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Review Article

AN OVERVIEW OF PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH USE OF MODERN INVESTIGATORY TECHNIQUES FOR DIAGNOSIS OF DISEASES IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Āyurveda science has a very scientific methodology for diagnosing disease but the skill to adopt that methodology is vanishing day by day. Though various modern diagnostic techniques are evolved in modern medical science, all of them cannot be directly adopted for diagnosis in *Āyurveda*. In this article, problems associated with use of modern investigatory techniques for diagnosis of diseases in *Āyurveda* has been discussed. Physiology and Pathology of *Āyurveda*are quite different from that of modern medical science. In diagnosing pathologies associated with anatomical abnormalities, these modern investigatory techniques can be adopted easily but the diagnostic tools based on biochemical changes in body cannot be adopted in *Āyurveda* unless one has proper understanding of basic principles of *Āyurveda*.

INTRODUCTION

The term patient is derived from the Latin word '*pati*' or 'to *suffer*'. A patient is one who feels sick physically and mentally and consults doctor for relief of his ailments. In clinical medicine, patients hold the key position in establishing the diagnosis perfectly. Naturally, it is the task of physician that he should do the needful for the recovery of his patient. To make his patient free from his sufferings, a doctor should ascertain first, the nature of the illness from which the patient is suffering from. In other words, the doctor has to diagnose the disease. Physical diagnosis make the bridge between the study of disease and the management of illness. Clinical diagnosis is an artistic science, based on the medical informations gathered from different methods. Ayurveda emphasises three folded examinations, "*darshanam sparshanam prashnam pareekshet cha roginam*" [1]

Even in the early days of modern medicine there was lots of emphasis given to clinical understanding of patient rather than relying upon investigational reports. History taking is one of the most crucial part in clinical diagnosis, in most cases the diagnosis can be made with proper history alone. History taking is an art, which a doctor should learn over years by repeated practice. While examining a patient, the experienced doctor not only 'sees' but also 'uses all of his senses' and gradually develops the keen 'power of observation' which is known as 'clinical eye' or 'clinical acumen'. [2] In Ayurveda too, we very often find the third eye that is *Jnana chakshu*, the most important component of *Vaidyas* has been employed in understanding and diagnosing patients. [3]

Today, there is a rapid development in various basic sciences like Physics, Chemistry and Biology. The human being is continuously making use of these sciences for his various needs. The medical science is not an exception for this. Modern medical science has developed various methods of investigations in various diseases using these developed sciences. Due to that it has become very easy to diagnose and treat these diseases easily and in short span of time. This has made a big revolution in modern medical science

indeed; but the question is that, is it beneficial in diagnosis of diseases in *Ayurveda*?

In *Ayurveda*, there is a very scientific methodology of diagnosing a disease which includes examination of patient and that of disease by various ways and in various contexts. This methodology is based on the Physiology and Pathology of *Ayurveda*. So, it is useful for diagnosis of diseases. But now days, the skill of using this methodology of *Ayurveda* is on the way to vanish. This is because of two reasons. First is- many techniques in it are based on subjective parameters and so seek skilful and experienced investigator. Second is the skilful practioners of *Ayurveda* who are able to use and able to teach that how to use these techniques are very rarer today. This resulted in increased use of modern medical investigations for diagnosis of diseases by the practitioners of *Ayurveda.* But if we consider the difference between Physiology and Pathology of *Ayurveda* and modern medical science, it can be understood that to use investigatory techniques which are developed by considering the principles of modern medical science cannot be adopted directly for diagnosing the diseases described in *Ayurveda*.

Basic difference between principles of *Ayurveda* and modern science

Ayurveda science has its own principles on which it stands. Some of them are principle of *Sāmānya* and *Viśeṣa* (similarity and differences), principle of *Kārya kāraṇa bhāva* (cause and effect), principle of *Pañcamahābhuta* (five basic elements- the material cause of universe), principle of *Tridoṣa* (three body humours), principle of seven *Dhātu* (body tissues), principle of *Prakṛti* (physical and mental constitution/ temperament), principle of *Srotasa* (secretary, carrying and transporting channels in body)and so on. Physiology and Pathology of *Āyurveda* is based on these principles. So, the diagnosis and the treatment in *Āyurveda* also follow these principles. Diagnostic methods of *Āyurveda* are mainly eight folded and ten folded. [4] These are performed using direct or indirect tools examination of parameters based on these principles.[5] In *Ashtanga Hridaya sutrasthana doshabhediya adhyaya*, *Acharya vagbhata* explains twelve folded examinations minutely and grossly before formulating the treatment, which makes the successful outcome of treatment.[6] Some of the modern investigatory techniques can be included in indirect examination techniques of *Ayurveda.* But they have many limitations and can prove appropriate only if the physician take fundamental principles of *Ayurveda* in to consideration while drawing any diagnostic conclusion *as* these modern diagnostic methods are developed by considering the principles of modern medical science. These investigatory methods of modern medical science are based specifically on Biochemistry, Microbiology along with Anatomy and Physio-Pathology of modern medical science. The diagnostic basis are various objective parameters evolved from modern Biochemistry, Microbiology, physio-Pathology and Anatomy of modern medical science. The diagnostic criteria of *Ayurveda* is the increase or decrease in the functions of any of the three *Doṣas* (body humours), any of the seven *Dhātus* (body tissues) or any of the three *Malas* (by-products of metabolism); or the alteration (increase or decrease) in the function of five *Mahābhutas*. Their increased or decreased functions indicate their quantitative increase or decrease which results in pathological conditions. So, in *Āyurveda,* various examinations methods are described to identify the variations of physiological components of human body. The modern investigatory techniques which identify anatomical alteration scan be adopted directly useful in diagnosis in *Ayurveda*. But the diagnostic techniques and instruments which are based on biochemical parameters are of less use for making any inference about pathology in the body unless the clinicians considers the basic principles of *Ayurveda* while inferring.

Therefore giving *Ayurvedic* treatment merely on the basis of modern diagnostic parameters may prove wrong. Or it can be said that diagnosing the disease from the investigatory techniques based on modern parameters and trying to treat (?) it by considering the same parameters, without considering principles of *Ayurveda* is scientifically wrong. The altered parameters may not really be pathological by view of *Ayurveda* or *Āyurveda* may have some different views of treatment for that condition if we consider principles of *Āyurveda* for diagnosis. So if one treats such conditions by considering such modern parameters of pathology without considering principles of *Ayurveda*, then that will be modern

treatment though he/she uses the formulations described in *Ayurveda*.

Discussion

'Pramanai: arthaavadhaaranam pariksha',

Pramanas, are the tolls to explore the subject of verification, through these *Pramanas*, the information received validates the perfect understanding in *Ayurvedic* diagnosis. [7] *Acharyacharaka* very much stresses the importance clinical examination prior to the planning of treatment throughout *charaka Samhita* in different contexts, *"Parikshakarino kushala bhavanti"*[8]

And in *Charaka vimana sthana* fourth chapter, *Acharya* emphasises the importance of in-depth understanding of patient in treatment. The physician who is well versed of the principles of *Ayurvedic* diagnosis, with the torch light of his skill and intellect must pervade into the soul of his patient to understand him best. [9]

Here some examples are described to explain the problems associated with the use of results of modern investigatory techniques indiscriminately in *Āyurvedic* treatment.

In modern medical science, the parameters and standard physiological range/values of that parameters are universal and are generally applied to all; but the *Āyurveda* decides health of the body (absence of disease) by considering place of living/ habitat (*Deśa*), seasonal and age wise condition of body (*Naimittik* and *Āvasthikakāla*), physical and mental power/ capacity of the person (*Bala*), physical and mental constitution of person (*Prakṛti*) and so on. *Āyurveda* has individualistic approach for diagnosing etiological factors, for diagnosing the pathology and deciding the treatment for a particular individual. So, the modern diagnostic techniques based on the general observations may not prove every time useful in diagnosing the disease in *Āyurvedic* way. For examples, if an individual has oral temperature slightly more than 98.6^0 F, then according to modern medicine, he will be considered as febrile. But according to *Āyurveda*, if that individual belongs to *pitta* predominant body constitution and has no signs and symptoms of *Jwara* described in *Āyurveda*, then the temperature of that individual will be considered as normal according to *Āyurveda*. Conversely, if the individual has normal oral temperature after measuring by thermometer but he/she has symptoms of internal fever (*āntarvegī jwara*) described in *Āyurveda*, then the *Āyurvedic* diagnosis of that individual will be *Jwara*. In this case, as per modern science, the individual will be afebrile. So, if the *Vaidya* (physician of *Āyurveda*) is alert and smart, then only he/she can decide that where to use modern investigatory techniques and how to draw inference from them.

Sometimes reports of modern investigations create dilemma for the physician of *Āyurveda* as *Āyurvedic* and modern etiological factors and understanding of pathogenesis differ grossly in most of the cases. For example, in the patient, who is diagnosed as a case of chronic renal failure as per modern medicine, if the level of serum creatinine is increased. Along with that he/she has symptoms of *Āmadoṣa* (abnormal digestive and /or metabolic product) like anorexia, nausea, loss of appetite and so on. In such patient tough the symptom of presence of *Āmadoṣa* are seen strongly, physician of *Āyurveda* will probably hesitate to give him the formulation *Bhāskar lavaṇa curṇa* as it contains salts. Though it is indicated in such condition of *Āmadoṣa* but as it seems contrast in such cases according to principles of modern pathology. Therefore, physicians of *Āyurveda* should be capable to use these modern diagnostic tools without affecting fundamentals of *Āyurveda*.

The major drawback of using modern investigations for diagnosis is diagnostic skills based on *Āyurvedic* principles are vanishing day by day. Physicians are becoming used to for easy and effortless diagnostic techniques and limiting their diagnostic thinking to them. There is very less desire or awareness for developing exclusive modern investigatory techniques based on the principles of *Āyurveda*.

Āyurveda believes that directly assessable (*Pratyakṣa*) things are very few in this universe while indirectly assessable (*Apratyakṣa*) things are more.[10] *Āyurveda* describes some tool like *Āptoadeśa* (authoritive and documentary testimony), *Anumāna* (logical inference), *Yukti* (reasoning) and *Upamāna* (simile) to know such *Apratyakṣa* things. So, by using these tools along with modern basic sciences like Physics in order to evolve diagnostic equipments for eight and ten folded examinations of patient, one can make the *Āyurvedic* diagnostic methods more practical to use without hampering principles and individualistic approach of *Āyurveda*. Also the available modern investigatory techniques can be

made useful if above tools are used while considering observations of modern investigations.

CONCLUSION

All modern investigatory techniques cannot prove useful to diagnose diseases in *Āyurveda* as Physiology and Pathology of *Āyurveda* and modern science are quite different from each other. If practitioners of *Āyurveda* want to use modern diagnostic techniques to diagnose diseases, they have to think logically on observations in context of principles of *Āyurveda* or they have to skilfully evolve new diagnostic techniques based on principles of *Āyurveda* using *Āptopadeśa*, *Anumāna*, *Yukti* and *Upamāna* in combination with basic modern other sciences like Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and so on skilfully. Otherwise, the diagnosis and treatment given by practitioner of *Āyurveda* on the basis of investigatory techniques based on principles of modern medical science will merely yield something worth.

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