

PREVENTION OF LIFESTYLE DISORDERS WITH BASIC PRINCIPLES OF AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is Divine science due to its origin as well as its incredible potency in curing the diseases and protecting the health of a healthy person. In the current era sedentary lifestyle, unbalanced diet, tense mental conditions, smoking, drinking alcohol have led to lifestyle disorders, causing a lot of complications that are difficult to remove. This results in the most common lifestyle disorders like hypertension, diabetes mellitus, arthritis, obesity, etc. Lifestyle disorders are a big problem for our society today. The onset of those disorders is insidious, they take years to develop, and once encountered, they are not easily cured. A healthy lifestyle is a valuable resource for reducing the incidence and impact of health problems, for recovery, for coping with life stressors, and for improving quality of life. At present, people are again getting attracted to, an ancient system of healing, *Ayurveda* as it rectifies disease along with, lifestyle originated consequences. In the management of lifestyle disorders, *Ayurveda* offers various regimens including *Ahara* (proper dietary management), *Dincharya* (daily regimen) *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Panchakarma* (five detoxification and bio-purification therapies), *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) therapies and *Sadvritta* (moral). These are the basic tenets of *Ayurveda*. The inclusive utilization of all these treatment modalities has a great effect on lifestyle disorders. And hope to treat lifestyle disorders brighten with the broader approach of *Ayurveda*. This is an attempt to grab the attention of *Ayurveda vaidya* towards the unique basic tenets of *Ayurveda* explained by ancient *Ayurvedacharya*.

Keywords: Lifestyle disorder, *Ayurveda*, *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Panchakarma*, *Rasayana* therapies

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization and westernization of the whole world have brought many advantages which had led to an improvement in the quality of life. At the same time, it has given way to many disadvantages in the form of a sedentary lifestyle, improper dietary habits, and excessive mental stress, leading to cropping up of many lifestyle disorders. Lifestyle disorders are going to take the form of epidemic in the 21st century if proper preventive measures are not taken. Lifestyle disorders characterize those disorders which occurrence is primarily based on the way of living and occupational habits of people. These disorders are ailment of slow progression and long duration; their onset is insidious, they take years to develop, and once encountered, they are not easily cured. Lifestyle disorders known internationally as non-communicable diseases as they kill around 40 million people each year, that is around 70% of all deaths globally¹. In the current era, very much stress found also eating unhealthy food, fast food, sedentary living, smoking, drinking alcohol disturbs the lifestyle. This results in the most common lifestyle disorders like hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, obesity, insomnia, etc. *Ayurveda* continues to contribute effectively to human health in the 21st century, capable to respond to the expressed health needs of the community and emerging times when the prevalence of lifestyle disorders is increasingly on the rise. *Ayurveda* the ancient system of medicine has great potential in preventing lifestyle disorders. In the management of lifestyle disorders, *Ayurveda* offers various regimens including *Ahara* (proper dietary management), *Dincharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Panchakarma* (five detoxification and bio-purification therapies), *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) therapies, *Sadvritta* (moral) and *Aachara Rasayana* (code of good conduct). The inclusive utilization of all these treatment modalities has a great effect on lifestyle disorders. And the hope to treat lifestyle disorders brightens with the broader approach *Ayurveda*.

Aim and Objectives:

1. To study causative factors of lifestyle disorders
2. To prevent lifestyle disorders through *Ayurveda*

Material and Method:

Various *ayurvedic* classic texts including *Charakasmhita Sushrut samhita*, *Ashtanghridaya*, *Swasthivritta* were consulted as source material. Apart from this, various research journals, websites have been thoroughly searched.

Causative factors of Lifestyle Disorders:

Causes of lifestyle disorders can be divided into two main categories:

1. Modifiable behavioural risk factors
2. Non-modifiable risk factor

Modifiable behavioural risk factors:

1. Bad food habits: Overeating, heating at odd hours, eating when not hungry, eating fast food, excessive use of sodium in the diet causes 4.1 million deaths per year as per the WHO report²
2. Addiction: According to the WHO, more than 7 million people die each year due to the use of tobacco and alcohol intake to leads around 1.65 million deaths³
3. Disturbed biological clock: sleeping late, waking up late, not sleeping, and oversleeping. A disturbed biological clock increases the likelihood of lifestyle disorders.
4. Physical Inactivity: A simple lack of physical activity has been claiming 1.6 million lives annually⁴. Sitting for long hours, wrong body posture, and remaining indoors is the causative of lifestyle disorders. The modern occupational settings (desk job) and the stress related to work are also being seen as a potent risk factor of lifestyle disorders.

Non-Modifiable risk factors: Risk factors that cannot be controlled or modified by the application of an intervention can be called non-modifiable risk factors and include: 1. Age 2. Race 3. Gender 4. Genetics

Preventive measure of lifestyle disorders:

1. Ahara (Proper Dietary Management):

Ahara is one of the important pillars of *Ayurveda*. It means that it is one of the basic principles upon which health, happiness, and harmony rest. Nowadays there is an increased prevalence of lifestyle disorders, in which faulty dietary habits play an important role. Unhealthy food and faulty dietary habits give origin to various life-threatening lifestyle disorders. For good health, a person should always eat a balanced diet and avoid incompatible dietary regimens. It is said in ancient Indian literature that if dietetics is followed, medicine is not needed and if dietetics is not observed, even medicines do not get proper results. In *Ayurveda*, there is a long list of wholesome and unwholesome diet in the context of diseases. The rules and methods of diet intake are mentioned in *Charaksamhita* as *ash-taaharavidhivisheshayaatanani*⁵. It is a very important aspect regarding dietetics that when to take food. *Ayurveda* also recommended warm water is good for digestive health. *Ayurveda* also described eighteen types of dietary incompatibilities (*Virruddha Ahara*)⁶ which should be avoided to maintain health and longevity. At present, many newer food processing methods are in practice which is harmful to human beings. *Ayurveda* teaches us how to go back to nature and find our balance. That's why *Ayurveda* suggests that one should follow these guidelines principles to prevent lifestyle disorders.

2. Dincharya (Daily Regimen):^{7 8 9 10 11 12}

In today's scenario, the daily routine of each individual has become so busy and hectic, that many non-communicable diseases have taken the form of epidemic in the current era, *Ayurveda* is the science which emphasized the preventive aspect. *Dincharya* is one of the principles mentioned in *Ayurveda* in the context of prevention. The activities or regimen which needs to be followed daily, by every individual is called *Dincharya*. It is advisable to wake up during *Bramha Muhurta* (preferably between 4.00 a.m. to 5.30 a.m.). One should attend nature's calls. The soft brushes made out of twigs of *Khadira*, *Karanja*, *Apa-marga*, etc. should be used for brushing the teeth. It is necessary to massage (*Abhyanga*) whole body with

medicated oil every day. Oil massage ensures softness and unctuousness of skin, free movement of joints and muscles. The application of collyrium (*Anjana*) in the eyes should be done regularly. Regular exercise (*vyayama*) is essential for perfect health. It builds up stamina and resistance against diseases, clears the channels of the body (*Srotas*), and increases the blood circulation. Whole-body massage with dry powders of *yawa, kulath (Udvaratan)* every day. It is necessary to do *Nasya* daily. *Nasyadravyas* triggers the nerve endings and sends the message to the CNS and initiates the normal physiological functions of the body. Bathing (*Snana*) improves strength, appetite, enthusiasm, a span of life, and removes sweat and other impurities from the body. To dress up properly, use of precious stones and metals in the form of jewelry, use of shoes and umbrella while doing outdoor work.

This daily regimen helps in maintaining balance and harmony in your body and nature by regulating your biological clock and advocating a healthy lifestyle. Implementation of *dincharya* has a great impact on the prevention of diseases especially lifestyle disorders.

3. Ritucharya (Seasonal Regimen):^{13 14 15 16}

Ayurveda explains *Ritucharya* as a set of rules to follow in each season to keep ourselves healthy and to prevent seasonal diseases. *Ritucharya* represents a very important aspect of a preventive measure for various illnesses including lifestyle disorders as mentioned in *Ayurvedic* text. Whole year is divided into six seasons (*Shishira, Vasant, Greeshma, Varsha, Sharad, Hemant*). A specific regimen has been mentioned in these seasons which includes *Vamana* in *Vasant Ritu*; *Virechanain Sharad Ritu*; *Basti* in *Varsha Ritu*. In the spring season, bitter, hot and astringent diet is advised while salty, sour food should be avoided. In the summer season due to the hot climate, aggravation of *pitta* occurs. Hence, *pitta* pacifying sweets, unctuous and liquid diet is advised. The excessive hot, spicy, sour, salty diet should be avoided. In rainy season aggravation of *vata* occurs, hence *vatashamaka* sweet, sour foods are preferred. In pre-winter and winter season *vata dosha* aggravates due to cold dry atmosphere, hence *vataghna* diet is recommended. People ignore

the food to eat in specific seasons, dressing, and other regimens to be followed in a particular season or stressful life leads to derangement of homeostasis and causes various lifestyle disorders. It is postulated that if an individual follows the prescribed *ritucharya*, he may adopt and overcome the stresses of seasonal variations and may not suffer from ill-health.

4. Panchakarma (Five Detoxification and Biopurification Therapies):¹⁷

Ayurveda is now accepted globally as a complete health solution. *Panchakarma* methods have been a crowning glory of our health science. In the present scenario, *Panchakarma* is one of the most emerging parts of *Ayurveda* as it plays a very important role in the effective management of lifestyle disorders which are on increase at a high rate. *Panchakarma* is a method of biopurification, as they possess properties being real pathogenesis breaker, long-standing effects, and fewer chances of recurrences of diseases. *Panchakarma* purifies and detoxifies the body by expelling metabolic toxins and in maintaining normal functioning of the body, improving metabolism and body coordinations. The five technologies of *Panchakarma* include *Vaman* (therapeutic emesis), *Virechan* (therapeutic purgation), *Asthapan Basti* (therapeutic decoction enema), *Anuwasana Basti* (therapeutic oil enema) and *Nasya Karma* (nasal medication). All the *Panchakarma* regimens are followed to achieve the homeostasis and not just counter the specific symptom. That is why it outcores the conventional medicines when it comes to tackling multi-dimensional disorders like lifestyle disorders. In the present era because of varied lifestyle, the majority of people are suffering from lifestyle disorders for which *Panchakarma* is one and the only therapeutic measure which can help mankind.

5. Rasayana (Rejuvenation Therapy):

Rasayana therapy of *Ayurveda* is a dedicated stream of medication for immune promotive, antidegenerative, and rejuvenating health care and is known for preventing the effects of ageing and improving the quality of life of healthy as well as the diseased individual. *Rasayanas* are a generic class of restorative and rejuvenating supplements, many *Rasayanas* could be tissue and organ-specific such as *Medhya Ra-*

sayana for the brain, *Hridya Rasayana* for the heart. *Twachya Rasayana* for the skin and so on¹⁸. The application of organ-specific *Rasayana* herbs also provides enough scope not only for the prevention of diseases but also for the promotion of health and cure of diseases too. Various studies on *Rasayana* drugs suggest their following action¹⁹ 1.Immunomodulator 2.Adaptogenic 3.Antioxidant 4.Antistress.

Rasayana has a definite role to play in the maintenance and preservation of health and appropriate use of *Rasayana* can help to bring down the prevalence of many diseases, ultimately reducing health-care burden.

Sadvritta and Achara Rasayana (Codes of Good Conduct):

Ancient scholars have mentioned the various principles of code of conduct known as *Sadvritta* and *Achara rasayana* which helps in maintaining a healthy body and a peaceful mind. *Sadvritta* means physical and mental decorum which should be followed by everyone daily. These are principles of right conduct that apply to all people at all times and places. Practicing them gives balance and harmony to the mind. In *Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana* detailed description of *Sadvritta* has been stated. The following code of conduct of *sadvritta* should be followed²⁰

1. Speak the truth and use pleasant words in conversation
2. Do not lose your temper under any circumstances
3. Do not get addicted to sensory pleasures.
4. Abstain from telling lies, anger, extreme grief, jealousy and greed
5. Observe self-control
6. As far as possible, do not expose yourself to hardships.
7. Do not harm anyone
8. Avoid suppression of natural urges
9. Be patient. Be straight forward and kind
10. Avoid overeating, overdrinking, too much sexual activity, too much or too little sleep
11. Control your sense organs
12. Make a habit of doing all that is good and avoiding all that is bad.

Such type of lifestyle adaptation is always helpful in the prevention and management of a wide range of lifestyle disorders. *Acharya Sushruta* considers a man healthy only when he is in the state of biological balance and enjoyssensorial, mental, and spiritual wellbeing²¹. Such a state of health can be achieved only by observing the rules of good conduct i.e *sadvrita*.

CONCLUSION

The lifestyle of modern human beings has created several disharmonies in his biological system. In the present era because of varied lifestyle, the majority of people are suffering from many lifestyle disorders for which *Ayurveda* is one and the only therapeutic measure which can help mankind. Conventional medicine does not have answers to all health care needs, particularly multidimensional lifestyle disorder, fortunately, many people could get find the cure with *Ayurvedic* medicines. Nowadays the lifestyle disorders are affecting today's society, as one of the quotations says that Prevention is better than cure. We can prevent these lifestyle disorders by maintaining our lifestyle through *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* offers an effective and safe solution in the form of proper dietary management, lifestyle advises *panchakarma*(bio purification procedures), and rejuvenation therapy to prevent lifestyle disorders. We should follow the above mentioned *Ayurveda* therapies, so these lead to a healthy lifestyle. Therefore, this paper was undertaken to evaluate the efficacy of these treatment modalities, to find out the better result in oriented therapy and an attempt is made to help the patients suffering from lifestyle disorders. The *Ayurvedic* physician concentrates on achieving the objectives of *Ayurveda* for the promotion of health, prevention, and management of the disease for a healthy and happy life in the ailing society.

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