

**HISTORICAL APPROACH OF DRUG DISCOVERY IN AYURVEDA**

**Karthikeyan S.<sup>1</sup>, Monishkumar V.<sup>2</sup>, Priyadharshini M.<sup>3</sup>, Santhosh C.<sup>4</sup>, Priyanka M.\*<sup>5</sup>,  
Manivanan R.<sup>6</sup>**

Department of Pharmacology, Excel College of Pharmacy, Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R Medical  
University.

Article Received on 07 October 2025,  
Article Revised on 27 October 2025,  
Article Published on 01 Nov. 2025,  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17538952>

**\*Corresponding Author****Priyanka M.**

Department of Pharmacology, Excel  
College of Pharmacy, Tamil Nadu Dr.  
M.G.R Medical University.



**How to cite this Article:** Karthikeyan S.1, Monishkumar V.2, Priyadharshini M.3, Santhosh C.4, Priyanka M.\*5, Manivanan R.6 (2025) HISTORICAL APPROACH OF DRUG DISCOVERY IN AYURVEDA "World Journal of Pharmaceutical Research, 14(21), 1033–1036. This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.

**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, stands as one of the most comprehensive and enduring frameworks of medical science in human history. Deeply rooted in the philosophical and spiritual traditions of the Vedic era, Ayurveda has evolved through centuries of observation, reflection, and practice. This manuscript presents a systematic review of the historical development of drug discovery within Ayurveda, exploring its philosophical, religious, and linguistic underpinnings. It highlights the contributions of key figures such as Charaka, Sushruta, and Vagbhata, alongside the intellectual influences of both Vedic and Buddhist thought. The discussion also examines the foundational theories of Sankhya, Vaisheshika, and Tridosha that form the basis of Ayurvedic medicine, as well as its approaches to diagnosis, treatment, and lifestyle. Through a historical and philosophical lens, this study reaffirms Ayurveda's continuing relevance to contemporary health sciences and its enduring contribution to holistic medical understanding.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, drug discovery, Charaka Samhita, Vedic literature, Sankhya philosophy, Tridosha theory, Panchakarma, Ayurvedic lifestyle.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Scientific and technological progress has profoundly reshaped modern healthcare, yet traditional systems such as Ayurveda continue to influence medical thought across the world. As one of the oldest and most structured forms of medical knowledge, Ayurveda represents a

synthesis of philosophy, empirical observation, and ethical practice. Its origins, however, remain the subject of scholarly debate. Some historians place its emergence in the pre-Buddhistic period, whereas others view it as an evolving discipline shaped by post-Vedic philosophical movements.

Dr. M. S. Valiathan, through textual analysis of the Charaka Samhita, situates Charaka in northwestern India during the post-Buddhistic era, describing him as an innovative thinker who absorbed and reinterpreted philosophical concepts. Conversely, Dr. R. K. Sharma and Dr. Bhagwan Dash assert that Charaka's work precedes Buddhist influence, characterizing it as a product of Brahmanical tradition. This divergence in historical interpretation underscores the dynamic intellectual milieu from which Ayurveda emerged.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review is based on an extensive analysis of classical Ayurvedic texts, including the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Sangraha, and Ashtanga Hridaya.

Complementary sources such as historical treatises, linguistic studies, and peer-reviewed research articles were also consulted. The study integrates both internal textual evidence and external historical records to reconstruct the evolutionary trajectory of Ayurvedic drug discovery and its philosophical foundations.

## 3. Historical Background

The genesis of Ayurveda is inseparable from the spiritual and intellectual heritage of the Vedas. Among these, the Atharvaveda contains numerous hymns related to healing, protection, and well-being, forming the earliest basis of Indian medical knowledge. Vedic thought emphasized the unity of the human body, mind, and cosmos, a principle that later evolved into Ayurveda's holistic philosophy of health.

The Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya collectively known as the Bruhatrayi or 'Great Trio' represent the classical consolidation of Ayurvedic wisdom. These works formalized the principles of anatomy, pathology, pharmacology, and therapeutics, establishing Ayurveda as a distinct medical discipline.

Philosophically, Ayurveda synthesizes concepts from both the Sankhya and Vaisheshika schools of thought. It also reflects interaction with Buddhist and Brahmanical traditions, as seen in Vagbhata's writings, which invoke both Hindu and Buddhist deities. This syncretic

nature highlights Ayurveda's inclusive intellectual foundation.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Sankhya philosophy provides a metaphysical framework for understanding existence through twenty-four tattvas (principles), forming the conceptual core of Ayurvedic physiology. Vaisheshika, in contrast, offers a naturalistic approach through its focus on dravya (substance), guna (quality), and karma (action). Charaka masterfully integrated these perspectives, creating a pragmatic model for medical science.

Central to Ayurveda is the Tridosha theory Vata, Pitta, and Kapha which governs all physiological and psychological processes. Health represents a balanced state of these doshas, while disease results from their disturbance. Therapeutic interventions, therefore, aim to restore doshic equilibrium through diet, lifestyle regulation, and medicinal preparations.

Ayurvedic therapeutics also include Panchakarma, a comprehensive purification therapy comprising five procedures: Vamana (emesis), Virechana (purgation), Basti (enema), Nasya (nasal administration), and Raktamokshana (bloodletting). These treatments are individualized according to a person's constitution and disorder, reflecting Ayurveda's emphasis on personalized medicine.

Diagnosis in Ayurveda involves holistic assessment, employing methods such as Trividha Pariksha (threefold examination) and Dashavidha Pariksha (tenfold examination). These focus on observation, inquiry, and physical examination to evaluate doshic balance, strength, and pathology.

Diet and lifestyle are integral to maintaining health. The principles of Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana prescribe guidelines for food selection, preparation, and consumption, emphasizing compatibility with an individual's constitution and environment. Daily and seasonal regimens (Dinacharya and Ritucharya), moral conduct (Sadvrta), and adequate rest (Nidra) are equally vital in preserving physical and mental equilibrium.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

Ayurveda represents a profound confluence of philosophy, observation, and empirical practice. Rooted in the Vedic worldview, it evolved through systematic exploration of life, health, and the natural world. Its doctrines spanning metaphysics, pharmacology, and lifestyle regulation continue to provide valuable insights into holistic healthcare. By integrating

ancient principles with contemporary research, Ayurveda can contribute significantly to modern drug discovery and preventive medicine, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of human well-being.

## REFERENCES

1. Acharya Brahmasankar Mishra. Bhavprakasha. 11th ed., Chaukhamba Publication, Varanasi, 2005.
2. Agnivesa. Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 5/3–13, translated by Bhagwan Das and Sharma, Chaukhamba Publications, Varanasi.
3. Vagbhata. Ashtanga Hridaya, Sutrasthana 8/39, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi.
4. Sushruta Samhita, Sutrasthana 46/493, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi.
5. Mukund Sabnis (2012). Viruddha Ahara: A Critical View. AYU, 33(3): 332–336.
6. Patwardhan B., Warude D., Pushpangadan P., Bhatt N. (2005). Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine: A Comparative Overview. Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 2: 465–473.
7. Basisht G. (2011). Exploring Progression of Ayurveda. AYU, 32: 445–447.
8. Lad V. (1987). Ayurveda: The Science of Self-Healing: A Practical Guide. New Delhi: Lotus Press.
9. Baghel M. S. (2011). Need of New Research Methodology for Ayurveda. AYU, 32: 3–4.
10. Semwal D. K. et al. (2015). Adverse Health Effects of Tobacco and Role of Ayurveda in Their Reduction. J Med Sci., 15: 139–146.