

AYURVEDIC FRAMEWORK OF CLINICAL DECISION-MAKING: AN EVIDENCE-ORIENTED INTERPRETATION FROM CHARAKA SAMHITA

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ABSTRACT

Clinical decision-making is a crucial component of effective healthcare practice. Modern evidence-based medicine integrates scientific evidence, clinical expertise, and patient-specific factors while planning treatment. Ayurveda, as described in the Charaka Samhita, offers a structured and rational framework for clinical decision-making that closely parallels these principles. The present conceptual study aims to analyze the Ayurvedic principles of clinical decision-making with special reference to Pramana, Hetu, Lakshana, Samprapti (including Samprapti Ghataka analysis), and Yukti. A literary review of relevant sections of the Charaka Samhita was carried out to interpret these concepts in a contemporary scientific context. Ayurvedic diagnosis and management emphasize valid knowledge acquisition, identification of etiological factors, observation of clinical features, detailed understanding of disease pathogenesis, and rational application of treatment. The

study highlights that Ayurvedic clinical reasoning is analytical, systematic, and evidence-oriented, and remains relevant to modern healthcare practice.

KEYWORDS: Charaka Samhita, Clinical decision-making, Pramana, Samprapti, Yukti

INTRODUCTION

Clinical decision-making forms the foundation of successful medical practice. In contemporary healthcare, evidence-based medicine focuses on integrating research evidence, clinician expertise, and patient values to guide treatment decisions. Although the terminology is modern, the fundamental principles of rational decision-making have been elaborately described in Ayurveda since ancient times.

The Charaka Samhita, a principal classical text of Ayurveda, presents a comprehensive framework for understanding disease, diagnosis, and treatment. Instead of symptom-based management, Ayurveda emphasizes understanding disease causation, progression, and individual variability. The present paper attempts to reinterpret classical Ayurvedic principles of clinical decision-making in the context of evidence-oriented healthcare.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literary Review

A conceptual and literary review was conducted by referring to relevant chapters of the Charaka Samhita, including Sutrasthana, Nidanasthana, Vimasthana, and Chikitsasthana, along with classical commentaries. Secondary references from standard English translations and contemporary scientific literature related to evidence-based medicine were also reviewed. The collected information was critically analyzed and interpreted to understand Ayurvedic principles of clinical decision-making.

Conceptual Review

Pramana (Means of Valid Knowledge)

Pramana refers to the means by which accurate and reliable knowledge is acquired. In Ayurvedic clinical practice, proper decision-making begins with valid knowledge. The Charaka Samhita recognizes Pratyaksha (direct observation), Anumana (inference), Aptopadesha (authoritative testimony), and Yukti (logical reasoning) as essential tools for understanding disease.

Direct examination of the patient provides observable data, while inference aids in identifying underlying pathological processes. Classical textual knowledge provides established guidelines. Together, these tools ensure that clinical decisions are systematic and rational, comparable to evidence assessment in modern medicine.

Hetu (Etiological Factors)

Hetu denotes the causative factors responsible for disease initiation. Ayurveda emphasizes that accurate identification of etiological factors is essential for both prevention and management. These factors include improper diet, unhealthy lifestyle practices, environmental influences, and psychological disturbances.

The Charaka Samhita highlights Nidana Parivarjana, or avoidance of causative factors, as the first principle of treatment. Addressing the root cause rather than suppressing symptoms reflects the rational and preventive nature of Ayurvedic clinical decision-making.

Lakshana (Clinical Features)

Lakshana refers to the signs and symptoms manifested during disease. Careful observation and interpretation of clinical features help in accurate diagnosis, assessment of disease severity, and evaluation of prognosis. Variations in symptom presentation indicate the involvement of specific Doshas, disease stage, and systemic impact.

Thus, assessment of Lakshana forms a vital link between clinical observation and therapeutic planning.

Samprapti and Samprapti Ghataka Analysis

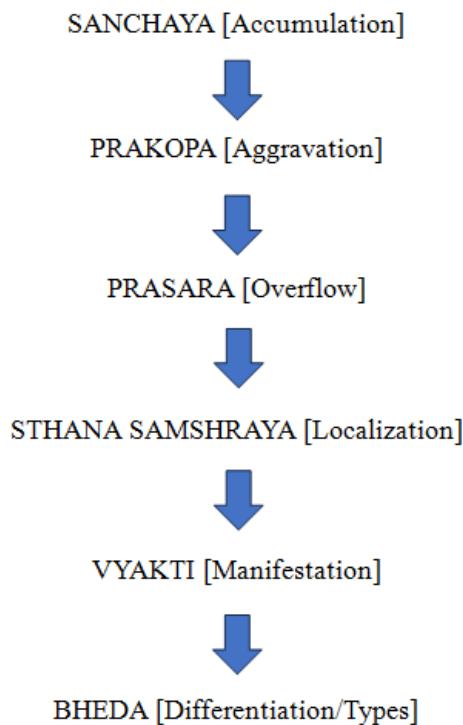
Samprapti explains the sequential development of disease from exposure to etiological factors to clinical manifestation. Disease develops when Hetu leads to Dosha vitiation, followed by involvement of Dushya, impairment of Agni, obstruction of Srotas, and accumulation of Ama, ultimately resulting in disease expression.

Detailed analysis of Samprapti Ghatakas enhances clinical understanding. These include

- Dosha involved
- Dushya affected
- Status of Agni
- Presence of Ama
- Srotas involved
- Udbhavasthana (site of origin)
- Sanchara (spread)
- Vyaktasthana (site of manifestation)
- Adhisthana (principal organ/system involved)

This analytical approach enables stage-specific and rational treatment planning and is comparable to modern pathophysiological analysis.

6 Stages of Disease in Ayurveda: Samprapti flowchart



Yukti (Rational Application of Treatment)

Yukti represents the physician's ability to logically apply theoretical knowledge in clinical practice. It integrates disease understanding with patient-specific factors such as Prakriti, Bala, Desha, and Kala.

Through Yukti, decisions regarding drug selection, formulation, dosage, and duration are individualized. This rational application of therapy highlights the depth of Ayurvedic clinical reasoning and aligns with modern patient-centered healthcare.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The clinical decision-making framework described in the Charaka Samhita demonstrates a structured and analytical approach to healthcare. The integration of Pramana, Hetu, Lakshana, Samprapti with Samprapti Ghataka analysis, and Yukti forms a comprehensive system of clinical reasoning.

Modern evidence-based medicine emphasizes the integration of scientific evidence, clinician expertise, and patient preferences. Ayurveda similarly integrates valid knowledge, logical reasoning, and individualized assessment. Although expressed in different terminologies, the underlying principles of rational clinical decision-making remain comparable.

CONCLUSION

The Charaka Samhita provides a systematic and evidence-oriented framework for clinical decision-making. The principles of Pramana, Hetu, Lakshana, Samprapti (with Samprapti Ghataka analysis), and Yukti support rational, individualized, and stage-specific management. Reinterpreting these classical concepts in contemporary scientific language can strengthen the relevance of Ayurveda in modern healthcare systems.

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