

ROLE OF CHATURVIDH PRAMANA IN DIAGNOSTIC DECISION MAKING: AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH***¹Dr. Surbhi Sharma, ²Dr. Salil Jain, ³Dr. Mamuni Sethy**

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a holistic science that developed through practical experience, systematic observation, and logical principles related to health, disease, and the functioning of the human body. Proper disease diagnosis is one of the most important foundations of successful treatment. If our diagnosis is accurate and proper, then the treatment results automatically become better. Disease diagnosis is not just a single step; rather, it is a broad term. It includes the entire process of understanding and identifying the disease. It provides systematic approach for gaining authentic knowledge. Ayurveda describes four main Pramanas for the proper identification and examination of diseases. These help the physician to understand the disease in a systematic and accurate manner. Proper utilization of these Pramanas enables a thorough understanding of the disease, which ultimately contributes to more accurate diagnosis and better treatment outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Pramana, Clinical diagnosis, investigations.

INTRODUCTION

That by which valid or true knowledge is obtained is called Pramana. Pramans are considered methods for gaining knowledge about a particular subject or phenomenon. In Ayurveda, Pramana is the synonym of Pariksha. Acharya has mentioned the word Pariksha for explaining the Chaturvidh Pramana. These are not just theoretical tools – they are used for clinical decision making and to develop correct diagnosis and treatment strategy.^[1]

All things are classified into two categories Sat-That which truly exists. Asat- That which does not exist or is absent. To verify what exists (Sat) and what does not (Asat), one must rely on valid means of knowledge called Pramana. Chaturvidha pariksha consists of Aptopadesha Parmana- It is authoritative statement obtained from a valid source of knowledge. Pratyaksha Pramana- It is the primary source of knowledge obtained through perception by senses. Anumana Pramana- This is inferential source of knowledge. It is largely based on previous knowledge obtained from the Pratyaksha Pramana. Yukti Pramana- It is based on the application and comprehension of information obtained from various sources.^[2]

Each Pramana has its own importance in the proper understanding and assessment of a disease. It form the basis for acquiring information and knowledge. Evidence based medicine is the need of the current era. Ayurveda fulfills this through Chaturvidha Pariksha. Without proper understanding of these Praman accuracy in diagnosis cannot be achieved.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this literary study material related to the study is collected from various authentic books, Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Astang Hriday, Sanskrit Dictionaries, etc.

Review

Aptopadesha आप्तोपदेशोनामाप्तवचनम्।

The statements of trustworthy and knowledgeable persons are called Aptopadesha.

The faultless and truthful words of reliable persons are called Aptopadesha.^[3,4]

In clinical dicision making – Aptopadesha is the foundation of physician's knowledge. It consists of guidelines, instructions, and authoritative statements Textbooks and standard medical literature Research articles and scientific journals, clinical practice, guidelines Expert opinions and consensus statements.

Physicians follow standard treatment guidelines and expert advice when clinical findings alone or personal experience are not enough to make a definite decision.

Many pathological processes cannot be directly visualized by the physician. A doctor cannot see tuberculosis bacteria in a coughing patient, plaque formation in blood vessels, or insulin resistance in diabetes. Aptopadesha provides knowledge about these hidden mechanisms through established scientific evidence and expert understanding.

When examination findings are uncertain or confusing, physicians depend on established guidelines and authoritative references for accurate decision-making. For instance, if a patient's HbA1c is 6.1%, the doctor refers to ADA criteria, which classify diabetes at HbA1c $\geq 6.5\%$. In this way, the uncertainty is clarified through standard medical guidelines rather than individual assumption.^[5]

Pratyaksha

The word Pratyaksha is formed by combining two words.

Prati = in front of Aksha = eye

Prataksh is direct perception is the knowledge produced by the contact of: Soul (Atma), Sense organs (Indriya), Mind (Mana), Objects of senses (Artha: sound, touch, form, taste, smell)

Prataksh is knowledge arising at that very moment. It excludes inferential knowledge and memory-based knowledge from direct perception.^[3,4]

In clinical decision making – In medicine, Pratyaksha is the most basic and essential tool for a physician. Physical examination findings, laboratory reports, imaging results, and patient complaints are all derived from direct observation of the patient's actual condition.

Components of Pratyaksha in Clinical Practice

Darshana (Observation): The physician observes appearance, skin color, posture, gait, eyes, tongue, and chest movements. Pallor may suggest anemia, while cyanosis may indicate hypoxia.

Sparshana (Palpation): Through touch, the physician assesses pulse, temperature, tenderness, swelling, edema, and organ enlargement. Nadi Pariksha in Ayurveda is an advanced form of Sparshana.

Shravana (Auscultation): By listening with a stethoscope, physicians detect abnormal heart, lung, and bowel sounds. Wheezing may indicate airway obstruction.

Ghrana (Smell): Certain odors aid diagnosis, such as fruity breath in diabetic ketoacidosis or ammonia-like odor in renal failure.

Prashna (History Taking): Systematic questioning helps understand symptoms and disease progression directly from the patient.

Technology as Extended Pratyaksha

Modern investigations such as laboratory tests and imaging techniques (X-ray, CT, MRI, Ultrasound) act as extensions of the physician's senses, enabling deeper direct assessment of the patient's condition.^[6]

Anumana

The word Anumana is formed from: Anu = after Mana = knowledge

Knowledge obtained after observing a sign or cause is called Anumana (inference).^[3]

Example: Seeing smoke and inferring fire.

Knowledge through direct perception occurs immediately, whereas inferential knowledge occurs after prior perception.

Example: First, smoke is perceived directly. Then fire is inferred from smoke.

It is the Inference depends upon logical reasoning.^[4]

In clinical decision making A patient comes with high fever, productive cough, and breathlessness. The physician does a chest X-ray and sees right lower lobe consolidation. The physician cannot see the bacteria causing infection. But they infer — "consolidation on X-ray + fever + productive cough = bacterial pneumonia. This inference is Anumana. The disease is not directly seen — it is logically concluded from visible signs."^[7]

Yukti

Yukti is the intellect that understands effects produced by the combination of multiple causes.

It helps in understanding: Past, Present, Future

Yukti helps in achieving: Dharma, Artha, Kama.

According to Chakrapani Knowledge obtained by observing the combination of many useful factors is called Yukti. For example- Proper combination of medicine, diet, dosage, and patient condition leads to cure.^[3,4]

In clinical decision making It involves logical planning and practical application of knowledge. In patients with multiple disorders, Yukti helps prioritize treatment and modify

therapy according to the patient's condition. Appropriate medicines, dosage, timing, and route of administration are decided through Yukti.

CONCLUSION

Chaturvidha Pramana — Aptopadesha, Pratyaksha, Anumana, and Yukti — forms the intellectual and practical foundation of clinical decision-making in Ayurveda. These four methods provide a systematic approach for understanding disease, evaluating the patient, planning treatment, and predicting outcomes.

Pratyaksha enables direct clinical assessment through examination and observation, while Anumana helps the physician interpret hidden pathological processes through logical reasoning. Aptopadesha provides authenticated knowledge from classical texts, expert teachings, and established medical guidelines, reducing uncertainty in diagnosis and treatment. Yukti integrates all available information and supports rational, individualized, and patient-centered therapeutic planning.

Even in modern clinical practice, these principles remain highly relevant. Evidence-based guidelines resemble Aptopadesha, clinical examination reflects Pratyaksha, diagnostic reasoning corresponds to Anumana, and personalized treatment planning represents Yukti. Together, these Pramanas enhance diagnostic accuracy, therapeutic precision, ethical practice, and clinical judgment.

Thus, Chaturvidha Pramana is not only a philosophical framework but also a practical clinical tool that strengthens effective and holistic decision-making in contemporary healthcare.

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