



UNDERSTANDING OF LIFESTYLE DISEASES IN THE LIGHT OF AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is one of the most ancient medical sciences in the world. It is more life and health-oriented and emphasizes prevention rather than cure. In *Ayurvedic* texts “*CHARYA*” word has been used to denote lifestyle or day to day activities being performed by individuals. *Charya* means “*Aahara*” and “*Vihara*”, which is to be consumed or followed, to maintain *Swasthaya* (Health) of an individual. A Comprehensive schedule of a health regimen for promotion and preservation of health as a code of conduct which can be attained through *Dincharya* (Daily regimen), *Ratricharya* (night regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Vyaayaam* (exercise), along with *AaharaVidhi Vidhana* (rules of diet) has been described in *Ayurvedic* texts. Lifestyle is the way in which a person lives. Lifestyle includes behaviours such as dietary habits, sleeping and resting habits, physical activity (include exercising), weight control, smoking and alcohol consumption. The diseases which are not transmitted by any vector, environment and not transmitted from person to person is called Non-Communicable Disease or chronic disease or Lifestyle disease. In *Ayurvedic* texts, there is no such type of disease mentioned but in *Ayurveda*, this kind of disease and its causative factors have been mentioned in abundance during the description of *Nidana*. So, an attempt has been made to understand the Lifestyle diseases and their *Nidanain* the light of *Ayurveda*, through this paper.

Keywords: *Charya*, *Vihara*, Lifestyle.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ancient system of medicine which has been originated from “*Atharvaveda*.” It is the science of life and longevity. *Ayurveda* apart from providing various therapeutic measures for diseases emphasizes maintenance, promotion of health and prevention of diseases through diet and lifestyle regimens. A lifestyle typically reflects an individual's attitudes, way of life and values. Lifestyle is the interests, opinions, behaviours, and behavioural orientations of an individual, group or culture. In *Ayurvedic* texts “*CHARYA*” word has been used to denote lifestyle or day to day activities being performed by individuals. *Char-ya* means “*Aahara*” and “*Vihara*” which is to be consumed or followed, to maintain *Swasthaya* (Health) of an individual.

AIM & OBJECTIVES

1. To study the Lifestyle diseases in the light of *Ayurveda*.
2. To study the *Nidana* of major Lifestyle diseases (CVD, Obesity, Hypertension, Diabetes mellitus 2) according to *Ayurveda*.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In *Ayurveda* life is considered as the union of body, senses, mind, and soul. The physical world including the human body is derived from the specific combinations of five fundamental entities i.e., *Akasha*, *Vayu*, *Teja*, *Jala* and *Prithvi* which are known as *Panchmahabhuta* and soul. *Panchmahabhuta* forms the *Tridosha* i.e., *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha*, *Dhatu* (tissues) and *Mala* (excretory products). These carry out physiological activities and are responsible for the integrity of the human body.

Thus, the health of an individual depends on the normalcy of the *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*. According to *Ayurveda*, diseases are caused by wrong “*Aahara*” & “*Vihara*”. Due to faulty diet and lifestyle, the normalcy of the *Tridosha* is disturbed and they vitiate in the body. Vitiating *Tridosha* disturbs the normalcy of

Dhatu and *Mala* causing their vitiation which manifests as various diseases in the body.

There are some other causative factors of disease other than unwholesome food. Classically *Ayurveda* describes three major causes of illness.

Asatmendriyartha Sanyoga (unwholesome conjunction of the sense organs with their object), *Pragyaparadha* (intellectual blasphemy) and *Parinama* (transformation) –these are the threefold cause of diseases. Proper utilization of the objects, action and time is beneficial to the maintenance of normal health.

1. *Asatmendriyartha Sanyoga*: *Atiyoga* (overuse), *Hinayoga* (less use) and *Mithayoga* (misuse) of sense organs are responsible for the manifestation of many diseases. Overeating is related to the *Asamyaka Yoga* of *Indriya* especially “*Rasnendriya*” The intake of one or two *Rasa* in high quantity continuously and avoid following the wholesome diet along with its proper methods is the main causative factor of lifestyle diseases.
2. *Pragyaparadha*: It is the root cause of many diseases. It is entirely applicable in the manifestation of lifestyle diseases. The word *Pragyaparadha* is made from two words *Pragya* & *Apradha*. *Pragya* means *Buddhi*, *Dhriti*, *Smriti* and *Apradha* mean malpractice. When the *Buddhi* (intellect), *Dhriti* (restraint) and *Smriti* (memory) do not carry out their respective functions properly due to their derangement, it causes the occurrence of improper actions (*Ashubha Karma*). These improper actions cause vitiation of all *Dosha* and imbalance of *Dosha* is one of the major causes of illness. (Ch. Sh.1/102)¹

The causes of lifestyle diseases are like *Pragyaparadha* mentioned by *Acharya Charaka* in *Charaka Samhita* which has been described in the table below: (Ch. Sh.1/103-108)²

Pragyaparadha mentioned in Charaka Samhita	Factors that cause Lifestyle diseases
mnjh. kaxfrerkeqnh. kkZuka p fuzzg A Forceful propulsion of natural urges or their suppression.	Wrong bowel habits.
deZdkykfrikpfe+F; kjEHk'pdeZ.kke~A Excessive or delayed or wrong actions.	Lack of physical activities (Sedentary lifestyle) or over exertion. Lack of sleep, Inadequate sleep, or rest, waking up late, Sitting for long hours in front of computers etc.
KkrkukaLo; eFkkZukefgrkukafu 'kso.ke~ A Repeating non-beneficial things knowingly.	Addiction- Smoking, Alcohol, Drug, Artificial sweeteners, Taste enhancers, Preservatives, Artificial flavours, Fast foods, soft drinks etc.

3. *Parinama*: It refers to *Samyaka* and *Asamyaka-Yoga* of different seasons. It is not directly related to lifestyle diseases.

LIFESTYLE DISEASES:

There is no such type of disease mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classics but in *Ayurveda*, this kind of disease and its causative factors have been mentioned in abundance during the description of *Nidana*. Lifestyle diseases can be understood and defined in the light of *Ayurveda* as, "A disease manifested by faulty *Aahara* and *Viharaas Nidana* due to not following the rules of *Ritucharya* along with its *Dinacharya* & *Ratricharya*, having slow & progressive pathogenesis and *Upachaya* in nature at various level of the human body may be called as Lifestyle Disease.

All the normal and abnormal events in the body are dependent upon causative factors. For the maintenance of their normal state i.e., positive health, one should resort to such regimens as would be conducive to their normalcy. Similarly, for the cure of diseases that constitute an abnormal state of the body, regimens that are conducive to their abnormality, should be avoided.

NIDANA OF LIFESTYLE DISEASES:

All the diseases are caused by the aggravation of *Dosha*. Aggravation occurs due to the intake of unwholesome food and a faulty lifestyle. Unwholesome food does not cause diseases immediately because of certain factors which come in the way of their manifestation. But in the long run intake of unwholesome food mostly causes diseases.

Aaharaja Nidana: Unwholesome *Aahara* is a main causative factor for Lifestyle diseases. Unwholesome *Aahara* in terms of *Prakriti* (Quality), *Rashi* (Quantity), *Desha* (Place), *Kala* (Time) etc. is responsible for

diseases. *Ayurveda* classics describe all these aspects in a scientific and systematic manner which is called "*Aahara Vidhi Visheshayana*." It includes *Prakriti* (Qualitative characteristic of food), *Karana* (Processing of food), *Sanyoga* (Combination), *Rashi* (Quantity), *Desha* (Habitat), *Kala* (Time and seasonal variation), *Upyoga Sanstha* (Classical *Ayurvedic* rules of diet) and *Upyokta* (Consumer of food). (**Ch. Vi.1/21**)³

In the present era, people are not following the prescribed rules for preparing, preserving, and eating food. People don't choose nutrients but choose a combination. Nowadays it is a trend to mix various food items or products to relish the taste, resulting in an incompatible combination that leads to harmful effects on the body. Due to busy lifestyles, there is no set pattern of diet, and they consume the food when they get time. All these factors are responsible for Lifestyle diseases. So, lifestyle diseases are more prevalent in the present era.

Examples of Aaharaja Nidana:

These are a few examples of food items that are commonly used by an individual in excessive quantity and responsible for lifestyle diseases.

Navanna (New grains)- *Guru, Snigdha, Abhishyandi*. (Su. Su.46/51)⁴

If taken in excessive quantity, it causes *Jatharagnimandya* and the formation of *Aam* takes place. It causes *Srotodushti*.

Maida and its preparation –*Madhura Rasa, Brihaniya*. (Bh.Pr.Kr.Va.25)⁵

Madhura Rasa causes aggravation of *Kapha Dosha* leads to *Agnimandya*. Hence *Aam* formation takes place and causes *Srotodushti*.

Rajamasha (Cow Pea)-Madhura, Kashaya, Guru. (Bh.Pr.Dh.Va.44)⁶

Excessive intake causes *Agnimandya* and will form *Aam* which causes *Srotodushti* of *RasavahaSrotas*.

Masha (Black Gram) and its preparation- *Madhura, Snigdha, Guru, Medakaphakaraka.*

(Bh.Pr.Dh.Va.41-42)⁷

Excessive intake of *Masha* increases *Kapha* and causes *Agnimandya*, leading to *Aam* formation and *Srotodushti* of *Rasavaha* and *MedovahaSrotas*.

Aaluka (Potato) and its preparation- *Madhura, Guru, Sheeta, Vatakaphakaraka.*

(Bh.Pr. Sha. Va. 96-97)⁸

Excessive intake of *Aaluka* causes *Agnimandya* and the formation of *Aam* takes place. It causes *Srotodushti* of *Rasavaha* and *RaktavahaSrotas*.

Gramya-Audaka-Aanup Mansa Rasa (Meat soup of domestic, aquatic, and marshy animals); Like meat soup (Pork), Mahishi (Buffalo)- *Madhura, Snigdha, Guru, Kaphakaraka.*

(Bh.Pr.Ma.Va.1)⁹

If taken frequently and in excessive quantity, it increases *Kapha Dosha* and *Meda* in the body, causing *Agnimandya* and *Aam Rasa*. *Dushti* of *Rasavaha*, *Raktavaha* and *Medovaha Srotas* takes place due to *Aam* formation.

Navamadyapaana (Alcohol)-Guru, Abhishyandi.

(Bh.Pr.Sa.Va.30)¹⁰

It causes *Srotodushti*, of *Rasavaha*, *Raktavaha*, *Mansavaha* and *MedovahaSrotas*.

IkshuRasa (Sugarcane Juice etc.)-Guru, Snigdha, Madhura, Kaphavardhaka.

(As.Hr.Su.5/42)¹¹

Excessive intake of *Ikshu Rasa* causes *Kaphavridhi* and form *Aam Rasa* which causes *Srotodushti*, of *RasavahaSrotas*.

Navneeta (Butter)-Purana Navneeta is Madhura, Snigdha, Guru, Kaphakaraka and Medakaraka.

(Bh.Pr.Na.Va.6)¹²

Excessive intake causes *Agnimandya* and digestion of *Navneeta* do not take place, *Aam* formation occurs. It causes *Dushti* of *Rasavaha* and *MedovahaSrotas*.

Apart from these aetiological factors nowadays some common eatables can be grouped under *Nidana* of these diseases. e.g.

- Bakery products
- Packed food items
- Junk foods
- Processed foods
- Fried and spicy foods etc.

If a person takes *Madhura, Snigdha* and *Guru Aahara* in excessive quantity, *Jatharagni* and *Medodhatvagni Mandya* takes place causing *Aam* and *ApakvaMedovridhi*. Also, *Madhura, Snigdha* and *Guru Aahara* with day sleep cause *Shonita Dusti*. Both lead to lifestyle diseases like *Sthaulya* (Obesity), *Madhumeha* (Diabetes), *Raktagata Vata* (Hypertension) and *Hri-droga* (CVD).

B. Viharaja Nidana: Faulty lifestyle is another factor responsible for Lifestyle diseases.

Divaswapna (Day Sleep) -It increases *KaphaDosha* and causes *Jatharagnimandya*, which leads to *Aam* formation. *Aam Rasa* causes *Srotodushti* of *MedovahaSrotas*. (Bh.P.Pu.5/216)¹³

Avyayama (Lack of physical exercise)- Cessation of physical exercise may cause *Agnimandya* and in turn, forms *Aam* and *Kapha*. Here *Aam* is responsible for *Srotovarodha* of *MedovahaSrotas*. (Ch.Vi.5/16)¹⁴

Swapanasukham (Enjoying the pleasure of excessive sleeping)-It increases the *Kapha Dosha* & causes *Agnimandya* and *Aam* formation to occur which causes *Srotovarodha*.

(As.S.Su.9/52)¹⁵

Bhojanottar Nidra (Sleeping after meals)-If a person is habitual of sleeping after taking a meal, it causes *Aam* and *Kapha* formation. It also causes *Raktadushti*. *Aam* is responsible for the blockage of microchannels of *Raktavaha* and *Mansavaha Srotas*. (Bh. Pr.5/176)¹⁶

These factors will aggravate the *KaphaDosha* and cause *Jatharagnimandya*, *Dhatwagnimandya* and will form *AamDosha* which causes *Srotovarodha* and thus lead to Lifestyle diseases.

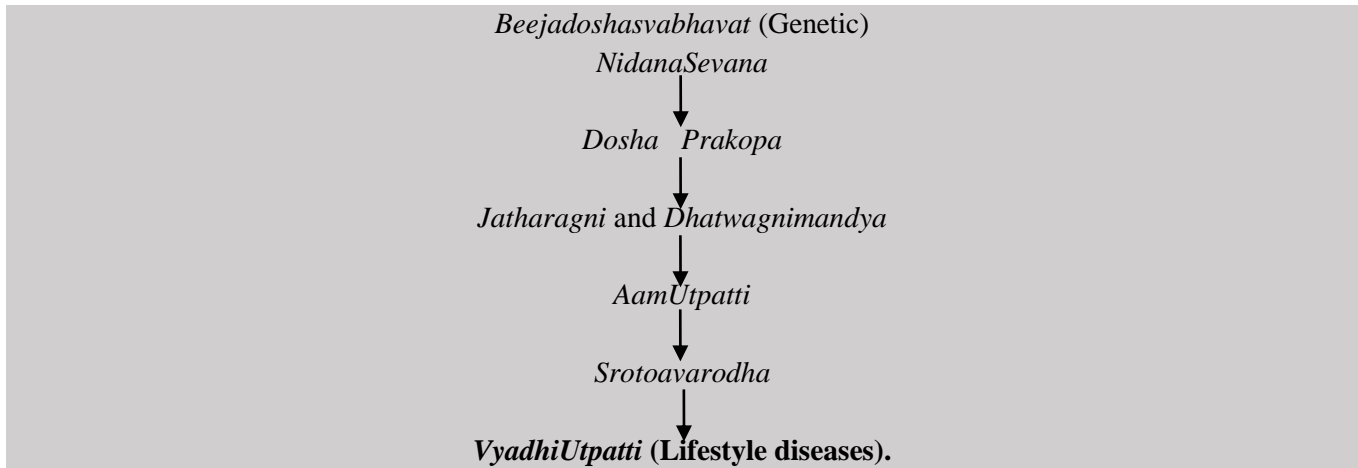
C. Manasika Nidana:

Achintana (Lack of mental exercise)- It aggravates *Kapha Dosha* and *Aam* formation takes place, which causes *Srotodushti* of *Medovaha Srotas*. (Ch. Su.21/4)¹⁷

Shoka, Chinta, Bhaya (Grief, Stress, Fear) - *Hridya* being seat of *Manasika Bhava*- *Shoka, Chinta, Bhaya* leads to *Vayu Prakopa*. (Ch.Ch.28/16)¹⁸

Vayu Prakopa (mainly *Vyan Vayu*) causes an increase in heart rate and cardiac output which results in *Raktagata Vata* (Hypertension) and *Hridroga* (CVDs)

D. Anya Nidana:



{*Hridroga* (CVD), *Madhumeha* (DM-2), *Sthaulya* (Obesity) and *RaktagataVata* (Hypertension)}

The important principle of *Ayurveda*, which was put, forwarded by *AacharyaCharaka* is:

"One causative factor may be responsible for many diseases and a single causative factor may lead to a single disease"¹⁹. Many causative factors may be responsible for only one disease and many causative factors may lead to many diseases, which is true for lifestyle diseases.

CONCLUSION

Due to rapid economic development, industrialization, urbanization, globalization & increasing westernization of lifestyle, India is now suffering from the double burden of diseases i.e., Communicable diseases & non-communicable diseases. NCDs are associated with faulty lifestyles & also called "Lifestyle diseases." Due to sedentary lifestyles and faulty dietary habits, people are becoming more susceptible to the lifestyle diseases like Diabetes mellitus, Obesity, Cancer, Chronic respiratory diseases, Stroke, Hypertension etc. In terms of *Ayurveda*, the diseases which

are caused by faulty *Aahara* and *Vihara*, having slow & progressive pathogenesis and *Upachaya* in nature at various levels of the human body may be called as Lifestyle Disease. A Comprehensive schedule of a health regimen for promotion and preservation of health as code of conduct which can be attained through *Dincharya* (Daily regimen), *Ratricharya* (night regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Vyaayaam* (exercise), along with *Aahara VidhiVidhana* (rules of diet) have been described in *Ayurvedic* texts. Hence Lifestyle diseases can be prevented by changing modifiable risk factors or through healthy diet and lifestyle regimens.

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