Ayurveda dietary guidelines during Covid-19 Pandemic

Ishwari Gaikwad¹, Priyanka Shelotkar*²

¹Department of Medicine, Mahatma Gandhi Ayurved college, Hospital & Research Centre, Salod (H), Wardha, Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (DU), Wardha - 442001, Maharashtra, India
²Department of Kaumarbhritya, Mahatma Gandhi Ayurved college, Hospital & Research Centre, Salod (H), Wardha, Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (DU), Wardha-442001, Maharashtra, India

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.

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 (Matrashteeeya Adhyaya,
pathyapathyà (Health-promoting regime) is a prime aspect of Ayurveda therapeutics. Food is an essential requirement in life. Following dietary concepts based on Ayurveda principles would not only help in health promotion and prevention of diseases but also in their management.

There are three indispensable pillars of life have explained namely Ahara, Nidra (Sleep) and Bramhacharya (Regulated sexual life). This shows the significance of Ahara in our life (Tristraishaniya Adhyaya, 2020). Here the classification of food articles mainly depends on their qualities, taste, therapeutic safety measures etc. included in it. Incompatibilities of food based on their flavors, dispensation, dosage, place, prescriptions of intake, time, food qualities and the nature of food that is being eaten are stated. Principal categorization of food is based on its suitability to the body and mental constitution based on the five elements and the Three Doshas theories (Caraka Samhita, 2020; Deshpande and Parwe, 2020).

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 can be a complex one using the same methods we have been using lately (Payyappallimana and Venkatasubramanian, 2016).

Efforts are being made to expand newer methodologies for such research focusing on the nutritional dynamics as the foundation of the immunomodulatory outcome of a Rasayana(Rejuvenation) drug. These herbal Rasayana drugs, which are extensively accessible in our country, have a broad range for an appliance in the normal population for the improvement of their immunity, i.e., Yuktitkrita Bala (Acquired immunity) and avoidance of a variety of infectious and contagious diseases, and also as an accessory in the treatment in the immunocompromised diseases. However, the existing method of modern science biology can be engaged in a relation with 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, Dhatu (Tissue) and Malà (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
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 (Atreyabhadrapooryya Adhyaya, 2020). The consumption of food should be started by Madhura Rasa first (Atreyabhadrapooryya 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 (Matrasitheyaa Adhyaya (Charak Samhita), 2020). The control of digestion and metabolism varies with respect to seasons and the age of the person (Tasyasitheyaa 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 (Matrasitheyaa 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. (Atreyabhadrakapikiiya 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
I would express my sincere gratitude to Dr Priyanka Shelotkar for her generous support.

Conflicts of Interest
The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest for this study.

Funding Support
The authors declare that they have no funding support for this study.

REFERENCES
A woman reading 2018. Food Does More Than You Think (Or An Introduction To Ayurveda Cooking). [Accessed on 23 July 2020].
Annapanavidhi Adhyaya 2020. Effect of wholesome food. Charak Samhita, Sutra Sthana Chapter 27. Classification and Regimen of food and beverages [Accessed on 20 July 2020].
Atreyabhadrakapikiiya Adhyaya 2020. Origin and basic composition of rasa. Charak Samhita, Sutra Sthana Chapter 26. Pharmacological principles of wholesome and unwholesome diet [Accessed on 20 July 2020].
Atreyabhadrakapikiiya Adhyaya (Caraka Samhita) 2020. Actions of Madhura rasa and effects of its excessive use. Sutra Sthana Chapter 26. Pharmacological principles of wholesome and unwholesome diet [Accessed on 20 July 2020].
Atreyabhadrakapikiiya Adhyaya (Caraka Samhita) 2020. Types of viruddha (incompatibility). Sutra Sthana Chapter 26. Pharmacological principles of wholesome and unwholesome diet [Accessed on 24 July 2020].
Banamali, D. 2014. Concept of Dietetics and its Importance in Ayurveda. Journal of Homeopathy & Ayurvedic Medicine, 03(02):1–4.
Caraka Samhita 2020. Basic composition of food. Matrasitheyaa Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana Chapter 5. The proper quantity of food and daily regimen for preserving health [Accessed on 22 July 2020].
Deshpande, S. B., Parwe, S. D. 2020. The Review of COVID-19 Pandemic Disease. International Journal of Research in Pharmaceutical Sciences, 11(SPL1):433–437.

© International Journal of Research in Pharmaceutical Sciences
Matrashiteeya Adhyaya 2020. Diet for preservation of health and prevention of diseases. Caraka Samhita, Sutra Sthana Chapter 5. The proper quantity of food and daily regimen for preserving health [Accessed on 21 July 2020].

Matrashiteeya Adhyaya (Caraka Samhita) 2020. Inherently heavy and light to digest foods. Sutra Sthana Chapter 5. The proper quantity of food and daily regimen for preserving health [Accessed on 20 July 2020].

Matrashiteeya Adhyaya (Charak Samhita) 2020. Quantity of diet and criteria. Sutra Sthana Chapter 5. The proper quantity of food and daily regimen for preserving health [Accessed on 22 July 2020].

Payyappallimana, U., Venkatasubramanian, P. 2016. Exploring Ayurvedic Knowledge on Food and Health for Providing Innovative Solutions to Contemporary Healthcare. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 4:1–9.

Rasa Vimana 2020. Ashta vidha Ahara visheshyatana (Eight specific factors for diet). Charak Samhita, Vimana Sthana Chapter 1. Taste-based factors for the measurement of diseases and drugs [Accessed on 21 July 2020].

Tasyashiteeya Adhyaya 2020. Benefits of following seasonal regimen. Charak Samhita, Sutra Sthana Chapter 6. Seasonal regimen of diet and lifestyle [Accessed on 20 July 2020].

Tistraishaniya Adhyaya 2020. Three Supporting Pillars of Life. Caraka Samhita, Sutra Sthana Chapter 11. The Three Desires of Life and important triads [Accessed on 21 July 2020].

Vividhashitapitiya Adhyaya 2020. Metabolism, excretion, and homeostasis. Charak Samhita, Sutra Sthana Chapter 28. Sequential effects of food and beverages [Accessed on 22 July 2020].