

Critical Review On Dietary Consideration Of Ayurveda

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Abstract

Lack of awareness and self-discipline are two primary reasons for falling ill. Food is the third most important thing for living beings to live after air and water. Diet is an essential component for living a healthy life and it referred as Mahabhaishajya by Ayurveda classics. Food imparts physical and psychological strength of body. Ayurveda Science describes several types of code and conducts of food called “Dwadasha Pravicharana” for promotion of health and prevention of diseases. Now a day due to change in life style humans are suffering from various life style diseases in young age. The main cause for increasing incidence rate is bad practice of food so it is mandatory to develop a health-oriented life style. To revealed the different aspects of Ahara Vidhi Vidhana and its relationship with life style disorders.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Ahara, Agni, Dietary Consideration, Dwadasha Asana Pravicharana

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has the concept of food, nutrition and a balanced diet in a broad way but the difference and uniqueness lies in individual approach to each individual based on their prakriti (body constitution), agni (digestive capacity) and avastha (health status). Various concepts of food and nutrition like Nitya sevaniya aharaⁱ (foods for daily consumption), Ashtavidha ahara vidhi vishesha ayatanaⁱⁱ (eight factors to be considered while planning diet), Ahara-vidhi-vidhanⁱⁱⁱ (rules of dietetics), Dwadasha ashana pravichara^{iv} (twelve types of dietary considerations) are given in the form of principles, where the understanding and application of them depends on the intelligence of physician. Acharya Charaka has included Ahara in traya-upastambhas which can be considered as support pillars of life. Out of three Upastambhas (supports of life) i.e., Ahara (Diet), Nidra (sleep) and Brahmacharya (observance of celibacy); more emphases is given to ahara.^v The concept of health in Ayurveda is very comprehensive and a nutritious, wholesome ahara plays a pivotal role in maintaining health. Proper diet is the ultimate support to the maintenance of the body. Ahara has been equated as life force (prana) for all human beings. A proper, skillful and optimum use of this triads, leads human body to maintain its integrity, being enriched with Bala (physical and immunological strength), Varna (complexion) and Upachaya (growth or nourishment), till full length of life, provided the person concerned does not get involved in the regimen detrimental to health. The articles of food, which dislodge the morbid humors but do not eliminate them from the body, are to be regarded as unwholesome (virudhha). Vishamaashana (irregular diet) is one of the cause of Sosha. When a person takes food – drinkable, eatable, chewable and likable – irregularly in terms of nature, preparation, combination, quantity, place, time, and various dietary rules (do's and don'ts) appropriate for his

constitution, his Doshas get imbalanced. These imbalanced Doshas spread in the body, obstructing the openings of various channels and the flow of dhatus.^{vi} Aam plays a vital role in the pathogenesis as well as prognosis of diseases. After the intake of viruddha aahar impaired digestion and metabolism is occurred due to hypo functioning of jatharagni which leads to produce of aam in amasaya. Vitiated aam circulates all over the body and mix with the dhaatu and mala due to srotovaigunya or functional disturbance of srotas and develops dosha dushya samurchhana. This develop sanga (one type of srotodushti) and produces disease. Healthy srotas perform their normal functions as a result body is free from diseases and unhealthy srotas become the root cause for the development of pathogenesis^{vii}. One should follow diet and lifestyle that are opposite to the qualities of dosha and similar to the qualities of dhaatus keeps the srotas and ultimately purusha (celestial beings) healthy. Apart from the dietetic codes and conducts, certain guidelines regarding the daily routine (Dincharya, Ratricharya), seasonal routine (Ritucharya), behavior and mental attitude (Swasthavritta and Sadavritta anusthan) have also been laid down by the ancient scholars. One who follows these guidelines with devotion, usually never gets indulged in the web of diseases. But unfortunately, the major population of world neither care to follow up the dietetic codes and the guidelines of Swasthavritta nor they have any time to follow these guidelines. Ahara has been equated as life force (prana) for all human beings. The concept of Ayurveda for an individual's proper diet incorporates multiple factorial approaches, including prakriti, bala, vya, kala, and nature of disease. The regulations and rules for consuming diet in a proper form, way and without any distraction have been well elaborated in vast literature of Ayurveda. All the Acharyas like Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata have mentioned about the concept of ahara, as well as the possible mode of action of Viruddhahara was also compiled and analyzed. Body always tries to maintain its physiological equilibrium provided certain conditions are favorable to it, if we take improper Ahara or its procedures written on samhitas, equilibrium of the body became hampered, thus it can be concluded that Ahara is important for maintaining the equilibrium of the body. Diet plays a vital role in maintaining health and treating diseases by modifying and altering according to need in both conditions. These modifications are described under the heading of Dwaadasha Ashana Pravacharana. In Sushruta Samhita, Dwadasha Pravacharana are the dietetic regulations and procedures for those, who are healthy and for certain types of patients. In the absence of food, its varieties, preparation and functions, physicians would neither be able to maintain the health of the healthy nor control the disorders of the ill.

Dwadasha Ashana Pravichara (Dietary Consideration):

These are twelve types of diet patterns according to the person in healthy and diseased condition. These twelve patterns of diet are-

1. Sheeta (Cold)
2. Ushna (Hot)
3. Snigdha (Unctuous)
4. Ruksha (Dry articles)
5. Drava (Liquid)
6. Shushka (Dry)
7. Ekkalika (Once a day)
8. Dwikalika (Twice a day)
9. Aushadhayukta (Taken with medicine)
10. Matraheena (Taken in smaller quantity)
11. Dosha prashamana (Taken for the pacification of any aggravated Dosha)
12. Vruttayartha (Taken for subsistence).^{viii}

Food According to Temperature – Sheeta & Ushna Ahara

1. Sheeta Ahara:

As per Acharya Dalhana's commentary, the term "Sheeta Anna" denotes objects that possess both low temperature and Sheeta Veerya. These are specifically employed in cases like Trishna and Rakta pitta where Pitta Dosha is in an exacerbated state. Because Pitta has qualities that are contrary to Sheeta Guna, such as Ushna, Tikshna, Drava, Katu rasa, etc., Sheeta Annapana is helpful under such circumstances.^{ix} Justification behind use of Sheeta Anna in above mentioned conditions should be remembered as,

properties inherent in substances bring about effects in the body and therefore properties can be inferred by observing their effects.^x

i. Trishnarta and Ushnarta (Thirst and Heat-related Conditions):

- Cold infusion of coriander seeds with sugar (Dhanyaka hima with sharkara)
- Thick gruel made from popped rice and raisins (Laja and Mridweeka siddha yavagu)
- Thin gruel prepared using popped rice (Laja manda)
- Cold drink prepared from roasted barley powder (Yava saktu manta)

ii. Mada (Intoxication):

- Cold infusion made with dates and dry grapes (Kharjuradi mantha)
- Thick gruel made with creeping spinach and curd (Upodika and Dadhi siddha yavagu)

iii. Vishaarta and Raktapitta (Toxicity and Bleeding Disorders):

- Green gram soup (Mudga yusha)
- Rice cooked in green gram soup (Mudgoudana)
- Thick gruel made with raisins, popped rice, long pepper, honey, ginger, and Indian sarsaparilla (Mridweekadi siddha yavagu)

iv. Murcha (Fainting/Delirium):

- Juice made from dry grapes (Mardweekambu)

2. Ushna Ahara:

Patients with Kaphaja and Vataja Vyadhi who have completed Snehana and Shodhana treatment and are free of Kleda (physical moisture) are recommended for Ushna Ahara.^{xi} Ushna is just opposite to properties of sheeta, it has the properties of flowing through passages, unpleasant and it results in fainting, thirst, sweating and burning sensation and stimulates digestion. It is useful in Pachana of Vrana (wound). It greatly helps to set in the process of suppuration in boils and abscesses. Substances that have ability to cure stiffness, heaviness and coldness (of the body) and causes perspiration are Ushna.^{xii}

i. For Jwara (Fever):

- Ashtaguna manda: A thin gruel made from rice and green gram, seasoned with pepper, long pepper, ginger, coriander seeds, rock salt, and asafoetida.

ii. For Tamaka Shwasa (Bronchial Asthma):

- Kulattha yusha: Soup made from horse gram
- Adaki yusha: Soup prepared using pigeon pea
- Chanaka yusha: Chickpea soup
- Dashamoola yavagu: A thick medicinal gruel made with a combination of ten herbs including Bael (Aegle marmelos), Premna, Oroxylum, Stereospermum, Gmelina, small and yellow-fruited Solanum species, Desmodium, Uria, and Tribulus.

iii. For Amavata (Rheumatoid Arthritis):

- Saptamushti yusha: Soup prepared using a mix of seven ingredients—horse gram, green gram, barley, ginger, long pepper, coriander seeds, and radish.
- Kwathitha jala: Water boiled and reduced to one-fourth of its original quantity for therapeutic use.

Food According to Texture – Snigdha & Ruksha Ahara

3. Snigdha Ahara:

Many activities cause vayu aggravation, dryness (Ruksha) conditions of the body. Snigdha guna pacifies the aggravated vayu and dryness so, Snigdha ahara (food and drink) is recommended for the people of Vatika Prakruti and suffering with Vata Vyadhi. People suffering with Vayu-related disorders should eat a diet rich in unctuous, sour, saline, and sweet components on a regular basis.^{xiii} Snigdha guna gives lubricity, softness; improves strength and complexion. Guna which is capable to produce Kleda in the body is Snigdha.^{xiv xv} In six factors described for the transformation (digestion, assimilation and metabolism- Ahara Parinamakara Bhava) of food, Sneha is one important factor which softens the food particles by which it gets easily digested in appropriate time.^{xvi} The recommended foods include milk (Ksheera), ghee (Grita), and meat (Mamsa). Common preparations are:

- Ksheera-Grita Abhyasa: Regular consumption of milk combined with ghee
- Mamsa Rasa: Nourishing soup made from meat

- Dadhyanna: Curd mixed with rice
- Payasa: Sweet milk-based dish (kheer)
- Krishara: A preparation similar to khichdi (a mix of rice and pulses)
- Masha Yusha: Soup made from black gram

4. Ruksha Ahara:

Individuals having Snigdha body, excess of Meda and Kapha suffering with Prameha disease should be treated with Ruksha (or non-demulcent) food and drink.^{xvii} According to Hemadri, Ruksha Guna is capable of Shoshana (of dhatu) in the body.^{xviii} Ruksha is the opposite of Sneha (oleaginousness); it causes stypsis (arrests flow through passages) and makes a thing rough to tactual perception. Therefore this guna is used in the treatment of diseases such as diarrhoea. Excess intake of Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter), Kashaya (astringent) rasa, oil cake of Sarshapa and Tila, honey, etc. and sexual indulgence produces rukshata in the body.^{xix} Recommended foods used to increase rukshata are barley (Yava), millets (Kudhanya), and honey (Madhu). Common preparations are:

- Yava Rotika: Flatbread made from barley
- Madhudaka: Water mixed with honey
- Trina Dhanya Odana / Kudhanya Siddha Anna: Cooked rice made using various millets
- Shaaka Siddha Odana: Rice cooked along with vegetables

Food According to Texture – Snigdha & Ruksha Ahara

5. Drava Ahara:

Drava-ahara is recommended for the weak, the handicapped, and those experiencing severe thirst. Food should be abundant in fluid components as it digests without causing any dosha. When consumed in combination with many other substances (liquid), dry food items do not cause any harm to the stomach. When dry food items are consumed alone, dry food (Shushkanna) cannot be fully digested, which causes irregular chyme, lumps in the stomach, and inadequate digestion which is followed by reactive acidity (Vidaha). Drava Guna (property) causes Kleda (increase fluid) and moistening of the body. Due to Drava, substance easily spreads in the body.^{xx} When body is deprived of water or fluid part in the body due to any internal or external cause, it leads to abnormalities of Udakavaha srotas which leads to dryness of oral cavity, throat, tongue and palate and finally death. Drava pradhana ahara should be advised in these conditions.^{xxi} In conditions such as Shushka Deha (dehydration), Pipasarta (excessive thirst), and Durbala (weakness due to fluid loss), liquid foods and various fruit juices are advised. Common preparations include:

- Shritha Sheeta Jala: Water that has been boiled and then cooled
- Ksheera with Sita: Milk sweetened with sugar
- Aamra Panaka: Juice made from raw mango
- Rasala Panaka: Ripe mango juice
- Nimbuka Panaka: Fresh lime juice
- Chinch Panaka: Tamarind juice
- Kharjuradi Mantha: Cooling drink prepared using dates, dry grapes, and similar ingredients
- Laja Manda: A light gruel made with popped rice

6. Shushka Ahara:

It is urged that Shushka Ahara take in patients with wounds, Meha, and bodies laden with Kleda. It decreases the Kleda from the body and takes long time to spread in the body.^{xxii} So, whenever there is increase part of Kleda in the body, Shushka Ahara should be prescribed. In patients of vomiting, dry, easily digestible and desired diet should be prescribed. As amashaya is the main seat of Kapha, diet which is not increasing Kapha is advisable to patient. More liquid diet will increase Kapha and Kleda in the body.^{xxiii} The digestive functions. So, whenever there is impaired digestive function due to any cause, wise person should avoid second meal. One meal a day and heena maatra (less quantity) is recommended in Durbalagni (very less digestive capacity). This is to facilitate easy digestion and to kindle the digestive fire slowly, just like a dying fire is gradually increased by putting in small quantities of fuel and not bulk of fuel at a time.^{xxiv} Dry foods—those lacking moisture—are beneficial in conditions such as Praklinna Kaya (body affected by fluid-dominant pitta and kapha), Vrani (chronic or infected ulcers), and Shushka Mehi (diabetes with significant weight loss). Recommended preparations include:

- Yava Saktu: Powder made from roasted barley
 - Yava Mantha: Cold beverage prepared using barley powder
- Food According to Frequency – Ekakalika & Dwikalika Ahara**

7. Ekakalika Ahara:

It is recommended that those with poor digestion only eat one meal per day to facilitate an increase in Jatharagni. Commentator Dalhana says the quantity in a single meal should also be reduced so that Agni can digest less food more readily. Any disease-related physical weakness is the cause of durbalagni. Any disease's convalescence stage is marked by a weak digestive system that is unable to process food that is regularly ingested. Thus, a single meal is suggested.^{xxv}

8. Dwikalika Ahara:

People who have a Samagni (excellent digestive power) should eat twice daily. Samagni does not create disease until a person's improper regimen disturbs it.^{xxvi} As a result, people who have Samagni should take good care of themselves and consume meals when they're hungry. A person's diet varies depending on age, occupation, and other variables. A Samagni sufferer ought to eat twice a day.^{xxvii} Kala is also one of the important Ahara parinamakara bhava described by Acharya Charaka.^{xxviii} Time brings about the maturity of the process of digestion. Chakrapani commented that even in the presence of all other factors digestion requires time for completion of the process; hence time is described to bring about maturity of the process.^{xxix} Food takes time for proper digestion and absorption in the body according to the strength of an individual's Agni. Ashtanga Samgraha has described time for digestion of food for samagni which is four Yama.^{xxx}

9. Aushadhayukta Ahara:

The medication should be used with meals if the patient finds it unpleasant to take. Due to their disagreeable tastes and smells, the majority of medications produce nausea, vomiting, and a choking feeling in the throat. These issues affect kids more often. If these substances are combined with appetizing food, they can be taken with ease. In addition, it is a kind of medication administration known as Sa-bhakta. It's recommended for ladies, the frail, the old, and kids.^{xxxi} Ayurvedic formulations include Pravacharana Sneha, and Dashamoola Yavagu (a thick gruel made with Dashamoola), which are primarily used in conditions involving Kapha-Vata imbalances. Panchakola Yavagu (a thick gruel prepared using Panchakola herbs) is mainly recommended for individuals with Mandagni (low digestive fire). Additionally, Mudgamalaka Yusha, a gruel made from green gram and Emblica officinalis (Amla), is especially indicated for managing constipation (Vibandha) and obesity (Sthoulya).

10. Matraheena Ahara:

Patients suffering from different diseases or with weak digestion should only be given little amounts of food. The main cause of diseases is a poor Mandagni, or digestive ability. Small amounts of food are better since they are easier to digest and won't harm Agni any more. Food that is Laghu, or quickly digested, and minimal amounts should be advised.^{xxxii} Agni's inability to assimilate dosha so causes the illness to appear. If the patient is given additional food, it will vitiate Agni even more, making the condition worse.

11. Doshaprashamana Ahara:

Doshaprashamana Ahara is food and beverages that are served seasonally and under the Dosha state. Dramatic seasonal changes upset Dosha, who demands appropriate responses to the disturbances. Season-specific diets that balance out the doshas that build throughout various times of year are advocated. Particular diet is advised in those seasons for healthy persons so that persons remain healthy.^{xxxiii} Some of the commonly used preparations include Purana Shashtika Shaali Odana (rice made from aged Shashtika rice), Godhuma Rotika (wheat flatbread), Patola and Nimbaadi Tikta Shaaka Siddha Ahara (meals cooked with bitter vegetables like Patola and Neem), Krita Mudga Yusha (flavored green gram soup), Madhudaka (water mixed with honey), and Ushna Jala (warm water).

12. Vruttyartha Ahara:

To keep the body in a healthy state, a diet that includes all of the tastes (Rasa) is recommended. On the other hand, Vruttyartha food and drink refers to any meal or beverage consumed by a healthy individual to preserve life. A person is considered healthy if their digestion is consistently good, their Dosha is in an equilibrium condition, their basic vital fluids are flowing in their regular state and amount, and their secretion, biological function, and mental functions are all going according to plan. To sustain these essential processes in their regular state, a healthy individual should eat a diet rich in Rasa.^{xxxiv} Sarvarasa Ahara works best when taken regularly to strengthen the physique.^{xxxv}

DISCUSSION

The basic theory of Ayurveda is to maintain the state of equilibrium of Tridosha, Saptadhatu and Trimala. All these are nourished well initially by the influence of potency of individual Jatharagni and productive nutrients (Ahara Rasa) are passed into each level of Dhatu (bodily tissues) for nourishment. Ultimately, necessary nutrients for the formation and development of tissues are supplied by one stream of pool.^{xxxvi} As per Ayurvedic medicine illness as an imbalance and seeks to balance these three doshas. The individual can live a happy, healthy, and disease-free life by adhering to daily, seasonal, and nutritional routines. The ultimate basis for morality, prosperity, pleasure, and salvation is good health. Since Ayurveda places more emphasis on prevention than on treating illnesses, it places a strong emphasis on eating the right foods to achieve and maintain good health. A healthy diet is necessary for a happy existence, and the same diet, Food is necessary for a healthy existence, yet when consumed incorrectly, it may be the cause of several illnesses. Everyone should be properly informed about food and its significance in order to get the benefits of it. Doctors need to understand the following concepts: Dravya (food particles), Rasa (taste), Guna (properties), Veerya (potency), Vipaka (taste after digestion), and Karma (action). Each of these concepts is prepared as eatables, drinkables, likeable, and chewables using a variety of substances, adopting a variety of processes, and having unique effects. Ayurveda, emphasizes a holistic approach to health and wellness, through three fundamental pillars: Ahara, Vihara, and Ausadha. These three components work in harmony to maintain physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Ahara refers to the food we eat and the way we nourish our bodies. In Ayurveda, diet is considered a crucial aspect of maintaining health and preventing disease. A balanced diet that suits an individual's constitution (Prakriti) is essential for optimal health. Ahara includes not just the food itself but also the way it is prepared, consumed, and digested. Vihara encompasses our daily habits, routines, and activities that impact our overall health. It includes our sleep patterns, exercise routines, stress management techniques, and social interactions. A balanced Vihara helps maintain physical and mental well-being. Ausadha refers to the use of medicines and therapeutic interventions to prevent and treat diseases which includes herbal remedies, minerals, and other natural substances that promote health and well-being. In Ayurveda, medicines are used judiciously and in conjunction with Ahara and Vihara. These three pillars are interconnected and influence one another. A balanced Ahara supports a healthy Vihara, which in turn reduces the need for Ausadha. Here dwadasha asana pravicharana are described being aimed to promote ahara rather than ausadha. Since all living things depend on food for survival, they will be unable to counsel others on maintaining their health and preventing illnesses without this understanding. Thus, a thorough understanding of food and beverages is crucial for the doctors.

CONCLUSION

Different ideas about food and nutrition are used in Ayurveda to promote health, avoid disease, and aid in treatment. The phrase "Dwadasha ashana pravichara" (the twelve varieties of food administration) refers to one such novel idea of dietetic prescription. This idea offers many approaches to food administration depending on the meal's quality and amount in connection to the person's state, whether they are healthy or ill. An analysis of this concept's real-world applications is attempted here. Inappropriate eating habits are one of the factors that contribute to lifestyle illnesses. While it has been noted that incorrect Dwadasha Pravicharana use contributes to a number of lifestyle ailments, appropriate Dwadasha Pravicharana use can help avoid lifestyle disorders. Therefore, one may undoubtedly combat the future lifestyle problems by adopting the dietary guidelines outlined in Ayurvedic teachings. After oxygen and water, food is the

third most essential element for life. Incorrect eating patterns, poor lifestyle choices, and a lack of awareness of one's own bodily makeup disrupt the natural balance of the five components and have a negative impact on the functioning of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. For instance, eating less meals once a day is recommended for people with impaired digestive capacity. In the same way that a dying fire is progressively rekindled by adding tiny amounts of fuel rather than large amounts at once, this will make digestion easier and gradually rekindle the digestive fire. Understanding and putting these twelve administrations into practice can help people either improve their health or use food to cure illnesses. Through some adaptation and change based on need, diet plays a critical role in both illness prevention and health maintenance. Under the name of Dwaadasha Ashana Pravicharain Sushruta Samhita, these changes are explained. Dwadasha Pravicharana are the dietary guidelines and practices for both healthy people and certain patient kinds. Physicians would be unable to control the illnesses of the sick and preserve the health of the well if they had a solid grasp of food, including its types, preparation, and uses.

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