

Diagnostic Approach of Panchabhautik Chikitsa and Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, as its name indicates, is our guide for a healthy living from our childhood to our old age. It's a science of not only how to cure diseases but also how to improve our health. Today, Ayurveda has established itself as a main alternative medical science. The classical Ayurvedic therapy is based on Tridosha Siddhanta (Tri = three, dosha = cardinal humour, siddhanta = theory). Each of these three humours, as with all other things found in the nature, are formed from the five universal elements known as panchamahabhutas (Panch = five, maha = main, bhuta = entity). These five elements are: Prithvi - Matter Aap - Water Tej - Fire Vayu - Air Akash - Space The equilibrium of these five elements in the body denotes health while their imbalance or disturbance denotes disease.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Tridosha Siddhanta, Panchamahabhuta, diagnostic methods*

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INTRODUCTION

Since the human body and the nature are both created from the Panchamahabhutas, Ayurveda considers all substances found in the nature as medicine; provided that it is used for specific indications and with appropriate formulations. Therefore, it utilizes a wide range of Materia medica mostly natural products viz. herbs, minerals, animal products and marine originates. They are used for indications in different conditions of health and disease in order to restore the state of balance.

The classical Ayurvedic therapy is based on *tridosha siddhanta*, the theory of three humour's or doshas. Like all matter in the universe, *tridoshas* are also a permutation and combination of the five states of matter, the five basic elements.

Ether (*Akash*), air (*Vayu*), water (*Jala*), fire (*Agni*), and earth (*Prithvi*) are the *panchamahabhutas* in Ayurveda.

The *panchabhautik* manifestation of the three doshas are as follows.

- Vata constitution is—*Akash* (ether or Space) + *Vayu* (Air)
- Pitta constitution is—*Agni* (Fire) + *Jala* (water)
- Kapha constitution is—*Prithvi* (Earth) + *Jala* (Water)

MATERIALS AND METHODS-

Panchabhautik chikitsa is a principle of analysis and treatment. It was brought into practice by *Vaidya Raj Atmaram Vaman Datar Shastri* who we'll refer to as *Datar Shastri*.

Datar Shastri belonged to the state of Maharashtra in India. He emphasized that both the human body and nature are created from the the five elements, or the *Panchamahabhutas*. While treating the human body, equilibrium of the five elements should be considered.

Panchabhautik chikitsa is based on the basic concepts of the great classical texts of Ayurvedic medicine. The *Brihatrayees* (three great literary works), are the

Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and the Astanga Samgraha.

The Doshas + Panchamahabhutas

- Vata dosha is the most powerful of the doshas. It controls the basic bodily functions as well as the mind.
- Vata dosha influences all types of movements in the body, from the movement of prana and nerve impulses, to thoughts and body fluids. The Vata dosha is a combination of *Akash* and *Vayu mahabhuta*, or space and air.
- Understanding the space (*Akash*) and air element (*Vayu mahabhuta*) and how they work in the body is very important. With understanding the elements, any imbalance in their functioning can be understood properly.
- Pitta dosha is responsible for metabolism, digestion and hormones linked to appetite. Pitta is a combination of the water and fire element.
- Kapha dosha is responsible for strength and stability, muscle growth, weight and the immune system. Kapha is a combination of the water and earth element.

The equilibrium of these five elements in the body denotes health. Their imbalance or disturbance denotes disease.

Panchabhautik chikitsa is a unique branch of Ayurveda which is based on analysis and treatment according to this principle.

Specific sites in the body have a dominance of specific mahabhutas.

- Earth element (*Prithvi mahabhuta*): *Adho Shakha* (lower limbs)
- Water element (*Jala mahabhuta*): below the umbilicus (*Nabhi*) and pelvic region (*Kati Pradesh*)
- Fire element (*Teja mahabhuta*): around the umbilicus (*Nabhi*)
- Air element (*Vayu mahabhuta*): above the umbilicus up to clavicular region (*Jatru*)
- Space element (*Akasha mahabhuta*): above the clavicle (*Jatru Urdhva*)

pH Levels + Panchabhautik Chikitsa

Another very interesting concept given by *Datar Shastri* is the concept of a combination of acidic pH and alkaline pH in nature which brings about a balance in nature.

Similarly, this same concept of acidic pH and alkaline pH brings a balance in the human body as

well as nature and the human body are reciprocal to each other.

The amalgamation of acidic pH and alkaline pH helps maintain the balance in nature. Life on earth depends on appropriate pH levels in and around living organisms and cells. Human life requires a tightly controlled pH level in the blood serum to survive (about 7.4, a slightly alkaline range of 7.35 to 7.45).

Diagnosis In Panchabhautik Chikitsa

Datar Shastri adopted the process of diagnosis in *Panchabhautik chikitsa* through a special technique called *Nada pariksha*. *Nada pariksha* is percussion or sound examination. It's used in addition to the famous *Nadi Pariksha* or pulse diagnosis.

In sound examination, abdominal sounds are examined on the basis of the properties of increased or depleted *panchamahabhutas* (five elements) in the body giving rise to a specific symptom of a disease.

Panchabhautik chikitsa is an easy method to heal chronic diseases successfully.

In Ayurvedic disease diagnosis, primary importance is given to *Udara Pariksha* or abdominal examination. The liver (*Yakrita*), spleen (*Pleeha*) and kidneys (*Mutrapinda* or *Vrikka*) is also examined through this process.³

4 Step Analysis In Panchabhautik Chikitsa

The process of analysis and treatment in *Panchabhautik Chikitsa* typically has the following four steps.

Find out the root cause of the disease. The series of events in the attainment of a particular disease, the disease pathogenesis, is based on the *Panchabhautik* theory or the imbalance in the elements

Analyze the present and future effects of this causative factor on other prominent systems of the body.

Treat the imbalance, and not only the disease in question, to bring equilibrium to the elements. The body experiences weakness during this equilibrating process.

Regain the strength of the body and stabilize it.

The *shareera* or body as well as the universe or *loka* is made up of the *Pancha Mahabhutas*. The variation in these *Mahabhutaha* will cause the disease.

Let's look at an example.

Intake of substances dominant in the earth element and water element will increase the same qualities in the body. This concept is known as the *Samanya Vishesha Siddhanta*. So in this condition substances

dominant in the fire element and air element are used for treatment to balance the earth and water elements in the body.

Like qualities cause an increase; dissimilar qualities cause a decrease.

When the earth element (*Parthiva Guna*) is in a vitiated state it causes stiffness (*Kathinyata*) in the body. Due to indulgence in causative factors, dosha vitiation takes place.

The vitiation of the earth and water element occurs in body parts where the earth (*Prithvi*) and water (*Jala*) element are dominant. The symptoms are found predominantly in the lower body below the umbilicus (*Adho shakha*) and pelvic region.

So to normalize the earth and water element, medicines dominant in the fire element (*Agni*), air element (*Vayu*) and space element (*Akasha mahabhuta*) are used for treatment.

Medicines In Panchabhautik Chikitsa

Ayurvedic medicines in *Panchabhautik chikitsa* are selected not only on the basis of *rasa*, *guna*, *virya*, and *vipak* as is in the case of conventional Ayurvedic medicine.

The composition of *Pancha mahabhuta* present in the ingredients of the medicine is also considered.

There are a few, very special compositions researched and formulated by *Datar Shastri* which are effectively used in *Panchabhautik Chikitsa*.

In *Panchabhautik chikitsa*, *Datar Shastri* did not limit the meaning of *shodhan* or purification to Panchakarma procedures only. According to *Datar Shastri*, by normalizing the digestive system (*Agni Sansthan*), nature carries out supply, nourishment and excretion.

If the important organs in the digestive system, the liver, spleen and kidneys, are not doing their functions normally, the equilibrium of the doshas is lost.

Abnormal toxic material is accumulated around these vital organs and all these culminate into diseases. The main aim of *Panchabhautik Chikitsa* is to remove the blockages and clear the minute doshas in these organs and vicinity. This is called *Shuddhi karma*, cleansing action, at the micro level.

This is the objective and achievement of *Panchabhautik Chikitsa*

DISCUSSION-

Rules For Preparing Medicines

Datar Shastri followed certain rules in respect of preparation of medicines and storing them.

According to his *Panchabhautik Chikitsa*, the period of collecting various herbs, should be strictly observed as the maximum natural properties can be tapped during that period. Delicate herbs should be dried in the shade. Others in full sunshine. Herbs should not be exposed or open at night. Selection of the raw herbs should be done carefully.

Manually prepared medicines are preferred over machine-made medicines. Manually made medicines have more potential and are preferable. Wooden vessels are used for preparing the medicines instead of metal vessels. Stainless steel discolours the recipes and changes the properties of the formulas.

These rules of combining ingredients in a formulation should be observed. Combination should be done by properly rubbing with due time.

Medicinal preparation are best started in the third week of October, after the appearance of the *Agasti* star. They should end by the third week of May on the setting of the *Agasti* star.

A clean, cloudless sky with full sunshine is essential for potent medicines. Cloudy weather is harmful. Keep the final recipes in bottles for six months before dispensing them as medicines mature in respect to properties by that time.

Datar Shastri says medicines are for the cure first. Their appearances are a negligible part for effectiveness. When making medicines, don't make deceptive appearances for commercial purposes.⁴

CONCLUSION

The words *Panchabhautik chikitsa* encompasses various aspects of health including diet, exercise, profession, environment, drugs, preparation of medicines, diagnosis and treatment.

The core concept involves interpretation of the scientific knowledge and disease management on the grounds of *Panchamahabhuta* theory.

Panchabhautik chikitsa achieved very good results with treatment. It includes a rich history, plentiful references in the ancient texts and wide research work done by *Datar Shastri* himself and his disciples, especially in Maharashtra. Despite all of this, *Panchabhautik chikitsa* has been well accepted by very few outside the state of Maharashtra and rarely practiced until today in other parts of India.

Datar Shastri encouraged the growth of Ayurveda in the age of antibiotics. His thorough study and analysis of the ancient Ayurvedic texts led him to this special approach to diagnosis and treatment in Ayurvedic medicine. He practiced, taught and spread *Panchabhautik chikitsa* among his students. He was

quite methodical in his approach of diagnosis and treatment.

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