

## AN APPROACH OF PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN AYURVEDA

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### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda*, with its holistic approach, addresses the root causes of communicable disease, providing comprehensive solutions to maintain health and mitigate public health concerns. *Sankramak Rog* refers to communicable diseases, which fall into two main categories: "contagious diseases," which typically spread through direct contact and infectious diseases, which spread indirectly through a variety of channels, including physical, chemical, and biological contact. Communicable diseases are conditions brought on by infectious agents or their toxins that can be transmitted directly or indirectly from an infected individual to a healthy person. According to *Charaka* and *Sushruta*, communicable disorders are explicitly referred in *Ayurveda* under the general terms *Janpadodhwansa* and *Aupasargika Rog* respectively. *Ayurvedic* texts describe the etiology, pathophysiology and management of many infectious diseases, attributing them to imbalances in physical and mental elements. *Acharya Sushruta* in

*Nidan Sthana* utilized the term "*Aupasargika Rog*" to describe communicable diseases transmitted through interpersonal contact. According to *Sushruta*, contagious diseases include: *Kushtha* (skin disorders), *Jwara* (feverish conditions), *Shosha* (wasting diseases), *Netrabhishyanda* (conjunctivitis). The system proposes preventive and curative approaches, including: *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (Seasonal adaptations), *Rasayana* (rejuvenative therapies), *Sadvritta* (good conduct), *Prakriti Vighata* (constitutional

balancing), *Apakarshana* (elimination of pathogenic factors), *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoidance of disease-causing factors). Every regimen is adhered to attain homeostasis rather than merely treat a particular symptom. Modern medical science offers various drugs for the management of communicable diseases however, these drugs suffer with adverse effects like, drug resistance and toxicity. For this reason, when it comes to treating a communicable disease, it works better than modern medications.

**KEYWORDS:** *Aupasargika Rog*, Communicable Disease, *Sankramak Rog*.

## INTRODUCTION

The importance of *Ayurveda* is increasingly acknowledged worldwide, especially in combating communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV etc which pose significant public health challenges in developing countries like India. Communicable diseases spread from person to person, animal to person or through contaminated environments. Transmission occurs through:

- Respiratory droplets (airborne viruses/bacteria)
- Direct contact (blood, bodily fluids)
- Fomite transmission (contaminated surfaces)
- Vector-borne transmission (animals/insects)
- Facilitated by factors such as:
  1. High population density
  2. Inadequate hygiene
  3. Compromised immune function

Ancient *Ayurvedic* literature employed terms like *Janapadodhwansha*, *Maraka* and *Janamar* to describe epidemic diseases. *Acharya Charaka* account primarily focuses on infectious diseases, detailing the contamination of physical, chemical and biological variables in the manifestation of disease and described *Janapadodhwansha* as an epidemic phenomenon, where a communicable disease affects a specific population. He emphasized that diverse individual factors (*Prakruti*, *Sarata*, *Aahar*) converge with common factors like *Dushita Vayu* (deleterious air), *Jala* (contaminated water), *Kala* (seasonal influences) and *Desha* (regional geographical and environmental conditions) leading to disease outbreaks.<sup>[1]</sup> *Aupasargika Rog* has been explained by *Acharya Sushruta*. *Aupasargika* infections are transmissible illnesses that can be contracted by direct contact or contact with infected patient objects. These

diseases are passed from one person to another by physical contact, contaminated air, eating with others while sharing dishes, sleeping in the same bed, and sharing clothing and cosmetics.<sup>[2]</sup> *Ashtanga Hridaya* described the term "*Sanchariroga*" for communicable diseases that can be transmitted between individuals. For Example, diseases affecting the eyes and skin can be transmitted through direct contact, sharing food or utensils, or exposure to a common source and sharing a sleeping area.<sup>[3]</sup> when *Bala* gets reduced then possibility of microbial invasion increases which further initiates pathogenesis of *Sankramak Rog*.

*Ayurvedic* interventions, including *Rasayana* therapy, aim to augment *Oja*, thereby strengthening immune function.<sup>[4]</sup> Other prevention methods are *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Panchkarma*, *Sadvritta Palan*.

### **SAMPRAPTI OF SANKRAMAK ROG**

In *Ayurvedic* literature, the pathogenesis of *Sankramak Rog* is not explicitly described in relation to disease occurrence. However, specific conditions like *Agantuja Jwara* and *Agantuja Atisara* demonstrate a sequence of events in which *Dosha Dushya Sammurchana* occurs after the disease has manifested, potentially implicating infectious agents as a causative factor.

*Ayurvedic* texts do not provide a detailed explanation of the pathogenesis of *Sankramak Rog*, it is inferred that compromised *Bala* and the presence of causative factors enable microbial invasion, leading to disease onset. The manifestation of *Sankramak Rog* occurs when there's an imbalance between the body's fundamental principles (*Dosha, Dhātu, and Mala*). How the disease progresses depend on factors like the type of infection, individual constitution (*Prakriti*), *Bala*, and microbial growth. Certain factors, such as age (children are more vulnerable due to weaker immunity) and environmental conditions (like humid and moist environments), play a significant role in the onset of the disease. Therefore, targeted preventive measures are crucial to control the spread of *Sankramak Rog*.

### **PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT THROUGH AYURVEDA**

*Ayurveda* provides detailed regimens for diet and lifestyle to promote seasonal adaptation and maintain homeostasis. Its core objective is health preservation i.e. *Swasthyasya Swasthya Rakshanam*, prioritizing prevention over cure.<sup>[5]</sup> In managing infectious diseases, *Ayurveda* emphasizes a comprehensive strategy, including disease prevention and immunity enhancement through diverse methods. *Ayurveda* advocates a multi-stage approach to combat

infectious diseases, focusing on preventing disease progression and enhancing immunity through various interventions. Primordial prevention encompasses the adoption of wholesome lifestyles, including *Dinacharya*<sup>[6]</sup> (daily regimens), *Ratricharya*<sup>[6]</sup> (nightly regimens), *Ritucharya*<sup>[7]</sup> (seasonal regimens), *Sadvritta*<sup>[8]</sup> (good conduct), and *Achararasayana*<sup>[9]</sup> (promotive ethical practices). These measures collectively contribute to the enhancement of host defense mechanisms and overall well-being.

According to *Sushruta*, preventive measures against *Maraka* (epidemics) encompass a multifaceted approach, including the utilization of uncontaminated herbs and water, *Sthanaparityaga* (abandonment of contaminated locations), and various spiritual and ritualistic practices such as *Shantikarma*, *Prayashchita*, *Mangala*, *Japa*, *Homa*, *Upahara*, *Ijya*, *Anjalinamaskara*, *Tapa*, *Nidana*, *Daya*, *Dana*, *Diksha*, and worship of *Devata*, *Brahmanas*, and *Gurus*.<sup>[10]</sup> Similarly, *Bhel* described measures against epidemic like *Upahara* (fasting), *Vigra* (reverence for knowledgeable individuals), *mantra* recitation, and specific herbal usage.<sup>[11]</sup> These preventive strategies primarily emphasize self-discipline and mental tranquility.

*Rasayana* helps in boosting immune system by enhancing the natural defenses. Research has shown that consuming certain herbs like *Amalaki*, *Pippali*, *Haritaki*, and *Shilajatu* can increase gamma globulins, which in turn strengthens our resistance to diseases.<sup>[12]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

The unforeseen occurrence of epidemics and pandemics, which can lead to devastating socio-economic consequences, it is imperative to adopt a proactive approach. While the development of vaccines and treatments for novel infectious diseases is a time-intensive process, *Ayurveda* offers a promising strategy by strengthening host immunity and preventing environmental transmission, thereby reducing the burden of these diseases.

The *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya Adhyaya*, which is described in *Charaka Sutra Sthan*, teaches regular preventive principles for the prevention of ailments. Following these principles will ultimately lead to a happy and healthy life. *Charaka* discusses three distinct approaches- *Apakarshana*, *Prakriti Vighata*, and *Nidana Parivarjana*- for treating ailments that have the potential to cause disease. *Nidana Parivarjana Chikitsa* was defined by *Acharya Sushruta* as "*Samkshepatah Kriyayogo Nidana Parivarjanam*." The first step in preventing pathogenesis is to stay away from the elements that cause the disease. Diseases can be classified as *Nija*,

*Agantuja*, or *Manas*. All communicable diseases fall into the category of *Agantuja*. The prevention of these diseases involves updating memory with information about *Dosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*), *Kala*, and *Atma*; avoiding *Pragyaparadha* (undesirable actions performed despite knowledge); and exercising self-control over *Indriya* (sensory and motor control). To avoid *Janapadodhwansa*, *Sadvritta Palan* (a code of ethical conducts), *Panchkarma*, *Ritucharya*, *Dincharya*, and *Rasayana* therapy are done.

## CONCLUSION

To sustain the health of a healthy individual is the primary goal of *Ayurveda*. Prevention is best way to avoid *Aupasargika Vyadhi* (communicable diseases). As a preventive precaution for *Janapadodhwansa* *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Panchkarma*, *Rasayana* therapy and *Sadvritta Palan* (a code of right conducts) should be tried. The strategic implementation of *Nidan Parivarjana* or avoidance of disease-causing factors and *Prakriti Vighata*, which involves medicinal interventions to pacify vitiated *Dosha* and *Dhatu*, we can effectively reduce the prevalence of communicable diseases. Patients who do not exhibit life-threatening symptoms are treated with *Panchakarma* and *Rasayana* as a mainstay of care. Therefore, the spread of communicable diseases can be halted by boosting individual immunity.

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