



AN AYURVEDIC METHODS OF PREVENTION OF THE DISEASES AND MAINTAIN THE HEALTH

Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

“Prevention is better than cure”. According to WHO “Health is the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity” in the recent years, this statement has been amplified to include the ability to lead a socially and economically productive life. Ayurveda has own unique fundamental principles such as prevention of disease, maintenance of health and promotion of longevity of life. Ayurvedic classics give special emphasis on preventive aspects like practicing dinacharya, nishacharya, rithucharya, nithya sevaniya ahara, varjana, nidhana sevan and pragnaparadha, undergoing regular rithushodhana etc. these are the important points which have been considered as the most conducive factors for maintenance of life and health. Trayopasthamba consists of ahara (food), nidra (Sleep) and brahmacharya (good conduct). Each upasthamba has its own importance in prevention of disease. Ahara (diet) has been considered as the first one which shows its prime importance. Intake of wholesome and unwholesome diet is responsible for prevention and production of various diseases respectively including life style disorders. In this article, mainly concerned with the various principles of prevention of diseases and maintenance of healthy life is discussed as mentioned in the Ayurveda

KEYWORDS

Prevention, Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Trayopasthamba

INTRODUCTION

Aim of Ayurveda is attain dharma, artha, kama and moksha by health. Ill health takes away the health and happiness from life. Charaka explain on the importance of maintenance of health of healthy person and curing the disease of the ill. In Ayurveda medicine or drugs can be classified into those which pacify doshas, which vitiate doshas and maintain the health. The condition free from the disease is swastha ie healthy and the regimens followed to keep one healthy are swasthavritta. Swastha means all doshas, agni, dathu and malas are in their normal state of equilibrium along with mental, sensory and spiritual pleasantness and happiness. Primary aim of Ayurveda is “swasthasya swasthya samrakshanam” “aturasya vikara prashamanamcha,” the context explains the importance of maintenance and promotion of health in healthy, along with treating a sickness.¹

Characteristics of Health

Acharya Kashyapa elaborates the features of health in khilasthana, Desire for the intake of food, proper and easy digestion of the ingested food, evacuation of faeces, urine and flatus properly, lightness in the body, pleasantness in sense organ, proper timely sleep and awakening, gain of strength, life and pleasant mind and normal Agni are the features of health and opposite state is illness.

Principles for Disease Prevention

The regimens to be followed after awakening from sleep to maintain health routinely are mentioned in Swasthavritta. There are two types of swasthavritta.

Vaiyaktika swasthavritta: The principles that are to be followed by the individual to prevent disease.

Samajika swasthavritta: Principles to be followed by the community for maintenance of health of the society.²

Food:

Charaka emphasizes on food which are wholesome to the body like rice, green gram, rock salt, goose berry, barley, rain water, milk, ghee, meat and honey. These should be consumed regularly for maintenance of health and prevention of diseases. The above reference can be taken as definition of balanced diet in Ayurveda, rice and barley as carbohydrate sources. Green gram meat as source of protein. Ghee as fats. Honey as source of sugar. Rock salt as source of mineral, milk and goose berries as vitamin and mineral source which make the components of balanced diet.³

Regimen:

One should avoid prajnaparadha (intellectual errors), take care of sense organs, by avoiding under utilization, wrong utilization over utilization of sense organs, one should have good memory, knowledge about place, time and one self and should follow rules of Sadvritta to prevent diseases

Purification of Body (Ritu sodhanam):

The diseases due to variations in the climate can be prevented by following purification in respective seasons. The kaphadosha produced due to effects of cold during hemanta and sisira ritu should be expelled out in the beginning of vasantha ritu through emesis, vata accumulated during grisma ritu should be expelled in varsha ritu through asthapana vasthi and pitta accumulated during varsa ritu should be expelled in the beginning of sharath ritu by purgation (virechana) and bloodletting (rakthamokshana). These purification procedures prevent seasonal diseases. All the diseases are produced by creation of unmanifested urges or suppression of natural urges.

The rejuvenation therapy (rasayanachikitsa) is used in the prevention and cure of disease as well as prevention of old age. Kashyapa has mentioned about concept of bala rasayana to enhance the immunity. One, who is desirous of his own well being, should take appropriate treatment while disease is in initial stages can be related to secondary prevention⁴

Disease prevention:

The concepts of prevention as enunciated by Leavell and Clark have stood the test of time. The basic frame work worked out by them has practical utility even today. The four phases of prevention are

1. Primordial prevention
2. Primary prevention
3. Secondary prevention
4. Tertiary prevention

These phases are further categorized into five levels of prevention as follows:

Primary prevention-Health promotion and Specific protection

Secondary prevention-Early diagnosis and treatment

Tertiary prevention-Disability limitation and rehabilitation

Primordial Prevention:

It has come from a Latin word 'primordium' means beginning. It means prevention at a stage, when the risk factors have not yet developed. Primordial prevention is aimed to eliminate the development of risk factors, while primary prevention is aimed to reduce the risk of exposure. Primordial prevention is achieved by health education. Example being, information is imparted to school children for adopting and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Primary Prevention:

Primary prevention can be better understood as the measures taken by an individual prior to the onset of any disease, which will remove the possibility of the disease occurring in the future. Significance of primary prevention lies in intervening at the pre-pathogenic phase (stage before any disease manifests) of the health problem.

The following points mentioned can be considered for the concept of primary prevention

- Dinacharya – Daily regimen to be followed by an individual.
- Ritucharya - Seasonal regimen to be followed by an individual.
- Samshodhana - Seasonal cleansing of the individual.
- Adhaaraniya vegas - Non- retention of the natural urges.
- Rasayanas – Intake of rasayana
- Sattvavijaya - Improving the mental strength with the help of yoga and dhyanā

Secondary Prevention:

The process of primary prevention is limited to the period before the onset of clinical disease in an individual. Thus activities directed to prevent the occurrence of disease in human population fall in this category. These activities are related to health promotion and specific protection

Health promotion:

Health promotion is an all embracing entity which goes much beyond prevention of only specific disease. It is the means to attain a state of “positive health”, or at least, freedom from disease

- Health education can also improve compliance with advice, medication and follow-up.
- Improved protected water supply systems.
- These again have a long-term impact.
- Improvement of environmental sanitation.
- Inculcation of healthy habits.
- Family life education

Specific protection:

Specific protection has benefitted to a great extent by improved modern day medical technology. Technological break-through has provided adequate and appropriate tools for prevention

- Active immunization by vaccines against measles, polio, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, hepatitis B, etc.
- Passive immunization by gamma globulins for tetanus, rabies, viral hepatitis, etc.
- Nutritional supplementation in mid-day school meal program; ICDS program, etc. to prevent against PEM

Secondary Prevention:

Secondary prevention, which may be better understood as the actions which halt the progress of a disease and prevent further complications. Early diagnosis and adequate treatment are the specific interventions in such cases.

Early diagnosis and prompt initiation of treatment can be undertaken at various levels

- In the general population or in an age specific population.
- In captive groups, such as school children, jail inmates and industrial workers.
- In a hospital or clinical setting.

Tertiary Prevention: Tertiary prevention acts at the stage where disease has got established in the individual. Tertiary prevention can be applied at the last two levels of prevention. These are

Disability limitation: Here the disease has progressed significantly and has caused some loss of function of a temporary or permanent nature. The idea is to provide relief to the affected individual so that a total handicap can be prevented.

Rehabilitation: Rehabilitation can be considered as a preventive measure in that if effectively utilized, it can prevent further social drift of the affected individual. Social drift is the phenomenon of going down the social ladder due to loss of ability to generate income caused by disease. The aim of rehabilitation is to integrate the affected individual in the community by optimizing his functional ability. It involves psychological, vocational and social and educational intervention⁵

DISCUSSION

One should maintain the health, increased life span without any diseases, we should regularly follow the dinacharya procedures explained in classics like brahma muhurtheuthiste (waking up early morning), achamana (sipping of holy water), ushnapanā (drinking luke warm water), souchakarma (evacuating bowels) dantha davana (brushing teeth), jihwanirlekhana (scraping of tongue), gandusha (gargling), kavala (mouth wash), anjana (collyrium), dhupapana (medicated smoking), nasya (nasal drops), vyayama (physical exercise), abhyanga (massage), shiroabhyanga (head massage),

padhaabhyanga (foot massage), udwarthana (powder massage), snana (bathing) etc. can be regularly practised in order to attain suchitha (maintenance of hygiene) suprasanendriyatha (to brighten the indriyas), balalabha (strengthen the body), ayusholabha (Promote the health and longevity), soumanasyatha (keep the mind at peace and harmony)

One should practice the rathricharya as explained in classics like actions contra indicated during evening time are Intake of food, sexual intercourse, sleep, reading and walking these five things are contra indicated in evening time because intake of food produces diseases, sexual acts leads to deformities in the fetus, sleep produces poverty, reading leads to loss of life span and long walk leads to fear various things like time for consumption of food, sexual intercourse, sleep and time for reading are specifically mentioned in classics should follow in order to avoid various diseases⁶

Various seasonal regimens should be practiced according to particular ritu one has to follow the ritucharyapactices in order to avoid various diseases caused because of accumulation and aggravation of specific dosha in particular ritu, one should go for regular practices of rithushodanain order to evacuate the accumulated and aggravated morbid dosha in the body through proper channels.

Trayoupasthambha are food, sleep and celibacy as considered as three supports of life. These support the life by providing strength, complexion nourishment and maintenance of the body in the whole life span.

One has to consume wholesome food in a required dose and practice of wholesome habits which improve the health status by improving the immunity of the body, good thinking also helpful for good thoughts to maintain healthy life, one should not get indulged in worldly matters which may intern leads to causing disease, On should consume wholesome food in the context of nithya sevaniya ahaaraas explained in classics like rice (shastikashali), green gram (mudga), rock salt (saindhava lavana), goose berry (amalaki), barley (yava), rain water (antrahikshajala), milk (khera), ghee (go gritha), meat (jangala mamsa) and honey (madhu). These should be consumed regularly for maintenance of health and prevention of diseases.

According to Ayurveda, mainly two major reasons can cause many diseases are vegadharana (suppression of natural urges which are well manifested) and vegaudheerana (forcefully inducing vega or manifesting the vega which is not yet manifested), these two are give a prime importance in manifestation of many diseases hence one should not forcefully manifest the un manifested vega and one should not suppress the already manifested vega and have to attend it in order to prevent production of further complications because of it.

One should follow the rules mentioned in sadvritta like words of noble persons are considered as best among the adoptable behaviors. Happiness is best among nourishing things. Sadvritta not only includes mental faculties, but also rules related with general hygiene, religion, food consumption, sexual intercourse exercises. Following which leads to prevention of psychological, physical and psychosomatic disorders. Similar principles are mentioned in achara rasayana and dharaniya vegas. Ayurveda believes that mind, soul body are like the pillars of life. The combination of these three is responsible for purusha as well as the world. Even the diseases occur either in the body or mind Avoiding various vihara like prajnaparadha (intellectual errors) which are the prime cause of many diseases e.g. over eating leads to obesity, excess fat intake leads to cardiovascular diseases, excess smoking leads to lung cancer, excess salt intake causes hypertension etc as these all can be considered under intellectual errors, one has to take care of sense organs even sense organs also plays its own role in causation of disease as excessive or low/wrong utilization of sense organs is harmful to body which may leads to many diseases⁷

CONCLUSION

One who desires for healthy and happy life, one has to follow regular preventive principles like dinacharya, ritu charya etc, mentioned in Ayurveda as well as modern principles for the prevention of diseases. One has to take care of disease in its initial stages itself to prevent further propagation of disease to limit disability and appropriate preventive aspects have to be followed.

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