

IMPORTANCE OF AYURVEDA IN PREVENTION OF LIFESTYLE DISEASES

Sadhana Singh

Phd Scholar in Dept. of Dravyaguna, I.M.S, B.H.U, Varanasi, U.P. India

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda provides a well organised system of traditional health care, both to maintain the health and prevent the diseases by following proper diet and lifestyle regimen rather than treatment and cure of the diseases. Lifestyle diseases are those diseases whose occurrence is based on the daily habits of people and are a result of an inappropriate relationship of people with their environment. The main factors contributing to lifestyle diseases include bad food habits, physical inactivity and disturbed biological clock. Occupational lifestyle diseases include those caused by the factors present in the vicinity of pollutants. A healthy lifestyle must be adopted with a proper balanced diet, physical activity and by giving due respect to biological clock. Healthy lifestyle methods are now easily achievable with nutritional counselling, exercise training, de-addiction programmes, regular medical check-ups and stress management techniques. Ayurveda offers various methods to manage lifestyle disorders by following Dincharya, Ratricharya, Ritucharya, Panchakarma or with help of Rasayanas. All the regimens are followed to achieve the homeostasis and not just counter the specific symptom.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Lifestyle Diseases, Ritucharya, Rasayanas*

INTRODUCTION

The incidence of lifestyle diseases like diabetes mellitus, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, and obesity associated with cardiovascular diseases is high on the rise. Cardio vascular disorders continue to be the major cause of mortality representing about 30% of all deaths worldwide. With rapid economic development and increasing westernization of lifestyle in the past few decades, prevalence of these diseases has reached alarming proportions among Indians in the recent years. As Ayurveda is recognized as foremost life science and describes ways to prevent and manage lifestyle disorders, the world is being attracted towards its potential. Ayurveda provides better solution in the forms of proper dietary management, lifestyle advises, *Panchakarma* and rejuvenation therapies. The holistic approach of Ayurveda, treating the patient as a whole, meaning intervention targeted toward complete physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being makes this science a wonderful option in lifestyle disorders.

Basically, a particular lifestyle of person is a cumulative product of his/her physical capacity co-ordinated with psychological functioning, displayed in the form of habits, behavior, dietary and living pattern based on his own training sought from childhood, and mimicries he gained from his immediate companions including parents, sibling etc. Thus, it involves a pure psychological and innate control over the physical and sensory activities. When this initiation, control, and co-ordination are disturbed, it leads to the derangement of lifestyle and results in any lifestyle disorder. Ayurveda narrated this phenomenon as '*Pragya-aparadha*' (intellectual blasphemy) which is one of the three

(IJRMST) 2018, Vol. No. 6, Jul-Dec

e-ISSN: 2455-5134, p-ISSN: 2455-9059

basic causes of any disease. There are ample improper actions as an impact of *Pragya-aparadha* which are root causes of various diseases, e.g., habit of suppression of any natural urge is a result of *Pragya-aparadha* and enlisted as a cause of nearly 50% of the diseases. Therefore, the habit of suppression of urge in improper lifestyle can be considered as one of the root causes of lifestyle diseases. Removal of these accumulated waste products is the first line of treatment as described in Ayurveda.

CAUSES

The commonest causes of lifestyle disorders are eating unhealthy foods, over eating, over dependence on processed foods, energy drinks, artificial sweeteners and fast foods. Sedentary living, stress, smoking, drinking alcohol, poor sleeping habits which are all attributed mainly to the so called modern living habits and urbanization added with the altered eating habits makes the situation worse. There is yet another significant problem of the modern world. That is poor exposure to sun light and fresh air. Diet and lifestyle are chief factors thought to influence susceptibility to lifestyle diseases. The nature and duration of work, the amount of time you spare for exercise and recreation, the time you spend with your loved ones, the stress factors, your physical activity etc decide on how soon you are likely to land up in any one of the lifestyle disorders. More work and no play, makes a lot of us prone to a host of diseases. Along with that there are certain other factors such as heredity, age and gender which cannot be avoided or controlled. But the other factors that can be avoided or controlled are drug abuse, tobacco smoking and alcohol drinking¹.

PREVENTION THROUGH AYURVEDA

In the management of lifestyle diseases, Ayurveda offers various regimens including Ahara and vihar (dietary habits and daily routine). Dinracharya (daily regimen), Ritucharya (seasonal regimen), Panchakarma (five detoxification and bio-purification therapies), and Rasayana (rejuvenation) therapies. The Sadvritta (ideal routines) and AacharaRasayana (code of conduct) are utmost important to maintain a healthy and happy psychological perspective².

Ahara-Ahara and Vihara play a central role in the life according to Ayurvedic understanding. Ayurveda places special emphasis on Ahara and Vihara as measures for better living, health and wellness. Ayurveda emphasizes more on Ahara in comparison to other systems of medicine and also explored its emotional and spiritual significance, in addition to its material and biological attributes. Ahara is considered as Prana (basis of life) in Ayurveda³. Ahara is described as one of the Trayopastambha (three subsidiary pillars) of life which are Ahara, Nidra (sleep) and Brahmacharaya (celibacy)⁴. Diet is considered as vital for a human body as it provides the basic nutrients and promotes longevity. Ayurveda always emphasizes on consuming healthy and nutritious diet for maintaining good health. As per the view point of Ayurveda, both the living human body and the diseases afflicting it are the products of Ahara. Use of hita-ahara (wholesome diet) promotes health and longevity and ahita-ahara (unwholesome diet) promotes manifestation of different disorders. Unfortunately in modern era the concept of hita- ahara is continuously being ignored leading to the emergence of lifestyle disorders⁵. Ayurveda also described eighteen types of dietary incompatibilities (ViruddhaAhara)⁶, which should be avoided to maintain health and longevity. In this way Ayurveda

(IJRMST) 2018, Vol. No. 6, Jul-Dec

e-ISSN: 2455-5134, p-ISSN: 2455-9059

offers different Pathayapathya (do's & don'ts) regarding diet/dietary supplementations which definitely help in the prevention and management of a wide range of lifestyle disorders.

Dincharya- Normal circadian rhythms are very important in day to day life to maintain biological clock. Ayurveda suggests to begin daily habits with awareness, early rising, avoid suppression of natural urges and eliminate wastes as per urge, keep the teeth & skin cleaned, regular use of massage (Abhyanga), regular daily bathing (bathing enhances the appetite and promotes longevity), consume suitable and wholesome diet according to the appetite and metabolic needs, since it is the basis of life and important for day to day promotion of health. Ayurveda has also suggested avoiding late night sleep and eating stale foods. These might lead to imbalance in the circadian rhythms and thus long term imbalance predisposes to lifestyle disorders. Therefore, one has to stay aware about this daily regimen for day to day promotion of health, boost immunity and prevention from lifestyle disorders⁷.

Ritucharya-Ritu (season) classified by different features expresses different effects on the body as well as on the environment. Ayurveda has depicted various rules and regimens (Charya), regarding diet and lifestyle to acclimatize seasonal enforcement easily without altering body homeostasis. The prime objective of Ayurvedic system of medicine is preventive aspect, which can be achieved by the modification in diet and lifestyle in response to change in climatic condition. Ritucharya represents a very important aspect of preventive measure for various illnesses including lifestyle disorders as mentioned in Ayurvedic texts⁸. It is the only system of medicine in the world which proposes the need of regular purification of the human biological system from gross level to the molecular level to render it suitable for self-recovery and therapeutic responsiveness. The human biological system continuously undergoes wear and tear and needs to be cleansed and rejuvenated regularly. Therefore, Ayurveda advises seasonal Panchakarma as preventive measure for maintenance and promotion of physical as well as mental health.

Rasayana- In addition to food and diet, Ayurveda propounds a separate concept of medicinal dietary supplements in the context of Rasayana (rejuvenative measures). Rasayanas can be used as nutritional supplement as well as medicine depending upon its various types. Most Rasayanas produce their nourishing and rejuvenating effect by promoting the Agni, Bala, acting as direct nutrients and by way of Sroto-prasadan (purification of body channels), resulting in an improved nutritional status which further leads to an improved quality of Dhatus or body tissues. Although the Rasayanas are a generic class of restorative and rejuvenative supplements, many Rasayanas could be tissue and organ specific such as MedhyaRasayana for the brain, HridyaRasayana for the heart, TwachyaRasayana for the skin, and so on⁹.

Sadvratta and AcharaRasayana- Ayurveda offers some code of good conducts under the heading of Sadvratta and AcharaRasayana. The conducts under Sadvratta and AcharaRasayana can be categorized into personal (early sleeping and awakening, avoid excess exertion, avoid suppression of natural urges, regime of bathing, keeping skin clean), social (keep mercy on others, telling truth, avoid alcoholism, be soft hearted, always use cleaned and washed cloths), psychological and emotional (try to be in a steady mental state i.e. avoid height of emotions, try to avoid to memorize if being insulted by anyone, keep patience, etc). Such type of lifestyle adaptation always helpful in the prevention and management of a wide range of lifestyle disorders¹⁰.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

"Lifestyle diseases" known internationally as 'non-communicable diseases' (NCD's) or 'chronic diseases of lifestyle' (CDL) emerge from inappropriate relationship of people with their environment. These are a group of diseases that share similar risk factors, which may be due to exposure over many decades, unhealthy diets, smoking, lack of exercise, and stress. The major risk factors are high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes and obesity. These result in various longterm disease processes, culminating in high mortality rates attributable to stroke, heart attack, cancers, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, renal failure, and many others. From the history of treatment and preventive measures given to the persons suffering from life style diseases.

Ayurveda has proven its role and importance in this area. The other systems do not have any other answers than the supply of nutritional food and physical activities in this respect. Also as the nutritional food and physical activity are well defined in Ayurvedic system, it can be upon its various types. Most Rasayanas produce their nourishing and rejuvenating effect by promoting the Agni Bala, acting as direct nutrients and by way of Sroto-prasadan (purification of body channels), resulting in an improved nutritional status which further leads to an improved quality of Dhatus or body tissues. Ayurveda offers some code of good conducts under the heading of Sadvratta and AcharaRasayana. The conducts under Sadvratta and AcharaRasayana can be categorized into personal (early sleeping and awakening, avoid excess exertion, avoid suppression of natural urges, regime of bathing, keeping skin clean), social (keep mercy on others, telling truth, avoid alcoholism, be soft hearted, always use cleaned and washed cloths), psychological and emotional (try to be in a steady mental state i.e. avoid height of emotions, try to avoid to memorize if being insulted by anyone, keep patience, etc). Such type of lifestyle adaptation always helpful in the prevention and management of a wide range of lifestyle disorders. Furthermore, community participation and civic engagement are associated with better self-reported mental health. Hence, Ayurveda has an upper edge in treating the disease with emphasis on its root cause. The Ayurvedic physician concentrates on achieving the objective of Ayurveda for promotion of health, prevention and management of disease for a healthy and happy life in the ailing society.

REFERENCE

1. <https://rohiniwithfindings.wordpress.com/> 2012/06/02/scope-of-ayurveda-in-lifestyle-diseases.
2. Caraka (2003), Caraka Samhita Vol I, By R.K Sharma, Bhagavan Dash-2nd Edition, Choukhambha Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi. .
3. Rajeshwardattashashtri e.t al., editors. Charak Samhita. Varanasi: ChaukambhaBhaarti Academy; 2005.
4. Rajeshwardattashashtri e.t al., editors. Charak Samhita. Varanasi: ChaukambhaBhaarti Academy; 2005.
5. Singh Satyapal, Tripathi JS, Rai NP. An Integrated Dietary Approach for the Management of Dermatological Disorders. IJRAP.
6. Rajeshwardattashashtri e.t al., editors. Charak Samhita. Varanasi: ChaukambhaBhaarti Academy; 2005.

(IJRMST) 2018, Vol. No. 6, Jul-Dec

e-ISSN: 2455-5134, p-ISSN: 2455-9059

7. Singh Satyapal, Tripathi JS, Rai NP. Preventive measures for dermatological disorders: An Ayurvedic perspective. *World J Pharm Sci* 2015; 3(3):678-681.
8. Thakkar Jayesh, Chaudhari S, Sarka Prasanta K. Ritucharya: Answer to the lifestyle disorders. *AYU*, 2011; 32 (4):466471
9. Singh R.H. The Basic Tenets of Ayurvedic Dietetics and Nutrition. In: S. Rastogi, editors. *Ayurvedic Science of Food and Nutrition, part-1*. 1st ed. New York: Springer; 2014. p. 15-23].
10. Vithalani L V. Mental Health and its Preventive Aspects through Ayurveda and Yoga. *Asian Journal of Modern Ayurvedic Medical Science*, 2012; 1(1): 1-9.