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Anguli Pramana in Ayurveda - A method of measurement in Ancient time

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ABSTRACT

The length and breadth of different anga-pratyanga in the human body was measured by using the fingers of individuals is known as *Anguli Pramana*. Own *Anguli Pramana* is taken to measure the body parts, this is called as *Swanguli Pramana*. It is one of the *Sharira Pramana* tool for determining various measurement of body parts. *Angula Pramana* is the means to quantitatively expressing the magnitudes of the human body parts. An individual with *Anga-Pratyangas* having appropriate measurements is tolerated with longevity, prosperity, happiness, wealth, ojas, strength. *Angula Pramana* is ancient method of quantitatively expressing the scales of the human body parts. *Anguli Pramana* measurement should be done at the site of 'Average of medio-lateral proximal interphalangeal joint of middle finger of right and left hand, and it should be considered of concerned person.

Key words: *Anguli Pramana, Sharira Pramana.*

INTRODUCTION

An *Anguli Pramana* is one of the *Sharira Pramana* tool for determining various measurement of body parts. In Ayurveda *Anguli Pramana* is one of the significant concepts in the ancient Indian medical sciences. The words 'Pramana' and 'metry' are related to measurement which described in Ayurveda for examination of patient the body has been mentioned in Ayurvedic Classics. This complete knowledge about *Sharira* always very much essential for a physician. According Acharya Sushruta Samhita to understand, anatomy grossly human body is divided into major six components. So, body is divided into two upper and

two lower extremities, Trunk, Thorax, Abdomen, Head, Neck & face.^[1] In the era of Sushruta, Charaka the body proportion were assumed on *Anguli Pramana*, means measuring various body parts were by applying self *Anguli*. *Anguli* is one the oldest unit of measurement appears to be more natural and scientific method. Ayurveda has given importance to individualistic approach rather than a generalized one.^[2]

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the method of measurement of body parts in Ayurveda.
2. To review literature on *Anguli Pramana* for measurement of *Sharira Pramana*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literary source

All possible review of the available literature on the *Anguli Pramana* done from classical text of Ayurveda, data also collected from various books, periodicals, thesis and papers published in the e-journal etc.

Anguli Pramana

In the ancient time of Charak and Sushruta, the length and breadth of different anga-pratyanga in the

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human body was measured by using the fingers of individuals. This method of dimension is named as *Anguli Pramana*.

Technical terms of *Anguli Pramana*

It is the distal and movable part of the upper limb & lower limb; they are of twenty in number & of five types.

- a) *Angushta*
- b) *Tarjani/ Pradeshini*
- c) *Madhyam Anguli*
- d) *Anamika*
- e) *Kanishta*

Anguli Pramana is a relative unit to denote length, breadth and circumference. *Angula* can be taken as;

- 1) Width of the *Madhyama Parva* of the *Madhyama Angula*.
- 2) Measurement obtained by taking the length of the *Madhyama Angula* and dividing it by Five.
- 3) Measurement obtained by taking the width of the palm and then dividing by Four.

As length and breadth of fingers of every person is differ from each other. That's why to measure the *Anga-Pratyanga*, own *Anguli Pramana* is taken to measure the body parts, this is called as *Swanguli Pramana*. Specification for *Anguli Pramana* for the measurement is taken as a length of proximal inter phalangeal joint (of right hand) and considered as *Swanguli*. So *Swanguli Pramana* (Self finger) is considered as a length of proximal inter phalangeal joint (Specifically considered of right hand).^[3] According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Pramanaa* is included among the *Dashavidha Parikshya Bhavas*. *Ayupariksha* is a substantial procedure before starting with management of any Disease. As the *Pramana Pariksha* plays an important role in assessment of the Ayu of an individual.^[4] *Pramana Sharira* can be considered as scientific tools of research which are not only useful in *Roga* (Disease) and *Rogi* (Patient) *Pariksha* (examination) but can be useful in evidence of the critical scientific approach of Ayurveda.

Pramana, which is one of the ancient methods of research having utmost importance in developing research methodology in Ayurveda and which can be achieved by *Pramanaa*.^[5]

In modern science, *Pramana Sharira* is nothing but the anthropometry which is used only for physical measurement like height, age etc. Anthropometry of the contemporary system is defined as the study of the human body in terms of bone, adipose tissue, muscle, correlated with risk of systemic as well as life style disorder. The *Ayaam* (Vertical height) of the any individual's whole body should be 84 *Angula* and *Ayaam* should be equal to *Vistaar* (Arm span or horizontal height) of the body. The person having *Ayaam* (vertical height) and *Vistaar* (Arm span) equal to each other is known as *Sama Purusha* (Anatomically proportionate healthy person) and these Person will have *Uttam Ayu* (longevity), *Bala Oja*, *Sukha*, *Aishvarya*, *Vita* (wealth).^[6]

DISCUSSION

Angula Pramana is the means to quantitatively expressing the magnitudes of the human body parts. For measuring the *Maana* (Quantity) of *Doshas in the body* as well as *Dhatu* the ancient system of measurements described in Ayurveda like *Anjali Pramanaa*, *Anguli Pramanaa*.^[7] *Acharya Charaka* considered it as one among the *Dashavidha Pareekshya Bhavas*. The patient should be examined by measuring *Anga Pratyanga* by using *Swaangula Pramana* as unit of measurement.^[8] There are basically two types of *Pramanas* that we find in Ayurvedic classics, one is *Anjali Pramana* and the other one is the *Anguli Pramana*. The *Anjali Pramana* is used for measuring other body constituents including fluids. On the other hand, *Anguli Pramana* which is based on *Swaangula Pramana* is used for measuring the dimensions (*Ayama*, *Vistara*, and *Parinaha* etc.) of the different *Anga-Pratyangas* of the body. The concept of *Anguli Pramanaa* is an exclusive unique entity of Ayurveda, compared to other system of medicine.^[9] *Ayupareeksha* is an important procedure before starting with the treatment. Ayurvedic principles state the *Pramanataha*

Pareeksha as one of the criteria to ascertain *Ayu* of the patient. *Sushrutacharya* has described *Anguli Pramana* for assessing life span and financial status of individual. The person who have appropriate *Pramana* of his *Anga Pratyangas* will attain *Deergayu* and the person with moderate and poor measurements attain *Madya* and *Alpa Ayu* respectively.^[10] The calculation and assessment of *Sharirik Bala* (immunity) i.e. *Uttam Bala* (Good immunity) and *Heen Bala* (poor immunity) and *Madhyam Bala* (moderate immunity) can be inspected with the help of *Anguli Pramaan*.^[11]

In *Ashtanga Hrudaya*, it has been mentioned that a person having height equal to $3^{1/2}$ of his own *hasta* will have a happy life, but it is not applicable for *Ashtanindita Purusha*. There is some difference of opinion between *Sushruta* and *Charaka* about height of human in *Angula Pramana*. *Sushruta* has mentioned the height of man as 120 *angulas*. Commenting on that *Dalhana* opines that; height given by *Sushruta* is to be measured by making the person stand on his toes with arms raised above the head. While *Chakrapani* comments that the *Angula Pramana* taken by *Sushruta* is smaller than taken by *Charaka* and there is actually there is no difference between the two. Both *Charaka* and *Vagbhata* considered 84 *angulas* as the height of an individual according to *Chakrapani*; height is to be measured from *Padatala* to *Shirahparyanta* that is the top of the head. *Acharya Charaka* gave a glorious concept of '*Sama Shareera*' which gives an idea that the individual having equal height and arm span is considered to have *Sama Shareera* and will attain *Deergayu, Bala, Sukha, Aishvarya, Ojas*, etc.

Importance of Pramana Shareera Based on Swa-Angula Pramana

An individual with *anga-pratyangas* having appropriate measurements is tolerated with longevity, prosperity, happiness, wealth, *ojas*, strength etc. The measurements mentioned in the classics for each part of the body are appropriate and desirable where as the less or more of these are abnormal and undesirable. *Anguli Pramana* is useful in the measuring different measurements of different

parts of the body. It is included in *Dashvidha Pariksha* (ten folds of examination) and also useful in assessing the *Ayu* of the patient. It also helps to identify the *Nindita Purusha* explained in *Ayurvedic classic*. It helps in determining *Atideergha & Atihrasva Purushas* with the measurements.

CONCLUSION

The concept of *Anguli Pramana* is an exclusive unique entity of *Ayurveda*. *Angula Pramana* is ancient method of quantitatively expressing the scales of the human body parts. *Anguli Pramana* measurement should be done at the site of 'Average of medio-lateral proximal interphalangeal joint of middle finger of right and left hand, it will be appropriate to take the unit of One *Angula* is calculation of average as like above sites as compared to average of *Chatur Anguli* of right and left hand. *Anguli Pramana* i.e. should be considered of concerned person, not examining physician. However, for the universal acceptance of standardizing anatomical organs measurements it may quite not be suitable method.

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