



CONCEPT OF HEALTH IN TRADITIONAL HEALTH SCIENCES W.S.R TO AYURVEDA

Dr. Gaikwad Varsha^{1*}

¹BAMS, MS, Ph. D. Scholar, Department of Prasutitantra and Stiroga, D.Y. Patil School of Ayurveda, Nerul 400706, Maharashtra, India.



*Corresponding Author: Dr. Gaikwad Varsha

BAMS, MS, Ph. D. Scholar, Department of Prasutitantra and Stiroga, D.Y. Patil School of Ayurveda, Nerul 400706, Maharashtra, India.

Article Received on 05/09/2024

Article Revised on 25/09/2024

Article Accepted on 15/10/2024

INTRODUCTION

Ayurved being one of the most ancient science holds a key to not only treat the illness but also to maintain wellness. According to Ayurved HEALTH is not mere absence of disease but it's a harmony and equilibrium of mind and soul and body. Having said that principles of Ayurveda emphasizes more on preservation of health than treating the disease that arise as a result of following unhealthy lifestyle.

Concept of health as per ayurveda

The main purpose of Ayurveda is to preserve wellness of a healthy individual & to eradicate illness of a diseased. The main aim of one's life is to do pious & ethical acts i.e dharma to earn sufficiently for livelihood (*Artha*), have desire for good things (*Kama*) & to obtain salvation

(*moksha*).^[1] Being healthy acts as a vehicle to accomplish all the materialistic, physical, emotional & spiritual bliss. Also only healthy individual can take his lineage forward contributing to persistence of mankind! Attainment of immortality is impossible but attainment of health is certainly possible & one should strive for it.

Assessment criteria of health as per Ayurveda can be designed as^[2]

Feeling of	Never on time	Sometimes on time	Always on time
1) Hunger	0	1	2
2) Digestion	0	1	2
3) Excretion	0	1	2
4) Sleep	0	1	2
5) Contentment	0	1	2

Score: Healthy – 7-10, Moderately healthy – 3-7, Unhealthy – 0-3.

Ayurveda has long realized this importance of health and hence designed daily & seasonal regimen (rutucharya and dinacharya) for preservation of health. because we all know that 'prevention is better than cure!' Dinacharya is something we should practice day in and day out which is formulated in a way taking into consideration of *doshakal* and use of dosha specific substances. Rutucharya is formulated taking into consideration pacification (*shaman*) & vitiation (*prakop*) of *tridosha* as per changes in environment. For vitiated dosha one is advised to undergo detoxification (*panchakarma*). Dosha that is conquered by detoxification is unable to produce disease, hence this leads to "PRESERVATION OF HEALTH" that's why all of us should indulge in seasonal detoxification therapy to attain this goal of HEALTH.

Concept of health in contemporary science

Concept of health according to WHO - The world health organization (WHO) defines health as "The extent to which an individual or group is able to realize aspirations & satisfy needs to change or cope with the environment. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living, it's a positive concept emphasizing social & personal resources, as well as physical capacities. WHO has dedicated 12 themes for health in the last 20 years.

Namely they are as follows

1. 2001- Mental health –Stop exclusion dare to care.
2. 2002- Move for health
3. 2003- Healthy environment for children
4. 2006- Working together for health
5. 2007- Invest in health, build a safer future
6. 2008- Protecting health from climate changes
7. 2012- Active ageing: Good health adds life to years

8. 2015- Food safety
9. 2016- Diabetes
10. 2017- Depression
11. 2018- Universal health coverage
12. 2019- Universal health coverage: Everyone, Everywhere

Concept of health according to traditional chinese medicine (TCM)

Just like Ayurveda preaches that maintaining equilibrium of *tridosha* is a key factor towards obtaining optimum health, TCM emphasizes on maintaining balance between *yin (feminine)* & *yang (masculine)*.

Yin & Yang are classically represented as two black and white swirls each having a part of one another at centre.

Other pivotal foundation of TCM is a theory of chi/qi.

Chi – is an energy that flows through all living beings through channels called as “meridians”

It's the Chi /qi which is responsible for life so as per ayurveda it can be compared to Oja i.e essence of life.

On the other hand TCM also states that blockages in “meridians” leads to disease which corresponds to Ayurvedic concept of “*srotorodha*” leading to disease! TCM have 3,500 year long history of Chinese medical practice.

Concept of health according to Unani /Arabian medicine

This is a traditional system of healing & health maintenance having its roots in south asia.

As per unani medicine “Health” of any individual is dependent on harmonious co-existence of seven fundamental principles.

Also the concept of human disposition comparable to *prakriti* in ayurveda has been elaborated nicely in unani medicine.

Four types of human disposition (*Prakriti*) are correlated to fluids/ humours of body, they are as follows

Sr. No.	Humours	Human disposition (<i>Prakriti</i>)
1	Dam (Blood)	sanguine
2	Balgham (Phlegm)	phlegmatic
3	Safra (Yellow bile)	choleric
4	Saude (Black bile)	Melancholic

Components of health as per ayurveda

Components of health – As per ayurveda components of health includes *dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala*, *agni*, *aatma*, *mand*^[3] *aahar*, *nidra* and *bramhacharya* and how these components maintain health can be elucidated as follows:

- 1) **Balanced state of dosha (*Samadosha*)**- Vata, Pitta, Kapha are the three *doshas* present in our body. Their equilibrium implies health and disturbance causes disease. Dosha can be termed as most important of all components of health, as all body process are governed by them of which *Vata dosha* is most influential as pitta, kapha, *saptadhatu*, *mala* can function only when stimulated by vata dosha. True to the core - vata dosha has also been called as GOD, GOVERNOR etc!
- 2) **Good digestive power (*Samagni*)** - Agni is of different types like *jatharagni* (Digestive capacity), *panchamahabhootagni*, *dhatvagni*. The word agni refers to “fire” or ability of digestion & conversion of one form to other. *Jatharagni* is responsible for digestion of food leading to production of *aahar ras*, this *aahar ras* when reaches to *rasa dhavtagni* gets converted into *rasa dhatu* so on & so forth. Good digestive power is reflected by optimum digestion and timely feeling of hunger. Almost all diseases have their roots hidden in low digestive power (*mandagni*) & hence first line of treatment (*chikitsa sutra*) of almost all diseases is *Langhan*, *Deepan* and *Pachan* i.e – Appetizers & fasting, leading to ignition of low digestive fire.

- 3) ***Samadhatu malakriya*** - Dhatu derive their name from their function of sustaining life/health. There are seven dhatu namely *rasa* (lymph), *rakta* (blood), *mamsa* (muscle), *meda* (fat), *asthi* (bones), *majja* (bone marrow), *shukra* (sperm/ovum). Each *dhatu* derives nourishment from prior *dhatu*. Each dhatu has its own *strotas* (carrying channel) if any aetiological factor exists at *strotas* level corresponding *dhatu/upadhatu* will show abnormality. Eg- overthinking/stress leads to vitiation of *rasavaha strotas* & is reflected as irregular menses/PCOD both related to menses (*aartav*) which is *upadhatu of rasa*. *Mala* again classified in two types one as excreta & other as *mala of dhatus*. Excretion is important process, failure of which can lead to many debilitating disease. Eg- constipation leading to piles, inability to urinate compels a person to go on dialysis.

- 4) ***Prasanna aatma- Indriya-Mana Mind (Mana)*** - Importance of strength of mind or positivity of mind can be well documented by the example of **Stephen Hawkins** the great scientist of this century who was diagnosed with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) at 22 years of age and became quadriplegic. Despite having no hope of life beyond two years, he lived till 76 years of age, not only did he just survive but made some great discoveries like general theory of relativity. Stephen Hawkins is a proof that mind power is as equally important as physical strength.

- 5) **Spirit (Aatma)** - Presence and importance of *Aatma* can be established with an instance of “**Blighted ovum**”^[4] an obstetrical condition in which UPT (urine pregnancy test) is positive but no cardiac activity is detected. Positive UPT represents that fertilization has taken place, as per modern medicine fertilization is what needed for pregnancy then why do life (cardiac activity) is absent? This doubt can be explained by definition of Fetus (*Garbha*)^[5] described in Ayurveda which says that fetus is produced when *Aatma* enters the fertilized ovum due to which cardiac activity (here chaitanya) can be appreciated.
- 6) **Organs of Sense and Function (Indriya)** – This collectively includes five sense organs namely eyes, nose, ears, tongue, skin & five organs of function or action namely two hands, two legs and one genitalia. Appropriate use of all sense organs is required to be healthy overuse or underuse poses a person at the risk of committing crimes or anti social activities (*Pradnyaparadh*) e.g – A presenter making eye contact implies proper functioning of senses.
- 7) **Diet (Aahar)** - As per ayurveda diet (*Aahar*) is a “two edge sword” i.e health as well as disease are produced by wholesome & unwholesome diet respectively.^[6] No medicine can be at par with food, complete eradication of disease can be achieved simply by adopting to nutritious diet.^[7] No wonder food (*Aahar*) has been cited as first sub pillar of health (*Trayoupstambha*). Charakacharya has narrated 8 special conditions for intake of food (*aaharavidhivisheshyatani*). collectively these conditions explains which food is to be consumed by whom in which season, in which manner, in which quantity, in which region etc.
- 8) **Sleep (Nidra)**- Sleep is an indispensable part of one's health. Charakacharya has cited sleep to be one of the non suppressible urge & also as a treatment of emaciation (*Karshya*). An adult needs approximately 6-8 hours of sleep. Sleep deprivation has got deleterious effect on mind as well as body. One naturally gets desire to sleep when gets tired up, such sleep is said to be a physiological sleep.^[8] There are some pathological sleep patterns like due to some disease (*Vyadhyanu vartini*), mental disorders like depression (*Tamobhava*), after eating sweets & difficult to digest things like sweet curd (*Shleshmasamudbhava*). Pathological sleep is undesirable & reason behind it should be corrected. Modern science has proved that sound sleep is associated with proper functioning of vitals, happiness & joy, good hunger, timely excretion, glowing skin etc. If we do survey half of us are living a sleep deprived life, no wonder we are facing an epidemic of lifestyle disorders. Rising cases of depression, anxiety, OCD, aggressive & impulsive behavior has its root hidden in Insomnia.

- 9) **Celibacy (Bramhacharya)** — Following celibacy has its own benefits as semen (*shukra*) is considered to be the most supreme *dhatu* having the even more supreme function of reproduction. *Shukra* has essence of all dhatus & hence it should be preserved by observing abstinence. Excessive intercourse is linked with vitiation of vata dosha which can lead to ‘n’ number of diseases. Following celibacy effortlessly needs some spiritual inclination which can be developed through continous practice. Following celibacy should be a choice & not a compulsion as desire for sex is a non suppressible urge or else the very much purpose of it will be compromised.

REFERENCE

1. Agnivesha, Charak, Dridhbala, Charak samhita, Sutrasthana deerghajeevitiya adhyay edited by Dr. Brahmanad Tripathi, Chaukhambha surbharti prakashan, Varanasi, 2013; 6: 1-15.
2. Marich Kashyapa, Kashyapa samhita, Khilsthana, Bhojyaupakramaniya adhyay, P.V Tiwari, Chaukhambha vishvabharti, Varanasi, 2008; 485: 5, 6-8.
3. Sushruta samhita sutrasthan, Doshadhatumala vidnyaneeyadhyay, edited by Prof. K. R. Shrikantha Murthy, Chaukhambha surbharati prakashan, Varanasi, second edition, 2004; 110: 15-41.
4. Textbook of Obstetrics by Dr.D.C.Dutta, chapter Hemorrhage in early pregnancy, sixth edition, 2004; 15: 162.
5. Agnivesha, Charak, Dridhbala, Charak samhita, Sharirshthan mahatigarbhavkranti adhyay edited by Dr. Brahmanad Tripathi, Chaukhambha surbharti prakashan, Varanasi, 2013; 875: 4-5.
6. Agnivesha, Charak, Dridhbala, Charak samhita, Sutrasthana vividhashitpeetiadhyay, edited by Dr. Brahmanad Tripathi, Chaukhambha surbharti prakashan, Varanasi, 2013; 553: 28-45.
7. Ibidem, Kashyapa Samhita, Khilsthana, Yushanirdoshiyo, P.V Tiwari, Chaukhambha vishvabharti, varnasi, 2008; 468: 4-5.
8. Susruta, Susruta samhita, Chikitsa sthana, Anagtabadhapratishtedham, Priya vratsharma, Chaukhambha vishvabharti, Varanasi, 2010; 500: 24-68.