

NUTRITION IN AYURVEDA-A REVIEW***¹Dr. Omprakash Koshima and ²Dr. Anil Kumar Patel**

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Article Received on
21 January 2020

Revised on 11 Feb 2020,
Accepted on 01 March 2020

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20203-24600

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ABSTRACT

Diet (Ahara) is an necessary factor for the preservation of life. In Ayurveda this term nutrition at the present times evolved as a complicated and organized subject of study, contemporary perspective mull over gross components of diet like carbohydrates, fats, proteins, minerals, water etc. While Ayurveda –the ancient science of life emphasizes on diversified aspects of dietetics and nutrition viz. quality, quantity, processing methods, rationale of combination of food articles, emotional aspects, nature of the consumer, geographical & environmental conditions etc. which are pivotal in preservation and promotion of health and prevention of disease. Health-promoting regime (pathya vyavastha) is the hall mark of Ayurveda therapeutics; specific diet and lifestyle guidelines are always prescribed along with

the drugs and therapies to facilitate restoration of homoeostatic bio-mechanisms (dhatu-samyata) and wellbeing. Ayurveda elaborate about different dietary regimens including recopies advocated for health promotion, prevention of illness and also prescribed for management of diseases as well which further provide a great scope for the development of nutritional component and dietary supplements.

INTRODUCTION

Nutrition is more and more being recognized as an important indicator of development at national and international level. It is a vital component of the individual and community health as nutritional well-being of the population is considered as an economic asset and a pre-requisite for national development. Most health problems develop due to the incorrect eating practices and cookery procedures. Ayurveda lays stress on positive health, a blend of

physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual welfare and this holistic medical science considers three important factors while dealing with the health and disease i.e. oushadha (drug & therapies), ahara (diet) and vihara (practices). Among these, diet (ahara)“ plays key position as recounted by major Ayurveda literatures. Ayurveda deals with the pathyavyavastha (planning of diet- dietetics) in a very scientific and holistic way Pathya (or a proper diet advocacy) is defined as the diet plan which is friendly to the channel of the body & relish by the person, that keep the individual healthy, maintain normal body function leads to proper performance of the organs, nourishes the brain.

SIGNIFICANCE OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

Nutrition implies to food and its relation with health while dietetics refers to planning of meal for the well and sick. Nutritional constituent often referred to as phyto-chemicals or functional foods are normal bioactive chemical compound that have fitness promote, disease prevent and medicinal property. The Vedic texts detail about the importance of food saying „food sustains the life of living beings and due to this all creatures are inclined towards it’. Complexion, clarity, good voice, longevity, genuineness, happiness, satisfaction nourishment, strength and intellect are all conditioned by food and well documented in Ayurveda texts. Ayurveda portray the human body as product of nutrition. Nutrition forms the basis for etymology of human body as indicated in Ayurveda. The Sanskrit synonyms denoting human body (viz. kaya, deha, sareera) are indicative of nutrition dynamics & different metabolic aspects of nutrition such as the term „kaya’ represent growth and development by virtue of nutrition, deha’ stands for anabolism while „sareera ,, symbolize catabolism.^[1]

NUTRITION IN AYURVEDA

Sareera vichaya or Ayurveda physiology clearly defines the theories of metabolism and attributes 13 factors (agni- biochemical and genetic factors) responsible for digestion and metabolism of food. Ayurveda classifies food (ahara) into 12 basic categories based on source, method of preparation and utility these are.

1. Sukandhanya (corns with bristles)
2. Samidhanya (pulses)
3. Mamsa (meat)
4. Saka (vegetables)
5. Phala (fruits)
6. Arita (salads)

7. Madya (fermented drinks)
8. Ambu (water)
9. Gorasa (milk and milk products)
10. Iksuvikara (products of sugarcane)
11. Krtanna (food preparations)
12. Aharayogi (accessory food articles).

Also the convenience of consumption show the way to classify food articles into different forms as cited in Charaka samhita and Bhava prakasha. These contributing factors of nutrition dynamics or “agni” act at different levels of organization viz. one Jathragni (Transformation at Gastro Intestinal Tract level); seven dhatwagnies (Transportation, assortment at tissue level) and five bhutagnis (Highly selective regulation of micro nutrition at organ level). Rasayana's are the foods, therapy or practice that are favourable and helpful to body tissues and its function. Further the unique Rasayana concept Ayurveda advocate emphasize on achieving best benefits of nutrition viz. longevity, immunity and mental competence. Balanced diet refers to the articles of diet which as a whole maintain health and prevent disease, increase strength of the body, health span, vitality, memory etc., and consists of six components namely: energy yielding/ jeebaniya, structure building/ brimhaniya, prevent fat accumulation/ lekhamniya, elimination of waste products/ bhedaniya, repairing damaged tissues/ sandhaniya, and promotes digestion/ deephaniya according to Charaka Samhita, the main beliefs and practice of Ayurveda. Preventive strategies are the backbone of Ayurveda anywhere food plays a major role because both the body and illness are product of food. Ayurvedic texts clearly pointed out that food should be taken only after completion of digestion of previous meal having four important characters, i.e, right quality of food/ hita bhojan, right quantity/ mita bhojan, in right time / kala bhojan, along with manage of need and greed (jitendriya). If diet intake is correct, utility of medicine is secondary. Diet suitable to the person of different physical and mental makeup or constitution/ prakriti enhances the health span and disease non-susceptibility. Prakriti is the inherent property or swabhabhva of an individual and is the sum of physical, physiological, psychological, immunological and spiritual aspects of life by which one person can be separated from other. Some have predominance of vata, some of pitta, some of kapha and others are sama prapriti (sama avastha) 10 mentioned in the major Ayurvedic texts. Regarding quantity of food and fluid our shastra clearly pointed out a formula in relation to contents of stomach, which is the reservoir of food. It can be divided in to four quadrants by self assessment. Two quadrants exclusively

for solid, one quadrant for liquid food, and rest quadrant should be empty for movement of vata, pitta and kapha and for aiding digestion.^[2-5]

DISCUSSION ON AYURVEDA DIET

If we look at the above we can see the diet and lifestyle modifications, It comprises of red variety of shali rice, green gram, rock salt, Amlaki fruit, milk, grass feed and grazing in sunlight cow's ghee, meat of animals of dry land and potable water. A balanced diet is indispensable for vital functions of the body, including wear and tear, an energetic lifestyle and for protection against common disease. A long list of most wholesome (hita tama) and unwholesome (ahita tama) articles of diet also mentioned in Charaka samhita.^[6-9]

CONCLUSION

Main aim of Ayurveda is to take care of the healthy individual and to treat the diseased patient. That can only happen with diet and lifestyle modifications. Many hitkara ahar are described by our acharya like shali rice, mudaga yush etc.. A balanced diet is indispensable for vital functions of the body, including wear and tear, an energetic lifestyle and for protection against common disease. Hence we should go towards the statements told by our acharya's.

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