

NON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN AYURVEDA

Banamali Das¹, Purnendu Panda¹, S.K. Meher¹, G.C. Bhuyan¹, Jayram Hazra²

¹Research Officer (Ayurveda); ²Director;

Central Ayurveda Research Institute for Hepatobiliary Disorders (CARIHD), Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Email: banamali.d@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are diseases of long duration, and are generally slow to progress. Non-communicable diseases are the number one killers globally, claiming nearly 36 million lives each year. The most common Non-communicable diseases are cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke), cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes. These are largely caused by unhealthy lifestyles or risky behaviours – tobacco use, unhealthy diet, insufficient physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol. A healthy lifestyle during childhood and youth can prevent the onset of NCDs later in adulthood. Detection and management of NCDs at an early stage can prevent complications and premature death. The global burden of non-communicable diseases is rapidly increasing, and the essential management strategy is to follow a healthy lifestyle. Ayurveda can play a major role in this aspect, as the primary aim of Ayurveda is to prevent diseases by following a healthy lifestyle i.e. proper observance of Tri-Upastambhas viz. Ahaara, Nidra and Brahmacharya. Ayurveda has mentioned Tri-Upastambha (Ahaar, Nidra and Brahmacharya); improperly following of which can produce varieties of non-communicable diseases. Following of the Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Achararasayana etc. can be helpful to prevent these diseases. However, in order to implement such classical knowledge (that is, healthy lifestyle based on Ayurvedic principles) into real practice, a systematic process needs to be followed. This systematic process must also include robust research studies (that is, development and evaluation of Ayurveda-based lifestyle intervention) and behaviour change of people. There is a huge scope of implementing classical Ayurvedic knowledge into real practice, which will be beneficial to all of society.

Keywords: Non-communicable disease, *Tri-Upastambha*, *Ahaara*, *Nidra*, *Brahmacharya*

INTRODUCTION

A non-communicable disease (NCD) is a disease that is not transmissible directly from one person to another. NCDs include autoimmune diseases, strokes, most heart diseases, most cancers, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease, cataracts, and others. NCDs may be

chronic or acute. Most are non-infectious, although there are some non-communicable infectious diseases, such as parasitic diseases in which the parasite's life cycle does not include direct host-to-host transmission. NCDs are the leading cause of death globally. In 2012, they caused 68% of all deaths (38 million) up

from 60% in 2000¹. About half were under age 70 and half were women. Risk factors such as a person's background, lifestyle and environment increase the likelihood of certain NCDs. Every year, at least 5 million people die because of tobacco use and about 2.8 million die from being overweight. High cholesterol accounts for roughly 2.6 million deaths and 7.5 million die because of high blood pressure².

The Indian systems of medicine have age-old acceptance in the communities in India and in most places they form the first line of treatment in case of common ailments and nonlife threatening chronic refractory illness. Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) are rationally recognized systems of medicine and have been integrated into the national health delivery system. Of these, Ayurveda is the most ancient medical system with an impressive record of safety and efficacy. AYUSH represents the tradition of codified, textual health knowledge systems other than the modern, while Local Health Traditions (LHT) represents the practices and knowledge of the common people and folk practitioners who follow an oral tradition of learning and passing on of the knowledge³.

Since inception, modern medical science depended upon synthetic extracts or isolated principles, which are beneficial in breaking the pathology, but are also known for certain shortcomings like developing adverse effects, drug dependency etc. In addition; the modern system of medicine failed to provide effective treatment for many chronic NCDs. To overcome such shortcomings; interest on traditional systems of medicines started growing worldwide. WHO too recognized the significance of traditional remedies in Global health care system; and encourages, promotes traditional remedies in national healthcare programs, because they are comparatively safe and people have faith in such remedies etc⁴.

Ayurveda always emphasizes on preventing disease occurrence rather than start treating them after manifestation. Prevention is better than cure. According to Ayurveda, the root cause of all diseases is violation of rules of behavioural and moral conduct⁵.

Ayurveda And Non Communicable Disease

According to Ayurveda, health is the dynamic integration between environment, body, mind and spirit. It lays great emphasis on preservation and promotion of health thereby preventing the diseases. Elaborate description is available on personal hygiene which includes diet and regimen to be followed daily (Dinacharya) seasonal regimens (Rutucharya) and sadvritta (Behavioral and ethical principles). Observance of certain rules regarding suppressible and non-suppressible urges also paves way towards positive health. Ayurveda advises strictly to follow the TrayaUpastambhas viz. Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya, which play key roles for maintenance of proper health. Principles related to daily regimen, seasonal regimen, behavioural and ethical principles and a person who follows these rules will never be a victim to diseases. Now-a-days due to modernization, the changes in life style are observed and the day to day regimen as prescribed in Ayurveda could not be followed properly. So the human beings are suffering from various non communicable diseases. Ayurveda prescribed a rational treatment for various non communicable diseases, which includes proper observance of the Traya Upastambhas.

Ahara (Food):

Ahara is considered as the best sustainer of life. Susrutha described that body as well as food are mainly constituted by five Mahabhutas. Body is the product of Food and Food is harbinger of Happiness and Suffering. All the dietary articles are composed of Panchamahabhutas and the Tridoshas/biohumors (Vata, Pitta and Kapha) are the biological derivatives of these five Mahabhutas. A balanced diet in Ayurveda is planned in relation to the known Panchabhautic composition and Tridoshic impacts in the living body. Food (Ahara) and lifestyle (Vihara) significantly affect one's overall health and the upsurge of metabolic and degenerative diseases are the result of adaptation of modern life style. Showing the importance of food Acharya Charaka says that food sustains the life of all living beings; and complexion, clarity, good voice, longevity, genius, happiness, satisfaction, nourishment strength and intellect are all conditioned by food.

Most of the incurable diseases are produced due to improper food. Intelligent and self-controlled person should consume conducive food in right quantity and at right time to prevent diseases⁶. The Ayurvedic texts give great emphasis on the compatibility and incompatibility of certain foods. Caraka describes in detail the 18-fold denominators of *Viruddhahara*, i.e., dietary incompatibility. Aharadravyas become incompatible due to their mutually contradictory qualities, by combinations (*samyoga*), by method of preparation (*samskara*), by virtue of place (*desa*), time (*kala*), dose (*matra*) and some others by their inherent nature (*swabhava*).

Caraka mentions that the intake of incompatible diet is responsible for the causation of sterility, blindness, *visarpa* (Herpes), *udara* (Ascites), insanity, fistula in ano, coma or fainting, intoxication, abdominal distention, stiffness in neck, varieties of anaemia, indigestions, various skin diseases, diseases of intestines, swelling, gastritis, fever, rhinitis, and infertility. Ayurvedic approach to food and dietetics is very different from the conventional Western approach. Carakasamhita describes the eight principles of *Ahara vidhi* i.e., (1) *Prakriti* (nature of food articles), (2) *Karana* (preparation), (3) *Samyoga* (combinations), (4) *Rashi* (quantity), (5) *Desha* (habitat and climate), (6) *Kala* (time factor), (7) *Upayogasamstha* (rules of use), and (8) *Upayokta* (the user). Similarly, Susruta describes 12-fold considerations (*dwadasaasaanpravicharas*) to be followed during the consumption of food. While describing the general principles of taking *Ahara*, Acharya Caraka emphasizes on taking food which is hot and unctous; because it taste well, stimulates digestive fire, carminates flatus, digests quickly, develops body, provides firmness to sense organs, increases strength, produces clarity or complexion. Caraka mentions that food taken in proper quantity promotes life span without disturbing the equilibrium of *tridoshas* (*vata*, *pitta*, *kapha*) also it passes down easily to anus, doesn't disturb the digestive fire and gets digested with comfort. One should eat only when the previous meal is digested, otherwise the indigested food vitiates all the *doshas* quickly. One should eat

food consisting of the items which are non-antagonistic in potency in favourable place and with favourable accessories. One should not consume too fast and too slow. One should take food without talking and laughing and with full concentration.

Benefits of Ahara (Food):

In a reference from Taittiriya Upanishad mentioned the status of supremacy to the Anara and calls Brahma or the Creator as it is true that we are all created and maintained by Ahara¹³. Charaka Samhita gives a beautiful concept about Ahara and tells that the Ahara not only forms this body but also forms the diseases which occur in us. The wholesome food (*HitaAhara*) is responsible for happiness and health, whereas the unwholesome food causes misery and unhealthy. In Kashyapa Samhita it is mentioned that no medicine is equivalent to the Ahara or food. He also mentioned Ahara as Mahabhaishajya. Just by the administration of proper food and diet it is possible to cure the diseases even without the need of administration of medicines and treatment^{14,15}.

Other benefits of Ahara as mentioned in Ayurveda are: It is one of the supporting pillars of life, it provides good nutrition and vitality, enhances strength and immunity, supports body and makes it strong and sturdy, enhances lustre, enhances ojas and memory, provides good complexion and colour, provides good voice, provides longevity of life, intelligence and capacity of using the intelligence in right places in right times, provides happiness and pleasure, provides satisfaction and nourishment enhances vigour and intellect^{16, 17, 18}.

Nidra (Sleep): Sleep is the second pillar of Ayurveda. Tama Guna is responsible for making us Sleep - being dominant at that time, which is mostly night time. This is the time when the mind and the body get some rest after a hard day's work¹⁹.

- When the body gets tired, we feel pain, mostly in the muscles or the joints.
- But when the mind gets tired, that's when the sense organs slowly stop working as well. That is the time when we feel tired and doze off.

- Ayurveda also says that when the body is tired but the mind is not, that is when we dream. Perhaps that is the reason why we don't dream every night.
- When we've had a very long day, that's when we get the best and deepest Sleep - because the mind and the body are both tired.

Effects of sleep (Sleep): Happiness, misery, nourishment, emaciation, strength, weakness, virility, sterility, knowledge, ignorance, life and death occur depending on proper or improper sleep. According to Sushruta Samhita, a good sleep enjoyed at proper time and for proper period, tends to improve the growth, strength, vigor and complexion of the body. It increases the sense of wellbeing by freshening the body and mind and also restores the natural equilibrium among different body tissues. So much so that the scope and importance of good sleep has been equated with the soundness of health enjoyed by a person. There is no physiological system in the body which doesn't get the salutary effect of sound and soothing sleep. Untimely and excessive sleep takes away both happiness and longevity. The same sleep, if properly enjoyed brings happiness and longevity in human beings as real knowledge brings about spiritual power in yogi.

Brahmacharya (Celibacy): Brahmacharya is one of the three pillars of Ayurveda. According to Ayurveda Brahmacharya refers to control over sexual intercourse. It is claimed that the practice of Brahmacharya makes a man perfect in retaining the Bindu i.e. sperm. While being in a state of being a Brahmacharya, Ayurvedic system of medicine, teaches the human beings about sexual abstention where social structure and healthy discipline are formed. Although the humans may not get a higher experience out of this but is definitely helps in achieving conformity, unity, amicability and purity.

Benefits of Brahmacharya (Celibacy)²⁰: It is as important as food. It fulfils our life with sense of completeness, by achieving progeny and adding the moments full of excitement and pleasure. It provides longevity, delayed ageing and the person endowed with lustre, vitality and strength.

CONCLUSION

Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya affect the physical, mental, ethical, social and spiritual well-being. By the practice of these three sub pillars, longevity, glory, strength, vigour, knowledge, wealth, undying fame, virtues and devotion to the truth, spirituality can be attained. Ayurveda provides a complete and systemic understanding about the effect of food on our physical and mental functioning. This unit would help you to learn the basics of Ayurvedic dietetics including selection of food according to the constitution (Prakriti). Sleep is a natural function of the body. Ayurveda tells that a comfortable sleep provides a healthy body, strength, virility, sharpened senses and long life. Sex plays very crucial role in our lives. It is as important as food. It fulfils our life with sense of completeness, by achieving progeny and adding the moments full of excitement and pleasure. Their balanced is the key to happy and healthy life.

REFERENCES

1. "The top 10 causes of death". World Health Organization. Retrieved 24 May 2015.
2. "Noncommunicable diseases". World Health Organization. Retrieved April 5, 2016.
3. A Manual for Doctors on Mainstreaming of AYUSH under NRHM, Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India New Delhi, 2008
4. Quality control methods for medicinal plant material- Geneva: World Health Organization; 1998
5. Ashtanga Hridaya, Sutra sthana: 4/36, Published by Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi; 2017. p. 59–60
6. Nishteswar, J Nutr Food Sci 2016, 6:4 <http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/2155-9600.1000530>
7. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Charakasamhitha, SutraSthana 26/86-87, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan. Varanasi
8. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Charakasamhitha, SutraSthana 26/81, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan. Varanasi
9. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Charakasamhitha, SutraSthana 26/102-103, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan

10. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Charakasamhitha, VimanSthana 1/21, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan. Varanasi
11. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Susrutasamhitha SutraSthana 46/465, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan. Varanasi
12. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Charakasamhitha, VimanSthana 1/25, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan. Varanasi
13. Taittiriya Upanishad, Bhrugu vallivali-Chapter II
14. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Charakasamhitha, Sutra Sthana 28/45, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan. Varanasi
15. Vriddha Jivaka, Kashyapa Samhita, KhilaSthana 4/5, Choukhamba Sanskrit series Publication, Varanasi\
16. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Susrutasamhitha Chikitsa Sthana 24/38, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan. Varanasi
17. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Charakasamhitha, SutraSthana 27/349-350, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan. Varanasi
18. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Charakasamhitha, Nidana Sthana 6/11, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan. Varanasi
19. Yadavji Trikamji Acharya, Charaka Samhita, Sutra Sthana 21/35, 4th Edition, Chaoukhambha Samskrit Samsthana, Varanasi
20. Yadavji Thrikamji Acharya (2013) (eds.) Susrutasamhitha Chikitsa Sthana 24/112, Chowkambha Surabharathi Prakashan. Varanasi

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict Of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Banamali Das et al: Non Communicable Diseases In Ayurveda. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2019 {cited March, 2019} Available from:

http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/398_402.pdf