



An Overview on Ayurvedic Remedies in Overcoming Communicable Illnesses and Its Contemporary Relevance W.S.R COVID-19

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Received: 11 February 2022

Published: 26 February 2022

Keywords: *Community Illness; COVID-19; Ayurveda; Prevention; Review*

Abstract

In ancient medicine, Swasthya or Health is considered as the equilibrium of three dosha (regulatory functional factors), agni (digestive fire), dhatu (tissues), mala (waste products) & together with the pleasant state of atma (soul), indriya (sensory and motor organs) and manas (mind). When this homeostasis is disturbed it leads to various illnesses ranging from infectious, communicable to life threatening diseases. Ancient scholars have very well described regarding the epidemics, pandemics of communicable diseases affecting mankind since time immemorial. They have termed them as Janapadodhwamsa roga or Aupasargika roga's. There are also references of remedies to be adopted to prevent and to protect from these illnesses. In current scenario we are coming across outbreak of viral illnesses which are communicable diseases needs the blend of agent, host and environment to successfully distress the mankind.

Introduction

Communicable diseases are the diseases which spread by direct or indirect contact through viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites. Some invade the body's organs through toxins generated and

others actually destroy cells. Some impairs the body's natural immune system & may also lead to cause serious illnesses or death. They exhibits features of illnesses once these pathogens have multiplied inside the body & there is decreased immunity.

Communicable diseases continue to be a major public health threat in developing countries, despite the fact that there is development in the fields of sanitation and public health through draining of marshes, control of the water supply, widespread vaccinations, and quarantine measures. Communicable diseases still attack human populations despite the advancement in technologies & control measures [1].

These diseases can be controlled by reducing disease incidence, prevalence, morbidity, or mortality to a satisfactory level by repeated efforts, & continued interventional measures in contrast with elimination, eradication, and extinction [2].

An Overview of Disease

Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is a globally infected disease which is caused by corona virus. The people infected with this virus may experience mild to moderate respiratory illnesses and will recover with or without treatment. This virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharges from nose, mouth of the infected person. Geriatric, immune-compromised patients and those with underlying systemic conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to complicate with serious illness. Hence the knowledge about this newly discovered virus is essential in preventing and slowing down the transmission of COVID-19. One should protect by frequent washing of hands and using alcohol based sanitizers and not to touch the face, mouth & eye, & by practicing respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow etc.) [3].

Ayurvedic Management

In Ayurvedic Science, when we review our literatures, we find the references of Sushruta describing the spread of communicable diseases through close contacts, while Charaka describes it under

Janapadodhwamsa. Acharya Charaka explains its spread via factors like *vayu* (air), *udaka* (water), *desha* (land) & *kala* (time) [4]. Furthermore, the ultimate goal of Ayurveda is to maintain complete and comprehensive healthcare & to sustain the equilibrium of body, mind & soul. Ayurveda also describes three fold management of diseases i.e. through *Daivavyapaashrya* (spiritual therapy), *Yukti Vyapaashrya* (logic based treatment) and *Satvavajaya* (counseling) where he uses the methods of psychospiritual healing practices & through specific diseases pacifying measures. Hence in COVID-19 these three measures can be followed especially *Yukti vyapashraya chikitsa* where the disease can be managed by using three modalities such as **Apa-karshana** (removal of disease producing *Krimi* (micro organisms) out of body using various therapeutic *shodhana karma* (purificatory procedures) & manual removal of visible macro organisms; Second is **Prakriti Vighata** which is a very unique modality that uses the drugs which possess *Katu* (pungent), *Tikta* (Bitter), *Kashaya* (Astringent), *Kshara* (alkali), *Ushna* (warm in potency) so that it destroys disease causing agents, & the most important of three is **Nidaana Parivarjana** which is the most efficient in controlling the spread of diseases and prevention by avoiding contact with the disease causing agent [5].

Measures in Amavastha (Latent Stage)

Ayurveda, the science of life believes that the disease manifests only when there is vitiation of *dosha* & *vyadhikshamatva* is compromised (immunity weakened) irrespective of whether it is virus or bacteria in this context.

Epidemics especially COVID- 19 can be specifically managed by Nutrition & Diet starting from *langhana* (fasting till appetite appears) as mentioned in classics taking care of *Amavastha* (latent stage) by using *kanji* (rice gruel) or *yavagu* (rice gruel prepared with medicinal herbs mainly those with *tikta*

rasa (bitter taste) & Swedana (sudation) [6]. The intake of deepana pachana dravyas (which increases appetite) like ginger, pepper, hingu (asafoetida) should be encouraged after completion of amavastha & with good agni (appetite), and lightness in the body after 7 day of appearance of jwara (fever). Body can be hydrated by intake of Hot water - ushna jalapana/ boiled and cooled water or *Paniya* (medicated drinks) made with panchakola (Pippali, Pippalimula, Chavya, Chitraka, and Shunthi) or using Ayurvedic medicated drink in the form of Shadangapaniya (contains six ingredients namely- Mustha (Cyperus rotundus), Parpata (Fumaria indica), Chandana (Santalum album), Ushira (Vetiveria zizanioides), Shunti (Zingiber officianlis), Udichya (Pavonia odorata) especially in pitta predominant patients & to maintain hydration in fever. Medications can also be advised based on the dosha bala, doshavastha, and bala (strength) of the patient [7,8].

Preventive Measures

There is also mention of measures to prevent infectious condition as described in Ayurvedic classics by implementation of dinacharya (dialy regimen, rutucharya (seasonal regimen), personal hygiene & environmental hygiene in our practices [9].

As Prevention, it is ideal to do undergo Panchakarma (Purificatory procedures) or at least Mridu Virechana (Kosta Shuddi) based on one's Prakruti (Body Constituents), Agni Bala (appetite) and overall health status. They can also use rasayana, appetizers, such as Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*/ Giloy), Haridra (*Curcuma longa*/Turmeric), Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), Shunti (*Zingiber Officinale*), Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Chyavana Prash, Anutaila pratimarsha nasya (nasal drops).

Contemporary Measures & Universal Guidance

On the other hand, contemporary sciences emphasizes more on advancing understanding on

COVID-19 by bringing newer insight into Environmental surveillance research which is now considered as an important goal in maintaining public health & detects SARS-CoV-2 which are shedding from animal sources.¹⁰ This approach has been indicated to elucidate virus shedding dynamics [11].

Apart from these, it is important to follow the technical guidance's advised by WHO such as; Infection prevention and control / wash, guidances for schools, workplaces & institutions, Travel, Points of Entry and Border Health, Health workers, Maintaining Essential Health Services and Systems etc [12].

Conclusion

Combating these communicable diseases has to be done by stopping its progression by early detection by advancement in technologies, building one's immunity against disease causing agent by preventive measures & also by Safe and effective vaccines which are the main tool along with immunomodulators, rasayana (anti-oxidants) mentioned in classics. In spite these measures, it is necessary to continue wearing masks, cleaning hands, ensuring good ventilation indoors, physical distancing and avoiding crowds for the foreseeable future. But the way forward is that, it's not vaccines that will stop these disease, its getting vaccinated & maintaining one's health by preventive & promotive measures [13].

Source of support: Nil

Conflicting Interest: Nil

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