

IMPORTANCE OF AHARA IN AYURVEDA – A REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the science of life, suggested many Siddhantas (principles), One of the most important principles is the three factors that is Aahara, nidra and Brahmacharya, are mentioned as three Upastambha for maintaining the health. Our diet is an essential factor for the formation of body. Food has been given prime importance since Vedic Period. It is considered as Brahma in Upanishad. Acharaya Kashyapa gives it the name "Mahabhaisajya". Acharya Charak says that consuming improper diet in improper way is the main cause of disease this is explained under Ashtaaharvidhivisheshayatan, Viruddhaahar. Use of incompatible food leads to skin disorder, GIT disorder, Diabetes, obesity, hence these should be avoided. Agni is the main factor in transformation of Chaturvidha Ahara Dravya into Sharira gata bhava like Rasa Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja, and Shukra. Agni is the fundamental entity responsible for the passage of food through these three phases. Food is of four different type (Chaturvidha) means Ashita, Khadita, Lidha, Pita. All these four types of food pass through the three phases of digestion and human life continues. This article highlights the basic concepts of Aahar, Astha Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana, Agni and Metabolism.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Aahar, Agni, Astha Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana.**INTRODUCTION**

According to Ayurveda "Sarvam dravyam Panchabhautikam" i.e all creation arises from five fundamental elements called as Mahabhutas. As everything made up of Panchamahabhuta human body or Sharira also made up of Panchamahabhuta.

Ayurveda's goals and priorities are to preserve a stable person's health and to cure patients' diseases.^[1] As is clear, Ayurveda's first and fore most goal is preventative rather than curative. It means "prevention is preferable to cure."

Aahara is the material ingested that nourishes the respective gunas of panchamahabhuta in the body dependent on their vipaka.^[2]

Food is an essential part of human life. We can't imagine what life will be like without food. Food is extremely important in Ayurveda. According to Acharya Charaka, Ahara is considered one of the triupasthambas.^[3] It is listed first because it is the most critical for life's sustenance. According to Ashtanga Sangraha the idea of Sapta ahara kalpana vishesha, which is a dietetic concept.^[4] Ayurveda claims that in order to attain and sustain healthy living (Arogya), it is important to obey a healthy Aahara, such as Ahara Vidhi, Ashta Aahar Vidhi

Visheshayatana Sadavritta etc. is described in detail in Ayurveda.^[5] Among the three Upasthambhas, Ahara is considered as the best sustainer of life (Vrittikaranam Sreshtam).^[6]

Ahara plays an important role in maintaining health. The food taken in appropriate quantity, helps individual in bringing out strength, complexion, happiness and longevity without disturbing the equilibrium of Dhatus and Doshas of the body.^[7] The 12 aahar varga described in Acharya Charak namely Shook, Sahmi, Mamsa, Shak, Phala, Harita, Madya, Jala, Gorasa, Ikshu, Krutanna, Aaharupyogi, varga. As per modern classification-Energy rich foods, body building foods, productive foods etc.

According to Ayurveda, ahara articles are made up of five mahabhutas, and their corresponding bhutagnis digest their own ingredients during digestion and metabolism, but only when stimulated by antar-agni. In India, traditional knowledge about food production, preservation methods, and therapeutic effects has been passed down through generations.^[8]

According to the meanings in Vachaspatyam, Sabda kalpadruma, Unadiksha, Agni is the one fundamental phenomenon that carries everything, travels everywhere,

can metamorphose substances, can bring transformation in substances, assimilates, gives and takes, which has the ability to enter minute channels, burns, glows etc.^[9,10,11] Agni is key factor in transformation of consumed Aharadi dravyas of Vijatiya origin to sajatiya nature. In Ayurveda the concept of Aahar and Agni provides an extensive field of research in the present day.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To emphasize and discuss the Concept of Agni and Ahara in Ayurvedic classical literature.
2. To Study Astha Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana in Ayurvedic literature.

MATERIALS & METHODS

In this article is review of various Ayurvedic classical texts. Materials related to agni, aahara, Astha Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana in Ayurveda and other related topics have been collected from various Ayurvedic classical texts. The references were compiled, analyzed and discussed for a thorough and in-depth understanding of the concept of Agni and aahara, types of aahara in Ayurveda. The samhitas used in the present study were Charaka samhita, Shushruta samhita and Astanga Hridaya with commentaries on them. The modern medical literatures as well as other various related information were collected from related websites.

Concept of Aahara

Aahara is a material that helps to build up the body, and it contains things like water and medication. Dravyas are graded as 'Aahara Dravya' and 'Aushadha Dravya' in Ayurvedic classics based on Rasa Pradhana and Virya Pradhana, respectively.^[12] What we eat, where we eat, how we eat, and when we eat all have an effect on our wellbeing. This thought is unique in Ayurveda. Ayurvedic eating is not generalized. It is "person" specific.

Eat in accordance with your age and body shape.

Eat fresh and seasonal vegetables and fruits.

Consume food that has been freshly prepared and is still warm. It enhances Agni, improves digestion, and decreases excess Kaph and Vata.

Consume food that is properly oily and moist (not fried). It improves taste, aids Agni, strengthens Dhatu, and increases intensity.

According to Various Acharya Classification of Aahara

Acharya Charak

1. Ashta ahara vidhi visheshayatana
2. Ahara vidhi vidhan
3. Ahara dravyo varga
4. Verodhika ahara gataka
5. Annapana vishayaka parikshya bhava

Acharya Sushruta

1. Dhvadhasha ashana pravicharna
2. Dravdhavya varga evam anna varga

Acharya vagbhata

A.S.- Saptahar kalpana

A.H.- Dhvadhasha ashana pravicharna

Acharya kashyapa- Chturvishantamaka ahara vidhi vidhan

Principle of Balance Diet

According to Ayurveda, the stomach should be divided into four parts: two parts filled with solids, one part filled with liquid, and one part left empty for the Doshas. The term "balanced diet" refers to a diet that nourishes both the mental and physical structures. Balanced diet in Ayurveda can be defined as "the diet enriched with Shadarasa, required Gunas, Veerya and given to the individual after consideration of Prakrati, Agni, Kostha and Ritu. In Ayurveda, Matravatashniyata Ahara."^[13]

There are two forms of Matra. One is Sarvagraha, and the other is Parigrah, so the diet must include a range of foods in sufficient quantities from various classes in order to include both micro and macro nutrients. Furthermore, Acharya Charaka determines the amount of food to be consumed based on its consistency.^[14]

Concept of Astha Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana

According to Charaka, all Dravyas are Aushadhis, which are divided into two forms based on their composition.^[15]

Dravyabhuta Aushadhi

Adravyabhuta Aushadhi

Dravyabhuta Aushadhi is a group that includes Ahara Dravyas. As a result, the dietetic rules for Vikaraprasamana can be graded as Upaya or Adravyabhuta Aushadhi. The eight dietary factors that influence health and disease are referred to as "Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatanani."^[16]

1. Prakriti

It defines the properties of substances, such as their intrinsic characteristics. For example, black gramme is heavy and Mudag is light. Through combining with other compounds, the natural quality can improve.

2. Karan

Contact with water or fire, washing, churning, cooking place, time, mode, and vessel are all examples of processing. Preparatory processes such as soaking rice, grinding rice with dal, roasting, frying, health, burning, boiling in water, frying in fats, steam cooking, baking, and so on all affect the food's quality.

3. Samyoga

It consists of a mixture of two or more substances. This results in the manifestation of complex properties that cannot be manifested by a single product, such as a honey-ghee mixture.

4. Rashi

Rashi is the quantity of a complete (Sarvagraha) or individual (Parigraha) substance that decides the outcome of their administration in the proper and improper dose. Sarvagraha refers to the total amount of food, while Parigraha refers to the total amount of each of its ingredients.

5. Desha

Desha refers to both the growing area for a particular food item and the user's home nation. Desha also refers to the user's body, which means taking into account his current health, strength, constitution, and digestive system.

6. Kala

Kala denotes both the passage of time in the form of day and night, as well as the states of individuals (e.g. condition of health and age). The latter is important to the illness, such as the onset of disease due to Kapha in childhood and fever.

7. Upayogsamstha

Dietary rules are referred to as upayogsamstha. The most of them are based on digestive symptoms.

8. Upayokta

Upayokta is that who take food. He is solely responsible for the wholesomeness of the food he eats on a daily basis.

Like this according to Sushruta explains Dvadasha Asana Vidhi, or 12-fold considerations to be observed during food intake.^[17] which is as follows:

Sheet Ahara, Ushna Ahara, Snigdha Ahara, Ruksha Ahara, Drava Ahara, Shushka Ahara, Ek-kalika Ahara, Dvi-kalika Ahara, Aushadha Yukta Ahara, Matraheen Ahara, Prashamaka Ahara, Vrattiprayojaka Ahara

Concept of Agni

According to Ayurveda, Agni plays an important role in body growth, and there is a detailed definition of Agni in Ayurvedic texts. Agni (Jathraagni) is believed to be responsible for food digestion in Ayurveda. Food is converted into biological energy by Agni, which is responsible for all of our body's vital functions. Agni plays a vital role of physiological, psychological & pathological levels. Majority of the disease are outcome of malfunctioning of Agni. According to Acharya Charka, when the work of Agni is stopped, an individual dies; however, when the Agni of an individual is saamagni, that person is completely healthy and will live a long, prosperous, and healthy life.^[18]

Types of Agni according to Acharyas

Table no.-1.

Acharya	Types of Agni
Charaka	13 (Jathraagni-1, Bhutagni-5, Dhatvagni-7)
Sushruta	5 (Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Alochkagni, Sadhakagni, Bhrajakagni)
Vagbhatta	18 (Bhutagni-5, Dhatvagni-7, Dhoshagni-3, Malagni-3)
Sharandhara	5 (Pachak, Bharajk, Ranjak, Alochak, Sadhak)

DISCUSSION

According to the acharya kashyapa, aahara is mahabhaishyajya, or good medicine. Ayurveda's aim is to keep healthy people healthy and to heal diseased people. Aahara accomplishes this aim. The aahara serves as a source of energy for Agni. This describes aahara's and Agni's mutual relationship. To meet the needs of the body, the aahara must undergo a series of transformations that turn it into aahara rasa. The digestive process allows these changes to occur. Ayurveda says that vitiated Agni is the root cause of all diseases. To avoid such things there is need of proper functioning of aahar parinamkar bhavas. According to various Acharya's definitions and derivations of Aahara, it is clear that Aahara refers to both Aahara and Ausadha, the material that is consumed orally. Acharya Vagbhatta distinguishes Aahara from Ausadhi by saying that Aahara is Rasa Pradhana and Ausadhi is Virya Pradhana. Prakirti is the most important factor in "Astha aahar vidhi visheshaytan" since it is a significant factor for all, i.e. it is to be considered in the application of Karana and Samyoga to prevent antagonist effect, and it is also important in the determination of Aahara Rasi. And Prakirti is varied as per the Desa and Kala. Since

digestive ability and Satmya Aahara vary from person to person, Prakirti must be examined.

CONCLUSION

The first goal of Ayurveda is to keep the health of healthy people. Aahara, Nidra, and Brahmacharya, which are counted as Trayoupastambha, are significant for this reason. Aahara is the most significant of them all. Proper nutrition is needed for better health. As aahara is act as medicine said by kashyapa. They all play an important role in the digestive process. If they don't function properly, Agni becomes vitiated, resulting in tridosha, dhatu, and mala imbalance. Many valuable Ayurvedic principles can be found in the dietetic field. Diet is regarded as the most fundamental cause of existence. Diet, as well as the manner in which it is eaten, plays an important role in maintaining a balanced lifestyle. The rules and methods of diet intake are mentioned by Acharya Charaka as Asta-Ahara Vidhi Vishesa Ayatanani, Ahara Vidhi Vidhana, and by Acharya sushruta as Dwadasha-Asana-Pravicharana and aahara vidhi in sutra sthan chapter 46. The implementation of these rules is useful in both sustaining one's health and curing many diseases.

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