

## INTEGRATED REVIEW ON UPASHAYA–ANUPASHAYA IN AYURVEDA: DIAGNOSTIC AND THERAPEUTIC PERSPECTIVES

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### ABSTRACT

Upashaya–Anupashaya form an important component of Nidana Panchaka in Ayurveda. Upashaya refers to therapeutic measures—medicinal, dietary, or lifestyle-based—that alleviate symptoms, while Anupashaya denotes factors that worsen the condition. These principles assist in diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment planning, particularly when symptom presentation is ambiguous. This review synthesizes classical references and modern interpretations, providing an integrated perspective on their classification, application, and relevance in clinical practice. Flowcharts and tables are included to aid practical application.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda's diagnostic methodology is structured around Nidana Panchaka: Nidana (etiology), Purvarupa (prodromal features), Rupa (signs & symptoms), Upashaya–Anupashaya (alleviating & aggravating factors), and Samprapti (pathogenesis). Among these, Upashaya–Anupashaya act as unique clinical tools because they do not merely describe the disease, but actively test the physician's diagnostic hypothesis through therapeutic intervention. In scenarios where the disease presentation is vague or overlapping with other conditions, observing how symptoms respond to certain medicines, diets, or lifestyle changes can help narrow down the possible diagnoses.

Historically, this method has been emphasized in classical texts like the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, where physicians are advised to use therapeutic trials when conventional examination fails to yield a clear diagnosis. For example, in fevers with ambiguous etiology, the administration of a warming decoction may confirm Kapha dominance if improvement is observed. Similarly, if such a treatment worsens the condition, it may point towards a Pitta-dominant pathology.

The dual nature of this approach—diagnostic and therapeutic—places it at the intersection of theory and practice. By aligning patient response patterns with known Ayurvedic principles, practitioners can both confirm their clinical reasoning and provide immediate relief to the patient. In modern integrative practice, this approach can be compared to therapeutic trials in allopathic medicine, where a specific treatment is used to confirm a suspected diagnosis, such as bronchodilators for reversible airway obstruction in asthma.

Therefore, Upashaya–Anupashaya not only serve as ancient diagnostic aids but also remain relevant in contemporary practice, offering a practical bridge between observation, reasoning, and intervention.

## 2. Concept of Upashaya and Anupashaya

### 2.1 Definitions

- Upashaya: Interventions that alleviate symptoms. These may act as Chikitsa (definitive treatment), Satmya (constitutionally suitable), or Pathya (wholesome for the disease condition).
- Anupashaya: Interventions that aggravate symptoms, providing diagnostic clues about disease nature.

## 3. Classification of Upashaya

| Type             | Definition   | Classical Example   | Modern Analogy   |
|------------------|--|---|--|
| Hetu Vipareeta   | Intervention directly opposing the causative factor (hetu) of the disease. This approach aims to neutralize the qualities or effects of the initiating factor before it can fully manifest into disease. | Shunti ( <i>Zingiber officinale</i> ) in Sheeta Jvara – the warming, pungent qualities of Shunti counteract cold-induced fever caused by Kapha dominance. | Comparable to using warming, metabolism-stimulating agents in conditions triggered by cold exposure, e.g., ginger tea for common cold. |
| Vyadhi Vipareeta | Intervention directed against the disease process itself, regardless of its initial cause.   | Kutaja ( <i>Holarrhena antidysenterica</i> ) in Atisara – acts as an astringent and   | Similar to prescribing antimotility drugs in diarrheal diseases to   |

|                          |   |  |  |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|
|                          |   | antidiarrheal directly counteracting the pathology.  | control symptoms.  |
| Ubhaya Vipareeta         | Approach that opposes both the causative factor and the disease pathology simultaneously, offering a more comprehensive correction.   | Dashamoola decoction in Vataja Shotha – alleviates both Vata aggravation (the cause) and inflammatory swelling (the disease).  | Analogous to anti-inflammatory drugs in sports injuries caused by trauma (treats both cause and inflammation). |
| Hetu Vipareetarthakari   | Measures that appear similar to the causative factor but, when applied strategically, lead to symptom relief. These require careful timing and dosage to avoid aggravation. | Ushna Upanaha (hot poultice) in Pittaja Vrana Shotha – although heat is similar to the aggravating factor for Pitta, in this context it aids resolution of inflammation. | Comparable to using controlled hyperthermia therapy to improve local circulation and promote healing.          |
| Vyadhi Vipareetarthakari | Measures that mimic disease characteristics but eventually help resolve the condition.  | Madanaphala ( <i>Randia dumetorum</i> ) in Chardi (vomiting) – induces controlled emesis to remove underlying toxins.  | Similar to therapeutic vomiting in poisoning cases to expel harmful substances.                                |
| Ubhaya Vipareetarthakari | Measures similar to both cause and disease, but still beneficial when used judiciously.   | Madhya (alcohol) in Madatyaya (alcohol withdrawal) – small doses help manage withdrawal symptoms before tapering.  | Comparable to gradual detoxification or tapering strategies in substance dependence.                           |

#### 4. Hetuvyadhi Viparita Dravya

These substances counteract both the causative factor and the disease itself. Example: Dashamoola Kwatha in Vataja Shotha – acts as Vatahara and Shothahara, possessing Tikta, Kashaya, and Madhura rasa; Laghu guna; Ushna veerya; and Katu vipaka.

#### 5. Anupashaya

Anupashaya refers to medicines, foods, or regimens that are not conducive to the body and worsen disease symptoms. For example, applying sneha dravyas in Amavata exacerbates symptoms. Recognition of Anupashaya helps in ruling out certain conditions and confirming others.

#### 6. Clinical Importance of Upashaya–Anupashaya

- Acts as a diagnostic tool in ambiguous cases.
- Supports differential diagnosis.
- Guides therapeutic planning for diet and lifestyle.
- Offers prognostic insight into disease reversibility.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Upashaya–Anupashaya serve as a bridge between diagnosis and treatment in Ayurveda. While Upashaya can sometimes act as definitive treatment, its primary role is diagnostic, especially in unclear cases. Anupashaya, by worsening symptoms, provides complementary information. Understanding their classification and application allows for precise, individualized patient care.

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