NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL TREATMENTS IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Any type of measure applied to maintain or bring back the dhatus (body tissues) in ‘Samyavastha (equilibrium state)’ comes under the purview of chikitsa karma (treatment procedure). Ayurveda has explained every aspect and method through treatment of aushadha (drug), ahara (food) and vihara (conduct/bodily activities). Treatment is of two types- Dravyabhuta (drug therapy) and Adravyabhuta (non-drug or non-pharmacological therapy). Both the types have their importance in different degrees at different places. Synonyms of Bheshaja (medicine) like Pathya, Prayashchitta and Hita also indicate the significance of Adravyabhuta chikitsa. Adravyabhuta chikitsa is advocated for both sharirika rogas (somatic diseases) and mansika rogas (psychological diseases). There is a need to flourish Adravyabhuta chikitsa along with Dravyabhuta chikitsa to get desired and optimum results in different pathological conditions and in maintenance of normal physiological condition. Therefore, various measures of Adravyabhuta chikitsa which have been described in scattered manner in Ayurveda are collected, compiled and discussed in this research paper. Along with this, some other measures which are equally important like Meditation, Yoga and Marma therapy are also briefly mentioned in this paper.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Adravyabhuta, Dravyabhuta, Chikitsa, Non-drug therapy, Non-pharmacological therapy.

Introduction:

Life has always been given much importance from the very beginning i.e. Vedic period, when lot of praises of Sun, Water and Air and other Gods were done due to their healing capacities. Also, various types of ritual activities like yagya etc. were performed for demanding health directly from God. However, as the time passed from vedic period to Samhita period, emphasis of human being shifted from praising God to treating diseases through worldly matters i.e. medicines.

Treatment in Ayurveda is none other than establishing/maintaining the tissues of body in Samyavastha (equilibrium state). Therefore, any type of activity done for maintaining or bringing the tissues in ‘Samyavastha’ comes under the chikitsa karma (treatment procedure). It is of two types- Dravyabhuta (drug therapy) and Adravyabhuta (non-drug/ non-pharmacological therapy). Both types of treatment have their importance in different degrees at different places. Adravyabhuta chikitsa is based on different parameters like karana dravya (mana, disha, kala), status of mansika doshas (mental humors), interaction between sharirika and mansika doshas. Non-drug therapy is as much important as drug therapy and this has been justified by the synonyms given for Bheshaja (drug) in Caraka Samhita, which are- Pathya, Prayashchitta & Hita". Non-drug therapy for somatic diseases is advised in both the Daivavyapashraya (religious rites) and yuktivyapashraya chikitsa (rational therapy). In psychological diseases, Gyana (scriptural knowledge), Vigyana (scriptural knowledge), Dhairya (patience), Smriti (memory) and Samadhi (meditation) are advised by acharya Caraka which are related to Adravyabhuta chikitsa. Looking towards the significance, there is a need to flourish and apply the Adravyabhuta chikitsa along with Dravyabhuta chikitsa to get better results in different pathological conditions and maintaining normal physiological conditions. This is so because in many diseases, adravyabhuta chikitsa plays more significant and major role then dravyabhuta chikitsa. For example, in atithediuma (obesity) and prahema roga (diabetes), ancient scholars have laid more emphasis on increasing physical activity besides indicating drug and diet regimes. However, these non-pharmacological treatments are in different forms like psychological activities, spiritual activities, physical activities or religious activities etc. and have been discussed in this article.

This article is focused on collection and compilation of various non-pharmacological treatment measures from different classics of Ayurveda and their related published research articles and other relevant internet data; as well as to interpret and explore its clinical importance in fulfilling both the aims of Ayurveda i.e. Swasthyarakshana (maintaining health of healthy person) and Vikaraprashamana (curing the disease of ill-patient).

Adravyabhuta chikitsa: definition & meaning-

Adravyabhuta chikitsa i.e. non-drug therapy, is defined as the procedure of treatment which is done through Upayas (measures) which are Amurta-bhava (formless entities). This includes Bhaya darshana (creating terror), Vismapana (surprising), Vismarana (forgetfulness), Kshobhana (agitation), Harshana (exhilaration),
Adravyabhuta chikitsa in Ayurveda:

Three types of treatment procedures discussed in Ayurveda are- Daivavyapashraya, Yuktiyapashraya and Sattvavajaya. Out of these three measures, Sattvavajaya and daivavyapashraya chikitsa includes adravyabhuta measures abundantly. Sage Sushruta while describing the 4 Nigraha Hetu i.e. four factors which should be duly employed in order to successfully cope up with a disease, which are sanshodhana (purification), sanshamana (pacification), ahara and achara (regimes of diet & conduct), included adravyabhuta chikitsa in the form of Achara. Two procedures of Langhana (lightening therapy) are given by Vagbhata i.e. shodhana and shamana. In this, out of 7 types, 5 types of shamana procedures, i.e. kshuda (hunger), trit (thirst), vyayama (exercise), atapa (exposure to sunshine) and maruta (wind) are adravyabhuta forms of treatment. Similarly, while describing 18 types of Upshayas (homologatory sign), sage Chakrapani considered the importance of adravyabhuta chikitsa and mentioned it under all Viharaja upshayas.

The measures related to non-pharmacological treatment for both health maintenance and curing of diseases are being discussed here.

1. For Swasthya-rakshana i.e. maintenance and promotion of health-
   a) For maintaining normalcy of sharirika doshas (body humors):
      - Observation of non-suppressible urgesvi.
      - Observation of Brahmacarya- Celibacy is considered as best regime causing longevityvii.
      - Sankalpo Vrshyanam- Determination as a best aphrodisiacviii.
      - Nivratti pushthikaranam- Freedom from liabilities is considered best among those producing nourishment of bodyix.
      - Vyau Pranasyapradanahetunam- Fresh air for giving vital strengthx.
      - Vyayama Sthairyakaranam- Exercise in bringing firmness in bodyxi.
      - Wholesome bodily activities described for each seasonal regime.
      - Indriyajayo Nandanaman- Self control among the promoters of delightfulnessxii.
      - Vidya Brimhananam- knowledge among the promoters of both physical and mental nourishmentxiii.
   
   b) For maintaining manasicsa doshas (psychological humors):
      - Prashamo Pathyananam- Tranquility is considered the best as a wholesome regimexiv.
      - Harsha Prinanannam- Cheerful mind best in bringing delightfulnessxv.
      - Saumanasya Garbhadharmanam- pleasant mind in helping retention of conceptionxvi.
      - Achara Rasayana- If a person possess qualities like truthfulness, free from anger, regularly offering prayers to God, cows, priests, teachers, elders; etc, practice Rasayana therapy, then he acquire all the benefits of rasayana therapyxvii.
      - Indriyajayo Nandanaman- Self control among the promoters of delightfulness.
      - Tatva-avabodho Harshananam- understanding of truth among the promoters of happinessxviii.
      - Brahmacarya Ayananam- Abstinence from the sexual act among those leading to salvationxix.
      - To suppress urges like manasika and vachika vega (mental and verbal urges)xix.
      - Sadvritta- observance of good conducts/noble deedsxx.

2. For Vikara-prashamana i.e. cure of ill patients-
   1. In treatment of sharirika rogas (somatic diseases):
      - 8 Niragni sweda (fomentation without fire) out of 10 typesxxi.
      - Harsha (exhilaration), Pravahana (evacuation), Kala (time) and Bhaya (fear) are considered as Upayantra (accessory instruments)xxii.
      - Wholesome activities mentioned for the treatment of Atithula and Atikrisha (obese & emaciated person)xxiv i.e. more indulging in vigil, sexual act, physical and mental exercises; and sleep, joy, comfortable bed, abstinence from anxiety etc., respectively.
      - Nidra (sleep) in treatment of obese and emaciated personxxv.
All types of Langhana (lightening therapy) except shodhana (purification procedures) and deepana-pachana (digestive measures). Various regimes described for the alleviation of vata, pitta & kapha doshas. Vajikarana vihara (aphrodisiac conducts/ regimes). Langhana (fasting) in Jwara chikitsa (fever). Use of cold environment in patients of Rakta pittas (bleeding from different parts of body). Exercise and abolition of causative factors for diabetic persons. Swimming frequently against river current, indulging in physical exercise and walking over ground covered with gravels, in order to alleviate kapha dosha, is advised in patients of Urustamha (spasticity of thighs). In case of epidemics, it is advised to change the place. Activities to be avoided by kushtha patient (skin diseases) like discarding unwanted hairs and nails, performing physical exercise, avoiding meat, wine and woman. Special regimes for patients of prameha (diabetes) who have no money such as long journey by foot, plough fields.

2. For treating manasika rogas (psychological diseases):
- Vishnu Sahasra nama patha in Jwara chikitsa (chanting name of Lord Vishnu 1000 times in fever).
- Bandha (arresting), aveshana (driving out), pujana (worship) in the patients suffering from Bhutabisangha Jwara (fever due to invasion of evil spirits).
- Ritual activities like Yajya (sacrifice) in Rajayakshma.
- Mantra chanting and other religious activities in treatment of Agantuja Unmada (exogenous insanity).
- Ashwasana (consoling), bhaya (terror), Trasana (sudden terror), Paraspara pratidwandwa chikitsa (treatment by mutually contradictory psychic factors) and Rudra pooja (lord Shiva worship) helps in curing the ailment in the patients of Nija Unmada (endogenous insanity).
- Understandings, patience, memory and the power of concentration are instilled by friends in the patient of Atattvabhinivesha (psychic perversion).
- Exhilarating and consoling the patients of Bhayaja and Shokaja Atisara (psychological diarrhea), respectively, for their cure.
- Mantra chanting for curing poisonous cases and consoling patients in case of suspicious poison.
- Indulging in factors like music, pleasing and delightful companions and psycho-therapy to overcome alcoholism.

Along with these, some other measures of non-drug therapy which are also part of Ayurveda are Meditation, Yoga, Marma chikitsa and psychological counseling. They play important and equivalent role as a Dravyabhuta chikitsa in both maintaining health and curing various ailments.

Discussion:
Adravyabhuta chikitsa or measures are non-pharmacological approaches of treatment being practiced in various forms. Though they do not comprise any substance, yet they have their impact on the body and its functions.

Measures described for maintenance of physical health indirectly maintain the doshas of body in equilibrium state which results in dhatusamya. Clearance of Non suppressible urges prevents aggravation of doshas in body. Suramya Suresh et al, have highlighted the complications in females due to vegadharana (suppression of natural urges) and has emphasized on their protective aspects revealing the significance of adravyabhuta chikitsa. Bramhacharya (celibacy) leads for preservation of shukra dhatu (semen). For the maintenance of Sama mansa etc (physical health) shukra conservation is required because dhatu-kshaya occurs in two ways-anuloma kshaya and pratiloma kshaya. This pratiloma kshaya can only be prevented by proper and controlled sexual activity which will finally result in healthy body and long life. Nivritti (avoidance of unnecessary labour and indulgence) may cause nourishment of body tissues due to decreased catabolic processes in body. Exercise makes the body components healthy through the proper metabolism because by practicing vyayama, agni (digestive fire) of body become good and strength and compactness of muscles increases so much that even enemies will not be able to defeat him. Rasayana dravyas...
(rejuvenating substances) make the dhatus and dhatuvara srotas (channels) of body healthy predominantly. These dhatus are correlated with the body tissues on which our body sustains. Different types of dosha accumulation and dosha aggravation takes place in different seasons. According to this phenomenon, different types of regimen are described in different seasons so that the aggravation of dosha can be prevented.

Measures described for maintenance of mental health promotes the sattva guna among the mental attributes. It helps in prevention of various psychological problems and diseases. These measures also prevent various physical problems because derangement of mental humors also may cause derangement in bodily humors i.e. vata, pitta and kapha.2viii Suppression of suppressible urges results in predominance of sattva and normal stage of raja and tama guna in mind. Indriyavijaya (self control) and prashama (tranquility) means, performing only wholesome functions i.e. samyakyoga of indriya (balanced association of senses with their objects). It results in equilibrium state of bodily humors and promotion of sattva guna. Prinia karma (nourishing action) is stated as a function of rasa dhatu and harsha (pleasure) is a character of rasa-twakasa purusha (person having excellence of rasa-dhatu).2ix It indicates that the pleasure is the result of healthy rasa dhatu and vice-verse. Saumanasya (pleasant state of mind) is an important factor for Garbhodharana (conceiving). Because, as described in samhitas, psychological factors also acts as Vajikaranas (aphrodisiac factors). It indicates that positive psychological factors may influence the formation of healthy sperm and ova resulting in conception. All the measures described in Achara Rasayana (rejuvenation effect of good conducts) are advocated to increase sattva guna and also to improve the daivakarma.

For the treatment of diseases occurring in body, various measures are followed to maintain the dosha, dhatu and mala (humors, tissues and metabolic products) of body in equilibrium state. 8 types of fomentations without fire are described in Samhitas for just getting the effect of sweating without using any substance involved in dravyabhuta swedana karma and equivalent result is obtained. Exercise suggested in various diseases like obesity makes the agni and dhatu of body healthy by which disease can be cured easily. Sleep, along with diet and celibacy, are the supporting factors for body called as upastambha (sub-pillers). Celibacy is very beneficial for body tissues and sleep is a body nourishing factor as proper sleep makes the tissues of body healthy due to increase in prakrīta shleshma (natural kapha). All type of lightening therapies except shodhana karma and deepana-pachana are non-pharmacological measures which cause increase in agni and decrease ama-dosha in body. Various procedures like sleeping in cool place alleviates pitta dosha, plavana (swimming) alleviates kapha dosha etc. while performing these activities, properties opposite to properties of increased dosha, develop in body. But for different condition of aggravated dosha, different karma has to be done. In treatment of fever, fasting causes ama-pachana (digestion) and agni-vardhana (increase in digestive fire). In rakta pitta, use of cold environment increases gunas which are opposite to gunas of pitta dosha. Many researches have shown that exercise plays a crucial role in treatment of type 2 diabetes. Exercise not only improves the blood glucose control, but also improves the insulin sensitivity and restores the associated complications such as cardiovascular damage. Srijit Das et al in his research study have explored that various types of exercises viz. aerobic, resistance, yoga, endurance type etc. showed beneficial effect in type 2 diabetes mellitus.1

Ayurvedic psychiatry is full of non-drug therapies which act through Prabhava (specific effect) and by enhancing the sattva guna of mana. Fever is also caused by daivaparakopa whose effect can be minimized by worship like Vishnu pooja. The effect of yagya, pooja, bali, mantra etc. is not directly observed but they act due to Prabhava. Ashwasana, bhaya and trasana-chikitasa are advised in different diseases due to vata dosha which ultimately effects pitta and kapha dosha and the person may becomes normal in psychological functions. In the case of insanity, these activities might be able to suppress the hyperactivity or stimulate the hypo-activity of doshas through the control of vata dosha. Some diseases like Atisara (diarrhea) may occur due to bhaya and shoka. It can be managed by such procedures which can alleviates mental status of patient and thereby vata dosha becomes normal as mansika and sharirika bhavas affect each other as quoted by acharyas (scholars of Ayurveda).

Apart from all these, nidana parivartana (avoiding causative factors) is a very important adravyabhuta treatment procedure which helps in both maintenance & promotion of health along with cure of diseases. For example, different regimes have been mentioned for each season. If one doesn’t consume aggravating factors of dosha of a particular season, his doshas remain in normal and balanced state and thus no disease occurs. While, during treatment of a disease, nidana parivartana prevents further elevation of doshas and support in quick relief from disease.
Meditation i.e. Dhyana, described by all acharyas for manasika bhavas, is one of its important treatment measures. It brings about the tranquility in mind by increasing sattva guna and alleviates mental humors (raja and tama) along with bodily humors. Yoga, which has been explored in Patanjali yoga sutra, is also a part of Ayurveda. Ashtanga Yoga i.e. Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi; all are described in Ayurveda. Yama, Niyama and Pratyahara are described in the form of Sadvritta; Asana and Pranayama in the form of Vyayama; and Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi as the treatment measures of mental disorders.

Marma therapy which has not been described in detail in Ayurveda, but as an important therapy it has been explored in present era by many Ayurvedic physicians. It is based on the healing-touch concept of Ayurvedic science, which is mainly dependent on 107 sensitive points (marma points) in the human body for curing various ailments. All these points are connected with brain and are pressed to stimulate senses. Besides curing various ailments, this therapy is quite effective in preventive aspects too, making a person to live a healthy life and strengthening his immune system.

All these 107 marma points are categorized in 5 types of marma viz. mansa marma, snayu marma, asthi marma, sandhi marma and sira marma. These marmas are related to all body parts. Although specific yogasana and pranayama are indicated for their effect on specific organ or organ system, however the marma points related to these organs themselves get stimulated and results in desired effect. These yogasana and pranayama bring about stretch, pressure, vibration or rhythmic movement of the marma points resulting in their stimulation and leading to normalcy of physiological functions of their related organs. Thus influences the body and mind and their normal physiology through stimulation of these specific marma points. However, in marma therapy, these marma points are manually stimulated to bring about the desired effect. This reveals that in yoga the marma points are stimulated indirectly through rhythmic body movements, while in marma therapy, they are directly stimulated by manual compression.

It is always kept in mind to educate the patient about do's and don'ts in that disease while prescribing him medicines. These do's and don'ts refer to wholesome and unwholesome food and conducts or activities which involves both physical and psychological factors. These are indicated according to the doshas vitiated in that disease and the prakriti of the patient. However, psychological counseling is the part of do's and don'ts in which patient is educated about the disease. In this, mental status of the patient i.e. sattva is focused and examined and he/she is educated to have positive attitude towards curing of disease and avoid negative attitude about its severity as it has been stated by Caraka that vishad-rogavardhananam and harshah-prinananam. Along with this, Caraka has also stated that the disease of a patient having pravara-sattva recovers quickly as compared to patients of avara-sattva. Also, body and mind follows and influences each other i.e. any kind of change in mental status results in both physiological as well as psychological variation from normalcy.

Mantra refers to instrument of thought, speech, sacred text or speech, a prayer or song of praise, a vedic hymn, a mystical verse, consultation, resolution, counsel, advice, etc. These meanings of ‘mantra’ again reveals that mantra chikitsa is not limited only to the chanting of vedic or sacred hymns, rather it also involves psychological counseling and convincing the patient towards a specific thought. Thus, mantra chikitsa involves both, chanting of mystical verses or name of God as mentioned in jvara chikitsa and visha chikitsa; and counseling of patient giving him a resolution to have positive attitude towards cure of disease or continuous reminding of positive thoughts by patient.

The meanings of yagya are worship, devotion, praise, offerings, oblation and sacrifice. The 5 types of yagya viz. bhuta-yagya, manushya-yagya, pitra-yagya, deva-yagya and brahma-yagya, reveals that yagya karma is not only related to God and religious activities but in broader sense other kind of sacrifices and devotional activities too. However, the religious activities are confined to praising God and oblations etc. These activities actually promote and increase the sattva guna i.e. the positive attitude of the person which helps in cure towards curing of disease. They act through prabhava or in scientific terminology, the cosmic rays of different planets (graha) are influenced by such kind of religious activities.

Conclusion:
1. Non-pharmacological treatment is one of the important measures in the field of treatment procedures. All ancient scholars have laid emphasis on both the achara and vihara, as causative factors as well as treatment measure too.
2. These measures influence body and mind; and both these body and mind are affected by each other. Thus, while treating bodily disease, psychological counseling is always done; and in psychological disorder, as body physiology is also disturbed so respective treatment is provided.
3. These non-pharmacological measures act through both prabhava and abhava. Langhana karma, sleep prohibition in obese, nidana parivarjana in all diseases are the methods which function through Abhava factor. All other methods like Mantra chanting, exercise, sadvritta (right conduct), yajya, worship of Gods, ashwasana (consolation) etc act through Prabhava factor.

4. It has been found that nidana parivarjana and psychological counseling are the most important which are needed to be introduced in every patient because in both kinds of diseases whether somatic or psychological, when the disease is chronic or severe, the patient's mental status deteriorates. So it becomes necessary to counsel the patient and bring positive attitude in him for quick recovery from disease. Also, nidana parivarjana is one of the important measures which hampers and stops the further progression of disease.

Therefore, if adrayabhuta chikitsa is introduced as and when needed along with dravyabhuta chikitsa in treatment procedure, then definitely dhatusamya is achieved which is the state of health.

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