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Hemant Rutucharya - A Seasonal Regimen

Geeta J. Junjarwad

Associate Professor, Dept of Swasthavritta, SDM Trust's Ayurvedic Medical College, Terdal, Karnataka, India.

ABSTRACT

A healthy life is a wish of every being since antiquity. Ayurveda is the science of life with the aim of attaining health and curing diseases of ill. Ayurveda describes seasonal regimen for maintainance of health. In every *Ritu*, climate is different so the condition of *Dosha* is also different. So to maintain the equation of *Dosha*, one should follow the regimen, which are explained in Ayurveda so that one can prevent disease. *Hemanta Ritu* is a very pleasant *Ritu*, coming in *Dakshinayana*, moon is very powerful than sun, sweet taste are predominant in *Ritu*, so the strength of person enhances during the period.

Key words: *Hemanta Ritu, Ritucharya, Seasonal Regimen.*

INTRODUCTION

Ritu means time. *Charya* means regimen to be followed.^[1] The regimen which is wholesome to everyone with respect to the diet and practice is *Ritucharya*.^[2] The changes in diet and practices in response to change in climatic conditions like heat, cold, rain etc. is *Ritucharya*.^[3] The year is divided into six ritus or seasons ; they are *Varsha, Sarad, Hemant, Shishir, Vasant, Grishma* depending on the changes in the climate.^[4] These six *Ritus* are broadly divided into two *Ayans* (or solistics) depending on the direction of movement of sun that is *Uttarayana. Shishira, Vasant* and *Grishma* comes in *Uttarayana* (northern solstice) also known as *Adanakala* because sun takes away the strength of people daily.^[5] *Varsha, Sharad* and *Hemanta Ritu* from *Dakshinayana* (southern solstice) also known as *Visargakala* because power of moon is

more in these three *Ritu*. So the moon gives strength to the people.^[6] According to hindu calendar *Margashirsha (Saha)* and *Pusya* forms *Hemanta Ritu*. According to English calendar, *Hemanta Ritu* starts from nov15 to jan15. In this *Hemanta Ritu, Agnibala* (digestive capacity) is more so in this *Ritu* use of sweet, sour and salt tastes should be made. As the nights are longer, person feels hungry in the morning itself, so one should take products of sugarcane, milk, black gram, fat and edible oils. During *Hemanta Ritu*, due to atmospheric cold, the heat of the body is conserved inside by constriction that leads to increase of *Jatharagni* (digestive fire).^[8]

Effects of *Dakshinayana* on the body

The winds are not very dry or fierce. Moon is more powerful than sun, the heat of the earth is taken away by clouds, rain and coldwind. Unctuousness sets in the atmosphere and sour, salt and sweet tastes are predominant so the strength of person enhances during the period.^[9]

In the beginning of the *Visargakala* and ending of *Adanakala*, weakness occurs, in the beings. In the middle, moderate strength and in the end of *Visargakala* maximum strength is seen.^[10] So in the *Hemanta Ritu* strength is maximum as it is in the end of *Visargakala*.

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Geeta J. Junjarwad

Associate Professor, Dept of Swasthavritta,
SDM Trust's Ayurvedic Medical College, Terdal, Karnataka, India.
E-mail: junjarwadgeeta123@gmail.com

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Basic rules of seasonal regimen

During *Hemanta Ritu*, sweet taste should be consumed and unctuous and hot food should be used.^[11]

Feature of Hemant Ritu

The cold wind in the northern direction with dust and smoke all around is present in the *Hemanta Ritu*. The sun is covered with mist, lakes, tanks, etc. are covered with ice, the birds like crow, animals, get wild as it is the season for mating. This is the season for flowering of *Lodhra*, *Priyangu* and *Nagakesara*.^[12]

Effect of Hemanta Ritu on body

In this *Ritu*, due to atmospheric cold, the heat of the body is covered inside by constriction. This leads to increase of *Jatharagni*.

So if proper heavy food is not consumed, it will burn away the *Rasadidhatu*, as the food is in the form of fuel is not available.^[13]

Condition of Dosha

The medicines have good potency due to the effect of time. The water is clean, unctuous and heavy. Sun rays are mild due to ice and mist in the atmosphere. The water and medicines have *Madhura Vipaka*, *Guru*, *Sheeta* and *Snigdha*, so accumulation of *Kapha* takes place.^[14]

Do's and Don'ts in Hemant Ritu

Do's^[15]

Ahara

- New rice
- Millet
- Wheat
- Black gram
- Green gram
- Products of sugarcane and milk
- Fat
- Edible oil

- Warm water
- Flesh of aquatic animal

Vihara

- Gentle body massage with oil
- Head massage
- Body oil and head oil is removed by washing with decoctions
- Fine pastes of *Kumkum* and *Darpa (Kasturi)* should be applied then body exposed to fumes of *Aguru*
- Staying in warm heated rooms
- Use warm clothes
- Moderate exercise and sex as per the ability
- Foot wear should be worn always.

Don'ts^[15]

Ahara and Vihara

- *Vata* aggravating food which is light, dry, stale
- Less quantity of food
- Cold food
- Intake of cold drinks
- Exposure to strong wind
- Staying in cold rooms (*Sheetagraha*)

DISCUSSION

The person who follows *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, never suffering from disease. The person who is having the knowledge of season and following the *Ahara* and *Vihara* according to the *Ritu*, he gets *Bala* (strength), *Varna* (colour complexion) and *Ayushalaksha* (long healthy life). The positive health is to be obtained strictly observing the prescribed rules and *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*. We know that the state of homeostasis has its direction bearing on dietetics and advocated seasonal regimen. The regimen daily activates are having overall capacity to promote, preserve the health of an individual and also prevent the disease. To follow a seasonal regimen is preventive principle of Ayurveda. The preventive

principle described by Ayurveda are comprehensive healthcare in promoting physical, mental, social, spiritual health of an individual as well as community. One must always manage to maintain health, so that the disturbance that have not arisen may not arise.

CONCLUSION

Health is a dynamic phenomenon (that is always changing). It is being constantly subjected to factors of disturbance and needs to be restored as often as it is disturbed. The body must also be protected from disturbance like internal (e.g the *Dosas* being aggravated by careless conduct) or by external factors (e.g. seasonal variation) over which individual has control. If an individual follows the prescribed *Ritucharya*, he will overcome the stress of seasonal variation and as such may not suffer from ill health ordinarily produced by *Kalaparinama*.

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