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Role of incompatible food and regimen in neurological disorders

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The burden of neurological disorders has gradually increased over last 30 years. Neurological disorders are becoming a leading cause of disability and mortality in worldwide population. Patients presenting with common neurological symptoms like headache, anxiety, behavioural changes, fatigue, unexplained pain, erectile dysfunction, have been increasing, most of which can be attributed to unhealthy lifestyle and dietary practices. Ayurveda is one of the oldest systems of medicine, evolved over 3 millennia through constant devotedness of its preachers & learners. *Viruddha Ahara* is mentioned to cause various metabolic disorders and may even lead to neurological diseases. Food-food interaction is a serious issue requiring much attention. Hence it is of importance to ascertain role of *Viruddha Ahara* in the manifestation of different neurological disorders. **Aim:** To study role of incompatible food and regimen in neurological disorders. **Material and Methods:** This is a conceptual study for which various Ayurveda texts, Modern texts and published Articles are referred. **Discussion:** Although food combinations in present era are different in nature, principles remain the same and it is required to identify such food incompatibilities that can cause neurological disorders based on basic *Ayurvedic* principles. Conclusions will be made on basis of mentioned concepts.

Key words: Ayurveda, Food Combinations, Neurological Disorders, Incompatible Food, *Viruddha Ahara*, Dietary Regimen.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ancient medical science, that focuses more on wellbeing and healthy living of a person. Ayurveda has emphasized importance of *Ahara* by considering it one of the three *Upastambha* (pillars) of life^[1] viz. *Ahara* (diet), *Nidra* (sleep) and *Bramhacharya*

(celibacy). According to Ayurveda there are positive & negative attributes of *Ahara*, and it emphasizes on consumption of right kind of diet for promotion and maintenance of health & nutrition. *Ahara* is an essential unit of sustainment of life of humans and is responsible for both health & disease. If consumed according to mentioned rules, it is termed *Hita Ahara* and is beneficial for *Agni*, promote mental & physical strength as well as complexion.^[2] *Viruddha Ahara* is a unique concept of Ayurveda. The *Ahara* which has properties antagonistic to *Dhatu*s of the body is called *Viruddha Ahara*.^[3]

According to *Charaka* all those foods that aggravate the *Dosha* but do not eliminate them from the body which then become unhealthy for the body is considered *Viruddha Ahara*.^[4] According to *Sushruta*, *Viruddha Ahara* aggravate the *Dhatu* along with *Dosha*.^[5]

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Charaka has mentioned 18 types of *Viruddha Ahara* along with examples,^[6]

Type of <i>Viruddha Ahara</i>	Example
1. <i>Desha Viruddha</i> (antagonist to land or region)	<i>Ruksha-Teekshna Ahara</i> in <i>Jangala Desh</i> , <i>Snigdha Sheeta Ahara</i> in <i>Aanup Desha</i> .
2. <i>Kala Viruddha</i> (antagonist to time or region)	<i>Katu-Ushna</i> substance in <i>Ushna Kala</i> , <i>Sheeta-Ruksha</i> substance in <i>Sheeta Kala</i> .
3. <i>Agni Viruddha</i> (antagonist to digestive power)	Guru food in <i>Mandaagni</i> , <i>Laghu</i> food in <i>Teekshna Agni</i> .
4. <i>Matra Viruddha</i> (incompatible quantity)	Equal quantities of honey & <i>Ghrita</i> , honey & rainwater.
5. <i>Satmya Viruddha</i> (unwholesome to individual)	Intake of <i>Madhur-Sheeta</i> substance by a person accustomed to <i>Katu-Ushna</i> substance.
6. <i>Dosha Viruddha</i> (which aggravate <i>doshas</i>)	Consumption of substances with similar properties with <i>Dosha</i> but opposite to habit.
7. <i>Sanskara Viruddha</i> (incompatible mode of preparation)	Heated honey, meat of peacock roasted on castor wood, etc.
8. <i>Veerya Viruddha</i> (antagonistic potency)	Consumption of <i>Ushna</i> substance with <i>Sheeta</i> substance (fish+milk).
9. <i>Koshtha Viruddha</i> (against nature of bowel)	Consumption of light diet with mild potency by person with <i>Krura Koshtha</i> .
10. <i>Avastha Viruddha</i> (against state or condition)	Intake of <i>Vata</i> aggravating food after physical exertion or sexual act.
11. <i>Krama Viruddha</i> (against sequence)	Consuming curd at night, intake of food without clearance of bowel, not consuming food when hungry.
12. <i>Parihara Viruddha</i> (antagonistic to	Consumption of cold water immediately after having tea or coffee.

substances that relieve symptoms)	
13. <i>Upachara Viruddha</i> (antagonistic to treatment)	Intake of cold substance after taking <i>Ghrita</i> , intake of hot water after taking honey.
14. <i>Paaka Viruddha</i> (incompatible cooking practice)	Overcooking, undercooking, or burning of food.
15. <i>Sanyoga Viruddha</i> (combination which is poisonous)	<i>Amla</i> (sour) substance with milk, fruit salad
16. <i>Hriday Viruddha</i> (disliked food)	Intake of food that is unpleasant for a particular individual.
17. <i>Sampad Viruddha</i> (food with inadequate qualities)	Intake of not matured, over matured or putrefied substance.
18. <i>Vidhi Viruddha</i> (antagonistic to mentioned rules)	Consumption of food against mentioned rules and regimen.

Some incompatible food combinations have been given in *Ayurvedic* texts, which should be avoided,^[7]

Intake of fish with milk.	Consumption of melons with grains.
Intake of curd at night.	Consumption of milk and melons at same time.
Consumption of heated honey.	Consumption of sweet and sour fruits in fruit salad.
Consumption of cold water immediately after hot meal.	Consumption of raw and cooked foods together.
Consumption of banana with milk.	Consumption of honey and <i>Ghrita</i> in equal quantity.
Consumption of green leafy vegetables with milk.	Consumption of fruit salad with milk.
Consumption of meat of <i>Aanup</i> (marshy region) animals with black gram.	Consumption of <i>Upodika</i> cooked with paste of sesame.

Consumption of lotus stem or <i>Kamala</i> plant fried in mustard oil, with milk or honey.	Consumption of meat of <i>Haridraka</i> (kind of yellow bird) with turmeric.
Eating radish, garlic, or basil with milk.	Consumption of long pepper processed in fish fat.
Consumption of all sour substances with milk.	Consumption of meat of <i>Balaka</i> bird with <i>Varuni</i> (supernatant fluid of vine).
Consumption of <i>Ghrita</i> kept in bronze vessel for 10 consecutive days.	Consumption of meat of peacock, quail, monitor lizard cooked in castor oil on castor tree wood fire.

Ahara Vidhi Vidhan is another important topic mentioned in Ayurveda which forms the foundation of dietetics. It elaborates on regimen and rules to be followed in consumption of food, that are as follows,^[8]

1. *Ushnam Ashniyat* (consumption of warm food).
2. *Snighdam Ashniyat* (consumption of unctuous food).
3. *Matravat Ashniyat* (consumption of food in adequate quantity).
4. *Jirne Ashniyat* (consumption of food after digestion of previous meal).
5. *Veerya Aviruddha Ashniyat* (consumption of food which are not antagonistic in potency).
6. *Ishta Deshe/ Ishta Sarvopkarnam Ashniyat* (consumption of food in congenial place and circumstance).
7. *Naatidrutam Ashniyat* (consumption of food in calm not hurriedly manner).
8. *Naativilambit Ashniyat* (consumption of food in a not too leisurely manner).
9. *Ajalpana, Ahasana, Tanmanabhunjitam* (avoidance of talking, laughing while consumption of food and concentrating on food).
10. *Aatanam Abhisamikshya Bhunjitam* (consumption of food after considering one's constitution and requirements).

Viruddha Ahara produces various types of diseases. *Charaka* emphasized this matter by giving one verse specially regarding *Ahara* and its causativeness for diseases. Body is a result of nourishment by food ingested in the four-fold manner i.e., *Ashita* (eaten), *Peeta* (drunk), *Leedha* (licked up) and *Khadita* (masticated) and similarly the diseases that affect this body are equally the result of food that is also eaten, drunk, licked up and masticated. The distinction between use of wholesome diet and that of unwholesome diet is responsible for the distinction between health and disease in the body.^[9]

Agnimandya is the cause of several diseases.^[10] *Viruddha Ahara* causes the vitiation of *Agni* by *Abhojana*, *Ajirnatibhojana*, *Vishamashana*, *Asatmya*, *Ati Ruksha* and *Sheeta*, *Sansrusta Bhojana*. Thus, we can say that *Agni* mostly gets vitiated by *Viruddha Ahara*. This vitiated *Jatharagni* does not digest even the lightest of food substances, resulting in *Ajirna* (indigestion). This undigested food material later turns into *Ama* which acts as a poison and termed as *Ama Visha* in Ayurvedic terminology.^[11]

Following are the diseases that occur because of *Viruddha Ahara*,^[12]

<i>Shaandya</i> (Impotency)	<i>Aadhmana</i> (Abdominal distention)	<i>Shotha</i> (Swelling or oedema)
<i>Andhya</i> (Blindness)	<i>Galgraha</i> (Throat obstruction)	<i>Amlapitta</i> (Acidity)
<i>Visarpa</i> (Erysipelas)	<i>Pandu Roga</i> (Anemia)	<i>Jwara</i> (Fever)
<i>Jalodara</i> (Ascitis)	<i>Ama</i> (Endogenous toxin)	<i>Pinas</i> (Allergic Rhinitis)
<i>Unmada</i> (Insanity)	<i>Kilasa</i> (Leukoderma)	<i>Santana Dosha</i> (Infertility)
<i>Bhagandara</i> (Fistula in ano)	<i>Kushtha</i> (skin disorders)	<i>Mrutyu</i> (Death).
<i>Murcha</i> (Coma/fainting)	<i>Grahani</i> (IBS)	

Charaka has also mentioned that *Veerya Viruddha Ahara* is best amongst causes of *Nindita Vyadhi*.^[13] The *Ashtomahagad* are termed as *Nindita Vyadhi* by *Ashtanga Sangraha* commentator *Indu*. They are as follows (according to *Charaka*),^[14]

1. *Vatavyadhi* (neurological disorders)
2. *Kushtha* (skin disorders)
3. *Madhumeha* (diabetes mellitus)
4. *Udara* (ascites)
5. *Rajayakshma* (Koch's disease)
6. *Apasmar* (epilepsy)
7. *Gulma* (abdominal tumour)
8. *Shopha* (oedema)

From above information it is clear that *Viruddha Ahara* is an important causative factor of metabolic and neurological diseases.

Neurological Disorders

The nervous system is a complex and sophisticated system that facilitates regulation and coordination of body's basic functions and activities. Our whole body is controlled by the nervous system including the process of digestion up to endocrine function, everything depends upon the complexity of the nervous system. It is made up of two major divisions, including the central nervous system (consisting of the brain and spinal cord) and the peripheral nervous system (consisting of all other neural elements).^[15] The disease which afflicts the nervous system is termed as neurological disease.

Ayurveda considers neurological disorders to be the result of *Vata Dosh* vitiation. *Charaka* has enumerated causes of *Vatavyadhi* among which those related to diet and its regimen include, *Ruksha Ahara* (excessive dry), *Sheeta Ahara* (excessive cold), *Alpa Ahara* (light quantity), and *Laghu Ahara* (food with light property). This causes vitiation of *Vata Dosh* which in turn causes an imbalance and disharmony in the human system that leads to neurological disorders.^[16]

As stated before, incompatible diet and regimen is an important cause of diseases in humans. *Charaka* has considered *Veerya Viruddha Ahara* to be the best

causative factor for 8 *Nindita Vyadhis*, *Vatavyadhi* being one of them.^[13]

Furthermore, *Vishamagni* a type of *Agni Dushti*, is said to manifest into various *Vatavyadhis* in presence of favourable conditions.^[17]

Charaka has mentioned 80 types of *Nanatmaja Vatavyadhi*.^[18] Below are some common neurological diseases along with their Ayurvedic correlations.

<i>Vatavyadhi</i>	Correlation with modern science
<i>Ardita</i>	Bell's Palsy
<i>Avabahuka</i>	Frozen shoulder
<i>Apatantraka</i>	Hysteric convulsions
<i>Apasmara</i>	Epilepsy
<i>Akshepaka</i>	Convulsion
<i>Viswachi</i>	Brachial neuritis
<i>Gridhrasi</i>	Sciatica syndrome
<i>Grivashoola</i>	Cervical spondylitis
<i>Hanugraha</i>	Lock jaw
<i>Jivha Stambha</i>	Glossal palsy
<i>Kampavata</i>	Parkinsonism
<i>Katishool</i>	Lumber spondylitis
<i>Kalayakhanja</i>	Lathyrism
<i>Khanja</i>	Limping
<i>Khalli</i>	Cramps, fasciculations
<i>Manyastambha</i>	Neck rigidity
<i>Pangu</i>	Poliomyelitis
<i>Pakshaghat</i>	Hemiplegia, paraplegia
<i>Pakwashayagata Vata</i>	Irritable bowel syndrome
<i>Shirograha</i>	Trigeminal neuralgia
<i>Shukragata Vata</i>	Sexual neurosis

Twachagata Vata	Peripheral neuritis
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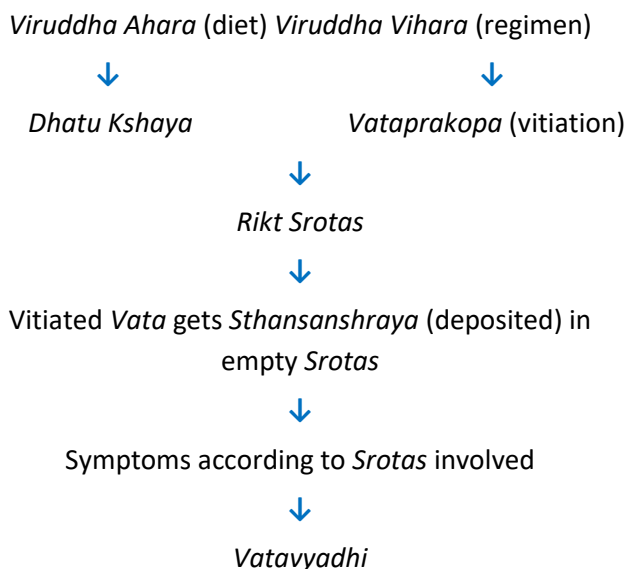
Samprapti (Pathophysiology)

The *Samanya Samprapti* of *Vatavyadhi* - Due to the intake of *Vatakara Ahara* and *Vihara*, *Vata Dosha* get vitiated, which lodges in *Rikta Srotasa*, producing diseases that are either *Sarvaang* (generalised) or *Ekaang* (localised).^[19]

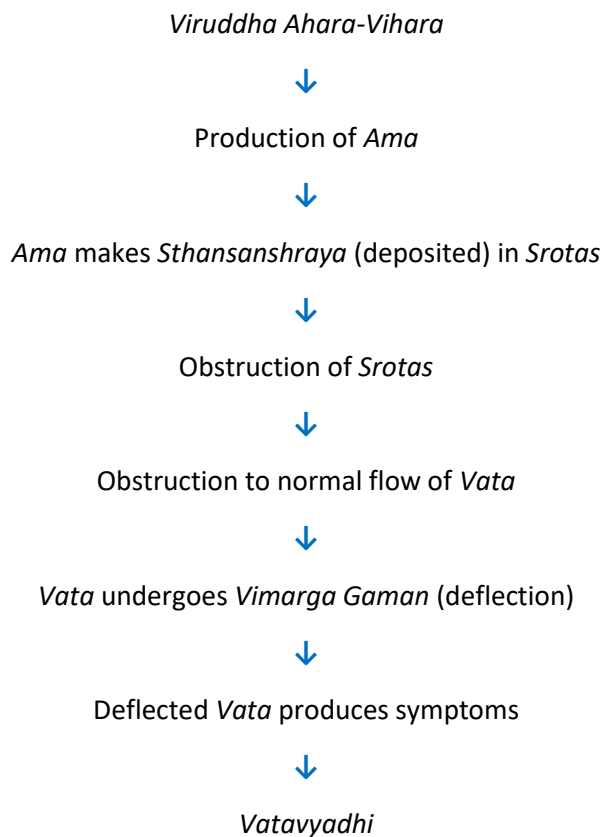
There are also 2 types of *Vishesha Samprapti* viz. *Dhatukshayajanya* and *Margavrodhjanya*.^[20] An attempt will be made to explain probable pathophysiology of *Vatavyadhi* due to consumption of incompatible diet and faulty regimen.

- 1) *Dhatukshayajanya Vatavyadhi* - Due to faulty diet practices there may be an inadequacy of nutrition to *Dhatu*s of the body leading to *Rikta* (empty) *Srotas*; and along with this if there is presence of *Vata* vitiating *Vihara* (regimen), the *Vata* gets established in these empty *Srotas* and manifest into *Vatavyadhi*.
- 2) *Margavrodhjanya Vatavyadhi* - The incompatible diet and faulty regimen may result into formation of *ama* which can lead to obstructive pathology. *Ama* deposits itself in *Srotas* creating obstruction to normal flow of *Vata*. This deflected *Vata* (*Vimarga Gaman*) manifests into various types of *Vatavyadhi*.

Dhatukshayajanya Samprapti



Margavrodhjanya Samprapti



MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a conceptual study which comprises of the review of literature of classical ancient Ayurveda texts. Literature in modern science concerned with concept of *Viruddha Ahara* and *Ahara Vidhi Vidhan* have been collected and correlated with published works. The compiled literary material has been analysed and critically evaluated to develop the concept.

DISCUSSION

There are over 600 known neurological disorders and conditions that affect the human nervous system and for many of them treatment options are extremely limited.^[21] Hundreds of millions of people worldwide are affected by neurological disorders. Approximately 6.2 million people worldwide die because of stroke each year, over 80% of deaths take place in low- and middle-income countries. More than 50 million people have epilepsy worldwide. It is estimated that there are globally 35.6 million people with dementia with 7.7 million new cases every year - Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia and may

contribute to 60-70% of cases. The prevalence of migraine is more than 10% worldwide.^[15]

Ayurveda considers neurological disorders are the result of a *Vata Dosh* vitiation. It is described above how faulty dietary practices and intake of incompatible foods can result in occurrence of various *Vatavyadhi* by means of different pathophysiology.

It is of great necessity to find the relation between diet of present era and establishing them on basic Ayurvedic principles in causation of diseases.

Intake of milk with fruits should be avoided, but in today's life we see that consumption of food items like fruit salad with cream, fruit shakes containing milk especially banana milk shake, are quite popular. Similarly heated honey is mentioned to become poisonous, but honey with warm water is widely advertised as a health drink for weight loss. Ayurveda also advises against consumption of raw and cooked foods together, but sashimi, a Japanese delicacy consisting of raw sliced fish or meat eaten with cooked rice is globally popular. Consumption of ice cream with hot chocolate sauce is another example of incompatible diet (*Veerya Viruddha*).

Fast foods are greatly popular especially in young individuals. A recent in vivo study demonstrated how fast foods are deficient in micronutrients, including zinc, iron, micronutrients, and vitamins. The study concluded that micronutrient deficiency especially zinc, caused underdeveloped testis and decreased testosterone levels^[22] which can further lead to erectile dysfunction and impotence (*Klaibya/Shaandya*).

Various studies have associated fast foods as a risk factor for diabetes mellitus in adult as well as growing population. Diabetes has been considered an independent compounding risk for stroke by aggravating other risk factors including hypertension, heart diseases, and hyperlipidemia.^[23]

Another study shows that reheating of oils such as soyabean, sunflower, corn produces a toxin called 4-hydroxy-trans-2-nonenal (4-HNE). Higher levels of 4-HNE have been linked with diseases like Alzheimer's

disease, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, stroke, and cancer.^[24]

Dietary practices of today's lifestyle like prolonged fasting; eating in a hurried manner; usage of mobile phones, television while eating; conversing, discussing, laughing while eating, all are against *Ahara Vidhi Vidhan*.

CONCLUSION

From above discussion it is evident that incompatible diet and regimen is an important aspect of today's lifestyle. This can lead to several types of diseases including neurological diseases unbeknownst to people. It is therefore important to enlist incompatibilities of diet and regimen in causation of neurological disease. This study explores the role of faulty dietary practices in both *Dhatukshayajanya* and *Margavrodhjanya Samprapti* of *Vatavyadhi*. Ayurveda provides a complete and systematic understanding about effect of food on our health. Food taken in a proper manner helps in promotion and maintenance of health, on the contrary if taken in an improper manner leads to various diseases. Proper study and understanding of Ayurveda can help train individuals to practice a healthy lifestyle inclusive of healthy dietary practices and help in preventing such factors becoming cause of neurological diseases.

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