

CLINICAL UTILITY OF NIDANA PANCHAK: AN AYURVEDIC DIAGNOSTIC TOOLAkshay Kumar¹, Pranjalee Sharma², Akhilesh Srivastava³

¹PG Scholar Final Year Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, RGGPG College & Hospital, Paprola, Distt. Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India

²PG Scholar Final Year Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, RGGPG College & Hospital, Paprola, Distt. Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India

³Sr. Lecturer Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, RGGPG College & Hospital, Paprola, Distt. Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author: akshaythebosssarswat@gmail.com<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj1310042022>

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**ABSTRACT**

The ancient Indian medicine, *Ayurveda* is based on a holistic approach to the treatment of disease. The state of *Arogya* which is the aim of *ayurveda* can be obtained by a proper diagnosis of disease as well as disease. All the *Acharyas* have stressed the fact that the diagnostic aspect known as *Pariksha* is important for proper understanding and diagnosis of the disease. *Pariksha* in ayurveda is further subdivided into *Roga Pariksha* i.e., information about the disease, and *Rogi Pariksha* which refers to the detailed information about the diseased person. *Nidan* panchaka is one of the most important tools in the diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of a disease. *Nidan*, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Upashaya*, *Samprapti* are the five components of *Nidan Panchaka* which are used for diagnosis. Each of them plays a significant role as a diagnostic tool for the assessment of Aetiology (*Nidan*), Prodromal Symptoms (*Purvarupa*), Signs (*Rupa*), Experimental Methods (*Upashaya*), and Pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) of disease. So, an attempt is made in this paper to establish the clinical utility of *nidan panchaka* in the diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of the disease.

Keywords: *Nidana panchaka*, *Nidan*, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Upashaya*, *Samprapti*.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of ayurveda is *dhatu samaya*, a balanced state of *dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala*, and *Agni*. Any imbalance in them may cause disease. Thus, a proper diagnosis of the disease is necessary. In ayurveda, there are two basic components of diagnosis i.e., *Rogi Pariksha* and *Rog pariksha*. Once these two concepts are clear the diagnosis (*Vyadhi Vinischaya*) will be accurate. All the *Pariksha* mentioned in ayurveda are subjected to the diagnosis of disease among them only *Nidan Panchaka* is used for diagnosis of the disease. *Nidan Panchaka* is mentioned by all the *Samhitas* but mainly by *Acharaya Madhavkar* in detail.

Disease should be diagnosed first and then rational therapeutic measures should be employed. A physician, who starts the treatment without diagnosing a disease, succeeds by chance even if he is a medicine expert^[1]. So, diagnosing a disease is far more important before initiating the treatment. Unless the disease is diagnosed properly and its cause is traced, the physician cannot apply proper therapeutic measures to overcome the disease.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

Various Ayurvedic texts were referred to fulfill this part. The conclusion is drawn based on acquired knowledge.

NIDANA PANCHAK: In ayurvedic literature, there is the best method of diagnosing the disease known as *nidana panchaka* which includes^[2]:

- *Nidan* (Causes)
- *Purvarupa* (Prodromal symptoms)
- *Rupa* (Signs and symptoms)
- *Upashaya* (Examination method)
- *Samprapti* (Pathogenesis)

NIDANA (Cause)

Nidana is the causative factor of the disease or Factor which indicates the disease is called *nidan* or Process by which disease can be diagnosed is called *Nidana*^[3]. E.g., *jwara* (fever). Chakrapani tells that *Nidana* is a *karana*, it is used in two contexts:

- *Vyadhi Janaka*: To explain the cause of the disease (Vyadhi- Disease, Janaka- Causing)

- *Vyadhi Bodhak*: *Nidana* helps in identifying or diagnosing the disease (Bodhak-indicating, suggesting).

Synonyms of *Nidana*: *Namita*, *Hetu*, *Aayatan*, *Pratyay*, *Samsthan*, *Karan*.^[4]

Types of *Hetu*:

1. *Sanikrista Hetu*^[5]:

It refers to the immediate cause responsible for acute precipitation of disease by aggravating *doshas*, it does not require the stage of pathogenesis. E.g., Diurnal variation of *doshas* takes place routinely i.e., in the morning *kapha dosha* is aggravated, for this *sanchaya of doshas* is not essential manifests naturally. Aggravation of *doshas* as per age, day, night, and during digestion is common and it is a physiological process.

2. *Viprakrista Hetu*^[5]:

Sanchayaya (accumulation) of *dosha* is very much essential. E.g., *Kapha Chaya* takes place in *Hemanta ritu*. However, in *Vasant ritu* due to the temperature change, *Vilayana of Kapha* starts and *Kapha prakopa* takes place which leads to the manifestation of *Kapha roga in Vasant ritu*.

3. *Vyabhichari Hetu*^[5]:

Those causes are weak and do not have enough strength to produce disease but act as a carrier when a favorable situation arises. E.g., eating sweets does not immediately lead to the disease but it has the potential to lead to the development of diabetes in long run.

4. *Pradhanik Hetu*^[5]:

It is a powerful cause that produces disease instantaneously like poison. A sudden manifestation of symptoms is seen '*Agantuj* may be included under *Pradhanik hetu*.

Clinical Importance of *Nidana*:

- **Diagnosis:** Whenever there is doubt in diagnosing a disease; the physician thinks about the nature of etiology and concludes as it provides the physician exact reason for the manifestation of the disease. E.g., excessive sleeping, excessive use of curd, meat soup of the domestic, aquatic, and marshy animals, and milk are the *Nidana* of

Prameha. The knowledge of each of these etiological factors helps the physician to make a good prognosis and make the exact diagnosis of the disease.

- **Differential Diagnosis:** If signs and symptoms of two or more diseases are extremely similar then diagnosis becomes very difficult. In such conditions, if we can find out the exact etiological factors, then a definite diagnosis can be made. E.g., Vomiting may be observed in fever, jaundice, or dietary indiscretion. When careful history is taken it is noted that the patient had consumed stale and bare food then it can be safely predicted that this vomiting is due to stale food.
- **Treatment:** *Nidana* is very important in the prevention as well as the cure of diseases. As *Acharya Sushruta* has told avoiding *Nidana* i.e., *Nidanaparivarjana* is the simple form of *Chikitsa*.
- **Prognosis:** *Nidana* also gives the idea about the prognosis of the disease. *Acharya Charaka* has told that disease manifestation or severity depends on the extent of *Nidana* taken.
 1. *Sadhya* (Curable) - *Nidana* is having *Alpa Bala*
 2. *Krichasadhya* (Difficult to cure) – *Nidana* is having *Madhyam Bala*
 3. *Asadhya* (Incurable) – *Nidana* is *Prabala*

PURAVRUPA (Prodromal features)

The symptoms which indicate the forthcoming disease is known as *Purvarupa* ^[6]. These are the symptoms that are produced in the body before the arrival of the disease ^[7]. *Purvarupa* is the earliest symptom of the disease. When *Purvarupa* gets manifested, the disease is still in developing form. It helps in the diagnosis of disease, identifying the disease, and also to prevent the disease process.

Types of Purvarupa

1. Samanya Puravrupa (General Symptoms):

It manifests after the conglomeration of *Dosha* with *Dushya*. As a result, it manifests *Purvarupa of Jwaradi vyadhi*, but it doesn't specify the *Vatadi Doshas* ^[8]. Fatigue, restlessness, abnormal complexion, abnormal taste, lacrimation, etc., are general premonitory symptoms of *Jwara* ^[9]. It generally disappears before the onset of the disease.

2. Vishistha Puavrupa (Specific Symptoms):

Symptoms that show the dominance of specific *dosha* involved in *Samprapti* are continued in the next stage i.e., *Rupaavastha* is known as *Vishisha Purvarupa* ^[8]. E.g., *Jrumbhaya Atyartham* (excessive yawning) in *Vataja fever*, *Nayanayao Ho Daha* (burning sensation) in the eye in *Pittaja fever*, *AnnaAruchi* (dislikes the food) in *Kaphaja Jwara* ^[10]. *Acharya Charaka* mentioned *Avyakta lakshan* are *Vishisha Purvarupa of Urahkshata* and *Vata vyadhi* ^[11].

Clinical Importance of Purvarupa

- **Diagnosis:** *Purvarupa* knowledge helps in diagnosing the diseases by differentiating between diseases having similar *Nidana*. E.g., *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned in *Uttar tantra* chapter 50th that *Kasa*, *Swasa*, and *Hikka* have similar *Nidana*. Excessive intake of *Madhu rasa* can cause *Prameha*, *Sthaulya*, and *Kaphaja vyadhi*. Can be differentiated from each other on basis of their *Purvarupa*.
- **Differential Diagnosis:** For differential diagnosis purposes, the knowledge of *Purvarupas* is essential. E.g., *Raktapitta* and *Pittaj Prameha*, both produce yellowish reddish urine. But if the history of the patient reveals the absence of *Purvarupas of Prameha*, then it could be inferred as the *Raktapitta* ^[12].
- **Treatment:** Knowledge of *Purvarupa* helps in minimizing the severity of the disease by initiating appropriate treatment before the onset of the disease. For eg. *Langhana* is indicated in *Purvarupa of Jwara* by *Charaka* ^[13] and *Ghritapana* by *Sushruta* ^[14]. *Snehadi karma* is advised in *Purvarupa vastha of Ashmari* ^[15].

Prognosis:

1. *Sukha sadhya* (Curable) - *Alpa bala* (few symptoms) *Purvarupa*
2. *Krichasadhya* (Difficult to cure) – *Madhyam bala* (most of the symptoms appear) *Purvarupa*
3. *Asadhya* (Incurable) – *Prabala* (all the prodromal symptoms appear) *Purvarupa*

RUPA (Sign and Symptoms)

Complete manifestation of disease with prominent clinical features is called *Rupa* ^[16]. *Rupa* is manifest-

ed during the 5th stage of *Shat Kriya Kala*. When *Sthan Samshraya Avastha* advances to *Vyakta Avastha* in this process the premonitory symptoms progress from 4th to 5th stage and attains the form of *Rupa*. It indicates the specific diseases by manifesting specific symptoms of that disease [17].

Synonyms- *Lingam, Aakriti, Lakshana, Chinha, Sansthana, Vyanjana* [18].

Types of *Rupa*:

1. **Samanya Rupa** (General features):

This refers to the general features present in that particular disease. E.g., *Santap* (temperature rise), *Swedavrodha* (reduced sweating), *Sarvanga pidha* (generalized body ache) is the general feature of all types of fever (*Jwara*) [19].

2. **Vishistha Rupa** (Specific features):

This refers to the special features which differentiate the further subtypes of that particular disease. E.g., shivering, dry mouth, yawning, etc. symptoms indicates *Vataj* type of fever. A prodromal feature like diarrhea, vomiting, increased thirst, delirium, etc. symptoms indicate *Pittaj* type of fever and excessive sleep, anorexia, etc. symptoms indicate *Kaphaj* type of fever.

3. **Pratyatmaka lakshana** (Cardinal features):

This refers to the unique and specific features of a particular disease. For e.g., *Dehamahasantapa* in *Jwara*, *Prabhutavila mutrara* in *Prameha*, *Netrat-wakpanduta* in *Pandu* etc.

Clinical Importance of *Rupa*

- **Diagnosis:** Disease is also called a syndrome as it includes many signs and symptoms in it. When such a syndrome is well established, it lends to the diagnosis of a particular disease, For eg. *Eka-dash Rupa Rajyakshma* (Eleven features of pulmonary tuberculosis). Cardinal features of the disease also help in diagnosis whereas some *Vyadhi* with unknown *Purvrupa* like *Vata vyadhi* and *Urahkshata* can be diagnosed based on *Rupa*.
- **Differential Diagnosis:** *Rupas* are useful in the differential diagnosis of the diseases, for e.g the *Udarshool* (abdominal pain) is present in *Annadrava-shool* and *Parinam-shool*. When the abdominal pain occurs during the digestion of food,

it is *Annadrava-shool* (Gastric ulcer pain) and when it is present after the digestion of food then it is *Parinam-shool* (Peptic ulcer pain).

- **Treatment:** *Rupas* produced at various stages of the disease allow timely intervention and help in avoiding the future course of the disease. E.g., Specific treatment is given in *Jwara* according to its location in various *Dhatu* and it can be decided by looking at the specific *Lakshana*. In the various stage of *Shopha* i.e., *Amavastha*, *Panchyamanavastha*; specific treatment is given based on *Lakshana*. E.g. In *Amavastha* incision should not be given while in *Pakvavastha* it is indicated to drain the pus.
- **Prognosis:** *Rupas* also give the idea about the prognosis of the disease. If all the features of the disease are produced, then it indicates a bad prognosis. E.g., if all the features of *Visarpa* are expressed then *Sannipataj Visarpa* is incurable. Some features themselves indicate a bad prognosis. E.g., hemoptysis, hematemesis, ascites.

UPASHAYA (Examination method)

In case of difficulty in a diagnosis due to some hidden things or mimicking nature of the disease in such circumstances, *Upasaya* and *Anupsaya* help in diagnosis [20]. Those medicine, diet, and regimens that bring about a feeling of happiness are known as *Upasaya* [21]. It gives relief to the person through the use of medicine, diet, and regimens. Their action may be directly against the cause, or to the disease itself, or both (i.e., the cause and disease) [22].

Generally, when the medicine with opposite qualities to disease is administered, we expect them to relieve the symptoms. But they can also aggravate the symptoms of a given disease. When the medicines, despite being opposed to the disease qualities, do not pacify the disease or if they aggravate the symptoms they are considered *Anupashaya* [23].

Clinical Importance of *Upashaya*:

- **Diagnosis:** *Upashaya* helps in the diagnosis of disease when they have similar *Lakshana*. for eg. *Vata* which alleviates by *Shadadharana churna* without *Sneha dravya* indicates that a person is suffering from *Urushamba*.

- **Treatment:** Acharya Chakrapani has mentioned 18 types of *Upashaya*. Chikitsa can be done based on *hetu vyadhiviprit* and *hetuvyadhi vipritarthkari*. E.g., *sunthi* in *Seetakaphaj Jwara* comes under *hetuviprit ausadh*, Intake of food which are supporting anti-diarrheal activity i.e., use of *Masura* in *Atisara Rogi* comes under *vyadhiviprit ann*, *Trasan* (Inducing fear) in *Vataja Unmada* comes under *hetuvipritarthkari vihar*, Swimming therapy is advised in *Urustambha* comes under *hetuvyadhi viprit arthkari vihar*

SAMPRAPTI (Pathogenesis)

The knowledge of *Samprapti* is very important because it gives a precise and comprehensive picture of the nature of the disease. *Samprapti* is a process of understanding the development of disease by vitiated doshas which are constantly circulating inside the body. It is also known as - *Jati, Agati* [24]. *Samprapti* means knowing the factors which are responsible for the genesis of a disease and not only knowing the disease [25].

Types of Samprapti:

1. *Samanya samprapti*:

It includes *Shat kriya kala* i.e., 6 stages for a better understanding of pathogenesis and the appropriate time for treatment.

2. *Vishista samprapti* [26]: It includes *Samkhya, Pradhanya, Vikalpa, Bala, Kala*.

- ***Samkhya Samprapti*:** It is based on the number of types or subtypes of a given disease. For e.g., 20 types of *prameha*, 8 types of *Jwara*, 5 types of *visham jwara*, 3 types of *Raktipitta* etc.
- ***Pradhanya Samprapti*:** It helps in the identification of dominant doshas in case two or more dosha are involved. In the case of two doshas, the word "*Tara*" is used to denote a dominancy in comparison to other doshas. If three are doshas involved the word "*Tama*" is used to demonstrate its dominancy with the other two doshas. The *samprapti* or pathogenesis of an independently manifested disease (*swatantra vyadhi*) is called *Pradhanya samprapti* and that of a secondary disease (*paratantra vyadhi*) is called *apradhanya samprapti*. This *samprapti* helps in knowing the

strength of the doshas involved in the disease, to understand the strength of major and minor diseases, and treating them accordingly.

- ***Vikalpa Samprapti*:** It helps us to understand the fractional variations occurring in the *gunas* of the *doshas*. This method of fractional study of *dosha* is called *Anshansha Kalpana*. Acharya *Srushut* mentioned that *Kashaya ras* and *kalaya* – vitiate all *ansha* of *vata* whereas *Seedhu* – due to *ruksha guna* vitiate only one *ansha* of *vata*. *Katu ras* vitiate all *ansha* of *pitta*. *Til* - due to *ushana guna* vitiate one *ansha* of *pitta*, etc.
- ***Bala Samprapti*:** The *bala samprapti* of a disease depends upon whether the causes, premonitory symptoms, and symptoms of a given disease are partially manifested or completely manifested. When these are partially manifested, the *bala* of the disease is weak. When these are completely manifested, the *bala* of the disease is said to be greater.
- ***Kala Samprapti*:** It shows that the *doshas* which have produced the disease get increased in terms of their intensity with change in season. change in time like day and night. change by stages of digestion. For example- in the first, second, and third parts of the day, and night, digestion increases *kapha, pitta, vata* respectively.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda says that before the planning treatment, the correct diagnosis of the disease is most important. *Nidana panchaka* is a tool for diagnosing the disease at various stages. Each component of *Nidana panchaka* individually as well as collectively helps in the diagnosis of disease.

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