



UTILIZATION PATTERN OF AYURVEDIC TREATMENT AMONG PATIENTS IN CHENNAI – A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Numbers of people are turning to complementary and alternative medicine to solve their particular health problems not only in India, but also in many other nations. Ayurveda is widely accepted and practiced parallel to allopathic system of medicine. Still there is very little information on the use of Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H). It is still to be understood that how the Ayurvedic medicines are utilized in Chennai. Aim of study is to assess the utilization pattern and perception of Ayurveda system of medicine among the patients undergoing Ayurveda treatment. **Methods:** A Descriptive study was conducted in Chennai in registered Ayurveda clinics with sample of 299 patients. Multistage sampling was done for the data collection. Data was collected by using semi-structured questionnaire. **Result:** 74.75% of patients have approached the Ayurveda clinic for chronic ailments. 65.8 percent of patients have used the Ayurvedic service as prophylaxis during Covid -19. Patients who likely to utilize other system of medicine in addition to Ayurveda is 32.4 percent, with 18.3 percent using modern medicine. Among the first time users, 24.4 percent of them have been familiarized of Ayurvedic medicine after the commencement of Covid-19. **Conclusion:** The vast majority of them thought Ayurvedic medication had benefited for pain management and female disorders. Patients believed that the system of Ayurvedic medicine has familiarized after the onset of Covid-19. Awareness about the Ayurvedic system is found to be adequate, yet the scope of the reach can be improved among general population by community based studies.

KEYWORDS : Ayurveda, Utilization, Perception

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, or traditional Indian medicine, is one of the world's oldest and most alive traditions. Ayurveda traditional medicine (TRM) of India, according to WHO, the holistic science of medicine that has been practised and used by Indians for centuries. Ayurveda is primarily concerned with the management of lifestyle problems that are prevalent among particular age groups in society owing to stress- related phenomena and other factors.

Ayurveda has two components: Preventive and Curative. Preventive aspect of Ayurveda is called Swasth-Vritt and includes personal hygiene, regular daily routine, appropriate social behaviour and RasayanaSevana, i.e. use of rejuvenate materials / food and drugs. The curative treatment consists using of drugs, specific diet and life style. Therefore, advancements in the ongoing research methodology are highly required for the promotion of Ayurveda. One of the most significant growth since medieval till modern era has been the non-communicable diseases or chronic diseases as the biomedicine cannot (Jaiswal & Williams, 2016) treat as effectively as Ayurveda because the whole system needs attention not the parts in isolation (Jaiswal & Williams, 2016).

However, attempts are made to develop this and to incorporate about utilization and perception of Ayurveda. This study is a tool for understanding how population engage with the health system, especially in Ayurveda (for infectious diseases and chronic diseases) (Jaiswal & Williams, 2016).

Singh et al., (2018) has conducted a study on Perception and practice of Ayurveda among users and non-users. With objective of comparing the difference in its source of knowledge among both the groups, satisfaction level among who have already used it and identification of factors that promote or demote it. A total of 728 responses were selected for analysis out of which 376 (52%) were Ayurveda users and 352 (48%) were non-users, out of all participants 222 (30.4%) were females and rest 506

(69.5%) were males. Results also showed that while people of all age groups, both sex, all occupational and educational groups uses Ayurveda, it appears that males and peoples older than 30 years of age prefer Ayurveda (Singh et al., 2018).

METHODS

This is the descriptive cross sectional study which includes the study population of patients in Chennai who come to registered Ayurvedic clinic. Multi stage sampling was used with the sample size of 299. The selection criteria of the study were any patients who are attending registered Ayurveda clinic in Chennai. $N = (Z\alpha^2 / d^2) (P) (1-P)$ Assuming that the proportion of patients is 50% and the precision at 5% with 95% confidence interval. Validity of the tool was assessed using content validity. Content validity was determined by field expert from research officers and ethical committee members. The questionnaire was pre-tested among 20 participants in registered Ayurveda clinic and the ambiguities were corrected. A self administered questionnaire was used to assess the utilization pattern and perception of Ayurveda system of medicine. The list of registered clinics from clinical establishment act was obtained from DMS, Teynampet. The clinics were divided according to their region, with simple random sample selection two zones were selected in each region. With random sampling method two clinics were selected in each zone. Patients were interviewed and the data was collected in the Microsoft Excel and the analyses was done using SPSS tool. The data collection was done over a period of 6 months.

RESULTS

Table 1: Utilization and proportion of the patients approaching Ayurvedic treatment.

| Variables | Frequency (n=299) | Percentage (%) |
|--|-------------------|----------------|
| Reason for choosing Ayurveda treatment? | | |
| Naturally interested in Ayurveda | 31 | 10.4 |

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Not satisfied with other treatment | 152 | 50.8 |
| Expecting a safe/lasting relief | 102 | 34.1 |
| Relatives and friend recommendation | 14 | 4.7 |
| For what ailment are you taking Ayurveda medicine? | | |
| a. Respiratory problems | 31 | 10.4 |
| b. Knee joint Pain | 98 | 32.8 |
| c. Non Communicable disease | 39 | 13.0 |
| d. Menstrual problems | 63 | 21.1 |
| e. General problems | 38 | 12.7 |
| f. Skin infection | 30 | 10.0 |
| How long are you taking Ayurveda medicine? | | |
| a. Recently/1 st time | 103 | 34.4 |
| b. Few months | 58 | 19.4 |
| c. More than 1 year | 87 | 29.1 |
| d. >5 years | 24 | 8.0 |
| e. >10 years | 12 | 4.0 |
| f. Long time/childhood | 15 | 5.0 |
| Did you get a significant improvement in your condition under Ayurveda treatment? | | |
| a. Yes | 254 | 84.9 |
| b. No | 45 | 15.1 |
| How long it took for the improvement? | | |
| Within 1 week | 151 | 50.5 |
| 1-2 week | 69 | 23.1 |
| 2 weeks – 1 month | 6 | 2 |
| Variables | Frequency (n=299) | Percentage (%) |
| > 1 month | 28 | 9.4 |
| No significant improvement | 45 | 15.1 |
| Are you satisfied with the improvement? | | |
| Yes | 254 | 84.9 |
| No | 45 | 15.1 |
| History of previous Ayurveda treatment for any other illness? | | |
| a. Yes | 231 | 77 |
| b. No | 68 | 22.7 |
| Have you taken any other Ayurvedic medicine without consultation (OTC)? | | |
| a. Yes | 202 | 67.6 |
| b. No | 97 | 32.4 |
| Are you taking any other system of medicine while undergoing Ayurveda treatment? | | |
| a. Yes | 97 | 32.4 |
| b. No | 202 | 67.6 |
| If yes, mention the system? | | |
| a. Allopath | 55 | 18.4 |
| b. Homeopathy | 25 | 8.4 |
| c. Siddha | 17 | 5.7 |
| How many approached Allopathic other than AYUSH? | | |
| Allopathic and AYUSH | 55 | 18.4 |
| Reason for choosing allopathy system of medicine? | | |
| Quick recovery | 46 | 15.4 |
| Tapering dose | 9 | 3 |
| Did you have any discomfort on taking Ayurveda medicine? | | |
| a. Yes | 187 | 62.5 |
| b. No | 112 | 37.5 |
| If yes, what kind of discomfort? | | |
| c. Non-Availability | 31 | 10.4 |
| d. Palatability | 109 | 36.5 |
| e. Missing Dosage | 47 | 15.7 |

All the study participants were consulting the qualified ayurvedic medical practitioners. Among the study participants, majority of the participants consult Ayurveda treatment for pain in the knee joint with 98(32.8%), followed by menstrual problems with 63 (21.1%) and others for some non-communicable diseases, general problems, respiratory

problems and skin infections with 13%, 12.7%, 10.4% and 10% respectively.

Most of the participants 34.4% uses Ayurveda recently/first time, 87(29.1%) using Ayurveda for more than one year, 58 (19.4%) were used Ayurveda only for few months, only 24 (8%) and 12 (4%) uses for more than 5 years and 10 years respectively. only 15 (5%) were using since childhood. Most of the patients 254 (84.9%) were satisfied with Ayurveda treatment, To observe the duration for significant improvement in the condition, 50% of the 299 participants told it took within a week to feel a significant improvement. 23.1% felt 1-2 weeks to get a significant improvement, 10% of the participants told that it takes more than a month to feel significant improvement. 77% of the participants approached Ayurveda for previous illness. Among 299 study participants, 62.5% had problem in taking Ayurveda medicines on account of its palatability with 36.5%.

Table 2: Accessibility of Ayurveda medicine

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|
| Available within the clinic | 236 | 78.9 |
| Purchased from other pharmacy | 17 | 5.7 |
| By Courier / online | 46 | 15.4 |

To find out the accessibility of Ayurveda medicine, 236 (78.9%) gets easy accessibility because it is near, 15.4% found difficult to access the Ayurveda medicine.

Table 3: cost of Ayurvedic medicine

| | | |
|----------------|-----|------|
| Non affordable | 65 | 20.4 |
| Affordable | 234 | 73.6 |

73.6% of the participants felt that the cost of Ayurveda medicine was affordable, only 20.4% felt Non-affordable.

Table 4: Ayurveda medicine and COVID-19.

| | | |
|---|-----|-------|
| Did you take any Ayurveda medicine for prevention of COVID-19? | | |
| Yes | 197 | 65.9 |
| No | 102 | 34.1 |
| If yes, what are the medicines? | | |
| Ashwaganda | 42 | 14 |
| Chyavanaprash | 72 | 24.1 |
| Guduchi | 47 | 15.7 |
| Nilavembu Bhunimba kashayam | 36 | 12 |
| Have you been ever affected with COVID-19? | | |
| Yes | 103 | 34.4 |
| No | 196 | 65.5 |
| How do you feel the system of Ayurveda helped during pandemic? | | |
| a. Excellent | 85 | 28.4 |
| b. Good | 66 | 22.01 |
| c. Fair | 148 | 49.5 |
| Did you approach any Ayurveda clinic during pandemic for any of the symptoms mentioned below? Cough, cold, headache, throat pain, fever, loss of smell/taste | | |
| Yes | 299 | 100 |
| No | 0 | 0 |

During COVID-19 pandemic, 65.9% of the study participants used Ayurvedic medicine for prevention of COVID-19. Among the study participants, only 34.4% were tested positive for COVID-19, most of the people feel good about the system of Ayurveda helped during pandemic. All the study participants approached Ayurvedic registered clinic for COVID symptoms.

Only 73 of the total 299 study participants approached Ayurvedic treatment for their chronic diseases during pandemic and felt the improvement in system before and after covid-19.

Table 5: Perception of Ayurvedic system of medicine.

| | | |
|---|-----|------|
| Did you approach Ayurveda treatment for any chronic disease during pandemic? | | |
| a. Yes | 73 | 24.4 |
| b. No | 226 | 75.6 |
| How do you feel the difference before and after COVID-19 about Ayurveda? | | |
| a. Improved | 282 | 94.3 |
| b. Not much improvement | 17 | 5.7 |
| Do you have any doubts regarding Ayurveda? | | |
| a. Yes | 272 | 91 |
| b. No | 27 | 9 |
| Would you recommend Ayurveda medicine to others? | | |
| a. Yes | 271 | 90.6 |
| b. No | 28 | 9.4 |
| Would you prefer any Ayurveda practitioners as a family doctor? | | |
| a. Yes | 277 | 92.6 |
| b. No | 22 | 7.4 |
| How to improve awareness about Ayurveda? | | |
| a. By keeping camps | 169 | 56.5 |
| b. Advertisement | 72 | 24.1 |

Almost all of the study participants recommend Ayurveda medicine to others, and prefer Ayurvedic practitioners as family doctor and also suggested that by keeping camps will have improved the Ayurveda system of medicine.

DISCUSSION

Higher cost of treatment was not the major reason for switching over to other systems. In this study, 50.8% of the patients were found to have switched over to the system of Ayurveda due to the non-satisfaction of the other treatments, whereas 34.1% have approached expecting safe and lasting relief. Patients with chronic diseases were found to be more likely to use Ayurveda medicines (Research Paper, n.d.).

According to recent study, calamity may arise if individuals are not thoroughly informed the practitioners about their disease condition and do not follow right rules. As the risks that can affect is quite high, only prevention through social separation is the way to go. To some degree, only good immunity can prevent humans from being infected by microbes (Kashid & Amarprakash, 2020). In our study about 65.9% of the study participants have taken Ayurveda medicines as prophylaxis treatment during covid-19. This positive approach shows a visible growth in the belief of Ayurveda, in spite of other treatments.

Why switch over?

Previous Study has shown poor referral by allopathic doctors. It may be due to their misperceptions and no orientation to AYUSH system. This might affect the system of AYUSH in connecting with patient. Such perceptions can be changed through sensitization workshops and repeated study (Allagh & Thippaiah, 2012). In our study the response of the patient has found to be more active with 40.5%. The Ayurvedic system of medicine has already receiving a much attention in the health field, as the referral by the western medicine is much welcoming.

Apart from Ayurveda, our study has a history of using various systems of treatment concurrently. Among them, the Allopathic system was picked by 55 members for the top ranked 7 problems Kidney stone, Acidity, Apnoea, Diabetes, Pain associated, Fertility, Women issue. They indicated that the switch was made for the purpose of decreasing the dose and allowing for a speedy recovery. Quick recovery denotes immediate action or to obtain spontaneous relief and tapering dose was stated as they were already consuming for the situations in which they are gradually reducing the dose.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of responses of patients few have approached for chronic disease, among them arthritis and pain management were maximum. The study showed that the patients receiving Ayurvedic treatment reported that they were progressing adequately after one week of the visit.

Approximately most of the patients receiving Ayurvedic treatment are satisfied with the prescriptions and medicines prescribed by the doctors. 24.4 in 30 percent of recent usage of Ayurvedic medicine is likely to be acquainted after the commencement of Covid-19. The majority of them are aware of Ayurvedic clinics.

In the study, Ayurveda has been a supportive system in health care management. The majority of them believed that Ayurveda medicine had helped them with their ailments. Respondents preferred Ayurveda because of success in chronic conditions. The most common reasons for preferring Ayurveda medicine include: 1. Lesser side effects, 2. Efficacy in chronic disease management, 3. Improvement in quality of life, 4. Health promotion and prevention potential. Furthermore, lack of access to allopathic medical services can lead to a preference for alternative therapies.

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