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**Ayurvedic Approach to the Prevention and Management
Of Lifestyle Disorders****VD.Ravikumar Kishanrao Hule**

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Abstract

Lifestyle is a way of leading one's life. The current generation desires to lead a grand lifestyle but unfortunately ignore the fact that the lifestyle is giving rise to many medical disorders.

Ayurveda is the most ancient science of life; health and cure, practiced in India for thousands of years based on its own unique fundamental principles such as promotion of health, prevention of disease, promotion of longevity etc. Ayurvedic classics give special emphasis on three important values which have been considered as the important conducive factors for maintenance of life and health. This important triune consists of Ahara (food), Nidra (Sleep) and Brahmacharya (Good conduct). These three have been considered as Upastambha or the basis of life and health. Among traya-upastambha, Ahara (diet) has been considered as the first one which shows its importance. Intake of wholesome and unwholesome diet is responsible for prevention and production of various diseases respectively including life style disorders.

AcaryaCharaka has clearly stated, that a daily diet should be (of such quality), which not only helps to maintain present well-being but serves as a prophylactic against coming diseases. This is a very important aspect of preventive medicine as mentioned in Ayurveda classics. In this article, we are mainly concerned with the various regimen of diet and dietetics principle as mentioned in the Ayurveda for the prevention of lifestyle disorders.

Keywords: Dietary Patterns, Discipline of Eating, Lifestyle, Lifestyle Disorders, Psycho-Social Stress, Rasayana

Introduction

Ayurveda is the most ancient science of life¹, health and cure, practiced in India for thousands of years based on its own unique fundamental principles such as promotion of health, prevention of diseases, promotion of longevity etc. The main aim of Ayurveda is "SwasthasyaSwasthyarakshanam" which means to maintain the health of the healthy person and "Aturasyavikaraprashamanam cha" means to cure the diseases of the diseased person². Ahara (diet), nidra(Rest-sleep) and brahmacharya(celebrity) are trayahupastambha³ (like as pillars which support a building) in Ayurveda, which support the life. Among traya-upastambha, Ahara (diet) has been considered as the first one which shows its importance. Life style disorders are due to Poor life-style which includes, poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking, excess alcohol, poor sleep, stress due to heavy workload. Several factors are resulting in the increasing burden of lifestyle disease which includes longer average life span, rising income, increasing tobacco consumption, decreasing physical activity and increased consumption of unhealthy food.

In India, rapid urbanization and globalization mainly contribute towards increased number of people suffering from life-style disorders⁴. The urban people are having less physically active life-style, more exposure to products and technologies that could be unhealthy for them. Lifestyle

disorder also known as diseases of civilization, as the name suggests, result from the way we live our lives. In India the situation is quite alarming. The disease profile is changing rapidly.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified India as one of the nations that is going to have most of the lifestyle disorders in the near future. Nowadays, not only are lifestyle disorders becoming more common, but they are also affecting younger populations. Hence, the population at risk shifts from 40+ to may be 30+ or even younger. According to WHO report (2002), cardiovascular diseases will be the largest cause of death and disability in India by 2020. It is estimated that the overall prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, ischemic heart diseases (IHD) and stroke is 62.47, 159.46, 37.0 and 1.54 respectively per 1000 population of India. There are an estimated 25 lakh cancer cases in India.

It is now considered that most of the chronic disorders like diabetes mellitus, bronchial asthma, hypertension, coronary artery diseases, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases), obesity, psoriasis, arthritis, etc. are resulted due to faulty lifestyle. Therefore, the lifestyle modification is considered sheet anchor for the prevention and management of such type of disorders. Ayurveda offers a wide variety of dietary supplementation and range of non-pharmacological measures for prevention and management of lifestyle disorders. There is a great need of time to globalize dietary supplementation and non-pharmacological measures as described in Ayurvedic system of medicine to promote the psychosomatic health, to reduce the morbidity and to reduce the disease burden on the society.

Prevention and Management of Lifestyle Disorders in Ayurveda:

A particular lifestyle of person is a cumulative product of his/her physical capacity coordinated with psychological functioning displayed in the form of habits, behaviours, dietary and living pattern based on his own training sought from childhood and also gained from his immediate companions including parents, siblings, peers etc. A healthy lifestyle which includes a proper balanced diet, physical activity and giving due respect to biological clock must be adopted to combat these diseases. In this revolutionised era we cannot stop doing the developmental work, but we can certainly reduce our ailments by incorporating these simple and effective measures to our lives.

Ayurvedic system of medicine offers holistic approach towards prevention and management of diseases. Ayurvedic intervention is targeted towards complete physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing, which makes it a wonderful option in treating lifestyle disorders. Ayurveda provides great options in the form of proper dietary management, lifestyle advises, measures for internal bio-purification and rejuvenation.

Lifestyle medicine is defined as the application of environmental, behavioral, medical and motivational principles to the management of lifestyle-related health problems in a clinical setting⁵.

Ayurvedic Approach to the Prevention and Management of Lifestyle Disorders:

A healthy lifestyle which includes a proper balanced diet, physical activity and giving due respect to biological clock must be adopted to combat these diseases. Ayurveda described Dinacharya (daily regimen) and Ritucharya (seasonal regimen) which include dietary and lifestyle modification for an individual depending on his Prakriti (psychosomatic constitution) to maintain the biological clock. Each individual is recommended to follow specific diet & activities based on his/her Prakriti, as the Prakriti is major determinant factor for predisposition of diseases, management as well as lifestyle modification or recommendation to a large extent.

The Ayurveda described various measures/strategies for Management of lifestyle disorders which are very important to maintain a healthy and happy psychological perspective include

- Ahara (Diet/dietary supplementation)
- DaivavyapashrayaChikitsa (divine/spiritual therapy)
- SatvavajayaChikitsa (psycho-behavioral therapy)
- DinAcharaya (daily regimen)
- Ritucharya (seasonal regimen)
- Panchakarma (five technologies of internal bio-purification)
- Rasayana (rejuvenative measures)
- The Sadvratta (ideal routines)
- AcharaRasayana (code of good conducts)

Ahara

Ahara and Vihara play a central role in the life according to Ayurvedic understanding. Ayurveda places special emphasis on Ahara and Vihara as measures for better living, health and wellness. Ayurveda emphasizes more on Ahara in comparison to other systems of medicine and also explored its emotional and spiritual significance, in addition to its material and biological attributes. Ahara is considered as Prana (basis of life) in Ayurveda⁶. Ahara has been described as one of the Trayopastambha (three subsidiary pillars) of life which are Ahara, Nidra (sleep) and Brahmacharaya (celibacy)⁷. Diet is considered as vital for a human body as it provides the basic nutrients and promotes longevity. Ayurveda always emphasizes on consuming healthy and nutritious diet for maintaining good health.

As per the view point of Ayurveda, both the living human body and the diseases afflicting it are the products of Ahara. Use of HitaAhara (wholesome diet) promotes health and longevity and AhitaAhara (unwholesome diet) promotes manifestation of different disorders. Unfortunately in modern era the concept of HitaAhara is continuously being ignored leading to the emergence of lifestyle disorders⁸. Ayurveda also described eighteen types of dietary incompatibilities (ViruddhaAhara), which should be avoided to maintain health and longevity. In this way Ayurveda offers different Pathayapathya (do's & don'ts) regarding diet/dietary supplementations which definitely help in the prevention and management of a wide range of lifestyle disorders.

Dincharya

Normal circadian rhythms are very important in day to day life to maintain biological clock. Ayurveda suggests to begin daily habits with awareness, early rising, avoid suppression of natural urges and eliminate wastes as per urge, keep the teeth & skin cleaned, regular use of massage (Abhyanga), regular daily bathing (bathing enhances the appetite and promotes longevity), consume suitable and wholesome diet according to the appetite and metabolic needs, since it is the basis of life and important for day to day promotion of health. Ayurveda has also suggested to avoid late night sleep, eating stale foods, having sex with inappropriate partner & at unsuitable time and position and the misuse of senses. These might lead to imbalance in the circadian rhythms and thus long term imbalance predisposes to lifestyle disorders. Therefore, one has to stay aware about this daily regimen for day to day promotion of health, boost immunity and prevention from lifestyle disorders⁹.

Ritucharya

Ritu (season) classified by different features expresses different effects on the body as well as on the environment. Ayurveda has depicted various rules and regimens (Charya), regarding diet and lifestyle to acclimatize seasonal enforcement easily without altering body homeostasis. The

prime objective of Ayurvedic system of medicine is preventive aspect, which can be achieved by the modification in diet and lifestyle in response to change in climatic condition. Ritucharya represents a very important aspect of preventive measure for various illnesses including lifestyle disorders as mentioned in Ayurvedic texts¹⁰.

It is the only system of medicine in the world which proposes the need of regular purification of the human biological system from gross level to the molecular level to render it suitable for self recovery and therapeutic responsiveness. The human biological system continuously undergoes wear and tear and needs to be cleansed and rejuvenated regularly. Therefore, Ayurveda advises seasonal Panchakarma as preventive measure for maintenance and promotion of physical as well as mental health.

Panchakarma

Panchakarma is a collective term used to address the five principal procedures or technologies of bio-purification. These procedures are used in order to cleanse the body channels, to eliminate toxins out of the body, bring about the harmony of bio-humors (Tridosha i.e. Vata, Pitta, Kapha, and Manasa Dosha i.e. Raja and Tama) to obtain long-lasting beneficial effects which further leads to chemical balance inside the bio-system and thus provide the normal chemical and electrical environment in brain and ultimately restore the homeostasis. When done properly, these promote psychosomatic health, rejuvenate the body and increase the receptivity and effectiveness of subsequent therapies. The five technologies of Panchakarma include Vaman (therapeutic emesis), Virechan (therapeutic purgation), Asthapan Basti (therapeutic decoction enema), Anuvastana Basti (therapeutic oil enema) and Nasya Karma (nasal medication)¹¹.

Ayurveda emphasizes more on the preventive aspect of the Panchakarma rather than curative. It also facilitates the absorption of nutrient and drugs administered thereafter in favor of attaining their desired pharmacotherapeutic effects. Panchakarma also restores the mental health, reduces the stress and therefore, helps in the prevention as well as management of many lifestyle disorders. Panchakarma is claimed for its preventive, promotive, prophylactic and rejuvenative properties.

Rasayana

In addition to food and diet, Ayurveda propounds a separate concept of medicinal dietary supplements in the context of Rasayana (rejuvenative measures). Rasayanas can be used as nutritional supplement as well as medicine depending upon its various types.

Most Rasayanas produce their nourishing and rejuvenating effect by promoting the Agni Bala, acting as direct nutrients and by way of Sroto-prasadan (purification of body channels), resulting in an improved nutritional status which further leads to an improved quality of Dhatus or body tissues. Although the Rasayanas are a generic class of restorative and rejuvenative supplements, many Rasayanas could be tissue and organ specific such as Medhya Rasayana for the brain, Hridya Rasayana for the heart, Twachya Rasayana for the skin, and so on. Various studies on Rasayana drugs suggest their following action¹².

- Immunomodulator
- Adaptogenic
- Antioxidant
- Nootropic
- Antistress

Sadvratta and AcharaRasayana

Ayurveda offers some code of good conducts under the heading of Sadvratta and AcharaRasayana. The conducts under Sadvratta and AcharaRasayana can be categorized into personal (viz. limited sexual relations, early sleeping and awakening, avoid excess exertion, avoid suppression of natural urges, regime of bathing, keeping skin clean), social (keep mercy on others, telling truth, avoid alcoholism, be soft hearted, always use cleaned and washed cloths), psychological and emotional (try to be in a steady mental state i.e. avoid height of emotions, try to avoid to memorize if being insulted by anyone, keep patience, etc). Such type of lifestyle adaptation always helpful in the prevention and management of a widerange of lifestyle disorders¹³. Social inclusion is a protective factor for maintaining mental health. Social networks and supports contribute to one's sense of purpose, self-esteem, resilience and access to resources and information. Furthermore, community participation and civic engagement are associated with better self-reported mental health.

The major component for the management of lifestyle disorders is Ahara and Vihara like healthy and antioxidant diet especially enriched with Rasayanas depending upon the patient's Prakriti and type of lifestyle disorder and adequate physical activity.

Discussion

In present era most of the disorders are resulted due to improper life style. Life style disorders are resulted due to an inappropriate relationship of people with their environment. Therefore, according to Ayurvedic system of medicine, a proper diurnal and seasonal behavior is very important for preventing diseases, harmonizing the biological humors and re-equilibrating the energy cycle in the body. Due to urbanization and adapting western culture in India the lifestyle has been disturbed like low activity level, sedentary lifestyle, etc. which contributes significantly to the risk of developing the metabolic syndrome and other lifestyle related disorders. Therefore, by adapting the principles of Ayurveda for diet and lifestyle modification we can impede lifestyle disorders.

Ayurvedic treatment involving medicines, diet and lifestyle activities which restore the Doshic/functional balance shows how a textual theory has been translated into a successful and viable clinical practice. Ayurvedic principles and methods of healthy living can be incorporated easily into people's daily life, their cuisine and other day to day activities. It can thus have a pervasive influence on the daily life of people by providing optimal health by customizing and harmonizing diet and lifestyle activities. This way, people are made responsible for their health and they need not to consider themselves as victims of factors beyond their control.

The whole range of Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Sadvratta, AcharaRasayana and other non-pharmacological Rasayana described in the Ayurvedic classics is designed to foster a healthy life style for better living to everyone as a promotive and preventive health care and also for the management of a diseased individual. Normal circadian rhythms (daily and seasonal) are very important in day to day life for promotion of positive health. Sadvratta and AcharaRasayana include not only mental faculties but also discipline related with general hygiene, ritual activities, food consumption, sexual relation and exercise. Application of this positive lifestyle will definitely help in prevention and management of various lifestyle disorders.

Conclusion-

Our lifestyle is indicative of the behavioral patterns we adopt to live our lives. This translates to the way we eat, drink, and exercise and are predisposed to taking care of our health. Unhealthy

habits will show up in the form of lifestyle diseases in the long run. Since these habits are acquired over a long period of time, it takes that long to change as well. However, persuasion and persistence of health care professionals can go a long way in making to adopt healthier ways of living. Ideally, we should not wait to fall sick before we make changes in these patterns. We should live a healthy life, where we eat a balanced diet; exercise and stay fit, and avoid habits that are injurious to health, so that we do not have to bear the unnecessary consequences that develop in the form of lifestyle diseases

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