



Review Article

MANAGEMENT OF LIFESTYLE DISORDERS WITH TENETS OF AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is one of the world's ancient health care systems. Ayurveda has always emphasized maintaining the health and prevention of diseases by following a proper diet and lifestyle regimen rather than treatment and cure of the diseases. Ayurveda describes *Traya-upastambhah*, three pillars for a healthy life are *Aahar* (proper diet), *Nidra* (proper sleep), and *Brahmacharya* (celibacy). *Aahar* has been given prime importance since the *Vedic* Period. It is considered *Brahma* in *Upanishad*. Acharaya Kashyapa gives it the name "*Mahabhaisajya*". Lifestyle disorders originate due to Poor lifestyle which includes poor diet, poor eating habits, *Viruddhahara* (dietetic incompatibility), lack of exercise, Smoking, excess alcohol, poor sleep, stress due to heavy workload, and increased consumption of unhealthy food. So, nowadays the number of individuals having lifestyle diseases like Heart disease, Obesity, Diabetes, Hypertension, and Cancer are continuously increasing and these are the primary cause of death. According to WHO, four main types of lifestyle disorders are Cardiovascular disease, Cancer, Chronic respiratory diseases, and Diabetes. Diseases of infective origin can be easily treated as compared to lifestyle disorders because lifestyle disorders are generally non-reversible. It is the need of time to review the *Ayurveda* in order to apply measures in preventing the upcoming epidemic of lifestyle disorders which are preventable with changes in diet (*ahara*), lifestyle, and environment.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is one of the most ancient sciences of life. The basic concept of Ayurveda about the healthy person is to maintain the equilibrium of *Sharirika* and *Mansika Dosh*. The main aim of Ayurveda is "*Swasthasya Swasthaya Rakshanam*" which means to maintain the health of a healthy person and "*Aturasya Vikara Prasamanam Cha*" which means to cure the disease of a diseased person^[1]. According to Ayurveda *Ahara*, as well as the method of intake both have equal importance. The substance, their specific tastes, qualities, potencies, and digestive transformation are responsible for the equilibrium of the *Doshas* and *Dhatu*. According to one quotation of *Acharya Sushruta* "*Sankshepta Kriya Yogo Nidaan Parivarjnam*"^[2]

i.e., treatment, in short, is to avoid the causative factors. Lifestyle disorders are common in the present era due to poor lifestyle which includes poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking, excess alcohol, poor sleep, and stress due to heavy workload. Several factors result in an increasing burden of lifestyle disease which include rising income, increasing tobacco consumption, decreasing physical activity, and increase consumption of unhealthy food (*Ahita Ahara*). According to *Acharya Kashyap*, since life cannot be sustained without diet and only on medicine, the proper diet is referred to as "*Mahabhaisajya*" (Greatest Medicine). *Ahar* has been given prime importance since the *Vedic* Period. *Aahar* (proper diet), *Nidra* (proper sleep), and *Brahmcharya* (celibacy) are *Traya Upstambha* (like a pillar which supports building) in Ayurveda^[3]. *Ahara* is not only needed for the continuity of life but for *Bala*, *Varna*, *Upacaya*, etc. also^[4]. This is responsible for the growth, development, and enhancement of *Ojas* (Immunity).

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Lifestyle

Lifestyle is the way, a person lives. Lifestyle is a distinguishing (typical or personal) group of behaviors adopted by a person which includes one's habits, customs, social group, mode of dress, general diet, kinds of entertainment, language characteristics, and how one performs common daily activities of living.

So, lifestyle is often an accurate reflection of our deepest values, attitudes, prejudices, moral standards, economic approaches, and personal philosophy. In short, the entire activities and conduct by a person during the whole day and night regarding its methods, timing, place, etc. is called lifestyle, i.e., how, where and when a person is sleeping, playing, wandering, eating, swimming, walking, etc.

Changing Lifestyle

In ancient times, people were following the ideal Lifestyle. Therefore, people were not much get affected by various types of diseases. Afterward, it has been turned into a sedentary lifestyle. In the modern era of civilization, due to the growing use of technologies and increasing competition, changing lifestyles has become a leading cause of manifestation of many diseases like Diabetes mellitus, Obesity, etc.

Top 10 Lifestyle Diseases

WHO states the top 10 lifestyles diseases in the world affecting health are as follows [5]:

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Arteriosclerosis
- Cancer
- Chronic Liver Disease/Cirrhosis
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Nephritis/CRF
- Stroke
- Obesity

DISCUSSION

As Acharya Charak has explained that we should use those food materials which maintain our health as well as prevent new diseases. [6]

Samyak Ahara Lakshanas[7]

1. There should be no undue pressure on the stomach due to the food taken.
2. There should be no obstruction to the proper functioning of the heart.
3. There should not be any pressure on the sides of the chest.
4. There should not be an excessive heaviness in the abdomen.
5. There should be proper nourishment of the senses.

6. There should be relief from hunger and thirst.
7. There should be a feeling of comfort in standing, sitting, sleeping walking, exhaling, inhaling, laughing, and talking.
8. Food taken in the morning should get digested by the evening and the food taken during the evening should get digested by the next morning
9. There should be the promotion of strength, complexion, and plumpness.

Disadvantages of taking food in more quantity than normal

Food taken in excessive quantity aggravates all the three *Doshas*. Symptoms due to each *Dosha* are as follows[8]:

Vata: Produces colic pain, constipation, malaise, dryness of mouth, fainting, giddiness, irregularity in the power of digestion, the rigidity of sides, back, and waist, and contraction and hardening of vessels.

Pitta: Causes fever, diarrhea, internal burning sensation, thirst, intoxication, giddiness, and delirium.

Kapha: Causes vomiting, anorexia, indigestion, cold fever, laziness, and heaviness in the body.

Atimatra Ahara as a cause of disease[9]:

- Rasavaha Srotasadushti
- Gulma
- Grahani Dosha
- Ardhavabhedahka
- Annavaaha Srotasadushti
- Purishavaha Srotasadushti
- Kaphaprakopa
- Sthaulya
- Stanyaroga
- Visarpa
- Prana Vayu dushti
- Udarad
- Raktadushti
- Chhardi

Disadvantages of taking food in less quantity than normal[10]

If a person takes food in a very less quantity that can not satisfy his hunger, it is not able to nourish the body properly and produce the symptoms as below:

1. Impairment of strength, complexion, and plumpness.
2. Distension and mis peristalsis in the abdomen.
3. Impairment of longevity, virility, and Ojas.
4. Affliction of body, mind, intellect, and senses.
5. Impairment of the excellence of Dhatus.
6. Manifestation of the inauspicious conditions.
7. Causation of eighty varieties of *Vatika* diseases.

Hinamatra Aharaas a cause of disease^[11]

- Anantavata
- Arsha
- Grahani Dosha
- Vatavyadhi
- Vatarakta
- Bijopaghataja Klaihya
- Pranavaha Srotasadushti
- Kshatakshin
- Udavarta
- Pittaprakopa
- Karshya
- Kshaya

Laghu Ahara as a cause of the disease

- Vatavyadhi
- Anantavata
- Vatarakta

The ideal time for taking food^[12]

- The *Doshas* are in their proper places
- Agni (digestive enzymes) is provoked
- There is a feeling of hunger
- The entrances of the channels of circulation are open
- Pure belching (without any taste or smell)
- Enthusiasm
- Elimination of waste at the proper time
- Lightness of the body
- Flatus is moving downward easily
- Mind is clean
- Sense organs are functioning well

The advantages of taking food at the proper time are as follows

- Unimpaired cardiac function
- Downward passage of the *Vata*
- Proper manifestation of the urges for voiding flatus, urine, and stool.
- The product of food does not vitiate the *Dhatus* of the body and promotes longevity in its entirety.

Disadvantages of taking food before digestion of previous meal

If one takes food before the digestion of the previous meal, the digestive product of the previous food, i.e. immature rasa gets mixed up with the product of food taken afterward, resulting in the provocation of all the *Doshas* instantaneously^[13].

When the digestive fire has not become keen after the morning meal, a second meal should not be taken; if a second meal is taken when the earlier food is undergoing digestion, it only destroys the digestive fire^[14].

Ahara Kala

In Sushruta Samhita, there is a reference to *Dwau- Kala Bhojana*^[15]. But there is the exception of *Pitta Prakriti* to this rule. *Pitta Prakriti* people are having '*Dandashuka*' because of the dominance of *Tikshna Guna of Pitta*, digestion occurs faster as compared to *Vata* and *Kapha Prakriti*. Therefore, they have a feeling of hunger frequently. *Srutis* (law books, scriptures) stipulate two times for taking meal viz- once in the evening and once in the morning; no meal should be taken in between, this rule/code is similar to that of *Agnihotra* (fire oblation) (not to be violated). Food should not be taken (for the second time) within one *Yama* (three hours after the earlier meal), and should not starve for (more than) two *Yama* (six hours) because, during the period of first three hours, *Ahararasa* of the previous meal gets produced. A second meal hinders this process and after a lapse of six hours, there will be a decrease in the strength of the body. So, both these should not be done^[16].

The ideal time for a meal

A) Lunch-Ideal time for lunch is between first and second *Yama* i.e., between 3-6 hrs after sunrise (beginning of the day)^[18].

B) Dinner- Ideal time for dinner is after the end of the first *Prahara* i.e., after 3 hrs after the beginning of the night (after sunset)^[19].

Ahara Kala according to Ritu^[19]

In seasons during which the nights are very long (*Hemanta* and *Shishira* – dewy and winter respectively). persons should partake food in the morning itself, such food being predominant in qualities opposite of the qualities of the season; in seasons in which the days are very long (*Grishma* and *Pravrut*-summer and early rainy seasons respectively), food suitable to the season should be taken in the afternoon; in seasons in which both day and night are equal (*Sharada* and *Varsha* - autumn and spring season respectively), food should be partaken at the middle, dividing the day and night equally.

CONCLUSION

It has been proved that in the case of lifestyle disorders, simple lifestyle measures like regulating proper *Ahar* are more effective in preventing or delaying the onset of these diseases.

For the prevention and treatment of disease with lifestyle modification and by following proper dietary rules according to Ayurveda (*Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatana*, *Virudha ahar*, *Dvadasha Asana Vidhi*) should be done as early as possible because "*Prevention is always better than cure*". The Ayurvedic principles and other holistic approaches have potential to the reduction of lifestyle disorders and their risk factors in the community.

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