



EXPLORING THE ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN DISEASE PREVENTION: ANCIENT WISDOM IN MODERN HEALTHCARE

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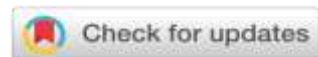
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ABSTRACT

In an era where modern medicine dominates the healthcare landscape, the ancient practice of Ayurveda continues to stand the test of time, offering profound insights and holistic approaches to disease prevention. Originating over 5,000 years ago, Ayurveda, which translates to "the science of life," emphasizes the balance of mind, body, and spirit for overall well-being. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in Ayurveda as people seek more natural and holistic approaches to health. This article delves into the role of Ayurveda in preventing diseases and its integration into contemporary healthcare systems.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

- To investigate the relevance of ancient Ayurvedic wisdom in contemporary healthcare.
- Being aware of ayurvedic practices and recommendations for both physical and mental health.
- Adopting the ayurvedic principles in daily life to attain optimal immunity for combating and preventing diseases.

METHODS AND MATERIALS:

- This literary review material comes from Brihatrayees and Laghutrayees. The fundamental concepts of disease prevention are investigated and compiled to create a more comprehensive framework for disease prevention in Ayurveda.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Health, Prevention of diseases, Lifestyle.

INTRODUCTION

“*Sharirendriya satvatma samyogo dhari jivitam*”^[1] “| Ayurveda encompasses a comprehensive approach to health and wellness, focusing on the balance between mind, body, and spirit. It emphasizes preventive measures to maintain health and treat illness through a combination of lifestyle practices, dietary guidelines, herbal remedies, detoxification techniques, and physical therapies.

Key principles of Ayurveda include the belief in the interconnectedness of all aspects of life, the recognition of individual differences in body constitution or “*doshas*” (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*), and the importance of maintaining balance among these *doshas* for optimal health.

UNDERSTANDING AYURVEDIC PRINCIPLES:

Primarily let us understand the tridoshas and their connection with health. At the core of Ayurveda lies the belief that optimal health is achieved through harmony with nature and the understanding of one's unique constitution, known as “*doshas*” – *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*.

“*Rogastu doshavaishamyam dosha samyam aroghata*”^[2] “|

Ayurveda believes, balance of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* is the natural order, in the same manner imbalances in these *doshas* disrupt the body's natural equilibrium, leading to disease.

By identifying and addressing this imbalance of *doshas* through lifestyle modifications, dietary changes, herbal remedies, and therapeutic practices, Ayurveda aims to prevent illnesses before they manifest. These concepts of disease prevention, as outlined in Ayurveda, must be thoroughly grasped.

This review will focus on some key factors that should be addressed and followed for disease prevention. They are lifestyle medicine, guidelines and recommendations of diet, herbal medicines and natural remedies, mental wellbeing.

1. DINACHARYA – A Lifestyle medicine:

Ayurveda places great emphasis on adopting a healthy lifestyle as a cornerstone of disease prevention. This includes adhering to daily routines or “*Dinacharya*,” which involves certain practices such as

- ***Pratauthana*** – It is the Time of getting up ‘*Brahmamuhurtha*’ before sunrise. Based on the studies, there is a lot of oxygen in the atmosphere at this time of day that keeps people healthy.

The word “*Brahma*” denotes knowledge, and it is also said to be the ideal time to pursue knowledge.

- ***Dantadhavana and Jihva nirlekhana***– Oral Hygiene restores oral freshness, enhances taste perception, and gets rid of bad odors, tastelessness, and dirt on the tongue.

Some particular twigs used in *dantadhavana* confer particular benefits. For example, *dantadhavana* with *Amra* (*Mangifera indica* L.) twig promotes health, while *Sirisha* (*Albizia lebeck Benth.*) Twig lengthens life and preserves health. It plays a crucial role in maintaining dental health by providing safer and more affordable treatment for periodontal issues.

- ***Anjana*** – Collyrium to the eyes. In Ayurveda, the saying “*Sarvendriyanam nayanam pradhanam*” is widely recognized. It signifies that “the eyes are the most important sensory organs.” The daily routine's “*Anjana Kriya*” is the first step towards ensuring the health of this essential sense organ.
- ***Nasya*** – The process of administering medication into the nose. The medication delivered through nasal route activates the brain's higher centers and affects nervous system activities.
- ***Kavala Gandusha*** – *kavala* is filling the mouth with minimum quantity of medicated paste and swirl around. *Gandusha* is filling the mouth with sufficient quantity of medicated oil and liquid. These methods help to strengthen teeth, gums, and jawbones; it also improves senses, preserves voice clarity, and prevents decay, bad breath,

gum bleeding, dry throat, and cracked lips. It also eases discomfort and suffering. By practicing this daily improves the local defense mechanism of oral cavity.

- **Abhyanga** – Oil application as a daily practice. It is *Jarahara* (rejuvenates body tissues, promotes health and prevents aging process), *Shramahara* (relaxes muscles and relieves fatigue), *Vatahara* (alleviates Vata Dosha). Abhyanga will enhance the functions of tissues and essential organs, leading to an extended lifespan.
- **Vyayama** – Regular exercise Brings lightness to the body, improves the work capacity, increases the digestion, prevents obesity, and helps to maintain a consistent body structure. It alters the hormone secretions which hamper both physical and mental health.
- **Snana** – Bath eliminates impurities, perspiration, itchiness, thirst, burning sensation, and tiredness. Moreover, it increases strength, courage, hunger, and longevity.

Thus, ayurveda stresses the importance of everyday practice to give strength to every region of the body. Including these suggestions into regular activities will increase a person's ability to prevent sickness.

Sandhya Varjya^[3] – Things to avoid in evening.

- *Ahara* – food consumption
- *Maithunam* – participating in intercourse.
- *Nidra* – sleeping during the evening.
- *Sampaataam* – Reading
- *Adhwa gamana* – walking longer distance.

Ratri Bhojana Vidhi – Things to keep in mind during dinner.

- Dinner should be consumed in the first three hours of the night (*Prathamaprahara*), and it should be less in quantity than the day and light to digest.
- “*Pada shatam gatva vama parshvena samvishet*^[4]”- Susruta says that after eating, one should sit comfortably until the fullness of the food subsides, after which one should take a hundred steps and rest on one's left side in bed.

“*Naktadinani me yanti kathambhutasya samprati*

Dukhabhan bhavatyevam nityam sannihitasmriti^[5]”// Vagbhata says that one who is always cautious in analyzing their *Dinacharya* and *Ratricharya* they never get afflicted with suffering.

Adherence to the lifestyle medicine supports physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing; individuals can strengthen their immune system and ward off diseases.

2. **DIET - A Healing tool.**

Central to Ayurvedic principles is the concept of “*ahara*,” or food, as medicine. Ayurveda recognizes that dietary choices profoundly impact health and advocates for a diet that is fresh, seasonal, and predominantly plant based. Acharya charaka explained certain rules and regulation regarding preparation and consumption of food in the name of *Astavidha Ahara Viseshayatana*^[6]

“*Tatrakhalvimanyashtaharavidhivisheshayatananibhavanti*

Tadyatha – prakrutikaranasamyogarashideshakalopayogasamsthopayoktashtamani bhavanti” //

Additionally, Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of mindful eating, proper food combinations, and moderation to maintain digestive health and prevent ailments related to poor digestion, obesity, diabetes, and gastrointestinal disorders. The eight entities explained are.

- *Prakruti* - nature of food.
- *Karana*- processing of food.
- *Samyoga*- combination of food.
- *Rashi*- quantity of food.
- *Desha* – habitat of food.
- *Kala*- seasonal variation.
- *Upayoga Samstha* – Rules for food intake.
- *Upayokta* – the person who takes the food.

The main factor contributing to the rising trend of health disorders is lack of understanding about these healthy dietary practices. Therefore, the best approach to prevent these problems is to comprehend how different eating habits are explained by *Ahara Vidhi Viseshayatana*. Understanding how to choose the right food, how to combine different foods, how to cook them, and how much and what kind of food is helpful. *Ahara Vidhi Viseshayatana* is highly advanced

tageous in accomplishing the admirable objective of preserving well-being. With the right knowledge and use of these, we can effortlessly accomplish the illness avoidance.

3. **NATURAL REMEDY: An antidote**

“Yogadapi visham tikshnam utamam bsheshajam bhavet| Bsheshajam chapi duryuktam tikshnam sampadyate visham^[7]” ||

With the correct preparation and administration techniques, even a highly toxic poison can be transformed into an effective medication. However, if used incorrectly, even a decent medication might become a strong toxin.

Rasayana- Ayurvedic rejuvenation therapy called rasayana aids in both promoting and maintaining good health. Single drug Rasayana treatment strengthens the immune system, and increases ojas (the life energy), all of which help ward against illness and the negative consequences of aging. Certain examples are *Guduchi*, *Ashvagandha*, *Shatavari*, *Brahmi*, *Hritaki*, *Amalaki*, *Yasthimadhu*, *Pippali* etc. The therapeutic effects, as well as the right use of these rasayana dravyas, improve youthfulness, memory, intelligence, complexion, body radiance, and maximum physical power. Rasayana dravyas work on multiple levels, i.e., at the cellular metabolism level (Rasadi-dhatu, Agni, and Srotas). This enhances the body's metabolic processes and, eventually, immunity.

Ritu shodhana^[8] Following seasonal regime and procedures mentioned during respective seasons enables the person to have a healthy and long life. When *Vamana* is performed correctly in vasantha ritu; it makes the body light, clears the channels of *Hrit*, *Parswa*, and *Indriyas*, and removes inflamed *Kapha*. When *Nasya Karma* is performed properly, it clears the channels of circulation and eliminates the exacerbated *Dosha* sitting above *Urdhva jatru pradesha* (head and neck). When *Basti Karma* is done correctly in varsha ritu, it establishes the normal ejection of the urine, feces, and flatus and promotes taste, appetite, and bliss. When *Virechana* is performed correctly in sharad ritu, aggravating *Pitta* is removed, all body

channels are cleared, *Jatharagni* is lighted, and lightness begins to settle in.

Integrating these natural remedies into daily life and during respective seasons can strengthen the body's defenses and enhance resilience against diseases.

4. **MENTAL WELL-BEING: An ode to Self-nurturing**

“Prashamyatyauashadhai purvo daivayuktivyapashrayai | Manso jnanavignanadhairyasmritisamadhibi^[9]” ||

Ayurveda emphasizes, the manasika and shareerika doshas their interconnectedness and how they are impacting the individual's health.

The *Sharirika dosha* are pacified by remedial measures of divine and rational qualities while the *Manasika dosha* can be treated with *Jnana* (knowledge of self), *Vijnana* (scientific knowledge), *Dhairy*a (restraint/temperance), *Smriti* (memory) and *Samadhi* (salvation/concentration).

In Ayurveda, mental health is considered integral to overall health, and stress is seen as a significant contributor to disease. Practices such as yoga, meditation, and *Pranayama* (breath work) are prescribed to calm the mind, reduce stress hormones, and promote emotional balance. They activate parasympathetic nervous system and help to lower fight or flight response. These practices act as add on therapies in reducing psychological pathologies and improving socio occupational functioning. By managing stress and cultivating a positive mindset, individuals can mitigate the impact of chronic stress on the body and prevent stress-related illnesses such as hypertension, anxiety, and depression.

DISCUSSION

Logically, the optimal course of action is to target the underlying cause, and this is especially a great technique for disease and stress management. Caraka, who says that one should never overexert oneself in order to preserve one's life, is the best example of avoiding them. Stress followed by diseases, however, is an unavoidable companion of success in today's world of cutthroat competition. In addition to the benefits it offers, stress is justifiable; yet illnesses

brought on by stress are intolerable. Since the body can adapt to stress better than anything else, stress management requires improving this ability. The body's coping capacity can be enhanced by the following above mentioned quality measures.

Integration into Modern Healthcare:

As interest in Ayurveda continues to grow, there is increasing recognition of its potential in complementing modern healthcare practices. Integrative medicine approaches, which combine the best of conventional medicine with traditional healing modalities like Ayurveda, offer patients a more comprehensive and personalized approach to health management. Furthermore, research into the efficacy and safety of Ayurvedic interventions is ongoing, paving the way for its integration into mainstream healthcare systems worldwide.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda's holistic approach to disease prevention, rooted in ancient wisdom and tailored to individual needs, offers valuable insights into maintaining optimal health and well-being. By promoting healthy lifestyle practices, dietary modifications, herbal remedies, and stress management techniques, Ayurveda empowers individuals to take charge of their health and prevent diseases before they arise. As modern medicine continues to evolve, embracing the principles of Ayurveda can enrich healthcare practices and

Foster a paradigm shift towards a more holistic and preventive approach to health.

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