

## A Brief overview on Ayurveda

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**ABSTRACT:** The World Health Organisation has estimated that for some 3.4 billion people in developing world, plant represent primary source of medicine. Indian traditional medicine is based on different systems including Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani. Ayurveda have been very popular among the public. Ayurveda suggests true health is based on the healthy functioning of four areas of life; physical/mental health, career or life purpose, spiritual relationships and spirituality. The unique features of Ayurveda is that it gives importance to the holistic treatment. By this disease will be destroyed from the root level and it does not reoccur. Ayurveda is considered as another system of medicine but it is actually another way of life. In fact it is the knowledge of life. The purpose of ayurveda as medical system is to safeguard health while enhancing the longevity of life. "The purpose of ayurveda is to protect the health of the healthy and to alleviate disorder of the diseased." Ayurveda recommends the use of several herbs, massage and therapies and even recommends subtle alterations to dietary habits and lifestyle, for an affected individual to get back his/her state of good health.

**Keywords :** Ayurveda- Ancient system- Traditional medicine

### I. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda was first discovered in the Indus Valley region of India more than 5000 years ago. The word ayurveda has been derived from Ayush i.e. life and veda i.e. knowledge. It is literally means "To know about life." Ayurveda is considered as another system of medicine but it is actually another way of life. In fact it is the knowledge of life.

Ayurveda is a holistic, natural system of health. Ayurveda offers remedies for illness is designed as a preventive medicine that supports consistent health and longevity. It was the dominant medical paradigm in the Indian subcontinent until modern times and is still widely practiced throughout the region as complete medical system. Ayurveda is a complete medical

system. It treat the whole person as an integrated beings: body, mind and spirit.

Knowledge of ayurveda comes from the vedas, which originated in India and are some of the oldest written text in the world. That was passed on the Indian sages or rishis from the Gods themselves. Ayurvedic knowledge was eventually written down in ancient Indian language sanskrit. Charak, Sushruta and Vagbhata are the authors of the three main classical Ayurvedic scriptures.

Ayurveda is allied with the four principle vedas of ancient India, which issued from Lord Brahma at the time of creation. The vedas include Rigveda, Samveda, Yajurveda and Atharveda. The ayurveda is said to be an upveda (part) of Atharveda.

### Basic principle of Ayurveda

According to ancient Indian philosophy, the universe is composed of five basic elements or panchmahabhuta. Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space.

- 1. Earth:** Earth shows up as all visible solid matter that we call the body. The earth gives your body structure and form, such as bones, teeth, tendons, muscles, skin, hair, organs, and so on. Earth is a key element for the kapha.
- 2. Water:** Water represents all liquidity that flows throughout the body. Body fluids such as plasma, blood, saliva, mucus and intracellular fluids form the largest represented element in the human body. Water is a contributing element of the pitta and kapha doshas.
- 3. Fire:** Fire is present in everything that requires digestion and transformation. Body temperature, intelligence, digestive enzymes, metabolism and acids are examples of the elements of fire. This gives rises to the pitta doshas.
- 4. Air:** Air is the dynamic and mobile element that is governs all the movement, change and action in the body Such as breathing, blood

circulation, muscular function. This is main element that gives rise to vata dosha.

- Space:** Space is allows all the elements to exist and interact. In the body, Space is translated as open cavities, such as in the heart, abdomen,

bladder, mouth and nostrils, as well as intracellular and synaptic Space. Space is a contributing element to the vata dosha.

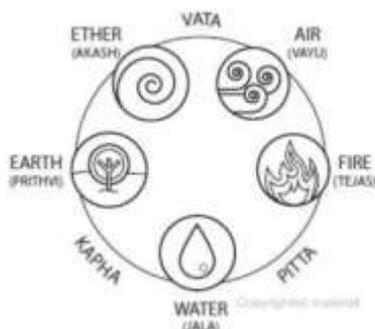
The properties of the five elements are given in table -

Gross element	Properties
Earth	Hardness, grossness, inertia, compactness, smell
Water	Coldness, fluidity, viscosity, softness and taste
Fire	Heat, color, lustier, digestive power, mental faculties, anger, valour, vision
Air	Movement, lightness, impulse, all functional activities in the organism, all vibration, sense of touch
Space	Porosity, vacuum, sound, power of differentiation, hearing

There are four aspects of the body that need to be kept in balance in order to maintain good health- these are the doshas, the dhatus, malas and agni.

Everything in the universe including food and the bodies were derived from these panchmahabhuta. A fundamental harmony therefore exists between the microcosm (the universe) and the microcosm (individual).

The panchmahabhuta theory and human body is in a state of continuous flux or dynamic equilibrium. The panchmahabhuta are represented in the human body as doshas, dhatus and malas. There are three doshas in the body also known as tridosha.



### Three doshas and zones in the body

Every doshas are composed of all five elements

- Vata is composed of Space and air.
- Pitta is composed of fire and water
- Kapha of earth and water.

**Vata:** Vata is derived from the elements of Space and Air and translates as wind or "that which moves thing". It is the energy of movement and the force governing of all biological activity such as breathing, muscle and tissue movement, the pulsation of the heart, blinking. Vata promotes creativity and flexibility. Vata is often called the "King of the Doshas". Since it govern the body is greater life force and give motion to pitta and kapha.

Vata is responsible for all major and minor, perceptible and imperceptible movements in the body. It is the prime force that governs the transportation of fluids, the discharge of secretion, and the elimination of waste materials.

**Pitta:** Pitta derived from the elements of fire and water and translates as "that which cooks". It is the energy of digestion and metabolism in the body that functions through carrier substances such as organic acids, hormones, enzymes and bile.

The qualities of pitta are oily, sharp, hot, light, moving liquid and acidic. The main location of pitta in the body are the small intestine, stomach, liver, spleen, pancreas, blood eyes and sweat. Physiologically pitta provides the body with heat and energy through the breakdown of complex food molecules.

Pitta is responsible for the conversion of food into heat, tissue and waste material. Pitta creates drive and passion and it's main disturbance is anger, which is toxic emotional heat or fire.

**Kapha:** Kapha is derived from the element of earth and water and translates as "that which sticks". It is the energy of building and lubrication that provides the body with physical form, structure and the smooth functioning of all its parts. Kapha can be thought of as the essential cement, glue and lubrication of the body in one.

The qualities of kapha are moist, cold, heavy, dull, soft, sticky and static. The main location of kapha in the body are the chest, throat, lungs, head, lymph, fatty tissue, connective tissue, ligaments and tendons.

Kapha is physical disorder are accumulation of mucus, water or excess tissue development, particularly fat or adipose tissue.

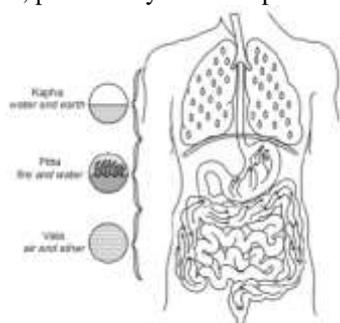


Fig. 2.1 The seats of three doshas: Vata, Pitta and Kapha

#### Properties of three dosha:

1. **Vata:** Dry, light, cold, rough, subtle, moving.
2. **Pitta:** Slightly oily, hot, light, odourous, liquid.
3. **Kapha:** Oily, cold, heavy, slow, smooth, slimy and static.

**Dhatus:** The structural, supporting and tissue structure in ayurvedic sciences are called dhatu. The dhatus are the body constituent and form the basic structure of the body, each one having its own functions.

Dhatu, agni collectively pertains to the body tissues and each tissue has its own individual agni.

Seven types of tissue (dhatu) in ayurvedic medicine.

1. Rasa
2. Rakta
3. Mensa
4. Meda
5. Asthi
6. Majja
7. Shukra

#### Malas:

Food is the precursor of all tissue production and maintenance and the metabolic process involved in the generation of tissues creates

its own malas or waste products. Waste products include Stool, urine, sweat, saliva, tears etc.

Effective elimination of malas is said to be important for maintaining good health.

Now, The doshas, dhatus and malas should be in a state of perfect equilibrium for the body to remain healthy. Any imbalance among these constituents result in ill health and disease.

#### Treatment:

In ayurveda, before starting the treatment a person's constitutional type should be determined.

Drug are prescribed based on the patients body type as well as on what disease or disturbance of the doshas they are suffering from.

The practitioner arrives at diagnosis through direct questioning, observation and a physical exam, as well as inference. Basic techniques such taking the pulse, observing the tongue, eyes and physical form; and listening to the tone of the voice are employed during an assessment.

The drug should be the last rather than first mean of treatment, beginning with the natural healing method like Ayurveda. One of the Ayurvedic treatment modalities such as Panchkarma can remove disease before its manifestation.

Everything that might affect the patient's health including their activities, the time of the day and the season should be taken into consideration.

## II. CONCLUSION:

Ayurveda describes the basic and applied aspects of life process, health and disease cured in terms of its own principle and approaches. Thus in this context Ayurveda is the therapy of choice.

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