

CONCEPT OF PATHYA***Vineetha V. Kurup**

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the art of living deals with all aspects of life from birth to death. Ayurveda is reflective in its treasures and principles as antiquity goes back to vedas which are the original sources of the subject matter of Ayurveda. According to Ayurveda, human life is supported by three pillars- ahara, nidra & brahmacharya.^[1] The first among the three, ahara has given importance to the culinary section of Ayurveda. The Ayurvedic cuisine is designed in such a way that it provides energy not only for body, but also for mind. This dietary and lifestyle restrictions are called as pathya in broader sense. In this era of modernization, the lifestyle of people is changed significantly leading to discrepancy between the external environment and man's internal mechanism causing multitudes of disease referred to as lifestyle diseases. Hence the significance of pathya is more in present era. Pathya palana is

given heavy magnitude by all the acharyas and legendary physicians of Ayurveda and it is said as equally important as that of chikitsa. A conceptual study on pathya is indispensable to elaborate and explain its various aspects and to differentiate it from certain other aspects which allocate some similar qualities. Here in this article there are various rationalization about pathya are presented.

KEYWORDS: Pathya, Ayurveda, Hitha, Ahara, Chikitsa.

INTRODUCTION

The history of dietetics is very old. We come across plenty of references related to dietetics in veda. Dietetics word itself depict "related to diet". Entire science of dietetics is expansion of āhāra and āhāraavidhi. It is also thought similarly for āsana pravacāra. The term āsana is synonym of āhāra. Therefore it is important to over view the concept of āhāra in ancient

literature. This concept is described from etymology of word āhāra to its functions. This also includes its types, whole digestion process of āhāra, and mechanism of its action and description of āhāra available in classical texts in form of āhāra varga. The word “ahara” is very much familiar since time immemorial.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The word pathya derives its origin from root word patha which literally means a way or channel. In this article the concept of pathya is studied and analyzed from various text books of Ayurveda.

DISCUSSION

In Shabdakalpadrumam it is said that pathya is beneficial for patients while apathya harms them. The food characteristics and properties will change according to season, place and person hence pathya also changes accordingly.^[2] Pathya not only advocates intake of wholesome food but also it directs to follow a certain regimen to fasten the process of recovery from the diseased state. In Charaka Samhita while explaining about chikitsa, Charaka has used pathya as a synonym for the chikitsa.^[3] Definition of pathya and apathya says, Pathya is the regimen which doesn't impair the body system and pleasing to mind and which is not pleasing is the apathya. These should not be regarded as an invariable rule. Due to these criteria pathya is being individual for everyone.^[4] According to 'Gangadhara' in 'jalpakalpataru' tika has given a very clear cut explanation that, a drug or diet not causing harmful effects to any channel of body and which is comfortable to mana is granted as 'pathya'. Chakrapani in vimana sthana srotho vimana, defines pathya as; that which cause vitiation of dosha is called apathya and that which lead to dosha prasamana is nothing but pathya. This clarifies the point that pathya is something which is inevitable for treatment or dosha samana.^[5]

It is very clear from the first and main objective of Ayurveda as stated by Charaka that^[6], where he clearly states that first the aim of Ayurveda is safeguarding the health of a healthy person. This can be achieved through proper diet regimens and healthy food intakes. In fact, the configuration of Charaka Samhita is also conditioned to fulfill the main objective of achieving health. In context to same, swastha chatushka has been elaborated by the acharya in sutra sthana itself. Charaka says about pathya that the drugs and regimen which do not adversely affect the body and mind are regarded as wholesome; those which adversely affect them are considered to be unwholesome.

Nevertheless, this cannot be accepted as a general rule in absolute terms. The drugs and regimen in fact change their qualities, depending on the dosage, season, method of preparation, habitat and combination with other useful and harmful things. So the natural qualities of drugs and regimen as well as the conditions like dosage etc. are to be well ascertained before the administration of the requisite therapy in order to achieve the desired effect.

Wholesome and unwholesome food articles bring out opposite effects, depending upon the variations in dose, time, method of preparation, habitat, and constitution of the body, disease and the age of the individual. The body as well as diseases are caused by food; wholesome and unwholesome food is responsible for happiness and misery respectively. The body is constituted of food. Hence one should take wholesome food only after careful examination and should not indulge in unwholesome ones out of greed or ignorance. Ayurveda is science that gives equal emphasis to diet and lifestyle. In this science there is explanation about total hita and ahita of the human life.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, it is not possible to define pathya in absolute terms. Generally speaking, nature of a certain drug may however be defined, but the definition of pathya relates only to its natural form, so also about apathya. Today, the main cause of any disease is the clumsy lifestyle that has rendered the life of a common person despondent. The popularity of fast foods, canned foods etc, has increased and violation of food habits is being done because of busy schedules. Factors like high calorie food, stress, irregular dietary habits etc. contribute to life style disorders. This is the time to explore the secrets, concepts, and principles mentioned in samhita to the diseases mentioned already along with the emerging ones. However, abiding to stringent dietary measurements, i.e. pathya, diseases can be averted even without consumption of medicines. Hence, a general code of conduct has been advised to be followed during treatment or for the maintenance of good health is Pathya.

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