AN AYURVEDIC CONCEPT FOR PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE.

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is mainly concerned in maintaining health of every individual rather than treating the diseases. According to tridosha theory of Ayurveda vata, pitta and kapha regulate the various complex mechanisms going on in every individual. Due to changes in the climate (seasonal changes) the balance of all these three doshas is affected and a particular dosha may get vitiated at a particular period of change in season. To bring the proper balance of these three doshas, Ayurveda advises the use of certain plant and animal products for medicinal purpose & purification methods known as ‘Panchakarmas’ i.e. vamana, virechana, basti, nasya and rakta mokshana. Prevention can be better understood as the measures taken by an individual prior to the onset of any disease, which will remove the possibility of the disease occurring in the future. Significance of prevention lies in intervening at the pre-pathogenic phase (stage before any disease manifests) of the malady or the health problem. Prevention is a holistic approach and the concept can even be used in the prevention of chronic diseases such as allergic asthma and other allergic conditions, Coronary heart disease, Hypertension, type2 Diabetes mellitus etc based on elimination or modification of the risk factors. The knowledge imparted by Ayurveda can be widely implemented for primary prevention due to its safety and cost-effectiveness. Prevention can be identified with health education and the concept of individual and community responsibility of health.

KEYWORDS: Prevention, Tridosa, Panchakarma, type-2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension.
INTRODUCTION

Main aim of Ayurveda is to attain pious acts, wealth, desire and salvation by health. Ill health takes away the health and happiness from life.[1] Ayurveda emphasises on the importance of maintenance of health of healthy person and curing the disease of ill.[2] Acharya Sharangdhar quotes, no creature in the universe is immortal, it is impossible to prevent death, but it is possible to prevent disease.[3] So one should try for that which is preventable. Again Acharya Charka quotes, “A wise person should perform such actions which are good for his body as the officer in charge of the city and charioteer in charge of the chariot protects city and the chariot respectively.”[4] Charka further emphasises on maintenance of health. One should take care of his body by neglecting all other things because if body is not healthy then nothing is existing.[5] So now we can understand, the primary aim of Ayurveda is “Swasthasya Swasthya rakshanam” “Aturasya Vikara prashamanam cha,” the context explains the importance of maintenance and promotion of health in healthy, along with treating a sickness.[6]

Health

Acharya Charka in sutra Sthana chapter five states, The condition where the body is devoid of any abnormality is known as Healthy i.e. Svastha.[7] Acharya Sushruta in sutra sthana chapter fifteen, explained about health that man is said to be svastha whose doshas, Agni’s, dhatus and malas are in the state of equilibrium along with mental, sensory and spiritual pleasantness and happiness.[8]

Balanced state of Doshas

Vata, pitta and kapha are the three doshas which perform all the physiological actions of the body when these all remain in a state of equilibrium but when their equilibrium state changes these doshas become pathognomic.[9] Physiological variations of doshas occurs in accordance to, day, season, age and metabolism which can be categorised into different types.[10]

1. Daily

   Morning-Kapha predominance
   Afternoon-Pitta predominance
   Night-Vata predominance

2. Seasonal-Chaya, Prakopa and Prasaman of dosas occur seasonally.
3. Age
Childhood- *Kapha*
Middle age-*Pitta*
Old age-*Vata*

4. Food intake
Begining- *Kapha* predominance
In the Middle-*Pitta* predominance
After digestion-*Vata* predominance

**Balanced state of Agni**
The *Agni* should be in equilibrium. *Agni* is the root cause of aayu, varna, bala, swasthya, utsah, upchaya, prabha, it is the indicator of prana and apana.\(^{[1]}\) Agni is the cause for bhootagni, dhatwagni and foremost responsible for deha poshak jathargni.\(^{[2]}\) Equilibrium state of Agni leads to proper formation of body tissues and derangement of *Agni* leads to different diseases.\(^{[3]}\)

**Balanced state of Dhatus**
Equilibrium state of *dhatus* is essential for the maintenance of health and prevention of disease. It is dependent on food consumption, regimes followed and state of *Agni*.\(^{[4]}\)

**Characteristics of Health**
*Acharya Kashyapa* elaborates the features of health in *Khilasthana*. Desire for the intake of food, proper and easy digestion of the ingested food, evacuation of faeces, urine and flatus properly, lightness in the body, pleasantness in sense organ, proper timely sleep and awakening, gain of strength, life and pleasant mind and normal Agni are the features of health and opposite state is illness.\(^{[5]}\)

*Ugraaditya*, the author of *Kalyanakaraka* describes two type of health. The prime being ultimate health i.e. *paramartha svasthya*, which means due to decreased effects of past deeds, the soul experiences eternal happiness of liberation that is salvation, which is wonderful, never ending exceptional and desire of great people and the other general health *vyavahara svasthya* which means The normalcy of *Agni, dhatus, mala*, without any confusion blissful state of soul and mind is general health.\(^{[6]}\)
Principles for Disease Prevention

The regimens to be followed after awakening from sleep to maintain health routinely are mentioned in *Svasthavritta*.\(^\text{[17]}\)

There are two types of *Svasthavritta*- Vaiyaktika *svasthavritta*- The principles that are to be followed by the individual to prevent disease and *Samajika svasthavritta*- Principles to be followed by the community for maintenance of health of the society. Acharya Bhavaprakash said Man should always follow those procedures which keep him healthy always, as health is always desired. Daily regimen, night regimen & seasonal regimens should be followed as mentioned to maintain health not otherwise.\(^\text{[18]}\) Acharya Vagbhatta says the person who always consumes wholesome food, practices wholesome habits, who is not interested in worldly matters, who sacrifices, who is always balanced towards all beings, forgives, speaks truth and who follows words of *Apta* does not develop any disease.\(^\text{[19]}\)

The concepts of prevention of disease include primary and secondary prevention through *Ayurveda*:

1. **Primary prevention**

Primary prevention can be better understood as the measures taken by an individual prior to the onset of any disease, which will remove the possibility of the disease occurring in the future.\(^\text{[20]}\) Significance of primary prevention lies in intervening at the pre-pathogenic phase (stage before any disease manifests) of the malady or the health problem. Primary prevention is a holistic approach and the concept can even be used in the prevention of chronic diseases such as Coronary heart disease, Hypertension, Diabetes etc based on elimination or modification of the risk factors. The knowledge imparted by *Ayurveda* can be widely implemented for primary prevention due to its safety and cost-effectiveness. Primary prevention can be identified with health education and the concept of individual and community responsibility of health. The following points mentioned can be considered for the concept of Primary Prevention:

a. *Dinacharya* – Daily regimen to be followed by an individual.
b. *Ritucharya* - Seasonal regimen to be followed by an individual.
c. *Samshodhana* - Seasonal cleansing of the individual.
d. *Adhaaraniya Vegas* - Non-retention of the Natural urges.
e. *Rasayanas* – Intake of *Rasayanas*.
f. *Sattvavijaya* - Improving the mental strength with the help of *Yoga* and *Dhyana*. 
2. Secondary Prevention

It’s quite common for a Doctor to face a lot of patients asking for methods which can help them prevent a second attack of stroke, cardiac arrest or even congenital anomalies of a forthcoming child. Here comes the role of secondary prevention, which may be better understood as the actions which halt the progress of a disease at its embryonic stage and prevent further complications. Early diagnosis and adequate treatment are the specific interventions in such cases. Secondary prevention is fundamentally the realm of Ayurveda practice. It is mostly an important tool in controlling a disease process and prevents any further attack.\cite{21} Hence secondary prevention may be identified mostly as a clinical method and a physician in a real sense is one who understand the dynamics of the pathogenic cycle of a disease and intervenes accordingly.\cite{22}

Following points mentioned may be considered for the same.

Changes in lifestyle – Advising the patients to make the necessary changes in their lifestyle. It is the collective responsibility of both the Doctor as well as the individual to prevent the disease from occurring and relapsing. In cases where the doshas have undergone an imbalance and have created changes in the dhatus, proper intervention is required to bring the 'Balance' back. Intervention can be in the form of treatment, educating the patient, change in the diet (pathya) and avoidance of the causative factors. The different modes of intervention are health promotion, specific protection, early diagnosis and treatment, disability limitation and rehabilitation.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has always emphasized on prevention rather than cure.\cite{23} Ayurveda pays more attention on avoiding the factors causing diseased state.\cite{23} Ayurveda teaches us about a routine that can help us gain control over the 'Balance' of the doshas with any change in the cosmos. Giving a little thought to our daily routine and a few subtle changes in our lifestyle can result in optimum health and well-being. With the increasing trend of poor health index of all age group across the world due to uncontrolled pollution and degradation of healthy eco system, the quality of life is falling to the new low, incidents of deaths are reported all over the world due to non communicable diseases and other diseases are at alarming rate. Life expectancy is falling in all ethnicities and countries and this scenario is likely to get worsen; at this juncture there is a bad need to look into the opportunities which are available in ancient medical systems, as described earlier, Ayurveda with a outstanding potential to
reverse the worsening health status across the world would be the best option. Hallmark of Ayurvedic medicine is that its practices take into account an individual's total internal, social, and external environment when considering disease prevention, promotion and treatment. With this, it can be said, Ayurveda is the best option for achieving the goal of personal health along with public health.

REFERENCES
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