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## Role of Ayurveda in Communicable Diseases (COVID-19)

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### ABSTRACT

Human health is an asset. Despite knowing this fact, humans tend to ignore this and go in pursuit of worldly assets ending up in ill-health. Because of the sedentary lifestyle and lockdown schedules of COVID-19 individuals have always been less concerned about the diet, exercises and the quality of healthy lifestyle and as a result of this human beings have the inferior status of health and have been prone to infectious diseases. In Ayurvedic context, *Acharyas* have mentioned about *Pragnyaparadha* (misuse of intellect) which is a significant factor in causing diseases. The present scenario augments, that, it is time to turn over to the ancient science of life. The old life focussed on maintaining the health by following *Dinacharya* (daily routine), *Ritucharya* (Seasonal regime), *Sadvrutta* (code of conduct) wherein *Panchakarma* (body purification procedure) and *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation therapy) secures the physical and mental health of an individual. In this literary study, an effort has been made to find out the role of holistic science of life in dealing with the communicable diseases and its acceptance globally.

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which have affected the human health and population to a greater extent. These diseases spread from one person to another through various modes and hence called as infectious diseases. Multiple conditions such as Ebola virus, H1N1, COVID-19 has affected the considerable population. Such epidemics have hampered human health rapidly. In ancient texts of Ayurveda, the *acharyas* have mentioned about such outbreaks and its causative factors under the headings Janapadhodhwamsa (Goyal, 2019). *Sushruta Samhita* mentions, there is a good description of the mode of transfer of disease. They are called Aupasargika rogas (Bihari et al., 2015).

### INTRODUCTION

It is well said that health is wealth. In the present scenario of COVID-19, the statement proves to be true. Health is one of the most precious assets which once lost, is difficult to regain. The advancement in technologies and new researches have succeeded in enhancing the ease of life, but on the other hand, has been a significant threat to humanity due to deprivation from living a healthy lifestyle.

Day by day, there is an increment in the diseases

### OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

In *Charak Samhita*, *Acharya* has mentioned about the vitiation of *Pancha mahabhutas* and the wrong acts of human beings known as *pragnaya aparadha*, which is quoted as one of the reasons for *jana-padhodhwansa*. In *Sushruta Samhita*, *Acharyas* have mentioned about various ways of spreading of the diseases such as contact with contaminated food, objects, garlands and even physical touch is one of

the *hetu* for the spread of *Aupasargika Rogas* (Bihari *et al.*, 2015).

Ayurveda focuses on avoidance of *hetus* as an important step in the treatment of the diseases which are *sadhya*. For the healthy being of an individual, the regimens such as *dinacharya*, *ritucharya*, and *sadvrittapanan* have prime importance Amol *et al.* (2015). The foremost aim of Ayurveda has maintained the health of human being rather than management of the diseases, adopted by the department of AYUSH, Govt. of India (Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, 2020b).

### Utilisation of Panchakarma

*Vaman*(Emission), *Vierchan*(Purgation), *Niruhabasti*(medicated enema of decoction), *Anuvasanbasti*(medicated enema of oil)and *Shirovirechan*(Errhine Therapy)are *Panchakarma*(five body purification methods) described by *Acharya Charak*, *Acharya Sushrut* and *Acharya Vagbhat* included *Raktmokshana* (bloodletting) in above-described procedures. The overall factors such as *Dosha*(three senses of humour), *Dushya*(vital entities), *Bala*(energy), *Desha* (location), *Kala*(period), *Vyadhi*(disease) appropriate *Panchakarma* is planned (CCRAS, 2020; Rawal *et al.*, 2010). There is a preprocedural treatment for *Panchakarma* explained as - *Snehana* (Massage) and *Swedana* (Sudation) helps to accumulate the *Dosha* at one place (abdomen) and take out from the body with appropriate suggestive *Panchakarma* procedure (Sawarkar and Sawarkar, 2019).

### Role of Rasayana and Sadvritta

Ayurveda having a holistic approach towards healing, focuses on causative factors along with the treatment principles. Hence one should have more attention towards the maintenance of a balanced state of the *Doshas* and ability to fight against the diseases (Travis and Wallace, 2015). To maintain the health of a healthy person, one should have *Rasayana* daily which rejuvenates the immunity (Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, 2020). Several medicinal plants have been described in Ayurveda as *Rasayanas* acts as effective antioxidant (Kuchewar *et al.*, 2014). Even *Acharya Rasayana* mentions about the set of rules which depicts the behavioural aspects of a person and code of conduct (Desai and Wanjari, 2012). Following these moral values helps a person to attain healthy mental and spiritual being in the same way as consumption of *Rasayana* helps. One should not yawn, sneeze, and laugh without covering the mouth. A person should not urinate on the road, in crowded places and while taking food. One should not let out

mucous nasal excreta at the time other than cleaning off face or bath, and also the person should keep far away from different persons to prevent inhalation of expired air from them (Kumawat *et al.*, 2018).

### DISCUSSION

The concept of contagious disease, along with the mode of spread, has been explained in *Sushruta Samhita*. *Aupasargika* roga (communicable) diseases like obstinate skin problems like leprosy or fever, malnutrition and conjunctivitis, spread from person to person. The spread can happen by contact, touch, respiration, sharing food, sharing bed and seats, using clothes, garlands and unctio's used by the person suffering from *Aupasargika rogas*. The epidemics according to Ayurveda is due to the vitiation of earth, water and wind. Due to this vitiation the micro-organism is given a space for their grow than multiplication by any or all of these media. Even though Ayurveda consider presence of micro-organism it is given more importance to the equilibrium of the internal environment so that these organisms can't multiply (Hankey, 2010). The present condition of Covid-19, rather than removal of causative factors, precaution by social distancing and hygiene are most important factors as well as purification of air by *Dhoopana*, with *Bhootanashak Dravyas*(antimicrobials) etc. likewise cleaning the environment and keeping one's individual is also essential in these conditions (Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, 2020a).

Communicable Diseases prevented by three measures; Controlling reservoir or source of infection, Interruption in the routes of transmission, Immunizing the susceptible host. *Sadvritta* at times of COVID-19 can be taken into consideration as the hygienic measures to prevent transmission of infection such as: creating awareness about how to cover, cough and wash our hands, availability and use of tissues when coughing and sneezing, and reminders to dispose of used tissues properly, judicious use of a mask, maintaining Social-distancing, stressing hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions. This applies to the patient, family members, visitors, employees, and care providers (Tawalare *et al.*, 2014). Three main measures which are adopted for prevention or control of infectious disease by modern science (World Health Organization, 2020) in the same way *Sadvritta* may also be applicable in three ways:

#### Controlling reservoir or source of infection

Many ways of controlling the cause of disease as a person should not urinate on the road, in a crowded

place and while taking food.

One should not let out mucous nasal excreta at the time other than cleaning off face or bath. And also, the person should keep far away from different persons to prevent inhalation of expired air from them. One should avoid bones, thorns, impure piercing articles, hairs, chaff, and garbage etc. One should not eat in an unclean utensil, nor eat dirty meals served by unclean service persons and also not in improper places where garbages are accumulated. Beyond this, one should not have stale things. One should bathe twice a day, cutting of hairs & shaving, one should always wear clean clothes and not put on the same clothes after bath. One should wear auspicious herbs and gems on hand ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019](#)).

#### **Interrupting route(s) of transmission**

Many ways interruption of the route of transmission as of One should not sleep or sit together and should not yawn, sneeze, and laugh without covering the mouth. And also, persons should keep far away from other persons to prevent inhalation of expired air from them. One should not eat in an unclean utensil, nor eat a dirty meal served by an unclean serving person. One should apply oil on head, ear, nose and feet every day. Should fertigate. Should not dust and broom the roof. Should not use garlands and unguents used by other people. Must wash hands, feet and face before having food ([Monto, 1999](#)).

#### **Immunising the susceptible host**

Code of conduct works more widely and effectively than immunisation concerning prevention from communicable diseases as it is cheap and easy to follow. Physical health by a procedure called as *acharara Sayan*, which give all qualities of *Rasayana dvajeekaran* qualities gained by following *vyavyay sadvritta (brahmacharya)*. By applying *ahara, vyavyay* & hygiene, *sadvritta* person can prevent from disease & attain good health ([Bogdan et al., 1990](#)).

This shows that the code of conduct is not limited up to only mental hygiene, but it has a much broader spectrum of benefits, and among them, one is prevention from infectious diseases. It plays a significant role in preventing transmission of infections along with improving immunity power by other regimen & one can achieve long and healthy life which prevents them from becoming source as well as a host of infectious disease in terms of the physical, psychological and social aspect. Implementation of regimens of *Sadvritta* (code of conduct) gives new point to look, behave and think at the world which can result in the decrease in transmission of infec-

tion and have a society which is healthy by all means.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Ayurveda being an ancient science of life with its holistic approach, provides in detail regarding the infectious diseases, its causative factors and the outbreak of epidemics. The vast devastation caused by COVID-19 throws light on the principles mentioned in the holistic science of life. Thus, following the rules for a healthy lifestyle will help to boost the immunity to tackle the infections affecting one's health. It is the need of the hour to get back to the principles of ancient science and have a healthy way of living life. It provides an opportunity for further researches to explore the approach of holistic science of life towards communicable diseases.

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#### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest for this study.

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