

VAIDYA GUNA AND VAIDYA UPADHI: REDEFINING THE ROLE OF VAIDYA IN THE PRESENT ERA.**Suvarsha¹, Vidyalakshmi K²**

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Article Received: 08/02/2025 - **Peer Reviewed:** 29/03/2025 - **Accepted for Publication:** 11/04/2025.**ABSTRACT****Background:**

Chikitsa (treatment) is primarily effective through the proper coordination of its four essential components: *Bhishak* (physician), *Bheshaja* (medicine), *Paricharaka* (nurse/attendant), and *Rogi* (patient). Among these, the role of the *Vaidya* (physician) is of utmost importance, as their unique qualities enable them to provide appropriate and effective treatment.

Additionally, various designations are attributed to a *Vaidya*, reflecting their distinct roles and responsibilities in different contexts. A *Vaidya* also holds a significant place in society, contributing to its betterment through their expertise and service.

This study highlights the essential qualities of a *Vaidya*, the various designations associated with them, and their role in the modern era. Excellence in theoretical knowledge and practical experience transforms *Vaidya* into an exceptional physician.

Objectives: To review the different *Vaidya Guna* and *Vaidya Upadhi*To compare the *Vaidya guna* with physicians of the modern era.

Materials and methods: Information about Vaidya, Vaidya guna, and Vaidya Upadhi is reviewed from various Ayurvedic textbooks, websites, journals, etc.

Discussion: The various roles of physicians as a dietician, *guru*, and healer were explored, along with the contrasting traits of fraudulent practitioners and their deceptive practices.

Conclusion: The significance of a *Vaidya* lies in its ability to treat patients while embodying various essential qualities. A physician ultimately aims to maintain the patient's health.

Keywords: *Vaidya, Vaidya Upadhi, Chatuspada,*

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of Ayurveda is to preserve the health of healthy individuals (*Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam*) and treat diseased ailments (*Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam*). Effective treatment in Ayurveda relies on the collaboration of four essential components, known as the four limbs of Chikitsa: *Bhishak* (physician), *Dravya* (medicinal substances), *Paricharaka* (attendant), and *Rogi* (patient). The *Vaidya* (physician) holds the most crucial role, as they utilise the other three components efficiently to ensure complete healing and successful disease management.

Derivation

विद्यां वेदेति (विद्या+तदधीते तद्वेद) शब्दकल्पद्रुम word *Vaidya* is derived from *Vidya*.

पर्याय- रोगहारिः, अगदङ्कारः, भिषक्.

वैद्य परिभाषा: A *Vaidya* is considered to have undergone a second birth after completing the course of training and earns the title *dwija* (twice born). After this stage they are recognised as *Vaidya*. As *Acharya Chakrapani* says that तेन विद्या योगात् वैद्यत्वं meaning that one attains the status of a *Vaidya* through the union with knowledge.¹

Acharya Haritha states in his text that a *Vaidya* possesses *Vyadhitatwajnana*, meaning knowledge of the disease's root cause (*Mula Karana*) and its origin (*Ut-patti*). A true *Vaidya* alleviates *Vedana* (pain and suffering) and, through this ability, attains *Vaidyatwa* (the status of a physician). However, he is not the one who determines an individual's lifespan (*Ayusha Prabhu*) According to *Acharya Haritha*, there are two types of *Vaidyas*:²

Rogopacharajna – One who specialises in treating diseases.

Roga apacharajna – One who understands diseases but lacks the expertise to treat them.

Acharya Charaka regards a *Vaidya* as a "*Dwija*" (twice born). Upon completing their studies, a *Vaidya* attains *Brahma Satwa* or *Arsha Satwa*. Those with *Brahma Satwa* inclination tend to treat patients through *Naishtiki Chikitsa*. While those with *Arsha Satwa* follow *Loukika Chikitsa* (conventional or worldly treatment).³

Table No. 1: Vaidya guna according to different Acharya^{4,5,6}

<i>Charaka Samhita</i>	<i>Sushruta Samhita</i>	<i>Ashtanga hrudaya</i>
श्रुते पर्यवदातत्वं	तत्त्वाधिगतशास्त्रार्थः	दक्षः
दृष्टकर्मता	दृष्टकर्मा	तीर्थत्तिशास्त्रार्थः
दाक्ष्यं	स्वयङ्कृती	दृष्टकर्मा
शौचं	लघुहस्तः	शुचिः
	शुचिः	
	शूरः	
	सज्जोपस्करभेषजः	

	प्रत्युत्पन्नमति	
	धीमान्	
	व्यवसायी	
	विशारदः	
	सत्यधर्मपरः	

Importance of Vaidya among Chatushpada:

The physician holds the most crucial position due to his deep wisdom in medicine (*Vijnata*), his administrative skills (*Shasita*), and his ability to prescribe the appropriate dosage of medicine (*Yokta*). *Acharya Sushruta* further emphasises the importance of the *Vaidya*, stating that the other three pillars of treatment (*Chatushpada*) are incomplete without the physician, just as a *Yajna* (sacrificial ritual) remains incomplete without an *Adhwaryu* (priest conducting the ritual).

Acharya Charaka illustrates the significance of a *Vaidya* through various examples. In cooking, essential supporting factors for cooking include vessels (*Pa-tra*), fuel (*Indhana*), and fire (*Anala*). For a conqueror to achieve victory, suitable land (*Bhumi*), an army (*Chamu*), and weapons (*Praharanani*) are necessary. Similarly, in the treatment process, the *Vaidya* plays a vital role. Along with the other three components of *Chikitsa Chatushtaya*, the physician ensures the success of the healing process.

An example highlighting both the virtues (*Guna*) and faults (*Dosha*) of a *Vaidya* is as follows: If a physician is skilled and knowledgeable, he can effectively cure a disease, just like *Gandharvapura Nasha* (an illusionary city disappears upon realisation). However, if the physician lacks expertise, he may worsen the condition instead of healing it.⁷

A physician who possesses the following six qualities can successfully treat patients, making nothing impossible for him:

Vidya – Knowledge of Ayurveda

Mati – Innate pure wisdom

Karma drishti – Practical experience

Abhyasa – Continuous practice

Siddhi – Success in treatment

Ashraya – Guidance from an experienced teacher

Only a physician who embodies all these qualities truly deserves the title of a real *Vaidya*. Such a physician alone can bring health and happiness to all living beings.⁸

An ideal physician should adopt four essential attitudes when dealing with patients:⁹

1. **Maitri** – Friendliness towards everyone
2. **Karunyam Arteshu** – Compassion for those who are suffering
3. **Shakye Preeti** – Dedication to treating curable conditions
4. **Upekshanam Prakrutisthesu Bhooteshu** – Detachment towards those nearing the end of life

These four principles define the ideal approach of a physician in patient care.

Various designations are given to Vaidya as per Samhita:

Shreshtha Vaidya:¹⁰ A physician who successfully cures a patient's disease is considered the best *Vaidya*. *Acharya Chakrapani* explains that true success in treatment comes from the knowledgeable and skilful application of medicine (*Jnanapurvaka Bhashaja Prayoga*). In contrast, an ignorant physician may achieve success merely by chance, similar to the concept of *Ghunakshara Nyaya* (accidental success).

In the present era, a physician must have complete knowledge of diseases and the proper use of medications. Understanding the appropriate adjuvants and the correct timing of medication administration plays a crucial role in ensuring effective patient recovery.

Pranabhisara Vaidya:¹¹ The ideal *Vaidya* possesses several essential qualities, including devotion to the study of *Shastra*, a deep understanding of its proper interpretation, and the inclination (*Pravrutti*) toward the correct application of therapies. Practical

experience (*Karma darshana*) is equally essential. A *Vaidya* should comprehend the entire science of life, including its subjects and objectives while demonstrating strong cognitive abilities such as grasping (*Grahana*), retention (*Dharana*), understanding (*Vijnana*), and applying knowledge to restore the body's *Dhatus* to a balanced state (*Samya Avastha*).

A physician must have a sharp memory, profound knowledge, and wisdom rooted in *Shastra* (*Shastrayukta Jnana*). Treating all beings with the same care as one's child and applying this knowledge effectively in treatment is crucial. The term *Pranabhisara* refers to a *Vaidya* who can revive a patient from the brink of death (*Pranan Gacchato Vyavartayati*). This highlights the significance of theoretical and practical excellence, a physician's right intention to restore bodily equilibrium, and an empathetic nature. These qualities enable a *Vaidya* to return patients from critical conditions, emphasising the importance of knowledge, skill, and attitude in medical practice. Such an exceptional physician is honoured with the highest respect in society.

Rajarha Bhishak:

A physician must possess four essential types of knowledge:

1. *Hetu Jnana* – Understanding the causative factors of diseases.
2. *Linga Jnana* – Knowledge of the signs and symptoms.
3. *Chikitsa Jnana* – Expertise in treatment methods.
4. *Roga Apunarbhava Jnana* – Awareness of preventive measures to avoid disease recurrence.

A physician endowed with these four qualities is deemed worthy of treating royal families and is honoured with the title *Rājarha Bhishak* (royal physician). The comprehensive understanding of causative factors, clinical manifestations, treatment, and prevention reflects a holistic approach to health maintenance. Proficiency in these areas not only earns a physician great respect but also signifies their ability to provide the highest standard of care, even to royalty, highlighting

the status of a physician as determined by their knowledge and expertise.

Pranacharya¹²: A physician with exemplary conduct, profound intellect, and a rational approach to treatment is regarded as a *Dwijati* who experiences a second birth upon completing medical training. Possessing perfect theoretical knowledge, such a *Vaidya* is worthy of reverence, akin to a *Gurudeva*. Just as a guru guides disciples out of *Tamas* (ignorance and darkness), such a physician helps familiar people transcend their ailments and suffering. This esteemed status earns him the title of *Pranacharya*. One who has attained mastery over his own life is honored as *Pranivarya*.

According to *Vridha Vagbhata*, a *Pranacharya* is none other than a wise and accomplished physician. He should come from a respectable lineage (*Kulinam*), be friendly and compassionate (*Snigdha*), have faith in God, and embody politeness (*Aryam*). He must maintain good relations with the royal family, be skillful (*Daksha*), uphold cleanliness, and remain diligent (*Analaskam*), free from sorrow and arrogance. Additionally, he should possess a sharp intellect, enabling him to grasp the underlying meaning of speech and communication. A *Pranacharya* must be well-versed in the *Ashtanga* (eight branches) of Ayurveda and allied sciences, equipped with proper instruments, effective medicines, antidotes, and a deep understanding of *Satmya* (compatibility and adaptability in treatment).

The king should appoint a *Pranacharya* to oversee his *Ahara* (diet) and *Vihara* (lifestyle). This physician protects the king from harmful food, unhealthy habits, and potential intoxication orchestrated by his enemies. *Acharya Vagbhata* illustrates this with a simile: just as a well-natured elephant is not genuinely valued unless guided by an *Ankusha* (goad), a king must also exercise self-discipline by adhering to proper dietary and lifestyle practices. He should avoid any food not prescribed by his *Acharya*. In the modern era, such a physician is equally essential for the nation's leader to safeguard them from intoxication and other harmful influences. Thus, the role of *Pranacharya* remains crucial, as emphasised by *Acharya Vagbhata*.¹³

Siddharta Vaidya:

A physician who considers compassion for all living beings the highest virtue approaches patient care with sincerity, attains all desired goals and experiences the greatest happiness.

Three types of *Vaidya* are considered under *Charaka samhita* in *Tisraishaniya Adhyaya*. They are: *Chadmachara Vaidya*, *Siddha Sadhita Vaidya* and *Vaidyagunayukta Vaidya*.¹⁴

Chadmachara Vaidya: They are not real physicians but are mistaken for them due to their external appearance. They carry a physician's box containing certain drugs, books, and leaves, which adds to the illusion. Based on these superficial attributes, they are quacks who only appear to be physicians.

Siddha sadhita Vaidya: A person who pretends to be wealthy, famous, knowledgeable, or an expert (*Siddha*) but lacks these qualities in reality falls into the category of feigned physicians.

Vaidyagunayukta Vaidya: A genuine physician known as *Jivitabhisara* (savior of life) possesses deep knowledge of *Ayurveda*, understands the practical application of various therapies, has keen insight, and is renowned and successful. Such a physician can bring happiness to patients and truly embodies the qualities of an authentic healer.

Rogabhisara Vaidya: Driven by greed and the desire to establish a profession, these individuals make exaggerated claims about their medical expertise and engage in clinical practice. Upon hearing of a sick person, they immediately present themselves, loudly proclaiming their skills as a physician.

They frequently criticise genuine physicians, especially those who challenge or compete with them. To gain influence, they befriend the patient's associates and friends by flattering and serving them while emphasising that they expect little in return for their services.

However, when faced with real medical challenges, they panic and attempt to conceal their ignorance. Unable to manage diseases effectively, they blame the patient for lacking proper tools, assistants, or discipline. When the patient's condition worsens, they quickly relocate, making excuses for their departure.

Ordinary people boast about their abilities in contradictory ways, ultimately exposing their incompetence and cowardice. They undermine the confidence of the courageous but avoid knowledgeable individuals, fearing confrontation, just as travelers avoid dense forests out of fear.

Their understanding of medical concepts is shallow, and they frequently misuse them in irrelevant or incorrect contexts. They dread being questioned, treating inquiries as if they were a threat to their very existence. Additionally, there is little to no credible information about their teachers, disciples, or professional associations, and any references they make are often dubious or controversial.¹⁵

Prajnamani Bhishak: According to the *Charaka Samhita*, a foundational text in *Ayurveda*, a physician who administers treatment without proper reasoning is considered unethical and dangerous. Such practitioners are viewed as malevolent, sinful, and akin to messengers of death.¹⁶

Ubhayajna Vaidya: Theoretical and practical knowledge is essential for any physician to excel in medical service. Acharya Sushruta emphasises this by stating that the study of this treatise is indispensable. He further explains that merely studying its contents is insufficient; diligent practice is equally important. Only those who thoroughly research and apply the principles of the treatise in practice become eligible to be recognised as a ***Rājarha Vaidya*** (a physician worthy of serving royalty).¹⁷

Bahushruta kruta yoga Vaidya: Physicians should not limit themselves to learning only one system but should strive to gain knowledge from various treatises and teachers. No single medical text or expert can provide complete knowledge. If physicians rely solely on one *shastra*, their understanding will remain incomplete. Therefore, it is essential for a physician to be *Bahushruta*. They become genuinely efficient and exceptional in their practice.¹⁸

Pallavika Vaidya: A physician with partial knowledge, known as *Ekadesha Jnani*, is called a *Pallavika Vaidya*. Such physicians can harm patients, much like *Vartakas* (male bastards), who panic easily. They are questioned on eight aspects of *Tantra*

(medical science) to assess their expertise. Those who possess true proficiency can confidently answer. At the same time, those with incomplete knowledge become fearful at mentioning the word Tantra, just as *Vartakas* are startled by the sound of a bowstring.¹⁹

Peeyusha pani Vaidya: A physician who consistently achieves treatment success, with every disease he addresses disappearing completely, is regarded as a skilled and fortunate healer. Such a physician is also referred to as a *Peeyusha Pani Vaidya*, symbolising one whose hands bring healing like nectar.²⁰

Chikitsa Prabhruta Vaidya:

A physician well-versed in theoretical and practical knowledge and equipped with the necessary instruments and essential qualities ensures the proper administration of *Vamana*, *Virechana*, and other *Panchakarma* therapies. Under such a doctor's guidance, one should undergo purification treatments to achieve a healthy and joyful life.

Such physicians are regarded as *Chikitsa Prabhruta Vaidya*, signifying an expert healer proficient in the art of treatment and purification therapies.²¹

These designations are given to *Vaidya* based on the quality. Both *Vaidya*'s positive and negative attributes have been mentioned here.

DISCUSSION

The various designations assigned to a *Vaidya* in different Ayurvedic texts remain relevant even in the present era. A qualified *Vaidya* naturally develops essential qualities such as efficiency, deep knowledge, and professional expertise. These designations reflect a physician's social status and unique attributes.

For instance, a *Pranacharya Vaidya* is considered a guru worthy of treating the royal family. This implies that such a physician is highly skilled and capable of treating all individuals, as royal healthcare demands the utmost precision and expertise. A *Rajarha Bhishak* is another prestigious designation representing a physician with exceptional diagnostic and treatment skills. Similarly, *Siddhartha Vaidya* is known for skill and empathy. Their sincere dedication to alleviating a patient's suffering demonstrates a selfless attitude, ultimately leading to fulfilment and success. Another

esteemed designation, *Pranabhisara Vaidya*, signifies a healer who embodies knowledge, skill, and noble qualities, playing a vital role in reviving and preserving life.

Designations such as *Ubhayajna* and *Bahushruta* indicate physicians' mastery of multiple disciplines, including other sciences, enabling them to handle complex medical situations with a well-rounded approach. Conversely, titles like *Chadmachara*, *Siddha sadhana*, *Pallavika*, and *Prajnamani* are associated with quacks—fraudulent physicians who prioritize wealth and personal gain over patient welfare. These individuals, despite their superficial knowledge and deceptive practices, often attract patients but ultimately cause harm, either worsening the condition or leading to fatal consequences.

A true *Vaidya* is committed to complete healing, ensuring treatment without side effects or complications. However, while some unqualified practitioners may occasionally achieve success by chance, their interventions more often lead to deteriorating health outcomes. Therefore, distinguishing between a genuine and a fraudulent physician is crucial for effective and ethical healthcare.

The special designation of *Peeyushapani Vaidya* signifies the sacredness of a physician, highlighting their role as life-giving nectar to patients. A physician proficient in handling emergencies is honoured with the designation *Pratipattiman*, recognizing their expertise and prompt decision-making.

A *Visha vaidya* is a physician who must act swiftly in situations of suspicion, be keen on observation, have thorough examination skills, and be able to detect even the slightest changes in a patient's condition.

The role of a dietician is acknowledged in classical texts, where a *Vaidya* is recognised for understanding the precise effects of drugs based on their *Rasa* (taste). A physician with comprehensive knowledge of *Dosha*, *Desha*, and *Kala* and their impact on the body is also highly regarded.

CONCLUSION

A *Vaidya* who has completed their professional education in the modern era and is qualified to treat patients

must transform their *Sattva* to reach the highest ideals of the *Vaidya Vrutti* (the noble profession of a physician). Beyond their various roles, a *Vaidya* is ultimately expected to practice *Paramarthika Chikitsa* or *Naishtiki Chikitsa*—a form of treatment that transcends mere physical healing.

If a *Vaidya* merely pretends to treat patients without possessing the essential virtues (*Vaidya Gunas*), they reduce their practice to a business rather than a sacred duty. However, a *Vaidya* who embodies the right qualities—compassion, empathy, and sincerity—while treating patients in a *Laukika* (worldly) manner will attain true fulfilment (*Sukha*) and spiritual elevation.

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