

## FACTORS AFFECTING PROGNOSIS OF DISEASE – AN AYURVEDIC PURVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Humanity has been toiling hard to conquer pain and suffering since the dawn of human civilization. Pain occurs in different forms. Sometimes it's spiritual, sometimes physical or mental. However medicine is more concerned with the elimination of the physical and mental pain. *Āyurveda*, as the science of life is not a frozen science but an ancient wisdom growing with the movement of life itself. Various fundamentals laid in *Āyurveda*, dealing with whole life of human beings well before its birth to the end of the life and even after death; are still very much relevant in their honest and holistic approach to cure the ailing humanity. The course of any disease depends on various factors. Whether it will subside by itself or it will be cured easily or it will aggravate more with time; this depends on various factors. This review article will explore various factors which affect the prognosis of any disease. Proper knowledge of these factors and their proper implementation will certainly help the physician to conquer any kind of disease.

**Keywords:** *Viśāda, Catuspāda, Guruvyādhita, Laghuvyādhita.*

### INTRODUCTION

The term '*Vyādhī*' appears at many places in Vedic literature. The synonyms of the term '*Vyādhī*' used in *Āyurveda* are *āmaya*, *gada*, *takman*, *yakṣmā*, *Jvara*, *Vikāra* and *Roga*<sup>1</sup>. In *Aṣṭāṅga Saṃgraha*, the words *Pāpa – Duḥkha* and *ābādha*<sup>2</sup> have been also used. These synonyms cover different aspects of *Vyādhīs* i.e. physical, psychological and metaphysical considerations. The term *Roga* means '*Rujatīti Rogah*'<sup>3</sup> i.e. which causes pain or suffering. In *Pātanjali's Yoga-Sūtra* it is described as *Pratikūla Vedana*. In *Āyurveda* it has been described by vari-

ous *Ācāryas* and writers but all of them have lastly concluded it as a state in which both body and mind are inflicted. *Ācārya Caraka* has stated that *Manasa* (mind) and *Śarīra* along with *Indriyas* is the substratum of *Vedanā*<sup>4</sup>. The *Āyurvedic* approach towards the causes of diseases is multi-faceted. The *Ācāryas* have considered the *Rog – Nidāna* from various angles and each one of them is very important for the complete knowledge of the disease. After the manifestation of any disease, the foremost duty of a physician is to eradicate it from the body and relieve the

patient from the suffering caused by it. *Āyurveda* aims primarily on the maintenance of healthy condition as well as eradication of the disease. In *Āyurveda*, the main objective of *Kārya* i.e. *Cikitsā* is *Sukha Prāpti*, *Sukha* being one of the *Ātma Guṇa* and denotes the contention or happiness of *Manasa*, *Buddhi*, *Indriyas* and *Śarīra*<sup>5</sup>. A diseased person can experience *Sukha* only after relieving from the disease. Lots of factors are involved in the early recovery from any disease. Similarly there are lots of factors that can intensify an existing disease. Proper knowledge of these factors can help the physician in accurate treatment.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The classical texts of Ayurveda with their commentaries, other Ayurvedic texts and journals, relevant websites, articles and presentation were referred.

### CAUSES OF DISEASE

The causes of disease can be divided into these categories –

1. Incompatible correlation of *Indriyārtha*, *Pariṇāma* and Volitional Transgression.
2. The intrinsic causes of diseases.
3. Other causes of diseases.

#### 1. INCOMPATIBLE CORRELATION OF INDRIYĀRTHA, PARIṆĀMA AND PRAJNĀPARĀDHA –

While discussing the causes of diseases and health *Ācārya Caraka* has clearly stated that the following three are the root causes of the development of diseases and balanced utilization of the above results in health<sup>6</sup>.

**A. Asātmendriyārtha Saṃyoga** – It means the deficient, excessive or perverted use and incidence of the *Ekādaśa Indriyas* (eleven sense organs including *Mānasa*) i.e. five sense organs, five organs of action and mind.

**B. Pajñāparadha** – Perverted use of mind and intelligence. It is the fault of understanding or volitional transgression.

**C. Pariṇāma** – The deficient or excessive or perverted incidence of *Kāla*.

### 2. THE INTRINSIC CAUSES OF DISEASES –

The causation of disease has been considered in many ways in *Āyurveda*. The factors responsible for the diseases are so many and they vary from each other, but *Doṣas* are the actual intrinsic factors causing morbidities. According to *Ācārya Caraka*, these *Doṣas* moving in the whole body produce good and ill effects accordingly depending upon the normalcy or disturbance in their equilibrium. When normal they produce good effects where as when they become abnormal, they produce *vikāras*.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. OTHER CAUSES OF DISEASES –

Besides the above mentioned two ways of determination of causes of diseases, we find some other factor in *Āyurvedic* literature, which can be called as the causes of diseases. *Suśruta* considers diseases of four kinds – 1. *Āgantuka* 2. *Śarīrika* 3. *Mānasika* 4. *Svābhāvika*. And he mentions different causes for different types of diseases which are described below:

- **Āgantuka** diseases are caused due to traumatic factors like injuries afflicted by weapons or some other external causes.
- **Śarīrika** diseases happen due to the use of deficient, perverted or excessive food. Also the *Śarīrika* or somatic diseases are produced due to unwholesome combination of *Doṣas*.
- **Mānasika** diseases are caused by the psychic or emotional *Doṣas* like *Kāma*, *Krodha*, *Bhaya*, *Harṣa*, '*Viśāda*', *Īrṣyā*, *Manodainya*, *Icchā* and *Dveṣa* etc.
- **Svābhāvika** diseases are hunger, thirst, old age and death.

*Ācārya Caraka* has also described almost the same nature of causes to the *Āgantuka* and *Nija Rogas*. Moreover *Ācārya Caraka* has also explained the causes of Epidemic diseases (*Janpadoddhvansa*). The contamination of *Vāyu*, *Deśa*, *Kāla* and *Jala* is regarded as the cause of epidemic diseases. These four factors when in normalcy are beneficial other-

wise when vitiated they produce the epidemic diseases.

## FACTORS AFFECTING PROGNOSIS OF DISEASE

*Ayurveda* is all about maintenance of health and eradication of disease. The physician has to deal with diverse symptoms, grave manifestations and complications of a disease. There are certain factors which if kept in mind while treating the patients can lead to speedy recovery of the patients and if ignored they have the potential to intensify the disease. These factors are detailed as under:

### ➤ Psychological factors-

*Ācārya Caraka* has stated that '*Viśāda*' is the most important factor in the disease intensifying factors.<sup>8</sup> '*Viśāda*' is also considered as a *Vātaja Nānātmaja Vyādhi*. It is a psychological state which is manifested by the *Glāni* of mind and body. On critically analyzing the etiology and pathogenesis of the diseases mentioned in *Caraka Samhitā* (the most acceptable treatise on *Kāyacikitsā*) various psychological factors are found to be etiologically and symptomatically involved with almost every disease. Therefore it's necessary for every physician to include certain methods of psychotherapy in his line of treatment for good prognosis of any disease.

### ➤ *Cikitsā Catuspāda* (Treatment Quadruple)

*Ācārya Caraka* has defined *Cikitsā* as the efforts of the *Catuspāda* i.e. the *Bhiṣaka*, *Dravya*, *Upsthātā* and *Rogī* possessing proper qualities for the revival of the equilibrium of *Dhātus*<sup>9</sup>. Sixteen qualities of this *Catuspāda* i.e. Quadruple have been mentioned. Moreover *Ācārya* has clearly stated that this quadruple consisting of these sixteen qualities is a cause of success. Lack of these qualities is responsible for quick intensification of the diseases which are otherwise curable.

### ➤ *Bala* (Strength)

*Bala* i.e. Strength is threefold, viz. constitutional, temporal and acquired. Constitutional strength is the one which exists in the mind and the body from the very birth. Temporal is the one which is based on the

division of seasons and the age of the person. The acquired strength is the one which is achieved by the combination of diet and other regimen<sup>10</sup>. The constitutional strength is because of the natural growth of the *Dhātus*. Thus the natural strength does not require any extraneous cause for its growth. It is well known that there are some people who by nature are strong; some others are weak; it is genetically decided. It is to be noted that the person having less physical and mental strength will be too incapable to cope up with diseases which in return will definitely very easily intensify the disease he is suffering from and vice versa.

### ➤ The concept of *Guruvyādhita* and *Laghuvyādhita*

The concept of *Guruvyādhita* and *Laghuvyādhita* patients is very significant. *Ācārya Caraka* has stated that there are two types of patients. Firstly, those who actually are suffering from serious illness but because of their mental and physical strength they seem as if they are having very small illness named *Guruvyādhita*. On the other hand there are opposite kind of patients named *Laghuvyādhita*; who are actually suffering from mild illnesses but they seem to be present with severe illness due to their less mental and physical strength. If any physician does not examine the patient keenly, he will fail to diagnose properly and treat the patient wrongly. This will lead to the intensification of the disease existing in both kinds of patients<sup>11</sup>.

### ➤ Chronicity

Any chronic disease intensifies more in its chronic condition. Lots of conditions arise due to prolonged illnesses which further intensify the disease due to less physical and mental strength, *Dhātu Kṣaya* due to chronic illness and complications. The concept of conversion of *Sādhyā* i.e. curable disease into *Asādhyā* i.e. incurable disease proves it also. Explaining this again in *kuṣtha-Nidāna*, which is a chronic pathogenesis, it is thus said, and incurable ones do not overcome their incurability. But the curable ones do overcome their curability by various factors. Thus, the curable disease may either get

converted to incurable or they become chronic. In this way chronicity also intensifies the disease. In the context of *Śadvidha Kriyākāla*, while explaining the sixth *bhedāvasthā*; *Ācārya Suśruta* opines that the *Bhedāvasthā* denotes the *Dīrghakālanubandha* i.e. chronicity of the diseases<sup>12</sup>. *Dalhaṇa* further explains that if *Cikitsā* is not done in the *Sañcayādi* previous stages, then *Dīrghakālanubandha* i.e. chronicity and later on *Asādhya* i.e. incurability occurs. It becomes evident that Chronicity will lead to incurability of curable diseases which further makes it clear that chronicity plays an important role in disease intensifying factors.

#### ➤ **Ojas kshaya**

Physical exercise, fasting, anxiety, intake of unctuous food and food in small quantities or habitual intake of food having one taste only, exposure to the wind and sun, fear, grief, intake of unctuous drinks, lack of sleep during night, excessive elimination of phlegm, blood, semen and other excreta, old age and period of demonic seizures are the causes of diminution or *Kṣaya of Dhātus*<sup>13</sup>. *Ojas* is the essence or *Utkṛṣṭatama Aṃsa* of all the seven *Deha Dhātus*. Therefore Diminution of *Ojas* will automatically happen due to *Dhātu Kṣaya*. *Ojas* has been compared to the *Vyādhikṣmatva* or immunity of the body i.e. the power to fight against diseases. *Ojas Dhātu* will further intensify the physical ailments already present in the individual.

#### ➤ **Ahitahara (Unwholesome Food)**

In the *Yajñapurūṣīya Adhyāya*, in response to the query about the factors responsible for the growth of *Puruṣa* and the *Vyādhi*, *Ācārya Caraka* opines that wholesome food is one of the causes for the growth of the living beings and unwholesome food is the cause of the diseases<sup>14</sup>. In the commentary of this verse *Acarya Cakrapani* clearly states that unwholesome food also aggravates the disease where as wholesome food leads to early recovery.

#### ➤ **Role of Pathogenesis**

*Ācārya Caraka* has stated that the disease has got three stages: *Vṛddhi*, *Sthāna* and *Kṣaya*. It is also said that having close acquaintance with the various

states of the disease, an intelligent physician should prescribe for these difficult states different therapies.

#### ➤ **Parasparanubandha (Intermingling)**

*Rajas* and *Tamas* are the *Doṣas* pertaining to the mind and the type of morbidity caused by them are passion, anger, greed, attachment, envy, ego, pride, grief, anxiety, fear etc. *Vāta*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* – these are the three *Doṣas* pertaining to the body. Diseases caused by them are fever, diarrhoea, Oedema, Dyspnoea, etc. When the psychic *Doṣas* intermingle with physical *Doṣas*, the psycho – somatic diseases are resulted or, when psychic or somatic diseases become chronic due to their intensity, they may get combined with each other. Such combination belonging to one group may also result in the condition with diseases of another group when they are allowed to persist for a long time<sup>15</sup>. While commenting on it *Ācārya Cakrapāṇi* clarifies that the term '*Anuvartmāna*' means '*praspara balābhivardhana*' i.e. both these kinds of disease when combine with each other they intensify the strength of the disease. Hence the psychological factors intensify the chronic physical illness and vice versa.

#### ➤ **OTHER FACTORS:**

Apart from the above discussed factors, many other factors may also lead to the intensification of the disease. These include inefficient attendant, lack of facilities and financial resources, *Daiva* etc. *Balābal* of *Ṛtu*, *Ahorātra*, *Dosas* and *Manasa*, *Kāla*, *Artha* etc is also responsible both in the aggravation or pacification of the disease. *Ācārya Caraka* has mentioned the factors which are responsible for the conversion of curable diseases into incurable ones. These factors include lack of proper attendance and equipment; lack of self-control in the patient; incompetence of the physician; and lack of proper treatment or existence of past sinful acts of the patient, which lead to the incurability of diseases. In fact, these factors may lead to the failure of host defense mechanism and yield to severe pathology. Hence these are also included in the disease intensifying factors.

## CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal of treatment is to eradicate the disease at the earliest. As in today's scenario the patient always demands for a speedy recovery. The course of a disease thus depends on various factors. The psychological state of the patient, his mental and physical strength, his diet, the treatment quadruple and its sixteen properties, the duration of illness, mode of pathogenesis etc. decides the prognosis of a disease. If all these factors are taken care of, the disease will surely have a good prognosis and if the physician is not able to recognize the importance of these factors and utilization of them in the line of treatment; it will worsen the case of the patient and leads to a bad prognosis.

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