

THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN AYURVEDA

¹*Dr. Shailza Bhatnagar, ²Prof. P. K. Goswami and ³Dr. Mukti Manki Mita Singh

¹Assistant Professor, Deptt. of Maulika Siddhanta & Samhita, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur.

²Director, North Eastern Institute of Ayurveda and Homeopathy, Shillong, Meghalaya.

³Lecturer, Dept. of Kriya Sharira, Shri Gulabkarba Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Jamnagar.

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***Corresponding Author**

Dr. Shailza Bhatnagar

Assistant Professor, Deptt. of
Maulika Siddhanta &
Samhita, National Institute
of Ayurveda, Jaipur.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a science which deals with four types of life, i.e. *sukhayu* (happy life), *dukhayu* (unhappy life), *hitayu* (good social life which is beneficial for society) and *ahitayu* (non- beneficial for society); advantageous and harmful factors for these four types and its span (short or long). Health is a prime factor in life of an individual. A long and healthy life has been cherished by the man since ages. *Ayurveda* describes health as *svasthya*, which is a state of physical, sensorial, mental and spiritual equipoising. It does not only talk about the treatment of diseases but basically provides emphasis on each and every aspect of one's physical, psychological, social and spiritual

health at both personal and social level.

KEYWORDS: quality, life, *ayurveda*, *ayu*, *sukhayu*, *hitayu*.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a treasure of knowledge of life which is the most saintly among all the *vedas*.^[1] It is a part of the *atharveda*.^[2] The utility of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the health of a healthy individual and cure the disease of a patient.^[3] It is a science which deals with four types of life, viz., *hita*, *ahita*, *sukha* and *dukha*^[4]; advantageous and harmful factors for these four types and its span.^[5] In *Ayurveda*, the span of life is described to be determined on the basis of nature of the physique, type of constitution and special signs.^[6]

Ayu(life) means combination of body, sense organs, mind and soul.^[7] The terms, viz. *chetnanuvritti*(continuity of vitality from conception till death), *jivita*(the act of keeping

alive) and *dhari*(one that prevents the body from decay) are synonymous with *ayu*.^[8] So, the word *ayu* means the whole life of an individual.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To explore and analyse the concept of quality of life in *Ayurveda*.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Charaka Samhita, *Sushruta Samhita* and their commentaries, published research papers and others scientific database was explored and analysed regarding the concept of quality of life in *ayurveda*.

4. REVIEW OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN CLASSICAL TEXTS

Ayurveda has given concept of quality of life in terms of four types of life. Good health is key to good quality of life.

The features of different types of *ayu* are as follows.

***Sukhayu* (happy life)^[9] -The concept of personal life**

In *Ayurveda* the individuals are said to have happy life

- Those who are not afflicted with physical and mental ailments
- Who are endowed with youth, enthusiasm, strength, virility, reputation and boldness;
- Who possess intellect, knowledge and have able sense organs;
- Who possess various assets of life;
- Who act according to themselves and achieve whatever they want.

The individuals having life contrary to above mentioned features are said to have unhappy or miserable life.

4.1 *Hitayu* (useful or beneficial life)^[10] -The concept of social life

In *Ayurveda* the individuals are said to have useful or beneficial life-

- Those who are well-wishers of all creatures;
- Who do not aspire for the wealth of others;
- Who are truthful, peace loving, who examine things before acting upon them;
- Who are vigilant, who enjoy the three important desires of life viz. virtue, wealth and pleasure in a balanced manner;
- Who are endowed with the knowledge, memory and intelligence;

- Who respect and serve the elders, and who have full control over passion, anger, envy, pride and prestige;
- Who are constantly involved in various acts of charity, meditation, acquisition of knowledge and peaceful life;
- Who have knowledge of the spiritual power and are devoted to it;
- Who make efforts both for the existing as well as the next life;

The individuals having life contrary to above mentioned features are said to have non beneficial life.

The description of *sukhayu*, *dukhayu*, *hitayu* and *ahitayu* signifies the personal, mental, social and spiritual life. One of the most important factor of personal life is health both physical and mental health.

Acharya Sushruta has stated that a man is *swastha* whose *dosas*, *agni*, *dhatu*s and *malas* are in the states of normalcy (*samadosa*, *samagni*, *samadhatumalakriya*) and who is mentally, and spiritually in the state of calmness i.e. bliss and happiness^[11]. The *dosha*, *agni*, *dhatu*s and *mala* are the various structural and functional units of body which are responsible for overall functioning of the body. This definition essentially touches the state of health in terms of all the four aspects of *ayu*. The reverse of this state is considered as illness.

Definition of health according to WHO is similar to the definition of health given by *Sushruta* many thousand years ago. As per WHO “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.^[12]

The World Health Organization defines the quality of life (QOL) as one’s perception of his/her position in life, culture, and value system in which he/she lives in relation to his/her objectives, expectations and standards. According to this definition, most medical science experts believe that QOL is a multidimensional and subjective concept.^[13] In general, four basic domains of QOL are related to physical, psychological, social, and environmental health. Physical dimension is defined as physiological performance of the body and one’s perception of his/her abilities. Psychological dimension includes balance and harmony of the person with himself /herself and others. The social dimension is related to the person’s ability to communicate with others, and environmental health has concentrated on the individual’s ability to exercise and perform daily activities which are observable.^[14]

Table no. 1: Distribution of concept of happy and useful life in QOL.

Physical Health	Mental Health	Social Health	Spiritual Health
Devoid of physical ailments	Devoid of mental illness	Rich and prosperous	Truthful, peace loving,
Physically strong	Knowledgeable, sensible	Popular	Full control over passion, anger, envy, pride and prestige
Independent	Fortunate	Charitable	Solitude
Tolerant to hunger, thirst, exercise, hot and cold weather	Non jealous and non-egoistic	well-wisher of all creatures	Learned person
Young age	Self- contented and Good Thinker	Worshiper of the worthy	Spiritual, Meditative and Cognitive
	Bold and enthusiastic	Helpful to elders	
	Well aware and vigilant		
	Non – greedy	Non – greedy	

5. CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic concept of life includes physical mental, social and spiritual aspects which are a component of WHO's definitions of health and quality of life. The whole *Ayurveda* focuses on these four basic components. This sacred science is devoted to attainment of total health at the personal, family and social level. Acceptance and application of principles of *Ayurveda* may contribute to a healthy body and mind, healthy family, healthy society and ultimately a healthy nation.

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