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# Knowledge attitude and practice of *Peya* among practitioners of Ayurveda

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## ABSTRACT

*Ahara* plays an important role in the maintenance of health and cure of diseases. Various dietetic preparations are explained in Ayurveda under *Pathya Kalpana*. Among this *Pathya Kalpana*, *Peya* is most commonly used preparation. No much study is undergone on this topic. *Peya* is beneficial in healthy and diseased. *Peya* is *Satmya* to people living in southern parts of India. So medicines can be administered by adding it with *Peya*. In classics, there are various diseases in which *Peya* have been recommended. On administering *Oushada Siddha Peya* in these conditions *Peya* does its action as well as exhibits the properties of *Dravyas* with which it is processed. It cures disease and at the same time nourishes *Dhathus*. A KAP survey was conducted as a part of study among the Ayurvedic practitioners. Majority of practitioners were found to administer classical *Peya Yogas*. Utility of *Peya* have been extended to other diseases, which are not mentioned in classical ayurvedic text books. This proves that *Peya* can be administered depending on the condition of patient as well as stage of disease. It was observed from the study that 78.0% practitioners had good knowledge regarding *Peya* and more than 50.0% had positive attitude towards this treatment modality. But only 46.0% practitioners adopted *Oushada Siddha Peya* in their practice.

**Key words:** KAP survey, *Peya*, *Pathya Kalpana*.

## INTRODUCTION

*Ahara* is considered as *Mahabhaishajya*<sup>[1]</sup> in Ayurveda. Following healthy diet and dietetic rules helps in protecting health and curing diseases. If wholesome diet is given in a planned way, then there is no need to administer medicines, and if wholesome diet is not being followed, then medicine is of no use.<sup>[2]</sup> Thus Ayurveda gives more importance to *Pathya* or healthy diet in curing disease than medicine. There are instances where *Acharya* advices

to administer *Oushada* along with *Ahara*. For pacifying a disease either drugs or diet opposite to the disease can be used.<sup>[3]</sup> In Ayurvedic classics various *Ahara Kalpanas* and *Oushada Kalpanas* which cure diseases are explained. *Ahara Kalpanas* and *Oushada Kalpanas* has to be used as per the need of patient.

According to Ayurveda, before administering any treatment *Bala* of *Rogi* and *Roga* has to be assessed. The type of treatment adopted depends on the *Rogi* and *Roga Bala*. If *Bala* of *Rogi* is weak, food can be processed with medicine and administered. *Peya* which is one among the *Anna Kalpana* serves this purpose effectively. *Peya* is easily digestible; it kindles digestive fire and helps flatus, urine, feces and *Doshas* to be in their normal course. It produces perspiration by its warmth, relieves thirst by its fluidity and sustains *Prana* due to *Ahara Bhava* (as it is a kind of food). It bestow feeling of lightness to the body by eliminating wastes by its laxative property and cures diseases because of its quality of making the *Doshas* normal.<sup>[4]</sup>

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Food can be mixed with medicines and administered to patients who have aversion for medicines. *Peya* is a dietary preparation which is *Satmya* to the individuals of South India.<sup>[5]</sup> Hence, it becomes an ideal preparation for healthy as well as diseased condition to people living in particular geographic area.<sup>[6]</sup>

This prompted me to do a study on the popularity of this treatment modality among Ayurveda practitioners and to assess the underlying principles behind the administration of different types of *Peya*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Specific formulations of *Peya* have been indicated in specific diseases. This practice of administration of medicated *Peya* has the additional benefit of not impairing *Bala*, at the same time achieving the desired doshic balance. This modality had been extensively practiced among traditional practitioners with marked benefits. But somehow this modality is less popular these days.

The underlying principles behind the use of different types of *Peya* must be understood before they are used. Present study was an attempt to explore the principles behind this modality and to validate its utility among ayurvedic practitioners. Also an effort was made to explore diseases in which *Peya* is administered commonly.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study in detail on the therapeutic principles of various *Peya Yogas* and corresponding stages of its administration in different diseases available from major classical text books of Ayurveda.
2. To assess the Knowledge Attitude and Practice of prescribing *Peya* among the practitioners.

The first objective is achieved by carrying out a thorough literary research on *Peya Yogas* used in different diseases. The second objective is achieved through survey conducted among Ayurvedic practitioners of Malabar region.

### Study Design

**Phase 1:** Exploratory study

**Phase 2:** Knowledge Attitude and Practice survey (KAP Survey)

**Study Setting:** Malabar region had been chosen as study area due to its extensive popularity of practice of *Peya*.

**Study Population:** Ayurveda medical practitioners

**Inclusion Criteria:** Ayurveda medical practitioners with A Class registration.

**Exclusion Criteria:** Practitioners who were not willing to take part in the survey.

**Sample Size:** 50

**Sampling Technique:** A sampling frame was prepared by simple random sampling,<sup>[7]</sup> practitioners from each category was selected.

### Data Collection: Survey

#### Study Tool

1. Authentic Ayurvedic treatises (original treatises and commentaries)
2. Questionnaire

The study involved a thorough literary survey of *Peya* from different Ayurvedic texts. Preparation, combination and various stage specific utility of *Peya* in the management of different diseases were analyzed. The concepts and theories developed after the bibliographical survey were discussed among the experts to design a well structured questionnaire which was pre-tested among doctors of Government Ayurveda College, Trivandrum. The questions was forced choice format. A KAP survey (Knowledge Attitude Practice) was carried out in Malabar region among 50 Ayurveda Medical Practitioners with A Class registration selected by simple random sampling. As the data collected were mostly qualitative, percentages were calculated and data was statistically analyzed to draw valid conclusions. Statistical tables and figures were constructed based on data.

## RESULTS

- 58.0% of physicians participated in survey administer *Ahara Kalpanas* mentioned in

Ayurveda classics in their practice and 42.0% physician's do not administer them in practice. Among *Ahara Kalpanas* *Peya* is administered by majority of sample physicians and *vilepi* is least popular among physicians.

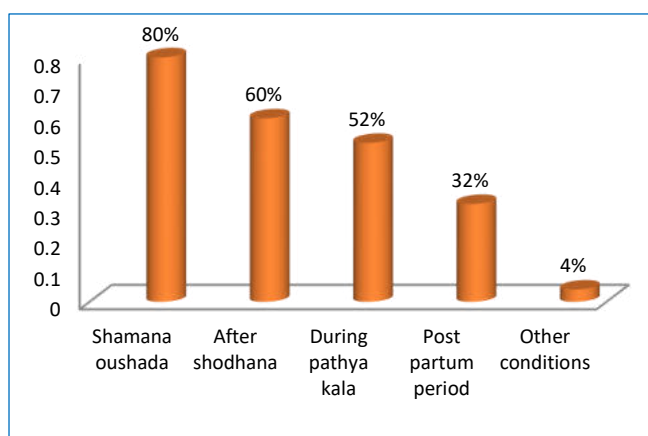
- Out of 50 practitioners who took part in survey, 66.0% find administering food along with medicine beneficial in treatment and 34.0% do not find it beneficial.
- 54.0% of physicians administer *Oushada Siddha* *Peya* in their practice and 46.0% do not administer. *Peya Yogas* are described in our classics for most of the conditions where *Agni* is impaired. A physician is free to modify these combination based on his *yukthi*. 28.0% physicians modify *Ahara Kalpanas* mentioned in classics and 72.0% do not modify.
- Medicated gruels are administered in different cases like as *Shamana Oushada*, after *Shodhana*, after treatment during *Pathya Kala* and during post partum period. Majority of physicians administer *Peya* as *Shamana Oushada*. Among the practitioners, 80% administer *Peya* as *Shamana Oushada*, 60% administer *Peya Yogas* after *Samshodhana*, 52% physicians administer *Peya* after treatment during *Pathya Kala* and only 32% physicians who took part in survey administer *Peya Yogas* during post partum period as a part of *Sootika Paricharya*. Physicians prescribing *Peya* for other conditions constitute only 4%. Other conditions where *Peya* is used are initial stages of disease where *Deepana* is required, as *Vrishya Yoga*, for *Santarpana* and for palliative care.
- Physicians who took part in survey administer *Peya Yogas* in *Jwara*, *Rakthapitta*, *Kasa*, *Chardhi*, *Arshas*, *Atisaram*, *Grahani* and *Shwayathu*. Other than these conditions which are mentioned in classics, more than 50% of physicians administer *Peya* in various other diseases like *Amavata*, *Sandhigata Vata*, *Stanya Kshaya*, *Marma Kshata*, *Abhighata*, *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, skin diseases,

kidney diseases, heart diseases, multiple sclerosis, metabolic diseases, *Vrana*.

- Among the factors considered while administering *Peya*, 84.0% administer *Peya* by analysing status of *Agni*, 48.0% considers *Dosha*, 68.0% considers *Rogi Balam*, 56.0% administer *Peya* considering *Roga Balam*, 32.0% prescribe *Peya* analysing *Roga Avastha*, 20.0% of physicians advise *Peya* by considering *Roga Marga* and Only 12.0% physicians administer *Peya* considering *Prakrthi*. 12.0% administer *Peya* by analyzing status of other factors like *Koshta*, *Satmya*, addictions and economic status of patients
- 44% physicians do not consider *Agni* while deciding the duration of administering *Peya* and 56% physicians consider *Agni* while deciding duration of prescribing *Peya*.
- 64% physicians find *Peya* beneficial in curing disease. 88% practitioners find *Peya* is beneficial in stabilizing *Agni*. According to 64% physician's *Peya* helps in protecting strength. Only 4.0% finds *Peya Yogas* makes medicine palatable. 12% physicians find it helpful in reducing cost of treatment and 4.0% physicians find *Peya* has effect of enhancing action of drug.
- 55.1% physicians find practical difficulties in administering *Peya* while 44.9% do not find any practical difficulty in practicing *Peya*. Among the physicians who find it difficult in administering *Peya Yogas*, main problems are difficulty in preparation of *Peya Yogas*, lack of cooperation from patients and other reasons.
- Among the practitioners who participate in the survey 78.0% had good knowledge regarding *Ahara Kalpanas* and *Peya Yogas*. 20.0% had average knowledge level and 2.0% physicians had poor knowledge regarding *Ahara Kalpanas* and *Peya Yogas*. 54.0% physicians had positive attitude towards the administration of *Peya Yogas* in practice and 46.0% had negative attitude.

**Table 1: Distribution of physicians based on type of *Peya Yogas* administered**

Type of <i>Peya yoga</i>	Yes	No
Classical <i>Yogas</i>	14	13
Formulated by experience	11	14
Traditionally practiced <i>Yogas</i>	11	14

**Figure1: Diagrammatic representation of distribution of physicians based on conditions in which *Peya Yogas* are administered.****Table 2: Distribution of physicians based on use of *Peya Yogas* in different diseases**

Disease	Yes	No
<i>Jwara</i>	21	4
<i>Rakthapitta</i>	5	20
<i>Kasa</i>	3	22
<i>Chardhi</i>	15	10
<i>Arshas</i>	7	18
<i>Atisaram</i>	14	11
<i>Grahani</i>	14	11
<i>Shwayathu</i>	7	18
Other	15	10

**Table 3: Distribution of physicians based on factors considered while administering *Peya***

Factors considered	Yes	No
<i>Agni</i>	21	4
<i>Dosham</i>	12	1
<i>Rogi Balam</i>	17	8
<i>Roga Balam</i>	14	11
<i>Roga Avastha</i>	8	17
<i>Roga Margam</i>	5	20
<i>Prakrthi</i>	3	22
Other factors	3	22

## DISCUSSION

The *Ahara Kalpanas*, *Manda*, *Peya*, *Vilepi* and *Yavagu* are extensively described in treatment of various diseases. Among them, *Peya* is considered as *Pathya* due to *Oushada Roopatwa*. It is superior to other preparations as it is beneficial in both healthy as well as diseased.

Ayurvedic classics describe *Peya Yogas* in various diseases. Most of the diseases belong to *Abhyantara Roga Margam*, where *Agni* is impaired. Physicians who took part in survey administer *Peya Yogas* commonly in *Jwara*, *Rakthapitta*, *Kasa*, *Chardhi*, *Arshas*, *Atisaram*, *Grahani* and *Shwayathu*. Majority physicians administer *Peya Yogas* in other conditions like *Amavata*, *Sandhigata Vata*, *Stanya Kshaya*, *Marma Kshata*, *Abhigata*, *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, skin diseases, kidney diseases, heart diseases, multiple sclerosis, metabolic diseases, *Vrana*, palliative care in cancer patients etc. Here it can be observed that diseases occurring in *Bahya Roga Margas* like *Kushta*, *Vrana*, *Arbudha* etc. and in disease belonging to *Madhyama Roga Margam* like heart disease, *Marma Kshata*, *Sandhi Vata* etc. are also administered *Peya*. So if *Avastha* or the condition demands *Peya* can also

be used in diseases manifesting in all the *Roga Margas*.

Even though in Ayurvedic classics *Peya* is administered in particular stage of a disease, majority of physicians advice *Peya* along with other Ayurvedic formulations. Here it is used just as a diet modification rather than a treatment modality.

The survey study revealed that even though a medicated *Peya* will not be sufficient to cure a disease completely, it can be used in specific conditions where the utility of *Peya* becomes necessary. The survey among practitioners of Ayurveda revealed that even though majority of the physicians had good knowledge and positive attitude towards this treatment modality when it comes to practice only a minor group of physicians are able to practice this treatment modality successfully.

## CONCLUSION

When various drugs are processed with *Peya*, their properties can be introduced into *Peya*. So *Peya* acts as medicine as well as *Pathya Ahara*. Thus *Oushada Siddha Peya* helps in bridging the gap between *Ahara* and *Oushada*. Two stages of administering *Peya Yogas* were observed from literary research. One is using *Peya* as a primary line of treatment, where patient is unable to withstand strong therapies. Another instance is after *Langhana*, for providing strength to patient who has undergone strong therapies. The administration of *Peya* after main treatment procedure helps to achieve *Agni Deepthi* and *Dosha Anulomana* as well as sustaining the effect of treatment.

Majority of physicians administer *Peya* as *Shamana Oushada*. Even though in Ayurvedic classics *Peya* is used mainly in *Abhyantara Roga Marga Ashritha Vyadhis*, most of the physicians extend its utility in other *Rogamarga Ashritha Vyadhis* also. So if *Avastha* or the condition demands *Peya* can also be used in

diseases manifesting in all the *Roga Margas*. The survey revealed that even though majority of the physicians had good knowledge and positive attitude towards this treatment modality when it comes to practice only a minor group of physicians are able to practice this treatment modality successfully.

## FURTHER SCOPE OF STUDY

The study may be repeated in larger samples. Clinical studies can be conducted to test the efficacy of *Peya Yogas* mentioned in classics. *Peya Yogas* that are traditionally practiced and formulated on the basis of *Yukthi* can be documented and analyzed.

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