



Review Article

A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON PREVENTING LIFESTYLE DISORDERS IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Lifestyle changes have contributed a lot in the manifestation and exacerbation of different disorders. Diseases can be prevented by doing *nidana parivarjana*, *dinacharya*, *ritucharya*, following *sadvritta* and following *ashta ahara vidhi ayatana*. *Ritu shodhana* will help to promote health and prevent the onset of diseases and also by doing the *nidana parivarjana* which will help to prevent the onset of diseases. *Shodhana* is an effective tool to prevent the lifestyle diseases also. This article will explain about the preventive measures of lifestyle disorders through Ayurvedic principles.

Keywords: Lifestyle diseases, *nidana parivarjana*, *shodhana*, *ritu shodhana*

INTRODUCTION

Lifestyle changes have contributed a lot in the manifestation and exacerbation of different disorders. Lifestyle hazards and occupational diseases like diabetes mellitus, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, stroke, obesity, low back ache and other spine related diseases are burning issues around the world.

The diseases which are associated with the way a person or group of people lives is known as life style diseases. These are non-communicable diseases which include cardio vascular disease, stroke, carcinoma, diabetes mellitus and chronic lung diseases etc. The non-communicable diseases occur due to four major risk factors and they are, use of tobacco, alcohol consumption, lack of physical activity and unhealthy diets. Non-communicable diseases kill 41 million people each year which is equivalent to 71% of all deaths globally. Each year, 15 million people die from non-communicable diseases between the ages of 30 and 69 years.¹

In Ayurveda diseases are broadly classified into two, they are *nija vyadhi* and *agantuja vyadhi*.² *Nija vyadhis* are caused by vitiated *shareerika doshas* like *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. *Agantuja vyadhis* are caused due to *bhuta*, *visha*, *vayu samsparsa*, *agni samsparsa* and *abhighata*. Lifestyle diseases come under *nija vyadhi*. *Nija vyadhis* like *kushta*, *prameha*, *kasa*, *swasa*, *shiroroga*, *hridroga*, *pandu*, *netra roga*, *gridhrasi*, *arsha* etc. are manifested because of the changes in lifestyle specially by indulgence in improper diet, stress etc. These diseases can be prevented by *nidana parivarjana* and *kala vishesha janita dosha nirharana* ie; following the *ritu shodhana*.

The concept of prevention in Ayurveda is *vikara anutpatti*. Acharya Charaka says about *vikara anutpatti* in *matrashiteeya*

adhyaya and *navegandharaneeya adhyaya*. In *matrashiteeya adhyaya*, Charaka says about *vikara anutpatti* in the context of *swasthya paripalana* and in *navegandharaneeya adhyaya*, Charaka says that the *apta vachana* and their implementation are the factors which are responsible for *vikara anutpatti* and *utpanna vyadhi shanti*.^{3,4}

Acharya Sushruta explains about the concept of prevention in *anagataabadha pratishedha adhyaya*. The word meaning of *anagataabadha pratishedha* is the *chikitsa* that which is given before the manifestation of disease that means the prevention of disease before its manifestation. In this context Sushruta explains about the proper *ahara vihara*, *dinacharya* (daily regimen) and *ritucharya* (seasonal regimen).⁵

Acharya Vagbhatta explains about the concept of prevention in *rogaanutpaadaneeya adhyaya*. The word meaning of *rogaanutpaadaneeya* is that the manifestation of disease has to be prevented.⁶

Vikara anutpatti can be achieved by *vikara hetu pariharanam* ie; avoiding or not indulging in the causative factors or aetiology of diseases and *dushparihara kala vishesha janita dosha nirharana* ie; the doshas which undergo the natural aggravation in accordance with the *ritu* should be treated by *ritu shodhana*. Chakrapani in his commentary explains that to maintain stable light of diya sufficient quantity of oil and wick are required. At the same time it is important to protect the lamp from the external influences like wind, insects etc. In the same way *shareera* also should be maintained by *poshaka ahara vihara* (*shashtika shali*, *mudga*, *saindhava* *lavana*, *amalaki*, *yava*, *antareeksha jala*, *ksheera*, *ghrita*, *sadvritta*, *ashtavidha ahara ayadhana*, *vyayama* etc.) and should be protected from the natural aggravation of the doshas by doing *ritu shodhana*.⁷

Concept of Nidana Parivarjana in Lifestyle Diseases

Nidana parivarjana (avoidance of etiological factors) means avoiding the causes of manifestation of disease and it is considered as the first line of treatment. There are certain types of *nidanas* which leads to the manifestation of lifestyle diseases like *ahita ahara vihara, diwaswapna, ratri jagarana, avyayama, vegadharana, prajnaparadha* etc.

Asatmendriyarthasamyoga

Hina, mithya and *atiyoga* of *kala, artha* and *karma* are the causes of diseases, whereas their *samyak yoga* is the cause of health.⁸ *Ahitakara samyoga* of *indriyas* with their respective *indriyarthas* is considered as *asatmendriyarthasamyoga* (improper use of sensory organs). *Ayoga, mithayoga* or *atiyoga* of *chakshu, shravana, ghrana, twak* and *jihwa* with their respective *indriyarthas* like *druk, shabda, gandha, sparsha* and *rasa* respectively. These also can be considered as the important causative factor for different diseases. For example, people who are working in front of computer for long hours have the risk for developing dry eye syndrome, cervical spondylosis etc, labours who are exposed to loud noise on day to day basis can develop deafness, standing for long hours due to profession like security, policeman, teachers can develop varicose veins and osteo arthritis.

The people who are working in factories where there is more noise may develop both auditory effects and non auditory effects. The auditory effects like deafness (temporary or permanent), tinnitus (buzzing in the ears) degeneration of cochlea and eighth nerve. The non auditory effects like fatigue, irritability, nervousness, interference with speech and communication, annoyance, increased cranial tension, hypertension etc. The people who are working in low atmospheric pressure (as in high altitudes) may develop deafness, pain in the ears, rupture of eardrums, expansion of gases in the sinus and body cavities, headache, pulmonary edema, dyspnea etc.⁹

Viruddha Ahara Sevana

Viruddha ahara (antagonistic food) like *kala viruddha* (time antagonistic), *desha viruddha* (place antagonistic), *agni viruddha* (agni antagonistic), *matra viruddha* (dose antagonistic), *satmya viruddha* (habituation antagonistic), *dosha viruddha* (dosha antagonistic), *samskara viruddha* (processing antagonistic), *virya viruddha* (potency antagonistic), *koshta viruddha* (bowel antagonistic), *avastha viruddha* (condition antagonistic), *krama viruddha* (order antagonistic), *parihara viruddha* (contraindication antagonistic), *upachara viruddha* (indication antagonistic), *paka viruddha* (cooking antagonistic), *samyoga viruddha* (combination antagonistic), *ahrudya* (palatability antagonistic), *sampat viruddha* (richness antagonistic) and *vidhi viruddha* (eating rules antagonistic)¹⁰ leads to the manifestation of diseases like sterility, blindness, *visarpa, pandu, kushta, shotha, santhana dosha, grahani* etc.¹¹

Santarpaneeya Ahara Sevana

Nidanas like *ati snigdha guru madhura picchila ahara sevana, acheshta, diwaswapna, shayyaasana sukha* will lead to *santarpana janya vyadhis* like *prameha, pandu, kushta, kilaibya, shotha* etc.¹²

A diet rich in fat, predisposes for obesity. High fat intake, more than 40 percent of the total energy per day, containing high proportion of saturated fatty acids, is a major risk factor for Coronary Heart Disease (CHD), because it increases the serum

cholesterol level. Hypercholesterolemia, which in turn predisposes for the development of atherosclerosis and coronary heart disease.¹³

Ekarasa Sevana

Ayurveda advised about indulgence in *shadrasa*, but indulgence of *eka rasa* leads to the onset of different diseases. For example, *ati sevana* of *madhura rasa* will lead to *kaphaja vikaras* like *sthoulya, ati nidra, swasa, kasa, pratishyaya, anaha, galaganda, slipada* etc,¹⁴ *ati sevana* of *lavana rasa* will lead to *pitta prakopa* and manifest the diseases like *vali, palithya, khalithya, raktapitta, amlapitta, vatarakta, indralupta, vicharchika* etc.¹⁵ *Ati sevana* of *kashaya rasa* will lead to *aasya shosha, hrid peeda, adhamana, vaksanga, kilaibya, pakshaghata, apatanaka* etc.¹⁶

High intake of sweets predisposes for obesity and also sucrose sharp rise in blood glucose, which in turn exerts more work on beta cells of islets of Langerhans in the pancreas. This might eventually lead to exhaustion of beta- cells and consequent diabetes. Sucrose favors the growth of bacteria in the oral cavity. These bacteria produce acid, which has a corrosive effect on dental enamel leading on to the development of dental caries.¹⁷

Diwaswapna and Ratrijagarana

Nidra is considered as one among the *trayopastambha* (three sub pillars of life).¹⁸ *Samyak nidra* brings happiness, it nourishes the body, strengthen the body, brings the potency, makes the person intelligent and gives long life.¹⁹ *Akala nidra* like *diwaswapna* and *ratrijagarana* leads to manifestation of diseases. *Diwaswapna* is contraindicated in *medasvi purusha, sneha nitya purusha, kapha prakruti* and *kaphaja rogi*. The reason for contraindications are that will lead to the onset of diseases like *halimaka, shirashoola, shaimitya, pralepa, shopha, hrillasa, peenasa, ardhavabhedaka, kotha, kandu, kasa* etc. *Diwaswapna* is always indicated for *bala, vrudha* and in *greeshma ritu*. *Ratri jagarana*, it is *vata prakopaka* and leads to *karshyata* and *dhatu kshaya*.²⁰ People who are working for night shifts may develop with obstructive sleep apnoea, insomnia which are the risk for cardiovascular diseases (eg; arrhythmias, atherosclerosis, coronary heart diseases, heart failure, hypertension and stroke) and metabolic disorders like obesity, type-2 diabetes mellitus and dyslipidemia.

Avyayama

Vyayama is a part of *dinacharya*, it brings *laghuta, karma samarthya, deeptagni, meda kshaya*, makes the body stable.²¹ But *ati vyayama* will aggravate *vata* and leads to *shrama, kshaya, trishna, raktapitta, swasa* and *kasa*. *Avyayama* will lead to *sthoulya, madhumeha* and *hridroga*.²²

Vegadharana

Vegadharana ie; suppression of natural urges leads to *vata prakopa*. *Dharana* of *adhovata, trishna, kasa, shramaswasa, ashru* will lead to *hridroga*. *Chardi vegadharana* will lead to skin diseases like *visarpa, kotha, kushta, pandu, jwara* and *shotha*.²³ *Vegadharana* is the main causative factors for many diseases like *vataja kasa, kshayaja kasa, rajayakshma, hridroga, hrid shoala, atisara, agnimandya, ajeerna, grahani, gulma, amlapitta, pandu, amavata, udawarta* etc.

The concept of *sadaathuras* are explained in the classics. The *sadaathuras* are *kshatriyas* (priest), *rajasevaka* (people who takes care of the king), *veshya* (courtesans) and *panyajeevi* (merchants). Because of the nature of the work they are prone to

vegadharana which aggravates the *vata dosha* and leads to constipation and pain all over the body.²⁴

Prajnaparadha

Prajnaparadha (intellectual blasphemy) means committing wilful mistake in conscious state. When *dhi* (understanding), *dhruthi* (retaining power of mind) and *smriti* (memory) are impaired then a person commits some mistakes like *udhirana* of *vega*, excessive indulgence in sexual activity, not following *sadvritta*, *bhaya* and *krodha* which disturb the equilibrium of *shareerika* and *manasika doshas* which causes diseases.²⁵ Smoking etc. also can be included under *prajnaparadha*, it is responsible for a substantial majority of cases of lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Smoking also causes cancers of the upper respiratory and gastro intestinal tracts, pancreas, bladder and kidney.

Under *prajnaparadha*, *ati madyapana* also can be included. *Ati madyapana* is considered as the *nidana* for the diseases like *madatyaya*, *pittaja hridroga*, *trishna*, *atisara*, *amlapitta*, *pandu*, *shotha*, *kamala*, *daha*, *mutakrcchra*, *madhumeha*, *vatarakta* etc. Alcohol consumption is an important risk factor for many diseases. Because of the excessive alcohol consumption it may lead to alcoholic liver diseases, pancreatitis, diabetes, neuro psychiatric disorders, cardiovascular diseases, cancer of the oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver, colon etc.

Ahara is one among the *trayopastambha*. For intake of *ahara* there are some special eight factors which need to be followed to obtain the complete benefits of the food. They are *ashta vidha ahara vidhi visheshat ayatana*. They are *prakriti* (nature of food), *karana* (method of processing of foods), *samyoga* (combination of food substances), *rashi* (quantity of food), *desha* (place where the food is grown and cultivated), *kala* (time of intake of food), *upayokta samstha* (person who consumes the food should follow some instructions like *jeerna ahara lakshana*) and *upayokta* (person who consumes food).²⁶

Emotional disturbances in the professional life increases risk for depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Educate the people those who are following the sedentary lifestyle, about the importance of doing *vyayama*, advice to consume wholesome food, timely food, avoid junk foods, not to suppress the natural urges. People those who are prone to the hereditary diseases like *prameha* and *sthoulya* should be advised to undergo regular screening in the form of health check-up and undergo *shodhana* that helps in the postponement of diseases.

Acharya Vagbhata says that the person will become free from all diseases if one who indulges daily in *hita ahara vihara*, who discriminates the good and bad of everything and then acts wisely, who is not too much attached to the *indriya arthas*, who develops the habit of charity, who is truthful, pardoning and keeping close relation with good persons.²⁷

Acharya rasayana is nothing but following certain rules like truthful, free from anger, avoid alcohol consumption, avoid sexual indulgence, non violence, avoid over exertion, peaceful, pleasing speech, chanting mantra, cleanliness, courageous, one should do charity, one should do meditation, one should offer prayers to god, cow, *brahmana*, *guru*, old people, should be compassionate, one should wake up and sleep at proper time, one should consume milk and ghee etc. Following these in daily life brings *rasayana* effect. The *rasayana gunas* are longevity, memory, intellect, health, youth, beautiful appearance, it strengthens the body, mind and sense organs.²⁸

Swasthya rakshana can be done by following *hitakara samyoga* of *indriyas* with their respective *indriyaartha* and one should do the *karma* which is *hita* after analysing with *buddhi*.²⁹

Concept of Ritu Shodhana in Lifestyle Diseases

Shodhana is one of the main modes of treatment, by doing so *apunarudhbhava* of diseases will happen.³⁰ *Shodhana* plays a vital role in the prevention of diseases and promotion of health. The main aim of *Ayurveda* is “*swasthasya swasthya rakshanam*” and “*athurasya vikara prashamanam*” which means to maintain the health in a healthy individual and treating the disease in the diseased person.³¹ These two aims can be fulfilled by doing *Shodhana*. *Acharya Charaka* explains that *shodhana* in *swastha* will lead to *bala vridhi* and *ayu vridhi* and in *rogi* it acts as *amayaghna* which means it cures the diseases.³²

Ahara and *vihara* that which followed by an individual has an effect on the *doshas* inside the body. In each *ritu*, specific diet and regimens are explained according to the *doshas*. If an individual is following improper diet and regimens which are not advisable in that particular *ritu*, then it will lead to vitiation of *doshas* and reaches to *chaya* and *prakopa avastha* (provocation stage). In this stage these should be managed by doing *dosha nirhana* according to the particular *ritu* and *dosha*. Otherwise, it may lead to manifestation of diseases.

Vata, *pitta* and *kapha prakopa* will happen in *varsha*, *sharat* and *vasanta ritu* respectively. These *prakupita doshas* should be eliminated out of the body by doing *basti*, *virechana* and *vamana* in *varsha*, *sharat* and *vasanta ritu* respectively.³³

According to *Acharya Charaka* the *sanchita dosha nirharana* should be done in the first month of *madhava* (*vaishaka*) ie; *chaitra* (March 15 - April 15), the first month of *nabhasya* (*bhadra*) ie; *shraavana* (June 15 - July 15) and the first month of *sahasya* (*pausha*) ie; *marghashirsha* (Nov 15 - Dec 15). Before administering the *shodhana* one should undergo proper *purvakarma* like *snehana* and *swedana* and then according to the *ritu*, *shodhana* can be administered.³⁴

Ritu anusara shodhana prevents the onset of diseases, maintains the equilibrium of *dhatus*, nourishes all the *dhatus* and slows down the aging process.³⁵ By doing the *shodhana* one can prevent the manifestation of the lifestyle diseases also. Because of the improper lifestyle and food habits there will be imbalance of *dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala*. By doing *shodhana* body can regain the normalcy of *dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala*.

Shodhana is having *rasayana guna* also. By doing the *samyak shodhana* it strengthens the body, nourishes the body, slows down ageing process, disease free life, it improves the quality of *sukra*, *medha*, *swara*, *varna* and increases the *jatharagni* (metabolic factors located in digestive tracts).³⁶

DISCUSSION

The people those who have following the sedentary life style, who are taking junk foods, software employees, who continuously sit and work and even people with continuous stress related to work, are prone to develop life style diseases. So regular screening should be done in the form of health check up, educate them regarding the risk of life style diseases and advice to undergo *shodhana* once a year.

Doing *shodhana* is necessary even in *swastha* also. Because *Acharya Vagbhata* explains that there will be formation of thin layer above the water, even pure water kept undisturbed in a mud

pot. Similarly even in healthy individuals there will be *vatadi dosha prakopa* with respect to *ritu*. So *shodhana* should be performed to eliminate the *doshas*.³⁷

There are two types of *prakopa* ie; *chaya purvaka prakopa* and *achaya purvaka prakopa*. *Ritu charya* is also divided into two i.e; *shodhana rupi ritucharya* and *shamana rupi ritucharya*. *Chaya purvaka prakopa* is the state where there will be *prakopa* of *dosha* after the *dosha* passing through *sanchaya avastha*. The *chaya purvaka prakopa* is *apathya nimittaja* because of the *apathya sevana* in *purva ritu*. For example, *apathya sevana* in the *shishira ritu* like *guru, amla, snigdha madhura rasa ahara sevana* and *diwaswapna*. So in *apathya nimittaja prakopa shodhana* is indicated. For example, in *vasanta ritu tikshna vamana* and *tikshna nasya* are indicated. *Achaya purvaka prakopa* is the state where there will be sudden provocation of *dosha* without passing through *sanchaya avastha* (accumulation stage) and it is *pathya nimittaja*. Here *shamana* is indicated for example, in *vasanta ritu shamana chikitsa* like *udwarthana, lepa* with *karpura, chandana* and *ushira* are indicated.³⁸

In life style diseases, the *nidana sevana* like *mithyahara* and *avyayama* lead to *kapha prakopa*. This *prakupita kapha* vitiates the *agni* and leads to *jatharagnimandya* and it hampers the *adhya ahara rasa* ie; *rasa dhatu*. This will further leads to *dhatu shithilata* and *sroto vaigunyata* (deformity in the body channels). Based on the *prakriti* and *amshamshakalpna* there will be *srota sanga* which will lead to the *sthanasamsraya* (stage of localization) and leads to the manifestation of diseases like diabetes mellitus, obesity, dyslipidemia and cardio vascular diseases. So the general awareness should be given to the people who are prone to certain *nidana sevana* which lead to manifestation of lifestyle disorders.

The people those who have following the sedentary life style like software employees who continuously sit and work with computer, people those who are taking night shifts and even people with work stress should undergo *ritu shodhana*. Adaptation of improper lifestyle is necessary for the survival in the form of professional life, so by doing *ritu shodhana* one can prevent the onset of diseases or it helps for the postponement of diseases.

After *shodhana* status of the *agni* improves like the person will be able to digest all types of *ahara dravyas* and regain the normalcy of *dosha, dhatu* and *mala*. There will not be any obstruction to the *mala, mutradi vega* and the person will feels happy to live, *indriyas* are able to perceive proper *indriya artha*, increases the *shareerika bala* and *manasika bala*.³⁹

Vamana karma is the therapeutic process which is indicated to eliminate the vitiated *kapha dosha*.⁴⁰ It improves the *jatharagni*, eliminates the vitiated *kapha dosha* which leads to *srotomukha vishodhana* and bring the *abbadha meda* to normal. So *vamana karma* helps in preventing the life style disorders such as indigestion, diabetes, obesity, atherosclerosis, respiratory diseases.

Virechana is the therapeutic process which is indicated to eliminate the vitiated *pitta dosha*.⁴¹ It helps to maintain the normalcy of *pitta*, maintains normal secretion of gastric mucosa and it acts as *rakta prasadana*. So *virechana karma* prevents from the diseases like acid peptic disorders, skin diseases.

Basti is considered as the *ardha chikitsa*.⁴² *Basti* is not only best for vitiated *vata* it also equally effective in correcting the vitiated *pitta, kapha* and *rakta*.⁴³ The vitiated *vata* takes *ashraya* in *sira, snayu, sandhi, asthi, koshta* and produces the diseases like

sandhigata vata, pakshaghata, gridhrasi. So *basti* prevents from musculo skeletal disorders like osteoarthritis, spinal disorders and *pakshaghata*.

Nasya is the *shodhana* process which helps to do *urdhwajatra gata dosha nirharana*.⁴⁴ It strengthen the *urdhwajatra pradesha* (part of body above the clavicle) like *greeva, hanu, danta, shira* and *akshi*.⁴⁵ *Nasya* acts as *drishti prasadana* so it prevents the diseases like dry eye syndrome, cataract and glaucoma. It strengthens the teeth, so by doing the *nasya* regularly prevents from dental caries. *Nasya* strengthen the hair, so it prevents from *khalithya* and *palithya*.

CONCLUSION

Life style diseases are occurred due to improper lifestyle like unhealthy food habits, improper sleep, control of natural urges, excessive use of tobacco, alcohol consumption etc. These will lead to vitiation of *dosha, dhatu, mala* and makes *kha vaigunyata* (deformity in the body channels) and manifest different types of diseases. By doing proper *shodhana*, body can maintain the normalcy of the *dosha, dhatu* and *mala* and it removes the *kha vaigunyata*.

“*Rogaah sarve api mandagnau*” *mandagni* is the cause for all diseases and after the *shodhana* the *agni* become *mahat, sthira* and *sarvapachasta*. *Shodhana* can be used as an effective tool to prevent the life style diseases and also helps to improve the quality of life.

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