

A Critical Analysis of Food in Health and Disease, W.S.R. to Brihatrayee, A Conceptual Study

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ABSTRACT

Among Trayopsthambhas food plays a major role in health and disease. On critical analysis, it is observed that more than 50 percent of the causative factors related to food are responsible for the production of different disease conditions. Hence the authorities of Ayurveda have prescribed certain rules related to diet and dietetics. In view of the painful diseases with irregular dieting, a wise person who has control over his senses should take wholesome food in proper quantity and in proper time. This is a golden rule for all and ever. In all human beings in every stage i.e. for the maintenance of health, for manifestation of diseases, during treatment, during convalescence, in the preoperative and in post-operative stages food plays an important role. Keeping all these factors in view the present study has been taken up to bring out comprehensive information about food in health and disease.

Keywords: Food, health, disease, quantity, rules.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda focuses more on the healthy living and wellbeing of the patient. For healthy living, Ayurveda has given extreme importance to the wholesome diet in all aspects, which plays an important role in promotion of health and prevention of diseases. The food taken as per Aharavidhi (dietetics) leads to the proper growth and development of the body if not causing diseases. In same way Ahita Ahara which is harmful and Viruddha Ahara which is incompatible to body causes diseases.

Ayurveda specified the characteristics of food in terms of quality, quantity and time which vary with age, constitution, digestive power, season, disease and also from person to person. One has to consume the diet, which is suitable to him in all aspects, and deviation from these may cause diseases. In addition to these, wrong cooking procedures, irregular timings, and consuming imbalanced food and not following the prescribed rules for preparing, preserving and eating food may also cause the imbalance of health.

The health is also the supreme foundation for the achievements of the life. Therefore the aim of the Ayurveda is to maintain the condition of health. Both the health and disease depends on various factors. Among them food plays the most important role. One's complexion, cheerfulness, lifespan, voice, appearance, intelligence, contentment, desires, nourishment, corpulence, strength, intelligence and power all depend upon food only.

Need of the study:

In this present era of modernization people are neglecting the causative factors for the diseases and rushing towards treatment modalities. It is the need of the hour to concentrate on the concept of "Nidana Parivarjana chikitsa" i.e to avoid causative factors.

An overall analysis on the various contributing factors of the diseases, major part goes to Aharaja Nidanas..Acharya Sushruta has emphasized that the simple base line of treatment is to exclude the nidana factor. Rightly it is said that “Prevention is better than cure”.As it was quoted by Charaka “Ahara sambhavam vastu rogascha ahara sambhava” ,Ahara is a key factor for both health and disease.Hence the knowledge of food on various aspects such as Hitahara-Ahitahara, Matrahara, Viruddhahara, etc is essential to keep us healthy and prevent from getting lifestyle diseases.

Keeping all this in view present study has been taken up and compiled all information related to Ahara which is scattered at various places in Brihatrayee with a ray of hope that this study will be useful as a ready reckoner.

AIM

To summarize and explore knowledge about food that was scattered in Brihatrayee.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the concept of food in health and disease
2. To ascertain the role of food for the maintenance of health and manifestation of disease, during treatment, during convalescence period and also in the preoperative and post operative stages.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material utilized for literary study is the most authentic Ayurvedic literature viz.Brihatrayee.All the relevant information related to food available in Brihatrayee has been studied well.Compiled and documented in a comprehensive manner for the benefit of Ayurvedic fraternity.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Concept Of Ahara

Since Vedic era,we can find the importance of diet concept ,rules and regulations.In Yajurveda the description of Ahara has been found as oh GOD, give the food which should not cause disease and that which gives strength and in Chandogyaopanishad we find Anna is called as Brahma¹.

Vyutpathi of the word Ahara :

The Word “Ahara” is derived from the root “Hrn Harane” ²this means to be taken in.

Nirukti of Ahara :

.Any substance which is to be taken or swallowed in,through the throat is called Ahara.According to WHO, Food is any substance consumed to provide nutritional support for an organism.

AHARA MATRA [Proper quantity of food]

The amount of food which without disturbing the equilibrium gets digested as well as metabolized in proper time is to be regarded as Ahara Matra told by Charaka. According to Sushruta and Vagbhata While eating, the stomache should be filled up with two parts of the solid food, one part of liquids and the fourth part should be left free to facilitate the free movement of the air³

A person who consumes excess quantity of food without controlling over his sence like a beast is affected with indigestion, which is the root cause for many diseases. Less quantity of food produces lack of happiness and loss of strength, while a large quantity of food produces lassitude, feeling of heaviness, gur-

gling noise inside the abdomen and debility.

AHARA VIDHI NIYAMAS

Do's:

- The food should be tasty, warm, qualitative, unctuous and easily digestible.
- It should be eaten neither too fast nor too slow.
- It is best to focus on food while eating.
- The food should be eaten when hungry after the last meal has been digested.
- Food should include all the tastes namely sweet, salt, sour, pungent, bitter and astringent in the daily diet.
- One should eat in comfortable sitting posture.
- One should eat food which is nourishing and suitable to the particular constitution, mental and emotional temperament.
- Food should be eaten in pleasant surroundings with utensils and preparation of individual's choice.

Don'ts:

- The food should not be contrary to each other in action. e.g.-fish and milk together, radish and milk together, honey and ghee in equal quantity.
- Eating should not be in a hurry.
- It should not be very slow.
- Should not eat when emotionally upset.
- Too much use of any of six tastes namely sweet, salt, sour, pungent, bitter and astringent is not conducive to health.

According to Charaka

Aahara Vidhi Visheshayatanas [Rules Confined To Intake Of Food]⁵

A self controlled person should take food only after considering the factors related to foods, which are prakriti, karana, samyoga, rashi, desha, kaala, upayoga samstha and upabhokta. One should try to understand them and there after desire for the wholesome only.

VIRUDDHA AHARA

The meaning of viruddha indicates the opposite or incompatibility of the substances which are not having an affinity for each other.

Charaka has stated that the food which vitiates the Doshas in the body and does not help in expelling the same is termed as Viruddhahara⁶. Astanga Hridaya has followed Charaka. According to Sushruta: The drugs and diet which dislodge the doshas from their original site, but do not expel them out of the body and they vitiate rasadi dhatus. Types of Viruddhahara:⁷

According to Acharya Charaka there are 18 types of Viruddhahara.

1. Desha Viruddha
2. Kaala Viruddha
3. Agni Viruddha
4. Matra Viruddha
5. Satmya Viruddha
6. Vatadi Viruddha

7. Virya viruddha
8. Koshta Viruddha
9. Avastha Viruddha
10. Krama viruddha
11. Parihara viruddha
12. Upachara viruddha
13. Paaka viruddha
14. Samyoga viruddha
15. Samskara Viruddha
16. Hridaya viruddha
17. Sampada viruddha
18. Vidhi viruddha

Acharaya Sushruta enumerated 4 types of Viruddhahara.⁸

1. Samyoga Viruddha
2. Krama Viruddha
3. Maana Viruddha
4. Rasa, virya, vipaka viruddha.

Charaka mentions that the intake of incompatible diet is responsible for the causation of many diseases like sterility, blindness, visarpa, udara, insanity, fistula-in-ano, etc.⁹

HITA - AHITA AHARA

According to Charaka: Wholesome and unwholesome diet has been described by Charaka in terms of Hitahara and Ahitahara. The food which maintains the balance dhatu as normally and restores the equilibrium in the all balanced ones, should be taken wholesome otherwise unwholesome.¹⁰

According to Sushruta :Hitahara means substances which are always suitable and accustomed to man by birth like water, etc, Ahitahara or unsuitable substances those which are always unsuitable and performing actions like burning, cooking and destroying such as fire, caustic alkalis, poison etc.¹¹

AHARA AS NIDANA:

आहारसम्भवंस्तुरोगाश्चाहारसम्भवाः।

हिताहितविशेषाच्चविशेषःसुखदुःखयोः

Food taken in proper manner helps in the proper growth of the body on the contrary if taken in improper manner leads to various diseases.. Acharya Sushruta has emphasized that the simple base line of treatment is to exclude the nidana factor. While treating diseases the highest importance should be given to avoidance of causes, which are responsible for the vitiation of the Doshas because it will be helpful in breaking the Samprapti of disease. As it was quoted by Charaka “Ahara sambhavam vastu rogascha ahara sambhava” Ahara is a key factor for both health and disease.¹² The incidence of lifestyle diseases like obesity, Diabetes mellitus, Cardiac diseases, Skin diseases, Respiratory diseases etc. is high on the rise due to poor diet intake.

Ayurveda narrated this phenomenon as ‘Prajnaparadha’ which is the basic causes of any disease.. These diseases can be prevented by pathya and apathya. Ahara and Vihara very much emphasized in Ayurvedic system of medicine for the prevention as well as the management of a wide range of disorders.

FOOD AS ANUPANA:

It is defined as liquid material, which is taken along with or after the meal and drug. Anupana is explained by all Brihatrayees in detail.

In vata unctuous and hot after the drink is suitable, in pitta sweet and cold, in kapha rough and hot. The concept of anupana is a unique contribution and essential part in the administration of ahara as well as aushada. The potency of medicine gets enhanced and brings about the desired effect when administered with suitable anupana. The anupana, when consumed along with food, increases digestion and absorption capacity while at the end of intake of food causes Brahma. Thus suitable anupana should be selected for different individuals and different conditions to obtain maximum benefit.

FOOD ROLE IN PURVAKARMA

Shodhana include group of events like preparation of body –for Shodhana, removing of mala roodidosh and finally protection of body, these can be done with the help of specific ahara in specific stages of Shodhana. Drava, Ushna, Anabhishtanda Ahara is advised before, during and after Shodhana.¹³ Intake of Takra, jeera, shunti sadhita Takra, Yavarotika, peya, Manda, kichidilike diet should be taken during purvakarma to achieve proper phala of Shodhana¹⁴.

FOOD ROLE IN SAMSAJANA KRAMA

Samsarjana Krama means graded administration of diet after Shodhana. The main purpose of samsarjana krama is not only agni Sandhukshan but also to take agni mahan, sthira and capable of digesting all food preparations even of guru gunas. After shodhana all of sudden regular diet cannot be introduced to the patient as it may increase the Agnimandya, so liquid and laghu diet should be started gradually, stepping up to solid or guru diet. According to different classics there are different types of food preparations mentioned for Samsarjanakrama viz, Manda, Peya, Yavagu, Vilepi, Odana, Akruta yusha, Kruta yusha, Akruta mamsarasa and kurta mamsarasa¹⁵.

PATHYA (WHOLESOME) & APATHYA (UNWHOLESOME)

पथ्यं पथोऽनपेतं यद्यच्चोक्तं मनसः प्रियम्|

यच्चाप्रियमपथ्यं च नियतं तन्न लक्षयेत्||

Pathya means the diet and other regimen which is suitable in health and disease. Apathya means the diet and other regimen which is not suitable in health and disease or which may provoke the disease.¹⁶

Vaidyajeevana describes that “If a man uses Pathya there is no need of any medication and if the patient doesn’t observe Pathya and indulges in Apathya the medicine will not act”. Hence it may be said that treatment can be carried out by regulated and wholesome or salutary diet with out the use of medicine.

Caraka states that the 6 factors¹⁷ – Matra, kaala, kriya, bhumi, desha and dosha determine pathya and apathya effect of a substance or procedure Similarly, dvaadasha ashana-vichara (the twelve factors which are to be considered in relation to food) referred by Sushruta: – Sheeta, ushna, snigdha, ruksha, drava, shushka, ekakalika, dvikalika, oshadhiyukta, matra heena, prashamana and vritti prayojaka¹⁸.

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DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.

.Study shows Ahara and the dietetic rules are basic factors considered important. It can be readily agreed on the point of Swasthya rakshana i.e. promotion of health and it is possible to achieve Vikaraprashamana by following dietetic rules mentioned in Classics. As a part of Shodhana type of chikitsa, in Poorva karma food has a great role in getting vriddhi of vitiated doshas and in elimination of those from the body. After Shodhana again food has great role in increasing Agni (Jathagni) slowly by Samsarjana krama and bringing patients back to Swasthya. During treatment period also again food showing its great importance in the form of Pathya and Apathya to get soon well and get rid of disease. After thorough scanning of classics it can be concluded that Food has a great role in Swasthya rakshanam, i.e. maintenance of health, prevention of diseases, major role in causing diseases, effective role in poorva karma, in samsarjana kramam to bring back Agni to normal, in treatment getting good results soon, following pathya apathya.

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