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Diet and lifestyle -key factors in the manifestation and prevention of the disease

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays prescribing medication as a first line of treatment is more common than modifying the dietary habits and lifestyle of people. Improper diet and a sedentary lifestyle are responsible for many diseases. A certain group of diseases popularly known as NCD or lifestyle disorders are directly related to these two factors. Ayurveda the most ancient science of medicine still aims at uprooting the cause of diseases rather than symptomatic relief. According to Ayurveda, to achieve and maintain Arogya (health) it is essential to practice healthy dietary and lifestyle interventions. A sufficient amount of safe and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting health whereas improper and unsafe food items create a vicious cycle of disease. Similarly, lifestyle choice plays an important role in the manifestation, prevention, and treatment of the disease. Many lifestyle interventions mentioned in Ayurveda include avoiding the suppression of manifested urges and adapting Swasthavritta in the form of Dinacharya, Nishacharya, Ritucharya, and Sadavritta have a huge impact on a person's overall health. One must adopt these dietary and lifestyle practices to achieve and maintain healthy living. This paper is an attempt to emphasize the importance of dietary and lifestyle behaviors in the manifestation and prevention of diseases, it enlists the various dos and don't that one must consider in day-to-day life for healthy living.

Keywords- Ayurveda 1, Prevention 2, Lifestyle 3, Dietary regimes 4.

1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is a rapidly changing century. We want everything very quickly, and this type of approach has affected the practice of medicine also. Nowadays prescribing medication without modifying the diet and lifestyle is very common. This therapeutic phenomenon only brings symptomatic relief to patients rather than the complete cure of the illness. Ayurveda, the most ancient science of medicine still aims at uprooting the cause of disease rather than symptomatic relief. The first aim of Ayurveda is the preserve the health of the healthy one and then treat or cure the disease. For the first aim, a healthy diet and lifestyle are important factors, and then for the second aim, medicine is important. If a person takes an unwholesome diet and lives a sedentary lifestyle it causes a lot of diseases i.e. obesity, hypertension, CVD, diabetes, and many more. These two factors are the root cause of many diseases.

Similarly, a healthy diet and lifestyle also play an important role in the prevention and management of various diseases. The food itself is known as MAHABHAISHAJYA, in Ayurveda, which means supreme medicine. The Ayurvedic regime of healthy life is designed for the achievement of a long, healthy, active life, providing relief from pain and disease, allowing enjoyment of life with the attainment of satisfaction & contentment.

2. CONCEPT OF AHARA AND VIHAR IN AYURVEDA

Health and disease are dependent on three factors i.e. Ahara, Vihara, and Aushadh, and Ahara is considered the most important one. Ahara is known as a supreme medicine, which plays an important role in establishing the phenomenon of wear and tear, the process of growth and repair, the supply of energy for all physical activities, etc. A specific diet has been mentioned in Ayurveda to maintain the balance of dosha distributed according to various factors like Prakriti, Ritu, Vaya, etc. Each Ahara dravya consists of Panchmahabhot and this Panchbhotic-ahara provides nutrition to this panchbhotik body. The bodily constituents like Agni and other agents transform the heterogenous ahara dravyas into homogenous dravyas and hence, they will be transformed into doshas, dhatus, and malas and cause the maintenance of this body. Another important factor that should be kept in mind in planning a diet is Virudh

Aahar. *Virudh Ahara* is a toxic combination of the human body. These have an adverse effect on the body that aggravates Tridoshas and leads to various disorders including digestive tract diseases, allergies, skin diseases, anemia, etc.

Similarly, *Vihar* is defined as the second most important pillar of Ayurveda. There is an elaborate description available in ayurvedic texts regarding *Vihara* in the form of daily routine (*Dinacharya*), seasonal routine (*Ritucharya*), suppressible (*Dharniya Vega*), and non-suppressible urges (*Adharniya Vega*), and behavioral and ethical principles (*Sadvritta*) which have an important role in the maintenance of the health and prevention of various diseases. The Ayurvedic regime of healthy life is designed for the achievement of a long, healthy, active life, providing relief from pain and disease, allowing enjoyment of life with the attainment of satisfaction & contentment.

There are lots of diseases mentioned in ayurvedic texts in which unbalanced diet, improper dietary habits, and faulty lifestyles are mentioned as the main cause of that disease. *Atikrash* and *Atisthul* which also comes under the category of *Astoninditiya-Purush* are directly associated with an unbalanced diet. The leading cause of all types of skin disorders is *Virudh Ahara* and the disease *Swas*, *Kaas* which comes under the respiratory disorders also occurs as poor dietary habits in the form of *Adhyasan*, *Vishamasan*, and *Shamsan*. When we see psychological disorders, for example, *Unmad* and *Apasmar*, here also the diet which has a predominance of rajas and tamas guna, have *Virudh*, *dusta*, and *Asuchi* properties play an important role in the manifestation of the disease. These are just a few examples, there are many more diseases in which these two factors act as a triggering factor.

2.1 Role of various lifestyle interventions in maintaining health-

a. Dincharya-

Dincharya if it is followed correctly, helps to establish equilibrium in the constitution of an individual and thus helps to regulate the biological clock. These daily regimen procedures have beneficial physiological effects on the proper functioning of the body, thereby maintaining a state of equilibrium of three doshas, seven dhatus, and three waste products, which in turn helps to attain positive health.

b. Ritucharya-

In Ayurvedic classics, there has been a thorough consideration of the seasons. The entire year is divided into six seasons and a detailed dietetic regime and lifestyle for those seasons are prescribed. Ayurveda advises Ritu-based seasonal *Panchakarma*, *Basti* in Varsha Ritu, *Vaman* in Vasant Ritu, and *Virechana* in Sharad Ritu as a preventive measure for maintaining and promoting physical as well as mental health.

c. Sadvritta (Rules of good conduct)

Ayurveda prescribes certain rules for maintaining a healthy mind. These are principles of good conduct that apply to everyone everywhere at any time. Practicing them gives equilibrium and harmony to the mind.

d. Nonsuppressible and Suppressible Urges-

Ayurveda places a strong emphasis on not suppressing natural urges. A large number of diseases are caused by the forceful suppression of natural urges. *Vegas* is part of bodily functions, to fulfill the physiological demand and create for eliminating the toxins of the body. So it is very important to respond to these urges.

In contrast to this one should suppress urges of greed, grief, fear, fury, pride, shamelessness, envy, and excessive passion. These urges are the effect of the increase in *Rajas* and *Tamas*'s qualities of mind. They are created due to the failure of intelligence or *Prajnapradha*.

3. HOW AHARA AND VIHAR PLAYS A ROLE IN THE PATHOGENESIS OF DISEASE-

According to Ayurveda, the food consumed by the individual is transformed in the intestinal tract by the action of *Koshtagni* i.e. the digestive fire. The production of *Ahara rasa*, which is normal in quality and quantity, is dependent upon the normality of *Koshtagni*. *Ras dhatu* is the first formed *dhatu*, which is generated from this *Ahara Ras*. *Ras dhatu* is now circulated by the action of *Vyana Vayu* throughout the body, providing nutrition to other dhatus, viz, *Rakta*, *Mamas*, *Medas*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Sukra*. The organs and channels through which this *Rasa Samvahana* (circulation) is carried out are collectively called *Rasavaha Srotas*. *Ahara ras* is not only responsible for the nourishment of the physical body but also nourishes the mind and *indriyas*.

In contrast, if the quality and quantity of *Ahara* and *Kostagni* are not in appropriate condition, it leads to improper digestion of food and subsequent formation of abnormal *Rasa dhatu* which has a direct impact on the other dhatus and is responsible for the diseases.

Not only a faulty diet but also a sedentary lifestyle pushes us to do unhealthy things that harm our health. There are lots of unhealthy behaviors and habits which occur as an impact of *Prajnaparadha*, eg, the habit of suppressing any natural urge is a result of *Prajnaparadha* and enlisted as a cause of nearly 50% of the diseases. The *Prajnapradha* is considered the root cause of many diseases. Following *Prajnaparadha*, *Astamyendriyarth Sanyog* is another major cause of the diseases. *Asamyak yoga* of *Indriya* especially *Rasnendriya* is directly connected to a group of diseases collectively known as NCDs. *Mithyoga*, *Atiyoga*, and *Hinyoga* of *Indriya* lead to *Rogavastha* or diseased condition, and *Samyoga* of *indriya* lead to *Arogyavastha*. Here By following *Sadvruitt* and other lifestyle regimes mentioned in Ayurveda one can maintain the state of equilibrium of these *indriyas* and can achieve the *Arogyavastha*.

Ayurvedic diets, dietary regimes, and lifestyle regimes not just protect against physical illness, but also from various mental illnesses.

4.DISCUSSION

Ahara is a substance that builds up in the body, it also includes taking water and medicines. The diet is regarded as Brahma, as it holds such supreme importance. Ahara is the first and foremost component of *Tri Upsathambh*. A balanced diet contains different kinds of food in such quantities and proportions that the body's need is adequately satisfied. A faulty diet and lifestyle are the main cause of any disease.

The role of Ayurveda in the prevention and management of these diseases is very systematic and scientific. According to Acharya Charak, all *Dravyas* are *Aushadhi*, and they are divided into two categories dravyabhoot and adravyabhoot Aushdhies. Ahara comes under the category *Dravayabhoot Aushdhi* and the dietic principals come under the category *Adravyabhoot Aushadhies*. Thus Ahara acts as a medicine in the prevention and management of many diseases. Diet and behavioral bad habits should be given up and good things should be taken up gradually.

When we see the treatment protocol of Ayurveda, the first concept is *Nidanparivarjanam*, which means without changing or modifying dietary and lifestyle habits one cannot get rid of the disease, even though the choice of medicine is proper. These protocols should be adopted by all who desire good health and prosperity themselves.

5.CONCLUSION

Today, most health issues develop due to poor diet and improper cooking methods. In Ayurveda, special guidelines are prescribed for the consumption of a diet, based on the principles mentioned in *Astavidhi Vishesayatan* to maintain the équauabillirium of the *dosha*. According to Ayurveda, the balance quantity of *tridosha*, *dhatu*, and *mala* is responsible for Arogya. In addition to these, improper amounts of food, wrong cooking procedures, irregular timing, and not following the prescribed rules for preparing, preserving, and eating food may also cause an imbalance of health.

In every disease along with the medication, there is a separate description of food and lifestyle named as *Pathya* which should be followed during the treatment of that disease similarly separated *Apathya* is also mentioned which should be ignored during the treatment of that disease. By following all these rules and guidelines, we are able to preserve health and manage various disorders.

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