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Role of Ahara in prevention of Life Style Disorders w.s.r. to Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the foremost life science and describes ways to prevent lifestyle disorders. Ayurveda is the world's ancient health care system. Lifestyle disorders are due to Poor life-style which includes; poor diet, poor eating habits, lack of exercise, Smoking, excess alcohol, poor sleep, stress due to heavy workload and increased consumption of unhealthy food. Ahara Dravyas can be considered under the category Dravyabhuta Aushadhi. So, the dietetic rules can be considered as Upaya or Adravyabhuta Aushadhi for Vikaraprasamana. The eight factors of diet responsible for health and diseases are described as "Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatanani". Ahara is considered as Mahabhaishajya (the superior medicine). Various life style disorders and numerous diseases occur due to faulty dietary habits which may be prevented by proper Ahara and eating habits. Ayurveda insists that Ahara should be chosen in accordance to the Prakriti or constitution of individual. The diet is regarded as Brahman as it holds such supreme importance. "Annam Brahmeti Vyajaanat". In general terms food includes all the edible substances. The original source of living beings and their strength, complexion and Ojas is diet which consists of Six Rasas and those again depend on substances.

Key words: Ayurveda, Ahara, Lifestyle Disorders, Visheshayatana

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the world's ancient health care system. The main objective of Ayurveda is "Swasthsya Swatha Rakshnam Aturasya Vikara Prashmnam Cha" Which

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means to maintain the health of healthy individual and to cure the disease of diseased Person.^[1] Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya are Trayaupastambhah mentioned in Ayurveda, which plays a very important role in Healthy life.^[2] Among all these three Ahar has been given prime importance for healthy life of individual. Hence the Ahara is considered as Mahabhaishajya (the superior medicine).^[3] Ahara is the main source of strength, complexion, and vitality. Ahar is the most important factor in life "Health as well as disease is depends upon Ahara". Proper diet, taken in proper manner can lead to better health or else can lead to disease. Faulty diet results in disturbed functions of the body. That is the reason why while describing causative factors of disease, dietary articles (Pathya-Apathya) have been given prime importance. In today's modern era due to lack of knowledge about incorrect eating habits, irregular timing, wrong cooking procedure,

imbalance diet and not following the proper rules of eating leads various problem or disease. *Acharya Charak* has stated that diet sustain life if taken with discipline in a proper manner. He has described eight specific factors of method of dieting in a very systemic and scientific manner which is known as *Ashta Ahar Vidhi Visheshayatana*. *Ahara* has important role in maintaining health and also in treating various disorders.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature review from various *Samhita* such as *Charak Samhita*, *Sushrut Samhita*, *Ashtang Sangrah*, *Ashtang Hridaya* etc. various literature and articles have been reviewed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In *Vimansthan Rasvimana Adhyaya*, *Acharya Charak* has explained *Ashta Ahar Vidhi Visheshayatana* and its importance by following these eight rules one will definitely obtain healthy life and can be free from the diseased state.

Lifestyle Disorders

The diseases which are associated with the people those who adopt unhealthy and inappropriate lifestyle are called lifestyles disorders. In India, rapid urbanization and globalization mainly contribute towards increased number of people suffering from life- style disorders.

Causes

Junk food is the main cause of all these disorders which ultimately results in improper digestion and becomes the primary cause of these lifestyle disorders. Some other causes are as follows -

- Sedentary Lifestyle
- Stress
- Smoking and Alcohol consumption
- Regular Intake of Processes food
- Poor or Irregular Sleeping habits

Lifestyle disorders are group of disease. most common lifestyle disorders are diseases of cardiovascular

system such as hypertension, heart attack and stroke. So according to *Ayurveda*, following diurnal and Seasonal behaviour is very important for preventing disease.

Ahara

The *Ahara* (diet) is regarded as *Brahman* as it holds such supreme importance. "*Annam Brahmeti Vyajaanat*" (*Taittiriopanishad*).

The original source of living beings and their strength, complexion and *Ojas* is diet which consists of Six *rasas* and those again depend on substances.^[4]

Importance of Ahara

Health and diseases both are dependent on various factors among these, *Ahara* is the most important one.^[5] *Ahara* is also necessary for *Bala*, *Varna*, *Upachaya* etc.^[6] According to *Acharya Charaka*, all the *Dravyas* are *Aushadhis* (*Nanausadhibhutam*)^[7] and these are of two types depending on the nature of composition.

- *Dravyabhuta Aushadhi*
- *Adravyabhuta Aushadhi*

Ahara dravyas can be considered under the category *Dravyabhuta Aushadhi*. So, the dietetic rules can be considered as *Upaya or Adravyabhuta Aushadhi* for *Vikaraprasamana*. The eight factors of diet responsible for health and diseases are described as "*Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatanani*."

Dietetics Principles for the prevention of Lifestyle Disorders

Principle of Balanced Diet

According to *Ayurveda*, the diet which nourishes both the mental and physical health is called balanced diet.

Ahara Matra: *Acharya Charaka* defines *Matra* of *Ahara*.^[8] The amount of food which gets digested as well as metabolized in proper time without disturbing the equilibrium (of *Dhatu*s and *Doshas* of the body) is to be regarded as the proper quantity.

Shadarasa Yukta Ahara: *Acharya Charaka* while describing the types of *Rasa*, said that the appropriate

use of all the six *Rasa* maintains the equilibrium of (*Dosa*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*) body. These six *Rasas*, when used in proper quantity, are beneficial for all human beings, otherwise become harmful. Hence the wise should use these properly in proper quantity in order to derive benefit (from them).^[9]

Ashta Ahar Vidhi Visheshayatana^[10]

1. *Prakruti* (nature of food)
2. *Karan* (methods of preparation of food)
3. *Samyoga* (combination of food substances)
4. *Rashi* (quantity of food)
5. *Desha* (place where food items are grown)
6. *Kala* (time of consumption of food)
7. *Upyogamstha* (rules of consumption of food)
8. *Upabhokta/Upyokta*- (the person who consumes food)

DISCUSSION

Ahara is a part of our daily routine. along with the quality, quantity, and taste of food, if we concentrate a little on the right way of taking food and the regimens related to *Ahara* described in *Ayurveda*, positive health can be achieved easily. Faulty dietary habits lead to the manifestation of different metabolic diseases. It is also observed that many diseases are arising merely due to this faulty dietary habit. In this context, the concept of *Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana* is most ideal in today lifestyle. *Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana* means the factors responsible for wholesome and unwholesome effects of the *Ahara* and methods of *Ahara Sevana* (special rule for diet intake). These eight dynamics must be measured before taking food *Prakriti*, *Karana*, *Samyoga*, *Rashi*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Upyoga-Sansatha* and *Upyokta*. Viewing the above points, it can be concluded that *Ahara* should be taken according to these eating habits are mentioned by *Acharyas* in the form of *Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana* which has been proven very scientific. So, by following these habits, we can prevent ourselves from various health problems and can cure many lifestyle orders.

Ahara Vidhi: A system, method, manner, way, arrangement, rule, law, command, conduct, condition or statement for diet intake (V.S. Apte).

Vishesha: Speciality, special property, distinguished effect (of *Ahara Vidhi*).

Ayatana: Cause, support, *Hetu* etc.

Thus, *Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshaya Ayatana* means, the causative factors responsible for the wholesome and unwholesome effect of the methods for diet intake. They are as follows: *Prakriti*, *Karna*, *Samyoga*, *Rashi*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Upayogasamstha*, *Upyokta*.^[11]

CONCLUSION

Ahara is not only needed for the continuity of life, but also *Bala*, *Varna*, *Upacaya* etc. In today's modern era, we are neglecting the digestive capacity nutritional value of food products, ready to eat food material. Lack of knowledge about correct eating habits is the primary region for the increasing trend of health disorders like diarrhoea, indigestion, hyperacidity, and anorexia etc. So, for preventing these disorders, the best way is to understand *Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana* explains the various dietary habits. It helps to know about choosing appropriate food, a combination of food, cooking method, quality, and quantity of food. *Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana* is one of the most beneficial for achieving the noble goal of maintaining health. By proper understanding and following these, we can easily achieve both the *Prayojana* of *Ayurveda*. Therefore, there's a requirement to illuminate this concept of *Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana* as described in ancient *Ayurveda* classics.

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