Ayurveda and Communicable Diseases

Ashok G. Naikar,² Ganapathi Rao,³ Panchal Vinayak J.³

¹Associate Professor, ²³Post Graduate Scholar, PG Dept. of Shalya Tantra, N. K. J. Ayurvedic Medical College and PG Center, Bidar, Karnataka, India.

INTRODUCTION

A disease produced due to specific infectious agent or its toxic products, capable of being directly or indirectly spread from man to man, animal to animal or from environment to man or animals.

The concept of communicable disease along with the mode of spread has been explained in Sushruta Samhita. Aupasargika diseases like obstinate skin diseases including leprosy, fever, emaciation and conjunctivitis, spread from person to person by contact, touch, respiration, sharing food, sharing bed and seats, using cloths, garlands and unction’s used by the person suffering from Aupasargika diseases.¹

According to the world’s most ancient health science i.e. Ayurveda, human body consists of basic five elements (Panchamahahbahutas), and these basic five elements play a very important role in the contribution of Tridosha, Saptadhatus. There is a need to know Aupasargika diseases elaborately.

Panchabhautikatwa²

Ayurveda is the science based on the fact that the whole universe is made out of five elements called Panchamahahbahutas, they are as follows:

- Prithvi - Earth - Solidity factor
- Aap - Water - Liquidity factor
- Tejas - Fire - Heat factor
Vaayu - Wind - Movement factor
Aakash - Ether - Forocit factor

Any matter (Macro or Micro) is made out of these five elements, for eg. Water - H₂O, we have Dhatu as the predominant element in combination with the other four and so on.

This means the living things - Jangama - the moves or grows and the inert Sthavara - the static elements like rocks, minerals, metals etc. are made out of the same things but in various combinations. Thus Charaka says, Yaavanto Bhavah Moorthimantam Dehe, this world view of Shad Darshanas Samkhya, Yoga, Vaisheshika, Poovramimansa and Uttar Mimansa is adopted by Ayurveda. Among these six Darshanas, Nyaya and Vaisheshika school of thoughts are filled with explanation of the Panchamahabhautik world. Over period of time two Darshanas namely Nyaya and Vaisheshika got merged to form Nyaya school of thought which the cause and effect of all phenomenal beings and the need to overcome this world of attachment which is temporal and be perishable (eternal)

Constitutions of Body

Look at the health and disease concepts according to Ayurveda the body is made of Tridoshas, Saptadhatus, Updhatus, and Malas. They are as follows

Tridoshas

Vaata - (Aakash + Vaayu Mahabhota)
Pitta - (Agni Mahabhoota)
Kapha - (Aap + Jala Mahabhoota)

These are combination of Panchamahabootas, these three factors are responsible for movements, change and mass.

Saptadhatus

Rasa - Chyle and Plasma fluid
Rakta - Blood cells
Mansa - Muscular tissue
Meda - Adipose tissue

Asthi - Bone tissue
Majja - Bone marrow
Shukra - Semen
Updhatu
Sira, Kandara, Dhamani, etc.

Malas

Purisha - Stool
Mootra - Urine
Sweda - Sweat

Prakruti

The gross aspect of the body is created with these elements in a proportion which is responsible at the time of fertilization of ovum and sperm in the womb. The quality is actually determined by the quality of the paternal and maternal elements of reproduction. So as per the genetic code embedded in the sperm and ovum the fetus grows with a septic psychosomatic character called Prakruti or constitution. Based on the Doshic combinations these can be seven basic psychophysical constitutions in the new born which is determined at the time of conception.

Saptaprakruti are Vaataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Vatapattaja, Vatakaphaja, Kaphapittaja and Sannipataja. Among these seven Prakrutis the Samaprakriti are equal in proportion and optimum level of functioning is said to be the best. When there are two Doshas in predominance that is considered as the wrost body type. The Prakriti can be considering the health indicator of a person. According to the various Acharyas - the definition of health – when the internal environment is in optimum level of functioning and is in equilibrium, the person is said to be in a health state.

Classification of disease

According to the etiology there are two types of diseases,
1. Nija
2. Agantuja
**Nija** is the type of disease which originates by imbalance in the internal environment due to structural or functional cause in the body e.g. *Madhumeha, Sandhivata* etc. covers under this category.

**Agantuja** is the type of disease where an external element is causing the disease from outside and then imbalance the internal environment e.g. *Asth Bhagna, Vrana* and communicable disease comes under this category.

**Communicable Disease**

*Kustha, Jwara, Rajayakshma, Netrabhishyanada* and other contagious disease which spread from one person to other by oral route, close contact of the body through breathing, eating together, by sharing the same bed and seating places etc.

**Role of krimi (microorganism) in communicable disease**

Ayurveda also explain about 20 types of organisms[6] which multiplies in blood, Intestinal flora etc. it also explains about the action of these organisms in the body.

**DISCUSSION**

The concept of communicable disease along with the mode of spread has been explained in *Sushruta Samhita*. *Aupasargika* diseases like obstinate skin diseases including leprosy, fever, emaciation and conjunctivitis, spread from person to person by contact, touch, respiration, sharing food, sharing bed and seats, using cloths, garlands and unction’s used by the person suffering from *Aupasargika* diseases.[1] The epidemics according to Ayurveda is due to the vitiation of earth, water and wind. Due to this vitiation the micro-organism are given a space for their growth and multiplication by any or all of these media. Even though Ayurveda consider presence of micro - organism it is given more importance to equilibrium of the internal environment so that these organisms can’t multiply. In these situation the *Nidana Parivarjana* or removal of causative factors are most important factors. Which involves purification of air by *Dhoopana*, with *Bhootanashaka Dravyas* (antimicrobials) etc. like wise cleaning the environment and keeping one’s individual is also important in these conditions.

**Communicable Diseases prevented by 3 measures;**

1. Controlling reservoir or source of infection
2. Interruption in the routes of transmission
3. Immunizing the susceptible host.

**CONCLUSION**

To keep the instinctual environment in harmony one should follow proper diet, proper sleep and proper sexual life. These are three legs of the tripod that is health. In communicable disease, the body balance is lost because of massive invasion of external micro-organisms. Here as a measure to prevent both instinctual and external environment is cleaned and then such medicines, diet and deeds are advanced which will not allow these organisms to grow or which will bring back the lost balance of these three *Doshas* so the body will fight back the inducing organisms. Early diagnosis, notification, epidemiological investigations, isolation, treatment, quarantine, hygiene and immunization help in the process of control and prevention of diseases.

**REFERENCES**

1. Dr. Mangalagowri V. Rao, Svastha Vrirra, Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2016, Page no.323-329
3. Dr. Bramhanand Tripathi, Charaka Samhita, Shareera sthana, Chaukhambha surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi, 2004, Page no.904
7. Dr. Ambikadatta shastry, Sushrutha Samhita, Shareerasthan, 1st chapter, Choukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varannasi, 2014, p.4


Source of Support: Nil, Conflict of Interest: None declared.