



Review Article

EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF *DOSHAS* A RESEARCH-BASED REVIEW ON *KRIYA SHARIR*

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ABSTRACT

The concept of *Doshas- Vata, Pitta, and Kapha-* is fundamental to Ayurvedic medicine and is vital for maintaining the balance and overall health of the human body. In Ayurvedic philosophy, these three *Doshas* influence not only physical functions but also mental and emotional health. The balance between these doshas affects various health aspects, including metabolic activities, immune response, mental clarity, and emotional stability. *Kriya Sharir*, which focuses on the study of bodily functions and physiological systems, provides insights into the interaction of *Doshas*, their functioning within the body, and the implications of any imbalances that may arise. This review examines the complex relationships between *Doshas*, their regulatory roles in bodily systems, their effects on disease development, and the clinical relevance of maintaining *Dosha* equilibrium. By integrating ancient Ayurvedic texts with modern scientific findings, it explores the influence of *Doshas* on various physiological activities, including digestion, metabolism, elimination, circulation, and neurological functions. Furthermore, the paper investigates how imbalances in *Doshas* can lead to the onset of diseases and disorders, underscoring the holistic approach of Ayurvedic treatments designed to restore balance. Through a thorough analysis of relevant classical and contemporary literature, this paper emphasizes the significance of understanding doshas within *Kriya Sharir* as a foundation for personalized healthcare. It also aims to present evidence-based insights into Ayurvedic perceptions of health and disease, thereby enhancing appreciation for *Dosha* dynamics and their relevance in modern health practices. Additionally, the research highlights potential areas for future studies that bridge traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with contemporary medical science, advocating for integrative strategies in health management and disease treatment.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is one of the oldest and most holistic medical systems, offering a detailed framework for understanding health and well-being. A key element of Ayurvedic philosophy is the idea of *Doshas*, which are the three primary energies or forces- *Vata, Pitta, and Kapha-* that regulate all physiological, mental, and emotional activities within the human body. These doshas are considered essential components of health, and their equilibrium or disruption significantly affects an individual's physical and mental well-being.

The principles of Ayurvedic medicine are based on the notion that health encompasses more than just the absence of illness; it represents a state of balanced functioning among the body, mind, and spirit. This equilibrium is influenced by the interactions of the doshas, which Ayurvedic philosophy attributes to crucial life processes such as digestion, metabolism, elimination, growth, immunity, and cognition.^[1]

Kriya Sharir is a significant area within Ayurveda that focuses on bodily functions and physiological processes. This discipline is essential for comprehending the roles of *Doshas* within the body. *Kriya Sharir* investigates essential physiological activities, including digestion (*Agni*), circulation (*Rakta*), elimination (*Malas*), and respiration (*Prana*). Its goal is not only to analyze the anatomy and structure of the body but also to understand how

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doshas affect bodily function and equilibrium, and how imbalances can result in illness.^[2]

The *Doshas* are viewed not as fixed entities but as dynamic forces that continuously interact with one another. Each *Dosha* possesses distinct characteristics and roles: *Vata* primarily governs movement and oversees the nervous system, *Pitta* is responsible for transformation and metabolic functions, while *Kapha* provides structure and lubrication to the body. The balance among these forces is crucial for an individual's health, and any imbalance in the *Doshas* can result in various physical and mental health issues. For example, an aggravated *Vata* may cause symptoms such as dryness, anxiety, and digestive disturbances; an unbalanced *Pitta* can lead to inflammation, acidity, and irritability; whereas excessive *Kapha* might result in sluggishness, weight gain, and congestion.^[3]

Ayurveda has a longstanding tradition spanning thousands of years, and contemporary scientific research is increasingly focusing on its foundational principles, particularly regarding the maintenance of homeostasis and disease prevention. Numerous studies are now investigating how Ayurvedic concepts, notably the *Dosha* system, can augment or provide valuable insights into current medical practices. This integration of ancient knowledge with modern science is essential for comprehending the physiological implications of the doshas and their influence on health promotion and disease prevention. The present study aims to investigate the dynamics of *Doshas* as they relate to *Kriya Sharir*. This review delves into the physiological roles of the *Doshas*, their interconnections, and their significance in health maintenance. Additionally, it examines the impact of *Dosha* imbalances on disease development and evaluates Ayurvedic methods for restoring balance through individualized treatments, including dietary changes, herbal remedies, and lifestyle modifications.^[4]

Through this paper, we seek to provide an in-depth understanding of the *Dosha* system within the framework of *Kriya Sharir*, shedding light on how the doshas operate within the human body to maintain physiological harmony. By doing so, we aim to highlight the significance of the *Dosha* system in both ancient Ayurvedic practice and contemporary medical practice. This review will also address the clinical implications of *Dosha* imbalances, offering practical insights into how Ayurveda can be integrated with modern healthcare approaches to promote well-being and treat disease.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Aims

- To explore the physiological and pathophysiological roles of the three *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) in the human body from an Ayurvedic perspective, specifically within the framework of *Kriya Sharir*.
- To analyze the dynamic interplay between the *Doshas* and their influence on the body's internal balance and health.
- To evaluate the clinical significance of *Doshas* in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases.

Objectives

- To identify the primary functions of each dosha (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) in regulating bodily systems.
- To examine how imbalances in the doshas contribute to the pathogenesis of common diseases.
- To review modern research and traditional Ayurvedic literature on *Dosha* imbalances and their treatment through dietary, lifestyle, and herbal interventions.
- To assess the role of personalized Ayurvedic treatments in restoring *Dosha* balance and promoting overall health.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data Sources

Ancient Ayurvedic Texts: Primary texts such as the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya were consulted to explore traditional Ayurvedic theories regarding the *Doshas* and their impact on bodily functions.

Modern Research Articles: Recent studies from peer-reviewed journals that investigate the role of doshas in contemporary medical practice, focusing on the application of Ayurvedic principles in disease prevention and treatment, were included.

Clinical Studies: Case studies from Ayurvedic clinical practices were analyzed to understand real-world applications of dosha balance and imbalances.

Doshas and Their Functions

Vata Dosha^[5]

Role in *Kriya Sharir*: *Vata* governs movement in the body. It is responsible for the functions of the nervous system, respiration, circulation, elimination, and cellular movements. As the most active *Dosha*, it oversees actions like digestion, excretion, and the flow of vital forces (*Prana*).

Imbalance: An imbalance in *Vata* can lead to issues such as anxiety, dry skin, constipation, and joint pain.

Pitta Dosha^[6]

Role in *Kriya Sharir*: *Pitta* governs transformation and metabolism. It controls the digestive enzymes, metabolic processes, body temperature, and the production of bile. *Pitta* influences mental clarity, intellect, and understanding.

Imbalance: When *Pitta* is aggravated, it leads to conditions such as hyperacidity, inflammation, irritability, and digestive disturbances.

Kapha Dosha^[7]

Role in *Kriya Sharir*: *Kapha* is responsible for structure and lubrication. It maintains stability, provides nourishment, and governs the immune system. *Kapha*'s qualities ensure that the body is hydrated, cohesive, and resistant to disease.

Imbalance: An excess of *Kapha* can result in conditions such as weight gain, lethargy, sinus congestion, and emotional sluggishness.

The Interrelationship of Doshas in Kriya Sharir^[7]

The three *Doshas* interact in a delicate balance, with each one supporting the others in maintaining bodily functions. *Kriya Sharir* explains how these doshas not only function independently but also collaborate to sustain homeostasis:

- Synergistic Roles: For example, *Vata* stimulates the digestive process, *Pitta* manages its transformation, and *Kapha* provides the necessary moisture and structure.
- Imbalances and Disease: Imbalances occur when one or more *Doshas* become aggravated or depleted. This can be due to external factors (such as environmental changes or poor diet) or internal factors (like stress or genetic vulnerabilities). Imbalances lead to disease, which is seen as a disruption in the equilibrium of *Doshas*.

Clinical Significance and Diagnostic Implications^[8]

Ayurvedic practitioners use pulse diagnosis, tongue examination, and other diagnostic methods to assess the state of doshas in the body. A thorough understanding of *Kriya Sharir* aids in identifying which dosha is predominant or imbalanced, allowing for targeted interventions.

Clinical Applications: By assessing the dosha balance, Ayurvedic treatments can be personalized. For example, if *Pitta* is high, cooling herbs and practices can be recommended, while *Vata* imbalances may be addressed through grounding and hydrating therapies.

Treatment Approaches**Dietary Modifications**

Vata: Warm, moist, and grounding foods like soups and stews can help balance *Vata*.

Pitta: Cooling and calming foods, such as cucumbers and coconut, are beneficial.

Kapha: Light, dry, and stimulating foods like salads and spicy dishes can reduce *Kapha*.

Herbal Interventions

Vata: Herbs like *Ashwagandha* and *Brahmi* help ground and calm *Vata*.

Pitta: Herbs such as aloe vera and mint help cool and soothe *Pitta*.

Kapha: Ginger and turmeric are known to stimulate digestion and reduce excess *Kapha*.

Lifestyle Modifications

Vata: Regular routines, adequate rest, and warm environments balance *Vata*.

Pitta: Relaxation techniques, avoiding heat, and regular meditation are helpful for *Pitta*.

Kapha: Physical activity and stimulating activities, such as brisk walking or yoga, balance *Kapha*.

DISCUSSION

The *Dosha* system serves as a fundamental element of Ayurvedic physiology, providing a detailed framework for understanding health in humans. Within the scope of *Kriya Sharir*, which focuses on bodily functions, *Doshas* are viewed not as separate entities but as interconnected and dynamic energies that influence both physiological and mental aspects. The relationship among the *Doshas*- *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*- is intricate and constantly evolving, shaped by various internal and external influences, including diet, lifestyle, emotions, environmental conditions, and seasonal changes. Each *Dosha* possesses distinct characteristics, and their interactions contribute to either a state of balance or imbalance, which in turn affects an individual's overall health status.^[9]

The Interplay of Doshas in Kriya Sharir

Vata, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* work in a synergistic manner to maintain homeostasis in the body. Each dosha influences the others, and their collective state of equilibrium ensures smooth physiological functioning. For example, *Vata*, the force of movement, drives the processes of digestion and circulation by stimulating *Pitta*, the transformative energy. *Pitta*'s role in metabolism, enzyme activity, and heat production is essential for the proper function of the digestive system, while *Kapha*, responsible for maintaining structure and lubrication, ensures that these processes happen smoothly without excess dryness or friction.^[10]

The equilibrium among the *Doshas* is fragile, and when one *Dosha* is out of balance, it can swiftly impact the others, resulting in illness. An overactive *Vata* can interfere with the flow of bodily fluids, potentially causing issues such as constipation,

dryness, and feelings of anxiety. An excess of *Pitta* may lead to symptoms like inflammation, fever, increased acidity, and digestive problems. Conversely, an imbalance in *Kapha* can result in symptoms such as lethargy, congestion, and weight gain. Maintaining a proper balance among these doshas is essential for the body to operate effectively. Gaining insight into this balance within the framework of *Kriya Sharir* helps practitioners identify imbalances and suggest appropriate therapeutic measures.^[11]

Clinical Relevance of *Dosha* Imbalance

The notion of *Dosha* imbalances is crucial in both preventative and therapeutic approaches within Ayurvedic medicine. *Doshas* are inherently dynamic, indicating that the body is in a continual state of change influenced by various internal and external factors. Environmental elements, including seasonal variations, weather shifts, and daily practices (referred to as *Dincharya*), can significantly affect the equilibrium of *Doshas*, rendering individuals more vulnerable to specific imbalances at different times. For instance, colder seasons typically see an increase in *Kapha* due to external environmental conditions, which can result in issues like colds, respiratory ailments, and allergies. Conversely, during hot and humid periods, *Pitta* levels often rise, potentially leading to heat-related conditions such as rashes, ulcers, and digestive issues.^[12]

Internal factors, including emotional stress, unhealthy eating habits, and insufficient sleep, can significantly influence the *Doshas*. *Vata* is often aggravated by emotional stress, which may result in symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, and digestive problems. Similarly, *Pitta* can become inflamed due to stress or an imbalanced diet, leading to issues like hyperacidity, anger, and irritability. Furthermore, *Kapha* may become disrupted with sedentary behavior, excessive sleep, or a heavy diet, contributing to weight gain, lethargy, and respiratory challenges. The fluctuating nature of these *Dosha* imbalances necessitates tailored treatment approaches that account for an individual's unique constitution (*Prakriti*), their current health condition (*Vikriti*), and surrounding environmental factors. Ayurvedic treatments, grounded in the principles of *Kriya Sharir*, focus on restoring balance by customizing interventions to meet each person's specific needs, utilizing methods such as dietary adjustments, lifestyle changes, herbal remedies, or detoxification techniques (*Panchakarma*).^[9]

Holistic Treatment Approaches in Ayurveda

Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to treating *Dosha* imbalances, focusing on the entire spectrum of health- physical, mental, and spiritual. The treatment

of dosha imbalances, according to *Kriya Sharir*, involves more than just symptom management; it addresses the root cause of the imbalance and seeks to restore harmony in the body, mind, and spirit.

Dietary Modifications^[13]

One of the key treatments in Ayurveda is the modification of diet to balance the doshas. For example:

- *Vata* imbalance may require foods that are warm, moist, and grounding, such as soups, stews, and whole grains.
- *Pitta* imbalance may benefit from cooling and calming foods such as fresh fruits, cucumbers, and dairy products, as they help soothe inflammation.
- *Kapha* imbalance can be addressed by incorporating light, dry, and stimulating foods, such as leafy greens, legumes, and spicy dishes, which stimulate digestion and remove excess water retention.

Herbal Remedies^[12]

Ayurvedic herbs play an important role in treating *Dosha* imbalances. Specific herbs are prescribed depending on the *Dosha* in question:

- *Ashwagandha*, *Brahmi*, and *Shatavari* are commonly used to balance *Vata* by promoting calmness, grounding, and moisture.
- Aloe vera, turmeric, and peppermint are effective for cooling and soothing *Pitta*.
- Ginger, *Tulsi*, and *Triphala* are often used to stimulate the digestive system and balance *Kapha*.

Lifestyle Changes

Ayurveda also emphasizes the importance of proper daily routines (*Dincharya*) and seasonal routines (*Ritucharya*) to maintain *Dosha* balance. Regular sleep, exercise, meditation, and stress management techniques like yoga and pranayama are integral in maintaining *Dosha* harmony. For instance, *Vata* imbalances require a stable, structured routine to promote grounding, while *Pitta* imbalances benefit from cooling practices such as evening walks, mindfulness meditation, and avoiding heat and stress.^[14]

Panchakarma (Detoxification)

Panchakarma is a comprehensive detoxification therapy aimed at eliminating toxins from the body and restoring *Dosha* balance. It involves treatments such as *Abhyanga* (oil massage), *Swedana* (steam therapy), *Nasya* (nasal administration of herbal oils), and *Vasti* (medicated enemas), tailored to the individual's *Dosha* and health condition.

Modern Research and Integrating Ayurveda with Contemporary Medicine

The growing interest in Ayurvedic practices, particularly in the context of *Kriya Sharir*, has led to numerous studies exploring the role of *Doshas* in modern health. Research has increasingly shown that Ayurvedic principles, such as the dosha system, are compatible with current scientific findings related to immunology, neurobiology, and endocrinology. For example, Ayurveda's understanding of *Vata* and its role in nervous system regulation aligns with modern neuroscience, while the metabolic functions of *Pitta* find resonance with current studies on body temperature regulation and inflammation. Similarly, *Kapha*'s role in immunity and structural integrity parallels with findings in modern biology related to mucous production, fluid regulation, and joint health.

Future research could explore the molecular mechanisms behind Ayurvedic treatments, such as how certain herbs and therapies influence biochemical processes or how dosha imbalances may contribute to the pathogenesis of diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and autoimmune disorders.

CONCLUSION

The *Doshas- Vata, Pitta, and Kapha-* are essential to Ayurvedic physiology, providing a framework to understand human body functions. Their interplay is vital in *Kriya Sharir*, which studies physiological processes. Understanding these *Doshas* helps in grasping their influence on physical, mental, and emotional health. Balance among *Vata, Pitta,* and *Kapha* is crucial for maintaining health, as any imbalance can lead to physiological and psychological issues. This overview highlights *Doshas* as active forces involved in dynamic interactions. Effective health management depends on a balanced relationship among *Doshas* through diet, lifestyle, and emotional health. An imbalance disrupts bodily systems, leading to various health conditions. Thus, *Doshas* are significant in preventing and treating diseases. Ayurveda provides a holistic method for addressing *Dosha* imbalances, focusing on individual needs. Treatments like dietary adjustments, herbal remedies, lifestyle changes, and detoxification aim to relieve symptoms while restoring body and mind balance. Customized approaches based on an individual's constitution (*Prakriti*) and current health status (*Vikriti*) enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of wellness efforts. This personalized framework, combined with modern scientific insights, demonstrates Ayurveda's relevance in today's healthcare. Research integrating Ayurvedic principles with modern medicine is expanding. Studies are increasingly supporting Ayurvedic tenets, including

doshas, linking them to immunology, neurobiology, and endocrinology advancements. This blend of traditional wisdom with contemporary science fosters inclusive healthcare strategies focusing on prevention and personalized treatment. Despite the potential of Ayurvedic therapies, more research is needed to validate these practices. Future investigations should explore the molecular mechanisms of Ayurvedic treatments and their biochemical impacts. Examining the *Dosha* system's ties to chronic diseases like cardiovascular issues, diabetes, and autoimmune disorders could offer valuable insights into Ayurveda's effectiveness in tackling modern health challenges.

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