

## AYURVEDA-BATTLE AGAINST NCDs

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Published online: May, 2018

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### ABSTRACT

*Non communicable diseases* contribute approximately half of all the causes of mortality in India. These are caused by common risk factors like physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, and use of tobacco, unhealthy living conditions and stress. According to WHO, four main types of *NCDs* are cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes. Weighted prevalence of ischemic heart disease is 25.3/1000 population, diabetes of 118/1000 in urban and 38.7/1000 population in rural India. Ayurveda describes three pillars for healthy life is proper *Aahar* (proper diet), *Nidra* (proper sleep) and *Brahmcharya* (celibacy). These principles and other traditional holistic approach have potential in reduction of *NCDs* and its risk factors in the community. *CAM- Complementary and alternative medicine* has been widely used in Africa 80%, Australia 49%, Indonesia 40%, France 75%, United States 29-42%. It is being widely used in India as well as about 2860 hospitals provide CAM services. CAM includes - Traditional Chinese medicine, Acupuncture, herbal medicines etc. *Ayurveda* focuses mainly on *NCDs* and its holistic approach of treatment is successful over all other systems. It uses the meditative exercises of yoga, purifying diets and natural products. It deals with hygiene, lifestyle, behaviour, ethics, spirit, socialization etc. So in this presentation we will further explain about various treatment modalities in ayurveda which are significantly battling *NCDs*.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, CAM, NCDs

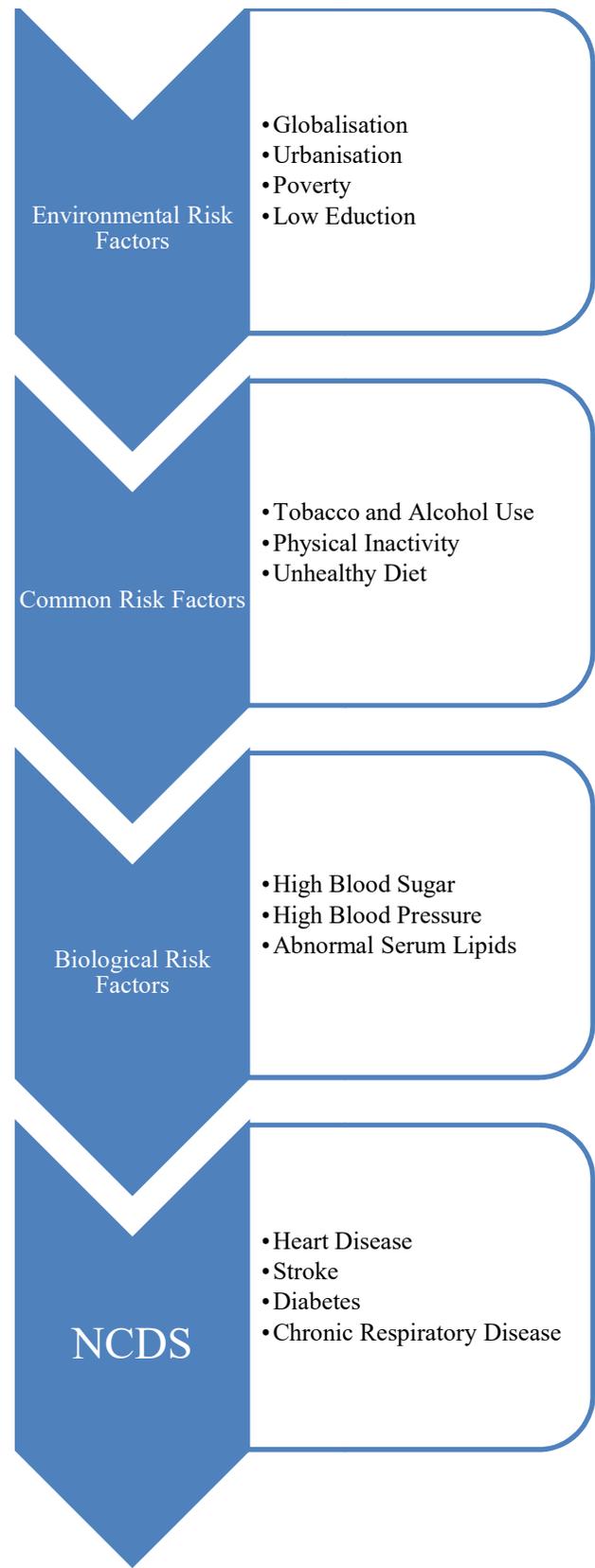
### INTRODUCTION

India is in major public health crisis with increasing rates of osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, cardiovascular disorders, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder and other lifestyle disorders. *Non communicable diseases* are crisis for India in global perspective. In India, NCDs causes more

deaths than infectious diseases like malaria, tuberculosis and cholera<sup>1</sup>. 53% of all deaths are now correlated with NCDs including cardiovascular diseases (24%), COPD (11%), cancer (6%), diabetes (2%)<sup>2</sup>. WHO projected that between 2005 and 2015 alone there was reduction in 15% deaths caused by *com-*

*municable diseases*<sup>3</sup> which in turn indicates that there has been an increase in NCDs because of the secondary or complex morbidity of those who live longer. Globally 63% of all deaths are caused by NCDs out of which 25% are avoidable and premature<sup>4</sup>. 90% of premature deaths from NCDs occur in lower or lower-middle income countries, with heart disease and stroke being the leading cause<sup>5</sup>. With increasing age risk of NCDs especially cardiovascular disease and diabetes rise. Risk factors involving physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, tobacco and alcohol consumption that causes NCDs impacts the economy of a particular family. Basically economy is affected due to extended treatment expenses, income loss (due to physical inability to work with full potential). The ayurvedic preventive and health approaches and therapeutic modalities either stand alone or as add on therapies have an edge over conventional medical approach in dealing with chronic and refractory disease conditions and lifestyle related disorders, sharing huge global burden (disease management and improving quality of life) such as cancer, rheumatoid arthritis ; conditions with an allergic component in their etiology (eg. bronchial asthma, skin allergies etc) ; sequelae of cerebrovascular diseases like hemiplegia and paraplegia ; malabsorption syndromes ; ischemic heart disease ; epilepsy ; and generalised anxiety disorder.

**CAUSATIVE PATHWAY OF NCDs**



## TRYOPSTAMBHA OF AYURVED FOR HEALTHY LIFE & PREVENTION OF NCDs

*Tryopstambha* refers to three pillars i.e. *Ahara* (diet), *Nidra* (proper sleep), *Brahmcharya* (celibacy). They are basis of healthy life. Just as three *dosha*, and three *guna* tryostambha are essential for promoting healthy life and prevention of non communicable diseases.

1. *Ahara*- *Ahara* stands for balanced diet. (Balanced diet is one which supplies with required amount of carbohydrate, proteins, fats and vitamins). It is a must factor for maintenance of healthy life. Diet alone is not capable of curing all the diseases, but majority of the diseases can be put under control only by doing adjustment in diet and maintain proper eating habits. Acharya Charak has mentioned *Ahara Vidhi Vidhan* (Dietary Guidelines) and *Ahar Vidhi Visheshaytan* (Basic Principles of Healthy Food)<sup>6</sup>. Acharya Charak mentions food as *prana* or life of living beings if taken properly but if taken in a faulty manner may cause death<sup>7</sup>.
2. *Nidra* - The state when mind and body undergo rest, it is known as sleep. According to ayurveda when the mind is affected by *tamoguna*, *kapha dosha* predominates and natural sleep is induced. In the presence of depression, anxiety, anger, calm sleep is not possible because these increase *vata*, which has opposite effect as compared to *tamoguna*. Sleeping for long times or sleeping late imbalances the daily routine and has a bad impact on health and is one of the major sedentary risk factor for NCDs.
3. *Brahmcharya* - According to ayurveda *shukra* is the last *dhatu* formed out of *majja*. Protecting *shukra* enhances health. *Ojas* defined as ultimate and supreme essence of *saptadhatu* starting from *rasa* to *shukra*. It is chiefly responsible for immune system vitality and strength. *Ojas* represents the by-product of *shukra* so preserving *shukra* results in improved immunity. Abstinence leads to multi-fold improvement in concentration, memory and courage.

*Brahmcharya* in today's world means restricted and safe physical relations with loyalty to the partner to prevent STDs and to maintain values of society and family.

Life supported by *tryopstambha* (three pillars), is empowered with strength, complexion, growth and full span of life. By following the rules mentioned for *Ahara*, *Nidra*, *Brahmcharya* once can prevent himself from various non communicable diseases.

### Concept of *pathya-apathya* and *Ritucharya*

Ayurvedic classics explained the unique concept of do's and don'ts as per different season and different ailments.

*"Pathye sati gadartasya kim aushadh nishevane  
Pathye asati gadartasya kim aushadh nishevane"*

A good seasonal routine (*Ritucharya*) helps in achieving balance of *doshas*. By following the seasonal routine to avoid changing stress of seasons and associated diseases.

### UTILITY OF ACHARA RASAYAN AND SADVRITTA IN PREVENTING NCDs

*Achara rasayana* is a unique concept in Ayurveda that implies moral, ethical, and benevolent conduct: truth, nonviolence, personal and public cleanliness, mental and personal hygiene, devotion, compassion, and a yogic lifestyle. These behaviours bring about rejuvenation in the body-mind system. One who adopts such conduct gains all benefits of *rasayana* therapy without physically consuming any material *rasayana* remedy or recipe, although it can be practiced alone or in a combination with material substance *rasayana* therapy. The concept of *achara rasayana* is to change our behaviours in order to reverse the disease process and stay in balance. *Achara Rasayan* can be inferred as *Ayurvedic Lifestyle Modifications* that can help in battling NCDs. *Sadvritta* has been widely described in ayurvedic classics which includes respecting elders, parents, teachers etc, helping others, staying away from bad habits and maintaining personal hygiene and many more. *Sadvritta* basically impacts on social health. All the

measures are necessary for developing a healthy society and healthy individual.

### Dincharya and its Utility in Preventing NCDs

*Dincharya* can be adopted as daily routine. 'Din' means daily and 'Acharya' means to follow. *Dincharya* provides an outline of daily regime in order to get healthy body and mind. To maintain a disease free healthy life, it is absolutely essential to follow *dincharya*.

According to *Acharya Vagbhata-*

"*kaalarth karmanam yogo heen mithya atimatrakah*"

Means disease is caused by less, improper or excessive involvement of *kaal* (time) *arth* (subjects of sense organs like *shabda sparsha* etc) and *karma* (actions). By *karma* (actions) we can infer physical, verbal and mental actions. If daily activities i.e. *Dincharya* are done properly then it will be helpful in prevention of disease.

Some of the rules mentioned in *Dincharya* in ayurvedic classics that can be correlated as preventive measures for preventing NCDs:-

**Brahm muhurte jagarana** (waking up early in the morning) and **Vyayama** (Physical exercise) - This can be related as a preventive measure because physical inactivity is one of the main causative factor for NCDs

**Bhojana vidhi**: Improper diet, junk food etc are major risk factors for causing Obesity, Diabetes and many more lifestyle disorders. *Dincharya* mentions rules for taking food and correct time for meals which are helpful in preventing obesity and other NCDs.

### CONCLUSION

NCDs include various life threatening diseases such as cardiovascular disease, various malignancies like cancer, diabetes mellitus with its complications, bronchial asthma and these are on rise highly along with the growth and development of countries. Ayurvedic contexts have time and again proven to be preventing NCDs by means of:-

- Following *dincharya* by making suitable changes in the *Ahara* and *vihar*.
- *Ritu anusaar shodhana karma* (purification).
- Non suppression of natural urges.
- *Rasayana* for long and healthy life (including *achara rasayana*)
- *Sadvritta* (Good Code Of Conduct)
- *Vajikarana*

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**Source of Support: Nil**

**Conflict Of Interest: None Declared**

How to cite this URL: Mehta Sahil & Sharma Mukesh Kumar: Ayurveda-Battle Against NCDs. *International Ayurvedic Medical Journal* {online} 2018 {cited May, 2018} Available from: [http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/1154\\_1157.pdf](http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/1154_1157.pdf)