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Enrichment of Modern Medicine by Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

The state of health of individuals and communities is determined by the four pillar *nutrition, lifestyle, environment* and *genetics*, in addition to access to health – care. Process of health seeking requires active participation of individuals and cannot be built merely through medical care. Therefore innovative primary – care programs, in addition to medical care to counter diseases, should aim at building the four pillars of health. Ayurveda has strongly advocated healthy behavior (Swasthavritta) involving ethical conduct and daily regimen as well as seasonal variations to diet and lifestyle. Let us look forward for an integrated health care system which integrates Ayurveda and Allopathy. However this calls for greater effort from both sides- the Allopaths should study and understand *Ayurveda* in its depth of spirit in detail similarly the Ayurvedics – very few of them being of high standard and quality should understand how to integrate Allopathy with *Ayurveda* in the larger interest of the society. An integrated research is the call of the hour.

Keywords: Modern Medicine, Ayurveda, Clinical Research, Concept of Health, Allopathy.

1. Introduction

“**What is new cannot be true!**” Modern living offers us many comforts and luxuries. The place of life has been constantly increasing especially in the last two decades. Modern Medicine has invented diagnostic tools and therapeutic formulations, which can identify diseases at the minutest levels, and suppress it. All these wonderful inventions of the modern times were originally discovered to enrich our lives with health, happiness and peace. Interestingly enough, the results are totally opposite with such expectations. In our search for happiness, health, peace and love, we have found more diseases, mental unrest, unhappiness and loneliness. This means we are either going in the wrong direction or we are missing the root cause of the problem. It is time we take a deep breath, relax and think where we are heading.

Health is not merely the absence of symptoms or physical discomforts. Ayurveda defines health as a complete state of balance at the level of body, mind and soul. While the modern world offers us solutions for comforting the body and senses, these “solutions” are actually disturbing the mind and are unfulfilling for the soul. When the mind is disturbed and there is lack of love in our lives, blockages and imbalances are created in physical organs and systems. This is why our efforts to become healthy are not working out.

The solution to all our problems is Ayurveda. Ayurveda is the combination of two words.
Ayur – Veda

- **Ayur** meaning “The Whole Lifespan”
- **Veda** meaning “Total Knowledge”

The science of Ayurveda, therefore, encompasses the total knowledge of the whole Lifespan [1-6].

1.1 Charaka defines Ayur-Veda as follows:

“Hita hitam sukhā dukhā ayustasya hita hitam
manam ca tacca yatrotkam Ayurveda ca ucayate.”
“Samadosha Samagnishcha Sama Dhata Mala Kriya.
Prassanna atma indriya manah swastha iti abhideyate.”

(Sushruta Samhitha)

1.2 Aims and objectives of Ayurveda have been divided into two aspects namely:

- Swasthya Swasthya Rakshanam (Preventive and Social medicine)
- Aturasya Vikar Purashamanam (Therapeutics)

2. Back To Past

Traditionally it is believed that Maharishi Bharadwaja was the first human being to have been deputed to acquire the first knowledge of Science of Life -Ayurveda from Indra, the king of Gods. Indra is supposed to have acquired this knowledge from Ashwins and them from Prajapati. Finally it is from Brahma that this supreme knowledge was acquired. Brahma is stated to have acquired this knowledge as Revelation through Yogic Samadhi.

Today our diseases are not limited to the body only. More and more people are suffering at mental and emotional levels. In order to treat these diseases we need to address them at the site of their origin. If we want to see a healthy world, it will happen only through Ayurveda. Ayurveda is not limited only to oil massage (abhyanga) and shirodhara as most people think. It offers solutions at every level of an individual. Most existing medical systems like homeopathy, acupressure, herbal medicine, gemology, energy healing, breathing exercises and even modern medicine has a root in Ayurveda.

Ayurveda is the “mother” of all medical systems and will very soon be the main medical system of the world.

3. Ayurvedic Concept of Health

Ayurveda is a medical system that deals not only with body but with the mind and spirit as well. According to Ayurveda, most diseases connected with the psychophysiologic and pathologic changes in the body are caused by imbalance in three different dosha (ie, vata, pitta, and kapha;^[2] The fundamental aim of ayurvedic therapy is to restore the balance between these three major body systems.^[6,7,9-11] Any imbalance can lead to inflammation (also called soppa). Almost seven different types of inflammation have been described in Ayurveda. The ayurvedic definition of pittaja soppa (inflammation) encompasses the modern concept of inflammation, which is defined as redness, pain, heat, loss of function, and swelling. The balanced coordination of body, mind, and consciousness is the ayurvedic definition of health.

4. Potency of Ayurveda

In Ayurveda one is in good health when our inner and internal environment is in balance:

1. The Vata, Pitta and Kapha dosha (vital humors) are in balance.
2. Agni (the digestive fire) is balanced.
3. Dhatus (the 7 body tissues) are functioning normally
4. Mala (the waste products) are produced and eliminated normally
5. The Mana, Indriya and Atma (mind, senses and consciousness) are working in blissful harmon.

5. What Is Panchakarma?

Ayurvedic Panchakarma clean the body using medicinal herbs. Panchakarma (literally, Five acts) is a special techniques related to rejuvenation, cleansing, and healing practices. These five actions or procedures are.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Shodhana | - Principle practice |
| 2. Vamana | - Emesis therapy |
| 3. Virechana | - Purgation therapy |
| 4. Vasti | - Enema therapy |
| 5. Uttara Vasti | - Douching. |

6. What Is The Reason That Allopathic Drugs Have Harmful Side Effects?

The treatments based on Allopathy are no doubt effective but not without side effects. The side effects are very serious, there are many reasons.

- a) The treatment is given not in a holistic manner but on a symptomatic basis
- b) Treatment is given on a mass basis not individualistic.
- c) The drugs act at the molecular level and not at the tissue level.
- d) The drugs are artificially produced, very strong and have highly potential concentration of single drug molecules without any counter balancing contents. In the case of herbal medicine, the drugs are at the tissues level, from natural herbal sources with balancing contents.

7. What Causes The Boom To Ayurveda Over Allopathy?

In the recent times there is a new realization, awakening and awareness in the whole world, even in the western medical world that

- a) A holistic approach to medicine is essential
- b) The human personality as a whole has to be studied and understood
- c) The cause of ill-health could be other than just infection or physical origin
- d) The mind / psyche and emotional state is accepted now as the major cause of ill health (e) Life style – discipline and moral character are accepted to have major role in health
- e) Diet – green and natural is now being accepted as a major force in health
- f) Treatment has to be holistic – acting at various levels – physical, mental, emotional and even spiritual levels of the individual
- g) Life style changes can lead to dramatic improvements in health
- h) Stress management-avoidance of stress and recovery from stress by techniques such as yoga, meditation, relaxation – all accepted as fundamental requirements to healthy life
- i) Avoidance of chemical drugs – using alternative natural therapies using natural items such as water, green diet, fruit diet, herbal medicines (if at all) for curing common health problems.

This list could be much stronger than the original symptoms.

8. Can Ayurveda Treat Chronic Diseases?

Ayurveda can provide better solution for chronic diseases like asthma, arthritis, diseases than many current allopathic treatments available today. In SWINEFLU, the present challenging disease. *Ayurveda* offers simple and effective remedies to boost immunity and build resistance. Tea made from Tulsi, Amla and Amrut (giloy) act as an immunity enhancers. Alternatively & additionally, Ginger, Turmeric (haldi) powder mixed with either lime juice or honey can also be taken twice a day.

9. Current Status of Ayurveda

At present the Ayurveda medicine is well set to re-orient itself to modern scientific parameters. Simultaneously, it is well poised for much greater, effective utilization to benefit the whole humanity to reach its goals of Health. Ayurveda medicine which started as a magico-religious practice, matured into a fully developed medical science with eight branches which have parallels in the modern western system of medicine and it has developed into following sixteen specialities.

WHO has framed a code of drug manufacturing practice in Ayurveda – Indian government has also undertaken many measures to observe GMP in Ayurvedic drug production. Many testing laboratories are working in collaboration with Ayurvedic pharmaceutical to make the Ayurvedic drugs more authenticated if these practices are taken honestly we may look for a complete changes in appearance of Ayurvedic drugs in near future.

10. Clinical Research

Treatment according to ayurveda is very individualized, thereby making it difficult to conduct a large populationbased clinical study. Thus, not many randomized, controlled, and double-blind clinical trials are available [20, 21]. Many anecdotal and case reports are available that show the efficacy of the herbs and the treatments used. The individualized therapies are sometimes poorly documented, unable to be accepted in the standardized Western field. Enough preclinical studies are done with individual herbs or their derivatives, for example, curcumin, ashwagandha, guggulu, kutki, shatavari, brahmi, guduchi, amla, ginger, and arsenic trioxide [7-13, 14, 16, 17, 19]. There are very few studies available with complex herbal formulations, for example, rasagenthi lehyam, Brahma rasayana, semecarpus lehyam, triphala, and other rasayanas.[7,8,15,18,19,22,23] Some human clinical trials are under way with curcumin, resveratrol, and flavopiridol, which show promising results. The National Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine has recommended doing more case studies to determine the herbal efficacy and future clinical studies. More randomized clinical trials need to be done for the herbs and formulations containing multiple constituents [20, 21].

11. Conclusion

Backing up...

Tradition...

With evidence...

Hence both *Ayurveda* and Allopathy has their own merits and demerits. We cannot supplement *Ayurveda* with Allopathy or vice versa. *Ayurveda* has to be studied and applied, integrated into allopathic practice-in both preventive and therapeutic levels for the better treatment quality-a good integration and absorption, of *Ayurveda* with Allopathy is the answer. Let us look forward for an integrated health care system which integrates *Ayurveda* and Allopathy. However this calls for greater effort from both sides-the Allopaths should study and understand *Ayurveda* in its depth of spirit in detail similarly the Ayurvedics – very few of them being of high standard and quality should understand how to integrate Allopathy with *Ayurveda* in the larger interest of the society. An integrated research is the call of the hour.

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