Ayurveda dietary guidelines during Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The current world situation is both frightening and alarming due to the massive disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The next few days are censorious as we need to be very precautious in our daily regimen as well as dietary habits. Ayurveda offers knowledge about food based on certain reasoning. Indecent food custom is the chief cause for the rising development of health disorders in the current era. In classical texts of Ayurveda, the concept of diet explained well, ranging from their natural sources, properties and specific utility in pathological as well as physiological manner. In this work, the review of the relevant literature of Ahara (Diet) was carried out from Charak Samhita and other texts, newspapers, articles, web page related to the same. Every human being is unique with respect to his Prakriti (Physical and mental temperament), Agni (Digestive capacity), Koshtha (Nature of bowel) etc. For that reason, the specificity of the individual should be kept in mind. Ahara, when consumed in the appropriate amount at the right moment following all Niyamas (Guidelines) given in Ayurveda texts, gives immunity and keeps the body in a healthy state during pandemics such as Covid-19. Ultimately, this will help the human body to maintain its strength for life. This article reviews the concept of diet viz. combination of foods, their quantity and quality, methods of preparation and processing, which are to be followed during pandemics and are essential in maintenance and endorsement of health and preclusion of diseases.

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INTRODUCTION

Diet is a fundamental part of our life. The values of nutrition in respect to health are very inimitable in Ayurveda as compared to biomedicine and modern nutrition. The concept of diet explained well, ranging from their usual sources, properties and detailed usefulness in pathological as well as physiological manner. However, varieties of systems have been developed and are advancing on these concepts. So, trans-disciplinary researches on food and health sciences are proved to be very significant. It also presents practical solutions for current health circumstances during pandemics such as Covid-19. This article reviews the concept of diet viz. combination of foods, their quantity and quality, methods of preparation and processing, which are to be followed during pandemics and are essential in maintenance and endorsement of health and preclusion of diseases (Matrashiteeya Adhyaya,
Prakriti to are underway. Diet should be consumed according to Ayurveda principles, such as the five fundamental elements and the three bio-effector concepts (three humors or Tri-Doshas), of Ayurveda can be a complex one using the same methods we have been using lately (Payyappallimana and Venkatasubramanian, 2016).

Materials and Methods

Ayurveda classics, electronic databases, research articles were searched to collect the concept of diet and nutrition viz. combination of foods, their quantity and quality, methods of preparation and processing, which are to be followed during pandemics and are essential in maintenance and endorsement of health and preclusion of diseases.

Observation

Every human being is unique with respect to his Prakriti, Agni, Koshtha etc. Hence, while thinking about diet, one should keep in mind about specificity to the individual. Ahara, when consumed in the appropriate amount at suitable instance following all Niyamas contribute health. To regulate the traditional herbal medicine; efforts in various fields are underway. Diet should be consumed according to Prakriti (A woman reading, 2018)(Figure 1).

Ayurveda principles, such as Prakriti, Dosha (Humor of body), and Agni are being understood in recent times, using contemporary technical tools. These efforts in the field of research have helped definite associate concepts of Ayurveda with current biomedical parameters. Still, the holism of Ayurveda has not been captured. The holistic knowledge of Ayurveda was either a dissimilar system adopted to recognize holism or was brought together by putting together data and information expanded over a period of time (like done in Systems Biology approach). Understanding these holistic values, such as the five fundamental elements and the three bio-effector concepts (three humors or Tri-Doshas), of Ayurveda than usual biomedicine. This is a tough job and would necessitate a thorough knowledge of Ayurveda. Ayurveda's importance on the function of Doshas and their disproportion as the major contributing feature of the diseases suppose significance on the fact that simple existence of causative organisms does not inevitably consequence in the appearance of the disease. The perception of Oja (Vitality) and Bala (Immunity) of the natural immunological potential together with Sahajabala (Innate immunity) and Yuktitkrita Bala (Acquired immunity) playing a key position in the health and disease have to be understood and esteemed by the modern immunologists (Payyappallimana and Venkatasubramanian, 2016) (Figure 2).

Discussion

The intonation of immune reaction by means of Ayurveda herbal drugs as a potential curative assess has, at present turned out to be a topic of methodical analysis. The chief motive for the ever-increasing inclination of health in the present situation is inappropriate dietary habits, for example, Eating of frozen food articles, junk food, packed food, processed food etc.; plays a vital role in here.

Basic Concepts of Nutrition in Ayurveda

The human body elements like - Dosha, Dhatus (Tissue) and Mala (Excretory part) are originated by the nutrition that we consume. Therefore, it is of utmost importance (Matrashiteeya Adhyaya, 2020). It is very rightly believed that ‘we are what we eat’. Food is crucial for our mind as well. Ayurveda texts clearly state that it gets separated into three parts. The flesh is made out of the gross part and the mind is nourished by a subtle part. Similarly, water also is
divided. The chief portion converted into the urine, the middle part into the blood and the subtle part promotes our life force or prana (Vividhashitapitiya Adhyaya, 2020).

Quality of food
Food plays a crucial role in health and diseases. The role of food on behavior is well-known. Good quality of food helps the mind be healthy and work efficiently. Ayurveda food habits help in assisting the function of gut more effectively to regularize absorption, assimilation and elimination, as well as the strengthening of immune systems.

Uttam Annapan (Advantages of wholesome food)
It is the diet that helps live a willfully holy and hearty living. It sustains it in a passive condition and nurtures the body. This is the finest food for the longevity of life, material power, a good mind and excellent health. It calms and purifies the mind, making it work more proficiently. A suitable diet thus results in good health, a peaceful mind with a fair stream of power amid them. It helps those who wish to live a peaceful, quiet and meditative life (Annapanavidhi Adhyaya, 2020). It includes fresh fruit, legumes, honey, milk, whole grains, nut, seed, seed oil and herbal teas.

ShadrasiyaAhara (Six Types of Taste)
Ahara comprising of all the Six Rasas, i.e. Madhura (sweet), Amla (sour/acidic), Lavana (salty), Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter), and Kashaya (astringent) must be consumed (Atreyabhadrakapyiya Adhyaya, 2020). The consumption of food should be started by Madhura Rasa first (Atreyabhadrakapyiya Adhyaya (Caraka Samhita), 2020). All these Six Rasas helps in the proper nourishment and growth of the body. This also helps the body not only to develop immunity and combat diseases but also steer clear of dreadful diseases of the current era like COVID-19.

Quantity of food
For maintenance of health, the appropriate amount and fine quality food should be consumed. The amount of food to be consumed again depends on the power of digestion (Matrashtiteeya Adhyaya (Charak Samhita), 2020). The control of digestion and metabolism varies with respect to seasons and the age of the person (Tasyashiteeya Adhyaya, 2020). Consumption of foods that are heavy to digest should be half of the actual urge of hunger. Whereas light foods also should not be consumed till full (Matrashtiteeya Adhyaya (Caraka Samhita), 2020).

**Food for mind**

According to Ayurveda classics, diet affects our mind as per its composition and qualities. There are three types, A) Satvik diet – It is an ideal one, contains vegetarian food articles which are non-oily and non-spicy. B) Rajasik diet – It stimulates the mind, contains salty, sour, too spicy, hot food articles. C) Tamasik diet – It creates lethargy, contains heavy and too oily food articles (Banamali, 2014).

**Processing methods**

Ayurveda not only states the importance of quality of food but also on the choice of food, its handling and preparation. The Ayurveda approach to dietary rules is extremely dissimilar from the usual modern approach. Acharya Charaka explains the eight principles of AharaVidhi (Principles of diet), i.e., (1) Prakriti (nature), (2) Karana (preparation), (3) Samyoga (combinations), (4) Rashi (quantity), (5) Desha (habitat and climate), (6) Kala (time factor), (7) Upayogasamstha (rules of use), and (8) Upayokta (the user) (Ashta vidha Ahara vishesh ayatana (Rasa Vimana), 2020).

**Combination of food**

The Ayurveda texts give immense significance to the compatibility and incompatibility of assured food articles. Acharya Charak also describes the 18-fold denominators of Aharadravyas (Items) become irreconcilable due to their equally contradictory characters, by Samyoga (combinations), Samskara (preparation), Desh (virtue of place), Kala (time), Matra (dose) and Swabhav (inherent nature) etc. (Atreyabhadrakapiyiya Adhyaya (Charak Samhita), 2020).

**CONCLUSION**

Every human being is unique with respect to his Prakriti, Agni, Koshtha etc. The main and crucial necessity in life is food, and superior health can be managed by following a suitable diet. Incorrect consumption patterns and cooking methods generate most of the health problems. To maintain the body’s integrity, physical and immunological strength for life, a suitable, the finest and expert use of these triads is essential. One can survive pandemics like COVID-19 by maintaining a healthy and proper diet and by following the dietary rules.

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**Conflicts of Interest**

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