

## THE ROLE OF DRAVYAGUNA IN MODERN AYURVEDIC PRACTICE: BRIDGING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND CONTEMPORARY HEALTHCARE

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### ABSTRACT

Dravyaguna, a fundamental branch of Ayurveda, focuses on the properties, actions, and therapeutic potential of natural substances, particularly medicinal herbs. As Ayurveda gains global recognition, Dravyaguna's relevance in modern healthcare becomes increasingly significant. This article explores the role of Dravyaguna in contemporary Ayurvedic practice, examining its integration with modern medical systems. Through a discussion of key herbs and their therapeutic properties, we highlight how Dravyaguna serves as a bridge between ancient wisdom and current healthcare needs. The potential of Dravyaguna to contribute to holistic, personalized medicine in the modern context is also discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** Dravyaguna, Ayurveda, Medicinal herbs, Traditional medicine.

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, one of the oldest systems of medicine, has a rich tradition of using natural substances for healing. Central to this practice is Dravyaguna, the science that classifies and elucidates the properties (guna) and actions (karma) of dravyas (substances). This ancient knowledge system provides a comprehensive understanding of how various natural substances, particularly plants, interact with the human body to promote health and cure disease.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in Ayurveda and other traditional medical systems worldwide. This has been driven by a growing awareness of the limitations of modern medicine, particularly its focus on symptomatic treatment rather than holistic healing. Dravyaguna, with its emphasis on understanding the intrinsic properties of substances and their effects on the body, offers a complementary approach to modern medicine. This article examines how Dravyaguna is being integrated into contemporary Ayurvedic practice and its potential to enhance modern healthcare.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

To explore the role of Dravyaguna in modern Ayurvedic practice, this article draws on a review of classical Ayurvedic texts, contemporary Ayurvedic literature, and recent research studies. Key sources include the "Charaka Samhita," "Sushruta Samhita," and "Bhava Prakasha," which are foundational texts in Ayurveda. These were supplemented with articles from peer-reviewed journals that discuss the application of Ayurvedic principles in modern medicine.

The research focused on identifying key medicinal herbs and substances described in Dravyaguna and their relevance in treating common modern ailments. The therapeutic properties, modes of action, and clinical applications of these substances were analyzed in the context of both traditional Ayurvedic and modern biomedical frameworks. Additionally, case studies and clinical trials that demonstrate the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatments based on Dravyaguna principles were reviewed.

## DISCUSSION

Dravyaguna, at its core, is the science of understanding how the physical and chemical properties of substances influence their therapeutic effects. Each substance is analyzed based on its rasa (taste), guna (quality), virya (potency), vipaka (post-digestive effect), and prabhava (unique action). This holistic approach provides a detailed understanding of how substances interact with the doshas (biological energies) in the body to restore balance and health.

- Integration with Modern Healthcare:- One of the key ways Dravyaguna is being integrated into modern healthcare is through the use of standardized herbal extracts and formulations. For instance, Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, has been widely studied in both traditional and modern

medicine. Its active compound, curcumin, has been found to have significant potential in treating conditions such as arthritis, cardiovascular diseases, and even cancer. Standardized extracts of turmeric are now commonly used in both Ayurvedic and allopathic treatments.

Similarly, Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), an adaptogen traditionally used to enhance vitality and manage stress, has gained attention for its potential in modern stress management and neuroprotection. Studies have shown that Ashwagandha can reduce cortisol levels, improve cognitive function, and enhance overall well-being, making it a valuable addition to modern therapeutic regimens.

- **Pharmacological Insights:-** The pharmacological properties of many Ayurvedic herbs, as described in Dravyaguna, have been validated by modern scientific research. For example, the bitter melon (*Momordica charantia*), traditionally used for its anti-diabetic properties, has been confirmed to have hypoglycemic effects through various mechanisms, including the regulation of insulin secretion and glucose metabolism. This has led to its inclusion in both Ayurvedic and conventional diabetes management protocols.
- **Challenges and Opportunities:-** Despite these successes, there are challenges in fully integrating Dravyaguna into modern healthcare. One significant barrier is the difference in methodologies between traditional Ayurveda and modern biomedicine. While Ayurveda emphasizes a holistic, individualized approach to treatment, modern medicine often focuses on standardized, evidence-based interventions. Bridging this gap requires collaborative research that respects both paradigms, developing a more integrative model of healthcare.

Another challenge is the standardization and quality control of Ayurvedic herbs and formulations. The effectiveness of Ayurvedic treatments depends on the purity, potency, and proper identification of medicinal substances, which can vary widely depending on factors such as geography, cultivation methods, and processing techniques. Modern analytical techniques, such as high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) and mass spectrometry, are increasingly being used to ensure the quality and consistency of Ayurvedic products.

- **Potential for Personalized Medicine:-** One of the most promising aspects of Dravyaguna is its potential contribution to the emerging field of personalized medicine. Ayurveda has always emphasized individualized treatment, tailoring therapies to the unique constitution

(Prakriti) of each patient. Dravyaguna provides the tools to select the most appropriate substances based on a patient's specific dosha imbalance, health condition, and environmental factors. As modern medicine moves towards more personalized approaches, Dravyaguna offers a valuable framework for integrating traditional knowledge into personalized treatment plans.

## RESULTS

The integration of Dravyaguna into modern healthcare is still in its early stages, but there are promising signs of success. Clinical studies have demonstrated the efficacy of Ayurvedic herbs and formulations in treating a variety of conditions, from chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Moreover, the increasing use of standardized Ayurvedic products in both traditional and modern medical practices highlights the growing recognition of Dravyaguna's value.

For example, a study on the use of standardized Ashwagandha extract showed significant improvement in stress-related parameters among participants, supporting its traditional use as an adaptogen. Similarly, clinical trials on turmeric extract have confirmed its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects, leading to its incorporation into both Ayurvedic and conventional treatment protocols.

The successful integration of Dravyaguna into modern healthcare requires ongoing research, collaboration between traditional and modern practitioners, and a commitment to quality and standardization. As this process continues, Dravyaguna has the potential to make a significant contribution to the development of more holistic, effective, and personalized healthcare systems.

## CONCLUSION

Dravyaguna represents a rich repository of knowledge that can enhance modern healthcare by providing insights into the therapeutic potential of natural substances. As the world moves towards more integrative and personalized approaches to medicine, the principles of Dravyaguna offer valuable guidance. By bridging the gap between traditional wisdom and contemporary science, Dravyaguna can contribute to the development of a more holistic and sustainable healthcare model, benefiting patients worldwide. Continued research and collaboration are essential to fully realize the potential of Dravyaguna in modern medical practice, ensuring that this ancient science remains relevant and beneficial in the 21st century.

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