



FACTORS DETERMINING EFFICACY OF AYURVEDIC MEDICINAL COMPOUNDS

Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is one of the ancient medical sciences across the world. Treatments of various diseases are widely described in Ayurvedic literature. Medicinal compounds are commonly known as *Kalpas* in *Samhitas*. Charaka Samhita, the apex text in Ayurvedic Concepts and the most authoritative text on *Kaya Chikitsa* (medicine) explores a large number of *Kalpas*. Thousands of *Kalpas* are depicted in contemporary *Samhitas* and in later literature like *Rashashtra* along with modifications in manufacturing procedures. Short, moderate and vast therapeutic indications are mentioned in these *Kalpas*. But it is very much difficult to identify exact *Vyadhi-avastha* (state of disease) in which a particular *Kalpa* is to be used. To get maximum effect of any medicine one has to study the basic principles stated in *Samhitas*. Charaka has enlisted the factors which determine efficacy of any *Kalpa*. He says if Vaidyas study only ingredients and therapeutic index of any compound, they will get familiar only with that *Kalpa* but they don't get expected results unless *Dosha* and other factors are examined in detail.

KEYWORDS

Charaka Samhita, Kalpa, Medicinal compounds.

INTRODUCTION –

Diseases are described in a particular manner in *Samhitas*. In any *Chikitsa Adhyaya*, disease development process is explained first following *Shodhana* and/or *Shamana Chikitsa*. Medicinal compounds, commonly known as “*Kalpas*”, are described for *Shodhana* or *Shamana Chikitsa*.

Framework of any *Kalpa* generally comprises of ingredients, their proportion, preparation method and therapeutic index. Therapeutic index is list of diseases for which that particular *Kalpa* is useful. Many times *Matra* (dose), *Kaala* (timings for consumption of medicine) and specific contraindications are also mentioned while explaining *Kalpa*. With this information we just become conversant about *Kalpa* but we cannot decide the exact condition where that *Kalpa* should be used. To understand exact indication and get maximum results from *Kalpa*, *Vaidya* must examine the factors advised by Charaka.

Charaka has advised to observe ten factors before prescribing any *Kalpa*¹. He has also mentioned these factors and few others in *Sutra Sthana*², *Vimana Sthana*³ and *Siddhi Sthana*⁴. Total 13 factors are advised by Charaka to be concerned before administering any *Kalpa*. Chakrapani has elaborated these factors in detail.

These factors are as follows –

1. *Dosha*
2. *Bheshaja*
3. *Desha*
4. *Kaala*
5. *Bala*
6. *Sharira*
7. *Aahara*
8. *Satmya*
9. *Satva*
10. *Prakruti*
11. *Vaya*
12. *Agni*
13. *Matra*

Each factor mentioned above is one of the fundamentals of Ayurveda and is very vast. It is neither possible to describe each of those factors in detail nor is the intent of this article. Here in this article we have tried to find examples of *Kalpas* from *Charaka Samhita* where these factors are well thought-out and then prescribed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS –

1. Charak Samhita with Chakrapani commentary

METHOD –

1. References from Charak Samhita regarding above factors are compiled.

2. Commentary of Chakrapani on these references is assessed and compiled.
3. Examples of *Kalpas* from *Charaka Chikitsa Sthana* where these factors are taken into consideration before administering *Chikitsa* are compiled. In other wards *Kalpas* under study are specific *Kalpas* advised with consideration of above mentioned factors.
4. Study is restricted for Charak Samhita only

Findings –

Among these 13 factors, Chakrapani has commented on almost each and every factor. In true sense, each factor is basic concept in Ayurveda and is very elaborative. So, in this study we have discussed a few of references where these factors are mentioned before administration of *Kalpa*. These are tabulated below-

Sr.No.	Factors	Example
1.	<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Triphaladi Kashaya</i> - for <i>Kapha Dosha</i> <i>Triphaladi Ghruta</i> – for <i>Vata Dosha</i>
2.	<i>Bheshaja</i>	<i>Kharjuradi Mantha</i> – Remedy for <i>Raktapitta</i>
3.	<i>Desha</i>	-
4.	<i>Kaala</i>	<i>Tarpana</i> – for <i>Jwara</i> <i>Sarpi Pana</i> – for <i>Jwara</i> after 10 days
5.	<i>Bala</i>	<i>Kshara Chikitsa</i> – for patients having better physical strength
6.	<i>Sharira</i>	<i>Prameha Chikitsa</i> <i>Brumhana</i> – for emaciated patient <i>Karshana</i> – for obese patient
7.	<i>Ahara</i>	<i>Mamsa Rasa Bhojana</i> – for <i>Punarnavarishtha</i>
8.	<i>Satmya</i>	<i>Dadima, Amalaka</i> – In <i>Raktapitta</i> , for the patients who wish to eat something sour.
9.	<i>Satva</i>	<i>Punarnavadi Kalka</i> – Patient should bear some patience
10.	<i>Prakruti</i>	-
11.	<i>Vaya</i>	Children – Smaller doses, Elder patients - <i>Yapana</i>
12.	<i>Agni</i>	<i>Laksha Churna</i> – <i>Anupanas</i> are changed for <i>Mandagni</i> and <i>Diptagni</i> .
13.	<i>Matra</i>	<i>Madhvasava</i> – 2 <i>Pala</i> <i>Abhayarishtha</i> – As per patients strength

Each if these factors and respective examples are discussed below focusing its role in efficacy of related *Kalpa*.

DISCUSSION –

Factors to be considered before prescribing *Kalpas* are –

1. *Dosha*⁵

Doshas play an important role in formation of all diseases. *Doshas* could be in various states in any disease. It is called as *Dosha Avasthas* in classics. These are well explained in *Samhitas*. Some of these *Dosha*

Avasthas are - *Kshaya*, *Vruddhi*, *Sama*, *Urdhvaga*, *Adhoga*, *Tiryak*, *Shakhagata*, *Kosthagata*, *Madhyamamargagata*, *Swatantra*, *Paratantra* and in accordance with *Dhatus* and *Malas*⁶. Meanings of these terms are well explained in *Samhitas*. Here we have just mentioned these terms to get an idea about various states of *Doshas*. This factor is considered most in all aspects of *Chikitsa*.

In *Kushtha*, *Triphaladi Kashaya*⁷ is prescribed for *Kaphapittaja Kushtha* and *Triphaladi Ghruta* for *Vataja Kushtha*; the ingredients being same in both formulations. Here instead of drugs, specific *dosha* is given importance in selection of formulation. It is very clear that drugs are effective in *kushtha* but only when administered by correct choice of formulation in accordance with *dosha* specification.

Raktapitta is *Rakta* and *Pitta* dominant disease. *Vidarigandhadi Gana*⁸ is advised in *Raktapitta* where *Kapha* is in *Ksheen* (decreased state) *Avastha*. Here apart from pacifying *Rakta* and *Pitta*, this *Kalpa* will simultaneously help in normalizing *Khseena-Kapha*.

2. Bheshaja¹⁰ –

The substances with which *Vaidya* treats the disease are called *Bheshaja*. Before administering *Kalpa*, *Vaidya* must verify state of drug - fresh or old/ wet or dry, its properties¹¹ like, *Rasa*, *Virya*, *Vipaka* and *Prabhava* and also its different forms like *Swarasa*, *Kwatha* etc.

*Kharjuradi Mantha*¹² is prescribed in *Urdhvaga Raktapitta* for *Tarpan*. *Kapha Dosha* is *Anubandhi* (supportive) in *Urdhvaga Raktapitta*. *Kharjuradi Mantha*, being *Madhur*, is likely to increase *Kapha*. Here *Chakrapani* states that *Kharjuradi Mantha* is '*Vyadhi-pratyani*' (specifically effective on this disease). Hence one can use *Kharjuradi Mantha* in *Rakta*, *Pitta* dominant disease and in any bleeding disorder where *Tarpana* is required. Here, medicine is given more importance than *Doshas*.

3. Desha¹³ –

Vaidya must consider the habitat in which the disease is developed and *Kalpa* ingredients are obtained. *Jangala*, *Anupa* and *Sadharana* are the types of *Desha* according to *Ayurveda*. It is also important to collect ingredients from the habitat where its utmost quality is available. Herbs collected from Himalayas are considered to be of utmost quality¹⁴. While considering geographically healthy climate, *Sadharana Desha* is considered good for health while *Amupa Desha* is considered unhealthy.

4. Kaala¹⁵ –

Kaala have different aspect according to *Ayurveda*. *Kaala* should be considered in following ways -

- Nityaga kaaal* (which we calculate as per calendar)- Different seasons, day-night -times, age etc. influence disease condition and *Doshas*. Consequently, drugs or formulation should also change. In *Grishma Rutu*, *Tarpana* should be used instead of *Yavagu* for *Jwara* patients¹⁶. *Yavagu* is a remedy for *Jwara* still *Tarpana* is advised in *Grishma Rutu* considering the heat of the season.
- Avasthik Kaala* (temporary state of disease/*Doshas*) – *Doshas* are in different state throughout the journey of a disease right from the beginning. Hence in which season disease is formed, in which period it aggravates or minimizes should always be noted. *Kalpa* is to be chosen accordingly. *Sarpipana* is advised in *Jwara* after 10 days when *Kapha* is in *Manda* (decreased) state¹⁷. Obviously it is not advisable in first phase of *Jwara*.
- Collection of medicines – *Samhitas* have emphasized the timings when and which part of the herb should be collected¹⁸. It assures maximum acquisition of potency of herbs.
- Kaala* in which *Kalpas* should be consumed – Total 10 timings are prescribed by *Charaka* at which medicines should be consumed by the patient¹⁹. These *Kaalas* are in accordance with timely ups and downs of *Doshas*, *Agni* and physical strength of the patient. It can be said that these are defined considering mainly specific *Vata* activity.

5. Bala²⁰ -

Bala is the strength of an individual. Assessment of *Bala* is very important before administration of any medicine.

In *Kaphaja Gulma Chikitsa*, *Charaka* advises to use *Kshara* if strength of patient is good²¹. *Kshara Chikitsa* scraps out vitiated *Doshas* adhered to different *Dhatus*. To bear such erosive pain, patient should have at least moderate strength.

It is noticeable that *Prameha Chikitsa* is divided only on the basis of strength of the patient. If patient is *Balawan* (bears good physical strength) or is *Sthula* (obese) it is advised to do *Apatarpana Chikitsa* and if he is *Durbala* (weak) and *Krishha* (emaciated) then *Santarpana Chikitsa* is advised²².

6. Sharira²³ –

Sthula, *Krusha*, *Saara*, *Nissara* etc. are different body types described in *Samhitas*. Detailed *Chikitsa* guideline for *Sthula* and *Krusha* is given in *Charak Samhita*²⁴. Extreme obese or emaciated people always tend to be ill. Also these people cannot sustain the pain or any other symptoms of any disease²⁵. Hence regular *Karshana* or *Brunhana Chikitsa* respectively is advised regularly²⁶. *Kalpas* determined on the basis of *Sharira* of patient are not found in *Samhita*.

7. Ahara²⁷ –

Diet is given equal importance to treatment. So many *Kalpas* are supported with specified diet. *Mamsarasa Bhojana* is prescribed for *Punarnavarishtha*²⁸ and *Paya*, *Yusha*, *Mamsarasa* for *Gudardraka Yoga*²⁹.

Severe weakness, critical disease condition, inability to digest regular meal or even to boost potency of *Kalpa* would be the probable reasons for such restricted diet. It should be monitored that patient is following such dietary rules.

It is also sometimes found few dietary items are contraindicated for few *Kalpas*. In *Pandu Chikitsa*, Horse Gram, *Kakamachi* (*Solanum nigrum*) and Pigeon meat are contraindicated while consuming *Yogaraja*³⁰.

8. Satmya³¹ –

Any habit which gets acquainted to the body is called *Satmya*. *Desha Satmya*, *Kaala Satmya*, *Vyadhi Satmya*, *Prakruti Satmya*, *Swabhava Satmya*, *Abhyasa Satmya*. are few of its types which are important to consider before administering *Chikitsa*. *Satmya* of *Ghruta*, *Taila*, *Mamsarasa* and all six *Rasas* are considered as *Uttama Satmya* for health. People with these *Satmya* are healthy and can tolerate severe disease conditions³². *Satmya Aahara* and *Vihara* increases *Bala* immediately in diseased condition. Even if *Satmya Aahara* is consumed more it doesn't cause much harm³³.

Ignorance of assessment of *Satmya* sometimes leads to harmful effects. *Bhallataka vidhi* is clear indication of this. *Bhallataka* is advised to administer in patient only after assessment of *Roga*, *Prakruti* and *Satmya*³⁴. *Yavagu* is said to be beneficial in *Jwara* as it is *Jwara Satmya*³⁵. This is a typical example of *Vyadhi-Satmya*. *Dadima*, *Amalaka* – are advised in *Raktapitta* patients who have *Amla Rasa Satmya*³⁶.

9. Satva³⁷ –

Satva means *Mana*. Healthy mind is a key in treating all diseases. *Satva* is of three types i.e., *Pravara Satva*, *Madhyama Satva* and *Avara Satva*. Patients having *Avara Satva* cannot resist even minimum amount of pain even though they have good physical strength³⁸. All the mental expressions come under the factor *Satva* and should be considered before giving medicines. Anger, grief, fear, anxiety are such mental expressions which should be checked before *Chikitsa*. *Satva* influences effect of *Kalpa*.

Punarnavadi Kalka is prescribed in *Vataja Shotha*³⁹ where Patient is supposed to be *Dheera* which means he should have patience while consuming this *Kalpa*.

10. Prakruti⁴⁰ –

Prakruti is based on *Doshas*. Typical *Dosha Prakrutis* are prone to aggravation of that *Dosha* within short time and thus lead to disease formation. Though vitiated *Doshas* are taking part in further steps of disease formation rather than *Prakruti* still *Prakruti* is considered in some diseases before starting certain medication. In *Gulma Chikitsa*, *Ksharas* are prescribed only for *Shleshma Prakruti* considering the corrosive action of *Ksharas*⁴¹.

11. Vaya⁴² –

Age of the patient should always be considered before starting *Chikitsa*. *Bala*, *Madhya*, *Vardhakya* are three stages of life. These stages are well defined in *Samhitas*. Children should always be given soft medicines⁴³. Treatment of children is same as that of adults only

difference is they should be treated with smaller doses⁴⁴. Those medicines should be scrumptious and lenient. Aged patients should always be given *Yapana Chikitsa*⁴⁵. We don't get specific *Kalpas* prescribed in *Samhitas* based on age differentiation. General guideline regarding pediatric treatment is given at end of the *Chikitsa Sthana*. So we can affirm that doses mentioned for different *Kalpas* across *Chikitsa Sthana* are for adult patients and *Vaidya* must alter that dose while treating children.

12. Agni⁴⁶

Agni is inimitable concept of Ayurveda. *Agni* is considered in every stage right from formation of disease, treatment and diet. *Vaidya* must assess *Agni* before prescribing any *Kalpa*. A very clear direction on this is given in *Kshataksheen Chikitsa*. *Laksha Churna* is advised as first step treatment but stress is given to change *Anupana* by assessment of *Agni*. In *Alpagni* it is advised with *Sura*⁴⁷ and in *Diptagni* with *Sarpi* etc⁴⁸.

13. Matra⁴⁹

This factor is not directly mentioned in the list given in *Vimana Sthana* and *Sutra Sthana*. But its importance is highlighted in *Sutra Sthana*. Not all the diseases are curable. But success of any *Kalpa* in curable disease depends upon *Matra* (dose) and *Kaala* (timing of consumption)⁵⁰. Sometimes specific dose is evidently mentioned in *Kalpas* as for *Madhvasava* it is 2 *Pala* given in *Prameha*⁵¹ *chikitsa*. But many times Charaka has not described dose of every *Kalpa*, hence *Vaidya* has to fix it for each patient. *Matra* and *Kaala* are determined on the basis of *Doshas* and other factors. *Matra* again depends upon *Dosha*, *Agni*, *Bala*, *Vaya* etc. hence it is very important to define dose of each medicine of every patient individually.

We have found many examples across Charak Samhita where dose of the medicine is influenced by above said twelve factors. We need to modify medicine dose as per age, season, strength and *Agni* etc. Examples given in the following table are directives for fixation of dose –

Sr. No.	Kalpa	Dose	Factor_Considered
1.	<i>Abhayarishita</i> ⁵²	<i>Yatha Bala</i> As per the strength of patient	<i>Bala</i>
2.	<i>Kutajadi Rasakriya</i> ⁵³	<i>Yatha Agnibala</i> As per the strength of <i>Agni</i> of the patient	<i>Agni</i>
3.	<i>Muktadya Churna</i> ⁵⁴	<i>Panitala</i> Palm of the hand Differs person to person	<i>Sharira</i>
4.	<i>Kansa Haritaki</i> ⁵⁵	1 <i>Haritaki</i> (Terminalia chebula) and 1 <i>Shukti</i> (20 gm) ⁵⁶ <i>Avaleha</i> (evident dose but one should note that it differs as per age)	Specific dose irrespective of <i>Agni</i> , <i>Bala</i> etc. for all
5.	<i>Madya</i>	<i>Amutarsha</i> ⁵⁷ Dose With plenty of water, which pacifies thirst but do not distress patient's mind.	<i>Satva</i>

From above discussion few noteworthy points are –

1. *Dosha*, *Desha*, *Kaala*, *Prakruti* and *Vaya* are directly or indirectly are related with *Doshas*.
2. *Bala*, *Sharira*, *Satmya* and *Vaya* are related with *Dhatus*. These factors highlight strength of the patient which must be considered throughout the course of treatment.
3. *Aahara*, *Agni* and *Matra* are related with *Agni*. It must be noted that not only food but digestion of medicines is equally important.
4. *Kshara Chikitsa* is the only example where multiple factors are advised to consider for learned physician. *Shleshma Prakruti*, *Kapha Dosha*, *Sthira Gulma* and *Hemanta* or *Shishira Rutu* are the multiple factors advised for *Kshara Chikitsa*⁵⁸.
5. *Vaya* is the only factor where liking of patient is considered that also in case of children.

Numerous *Kalpas* are prescribed in Charaka Samhita for single disease. Various *Kalpas* are listed for different types and stages of the same disease. Enormous range of *Kalpas* is available apart from Charaka Samhita across Ayurvedic literature. But at times it becomes very difficult to choose one *Kalpa* out of so many listed *Kalpas*.

In those circumstances monitoring above mentioned 13 factors by

Charaka eases drug selection and attains maximum efficacy of drug. It will also help to select *Kalpas* for those modern age diseases which are not documented in *Samhitas*.

CONCLUSION –

1. *Doshas* and all other factors are equally important and should not be missed before starting *Chikitsa*.
2. *Dosha* is the most considered factor amongst all other factors.
3. *Agni* and *Bala* of the patient determine the dose of the medicine.
4. Knowledge of only *Kalpa* ingredients and indications will not lead to success of the treatment unless we assess above said 13 factors.

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