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CONCEPT OF VIRUDDHA-AHARA AND ITS EFFECT ON PRESENT LIFESTYLE

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Abstract

In Ayurvedic classics, Ahara (food) is mentioned as one among the three Upasthambas (Sub-pillars of body) which supports the three main Sthambas (Pillars) of the body. Ahara is considered to be vital for a human body as it provides the basic nutrients, which are very essential to carry out the basic activities of digestion and metabolism. The wellbeing of individual chiefly depends upon the kind of food he consume. The maximum benefits of Ahara can be achieved only by following the healthy dietary guidelines mentioned in classics of Ayurveda. Whereas wrong dietary patterns can be hazardous to health. The diet, which disturbs the balance among the body elements, is called as Viruddha Ahara. Many times a physically balanced diet can also disturb the homeostasis. Food taken in proper method nourishes the person physically and mentally both and it is the food through which person attains positive health and growth of body. Food taken in improper (Unbalanced) methods can cause various types of diseases. Therefore Ayurveda have given keen attention on concept of wholesome ahara and unwholesome ahara. Correspondingly intake of incompatibility food is much increases in present era.

Key Words: Viruddha Ahara; Incompatible diet; Food interactions; Unbalancing diet.

Introduction

Ayurveda, an ancient medical science of healing, focuses more on the healthy living and well being of the person. Ayurveda offers a logical and scientific approach for determining correct Ahara (food) based upon an individual's constitution. According to Ayurveda, there are positive and negative attributes of Ahara. Since, Ayurveda deals with a holistic approach to cure; it covers the Ahara factor in depth. Ayurveda clearly mentioned regarding the wholesome diet and the benefits of such food. For healthy living, Ayurveda emphasizes on consuming right kind of diet which is healthy and nutritious. Ahara is very much essential for the sustainment of life of all living beings.^[1] It is stated to be responsible for both Arogya (health) and Vyadhi (disease). Hita Ahara (wholesome food) if consumed according to rules, they provide fuel to the fire of digestion; they promote mental as well as physical strength and complexion. The difference of proper health (Happiness) and unhealth (Unhappiness) is based on the difference between wholesome ahara and unwholesome ahara. Unwholesome ahara (Viruddha Ahara) is a unique and important concept described in Ayurveda. The diet, which disturbs the balance among the body elements, is called as Viruddha Ahara.^[2] The second meaning of Viruddha indicates about the combination of two substances which are not similar to each other.

Materials and Methods:-**Materials -**

Ayurvedic Grantha–

A) 1. Charaka Samhita-

2. Sushruta Samhita

3. Ashtanga Hridaya Samhita

B) Internet -Wikipedia

C) Modern Medical Literature

Method – All the references of Viruddha Aahara from Ayurvedic Samhita are considered and compared to evaluate and enlighten the concept of Viruddha Aahara with modern medical literature.

Definition of Viruddha Ahara

According to Acharya Charaka all kinds of foods which aggravate (Increase) the doshas but do not expel them out of the body and all of them become unsuitable or unhealthy for body is called as Viruddha.^[3] The food articles by which the doshas are going to be provoked and spread or diffused from their place but these doshas are not eliminated from the body. So these food articles become unwholesome. According to Acharya Sushruta Viruddha Aahara not only provokes the doshas but that also aggravate the Dhatus.^[4]

Types of Viruddha Ahara.^[5]

Ayurvedic literature has described various types of Viruddha Ahara, which can be summarized as follows

1. Desha Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against place or land region. For example –

a. To have Ruksha (Dry) and Tikshna (Acute) substances in arid region (Maru desha)

b. Snigdha (Unctuous) and Sheet (Cold) substances in Marshy land or Anoop desha.

2. Kala Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against time or season.

For example –

a. Intake of Katu (Pungent) and Ushna (hot) substances in Ushna kala (Grishma, Sharada Ritus)

b. Sheeta (cold) and Ruksha (dry) substances in Sheeta Kala (Hemanta, Shishira & Vasanta Ritus).

c. Sushruta mentioned that food substances having opposite Rasa and Guna are beneficial in that respective season. Therefore similar qualities of food substances are harmful to respective season and it may be cause for disease after a long period.

3. Agni Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against digestive power.

For example –

a. Intake of Guru food (foods which are heavy to digest) when there is Mandagni (low digestion power) and

b. Intake of Laghu (light) food when the power of digestion is Tikshnagni (sharp) and intake of food at variance with irregular and normal power of digestion.

4. Matra Viruddha – Consumption of those substances which are against quantity.

For example –

a. Intake of Madhu (Honey) and Ghrita (Ghee) in equal quantity

b. Intake of Madhu (Honey) and Rain water in equal quantity

c. Honey + Cow's ghee - mixed in equal quantity.

5. Satmya Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are unwholesome.

For example –

a. Intake of Madhur (sweet) and Sheet (Cold) substance by person accustomed to Katu (Pungent) and Ushna (hot) substance.

6. Dosh Viruddha

a. Utilization of drugs, diets and regimen having similar qualities with Dosh, but at variance with the habit of the individual.

7. Sanskar Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against mode of preparation. Drugs and diets which, when prepared in a particular way produced poisonous effects.

For example –

a. Heated Madhu (Honey)

b. Meat of peacock roasted on a castor spit

c. Meat of parrot placed inside a faggot of eranda (Ricinis communis) and then cooked.

d. Meat of sparrow and peacock roasted on castor spit.

8. Veerya Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against Potency Substances having Ushna (hot) potency in combination with those of Sheet (cold) potency substances.

For example –

a. Fish + Milk

9. Koshtha Viruddha – Consumption of those substances which are against nature of bowels. For example –

a. Administration of less quantity with mild potency purgative drug to a person of Krura koshta (Constipated bowel).

b. Administration of more quantity heavy purgative drug to a person having soft bowel.

10. Avastha Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against States or condition. For example –

a. Intake of Vata aggravating food by a person after exertion, sexual act or physical exertion.

b. Intake of Kapha aggravating food by a person after sleep or drowsiness.

11. Kram Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against sequence.

For example –

a. Consuming curd at night.

b. Hot water after taking honey

- c. Intake of food without clearance of his bowel and urination
- d. Intake of food when he doesn't have appetite
- e. Not consuming food when he is hungry

12. Parihar Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against things which relieve the symptoms.

For example –

- a. Intake of hot potency food after taking meat of boar etc.
- b. Consuming cold water immediately after having hot tea or Coffee.

13. Upachar Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against treatment.

For example –

- a. Intake of cold things after taking ghee.
- b. Intake of hot water after taking Madhu (Honey)

14. Paaka Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against cooking. Preparation of food with bad or rotten fuel and under cooking, over cooking or burning during the process of preparation.

15. Sanyoga Viruddha - Consumption of those substances which are against combination. Or intake of two such substances which on combination have poisonous effects.

For example

- a. Intake of sour substances with milk
- b. Fruit Salad / Milk + Banana

16. Hriday Viruddha – Consumption of those substances which are not liked by the person. In short intake of unpleasant food.

17. Sampad Viruddha – Consumption of those substances which are not having their proper qualities. For example –

- a. Intake of substance those are not mature, over matured or putrefied.

18. Vidhi Viruddha – This type includes the diet which is not according with the rules of eating. For example –

- a. Eating food in public place or open place.

Diseases associated with Viruddha-Ahara^[6]

Following are the diseases mentioned in Ayurved texts as a result of Viruddha Ahara:-

- Klaibya (Impotency)
- Blindness
- Visarpa (Erysipelas)
- Jalodara (Ascitis)
- Unmada (Insanity)
- Bhagandara (Fistula in ano)
- Murcha (Coma/fainting)
- Aadhmana (Abdominal distention)
- Galgraha (Obstruction in throat)
- Pandu roga (Anemia)
- Ama (Endogenous toxin)
- Kilasa (Leucoderma)
- Kushtha (Various skin disorders)
- Grahani (Sprue)
- Shotha (Swelling or oedema)
- Amlapitta (Acidity)
- Jwara (Fever)
- Pinas (Allergic Rhinitis)
- Santana Dosha (Infertility problem)
- Mrutyu (Death)

Mode of Action of Viruddha Ahara

Association between dietary pattern and diseases has always been a field of interest among the health professionals. Frequent intake of combination of incompatible food leads in to production of toxins. Then in the alimentary tract this toxins provoke all Doshas and which get mixed with digestive juice and then Rasa Dhatu and so on it spread from one Dhatu to next Dhatu. Thus this Doshas spread from Koshtha (gut) to Shakha (Dhatu and skin). While travelling through all over the body where ever there is Khavaigunya (inherent deformity) it gets lodged and shows the symptoms of the diseases. Effects of incompatible food can be classified in to Aashukari (acute) and Chirakari (chronic) which may be modified in the form of symptoms or diseases.

Chikitsa-Siddhant of Viruddha-Ahara^[7]

The treatment desirable for trouble arising from consuming of incompatible foods is either purifying therapies (emesis, purgation etc.) or palliative therapies, opposite of nature (specific for nature)

- Shodhana therapies including Vamana and Virechanahelps to eliminate toxin accumulated after consumption of Viruddha-Ahara.
- Shamana therapy help to pacify Doshic imbalance associated with consumption of Viruddha- Ahara
- Drugs possess Deepana & Pachana properties boost Agni and offer improvement in disease symptoms arises after consumption of Viruddha-Ahara.

- Haritaki, Amalaki, Pippali, Triphala and Laghu-Ahara recommended in chronic adversity of Viruddha-Ahara.
- The drugs such as; Shunthi, Musta, Trikatu & Haritaki act as Amapachana thus remove toxins from body.
- Vata vitiation associated with Viruddha-Ahara may be treated using Haritaki and Shunthi together.
- Marich, Pippali & Chitraka recommended for Sroto shodhana thus help to clear Ama from body which may be accumulated due to the consumption of Viruddha-Ahara.
- Drugs which are qualitatively possess opposite property to Viruddha-Aahara help to combat habitual consequences of Viruddha-Aahara.
- Gradual shift from unwholesome diet to wholesome diet help to reduce consequences of Viruddha-Ahara.
- Good conduction of Ahar-Vidhi, obeying rule of Dincharya & Ritucharya along with disciplinary life pattern helps to prevent any consequences of Viruddha-Ahara.

Discussion

As per Ayurvedic text certain food products or their combinations act as Viruddha Aahara which deteriorate Sharirastha Dhatus. There are total 18 types of Viruddha Aahara explained by Charaka and their commentators Chakrapani and Gangadhara. Consumption of Viruddha Aahara leads to several diseases by aggravating Sharirastha Prakruta Doshas and deteriorating Prakruta Dhatus. So, one should have proper understanding of all the types of Viruddha Aahara to avoid consumption of Incompatible dietary articles of today's fast food era. Mode of Action of Viruddha Aahara can be explained in terms of modern concept of Agonist. Certain food item after consumption gets attached to the receptors of Doshas and aggravates Doshas just like Agonist substances which cause hormonal secretions in body by stimulating receptors. It is really very important to find out whether Viruddha Aahara actually acts as an Agonist as well as the treatment given in those conditions acts like Antagonist; through researches in Dietetics.

Conclusion

The wholesome use of Ahara brings health whereas unwholesome food habits are cause of various diseases. The incompatibility of food is described in Ayurveda under the concept of Viruddha Ahara. There are total 18 categories of Viruddha Ahara described by Maharshi Charaka in Sutrasthana 26th chapter. Habitual consumption of it may lead to manifestation of many diseases. The diseases caused by Viruddha Ahara can be prevented by following wholesome dietary pattern described in Ayurveda. For the treatment of it, purification therapy followed by Hita Sevan (wholesome diet) is indicated.

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