>8</sup>

a. **Hridya Mahakashya** - *Amra, Amrataka, Lakucha, Karmarda, Vrikshamala, Amlavetas, Badra, Dadima & Matulunga* .These drugs are rich source of Vitamin C and have antioxidant and cardiogenic properties

b. **Agnideepana and Vatanulomana drugs** - Improves digestion and pacifies *vata*, effective in *hridgulma & CAD* - *Ajmoda (carum roxburghii)* , *Hingu (Frula northax)* , *Pippal (Piper longum)* , *Shunthi (Zinziber officinalis)* , *Chitraka (Plumbago zeylinica)* .

c. **Lekhniya Drugs** - Useful in Hyperlipidemia , Obesity and Atherosclerosis

e.g *Vacha (Acorus calamus)* , *Haridra (Curcuma longa)* , *Daruharidra (Berberis aristata)* , *Mustaka (Cyprus rotundus)* , *Cow urine & Gugglu (Commiphora wightii)*

d. **Other beneficial drugs** - *Gokshura (Tribulus Terrestris)* , *Pushkaramula (Inula racemosa)* , *Arjuna (Terminalia arjuna)* , *Tambula (Piper betel)* , *Tagara (valeriana welchii)* , *Brahmi (Centella asiatica)* , *Karvira (Nerium indicum)* , *Hritipatri (Digitalis purpurea)* , *Punarnava (Boerhavia diffusa)* , *Gugglu (Commiphora wightii)* & *Shilajit (Asphaltum punjabinum)* .

#### Some important formulations (Yoga)<sup>9</sup>

*Hingudwiruttaradi churna, Hinguwadi vati, Haritakyadi churna, Amalaki Rasayana, Shilajitwadi vati, Pathyadi Kwatha, Dashmula Kwatha, Arjunatwak Kwatha, Pipplyadi Ghrita, Shunthi Ghrita, Arjuna Ghrita, Trayamana Ghrita, Shwadamshtadi Ghrita, Chandraprabhavati, Arjunarisht, Mrigshring Bhasma, Akika Pishti, Hridyarnawa Rasa, Nagarjunabhra Rasa, Krishna Chaturmukha Rasa & Prabhakara Vati.*

*Yoga* has an important role in the prevention and management of cardiovascular diseases. *Yoga* influences the Hypothalamus directly, which controls the endocrine activity. The circulation is controlled by the autonomic

ic nervous system and endocrine system. *Yoga* practices enhance cardiac health, lower B.P, reduce chronic stress, boosts the immune system and enhances the cognitive ability. Yogic exercises give a good massage to the heart.<sup>10</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Today's life style has led to the increase in the incidence of cardiac diseases in the society. Hyperlipidemia, Obesity & Diabetes mellitus being the main risk factors for the development of cardiovascular diseases. 'Ayurveda' because of its most powerful aspect of 'Swasthya-rakshanam' has a big role to play in prevention of cardiac diseases. Ayurvedic principles of diet and Living pattern (*Ahara- Vihara, dincharya, Ritucharya*) and Codes of conduct (*Acharya Rasayana*) that are very effective in prevention of heart diseases. *Ama* and *Srotosanga* are pathological basis for these conditions described in Ayurveda texts. Changes in diet & life style according to Age, seasonal & geographical variations, avoiding suppression of natural urges (*Vega*), regulation of negative emotions, use of certain *Rasayana* (antioxidants) drugs in daily routine etc. are helpful for overcoming the burden of cardiovascular diseases worldwide. Ayurvedic texts described a number of drugs of different groups like *Hridya* (Cardiotonics), *Lekhana* (Hypolipidemic), *Deepana & Amapachana* (Bitter tonics & Digestives) *Rasayana* (Antioxidants) etc. which are promisingly effective in various cardiac diseases as mentioned above in detail. Various researches had been showed the hypolipidemic effects of *Gugglu*<sup>11</sup>. cardioprotective effect of *Pushkarmula*<sup>12</sup> and many other drugs mentioned in Ayurvedic texts.<sup>13</sup> Moreover

*Yoga* practices has an important role in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases.

## CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic principles of diet and life style modification (*Ahara- Vihara, Dincharya, Ritucharya*) and Codes of conduct (*Acharya Rasayana*) that are very effective in prevention & cure of heart diseases. The drugs as described above are being effectively used by Ayurveda physicians for a long time are now being proved to be effective for cure on the modern parameters also. Moreover these Ayurvedic remedies are cost effective and safe too.

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