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Concept of Ideal formulation (Yoga) in Charak Samhita.**Lalit Nagar**

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Abstract

Ideal formulation is the key for success in Ayurvedic treatment. Medicines are used in the form of single herb or multi drug formulation. Multi drug combination is the traditional therapeutic herbal strategy which by combining several medicinal herbs achieves extra therapeutic efficacy. Ancient Charak Samhita documented numerous formulations which are time tested. The reason behind the success of these thousands years old formulations is the fundamentals which were followed during the formation. The fundamentals are available in the Charak samhita but are disseminate. Through this article an effort is made to collect the fundamentals for making an ideal formulation as described in different Sthanas of Charak Samhita.

Introduction

A rational and well developed pharmacological and pharmaceutical basis forms the foundation of therapeutics in Ayurveda. It is the medicine which forms the link between the *Vaidya*, *Roga* and the *Rogi*. Ayurvedic system of medicine has included herbs as one of its most powerful ingredients which are recorded in the literature such as *Vedas* and *Samhitas*. The subcontinent of India is well known to be one of the mega biodiversity centers with about 45,000 plant species. In India, about 15,000 medicinal plants have been recorded, in which the communities used 7,000-7,500 plants for curing different diseases.¹ Ayurveda has more or less 700 types of plants listed in different *Samhitas*.² An ideal and good quality medicine forms the basis for ideal treatment. In Ayurveda medicines are used in the form of single herb or multi drug formulation. Multi drug combination is the traditional therapeutic herbal strategy which by combining several medicinal herbs achieves extra therapeutic efficacy. Ancient *Charak Samhita* documented numerous formulations which are time tested. In the multidrug formulation all the drugs are combined in specific ratio and these combined drugs show synergistic action and also prevent side effects. The fundamentals behind the formation of ideal formulation are available in the *Charak samhita* but are disseminate. Through this article an effort is made to collect the fundamentals for making an ideal formulation as described in different *Sthanas* of *Charak Samhita*. According to *Acharya Charak* only that medicine which can bring about a cure, is an ideal formulation.³

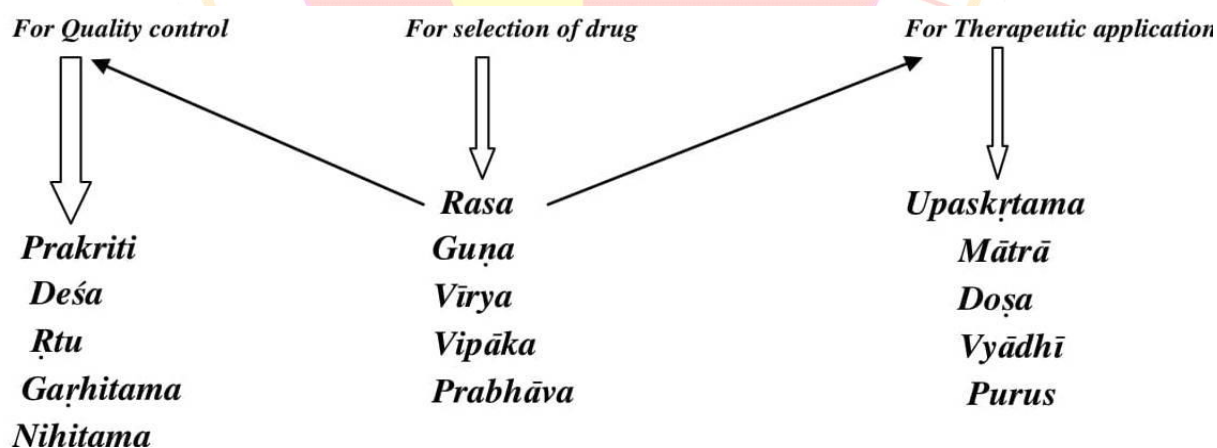
Selection of Drugs

For making an ideal formulation the most important task is the selection of drugs. Even though in Ayurveda there is approximately 700 plants listed in different *Samhitas*, but *Charak* also states that in the context of Ayurvedic treatment there is no substance in the world that may not be used as medicine in respective manner for respective purpose.⁴ *Charak* says that even poisonous substances can also be converted in to excellent medicine by the right method of

preparation whereas a good medicine may act as an acute poison if improperly administered.⁵ According to *Acharya Charak* the selected drug should have four qualities the most important quality is; drug should be abundantly available, so that the formulation once prepared can be prepared regularly and also it makes it economic so that it may be within the reach of the common man, second the drug should have rational applicability, third one is the drug can be transformed in to multifarious modes so that it may be used according to the need and convenience of the patient and the last one is the drug should be free from contamination and dampness and should be potent in *Rasa* and other qualities.⁶

Testing and Standardization of Selected Drugs

Before usage drugs should be tested and standardized as told by *Charak* in *Vimana Sthana* chapter 8. *Charak* has explained levels of testing and standardization from *Prakriti* (It includes nomenclature of a plant and its positioning in Ayurveda classification of the drug), *Guna* (*Rasa Guna, Virya, Vipaka*), *Prabhava* (Therapeutic Action), *Desh* (Plants grown in a particular type of land like *Jangal, Anoop* and *Sadharana* Land where *Jangal* denotes to dry, *Anoop* denotes to marshy and *Sadharana* means temperate land. The roots and bark are more potent in the plants of *Jangal Desha*. The fruits, flowers, leaves etc. are more potent in plants of *Anoop Desha*. The tree and shrubs are having more potent medicinal values of the plants originated in *Sadharana Desha*), *Ritu* (Seasonal changes), *Grihitam* (Method of collection), *Nihitam* (Method of preservation), *Upaskrtam* (Pharmaceutical processing), *Matra* (Dosage), *Dosha, Vyadhi, Purush*.⁷ These Parameters can be further divided in to three levels of testing. For quality control drug should be tested on basis of *Prakriti, Desha, Ritu, Grihitam, Nihitam*. For selection of drug *Guna* i.e. *Rasa Guna, Virya, Vipaka, Prabhava* of the drug, should be taken into consideration and for therapeutic application parameters like *Upaskrtam, Matra, Dosha, Vyadhi, Purush* can be grouped together.



Principles of Formulation

After testing and standardization of drugs, on the basis of the qualities defined by *Acharya Charak*, Physician should follow the principles of mixing a composite formulation. In the last two decades we have seen there is a drastic change in the Ayurvedic formulation, market is full of patent medicine that can also be seen in the Ayurvedic *vaidya*'s prescription. More than 90 % of these patent medicines are the result of random mixing of 10 to 20 drugs focuses on the

disease for which the medicine is to be made for, without knowing the basics. *Acharya Charaka* had defined principles in the *Vimana Sthana*, that should be followed while making new formulations, according to *Acharya* there are two types of principles one is *Prakriti-sam-samvet* i.e. similar to the nature of the constituent factors. In the multi drug formulation there are different drugs which are composed of many tastes (*rasas*) similarly diseases are caused by many *doshas*. Therefore, the specific manifestation of drugs and diseases can be determined by taking in to account the specific attributes of the *rasas* and *doshas*. In simple language for making a formulation for the *vatakaphaja* diseases, Physician mixes 10 drugs which have *vatakapha hara* karma for curing *vatakaphaja* ailment so that medicine gives him better result than using single *vatakapha hara* drug. But the above statement does not stand good in all circumstances *Vikriti-visham-samvet* i.e. dissimilar to the nature of constituent factors, because of the variation in the curative effects of drugs affection of one property of the drugs by another and method of their preparation which leads to perversion or irregularly in combination, it is not possible to determine the attributes of a substances having many tastes (*rasas*) or the manifestation of a disease caused by many *doshas*. Simply by taking into account, the attributes of individual *rasas* and *doshas*.⁸ When we analyze the various formulations described in *Charaka Samhita* we can see that in most of the formulations not all the ingredients possess similar guna (rasa, virya etc.). The principle behind the mixing of opposite guna dravyas in multi drug formulation is to balance the formulation so that it will only pacifies the morbid doshas and maintain the equilibrium of the doshas.

Collection of Drugs

To achieve the desired medicinal value, the drugs should be collected according to the principles or procedures laid down in Ayurveda. *Acharya Charak* has beautifully explained the features of the drugs while collecting, those which are grown in time or in proper season, mature with taste, potency and smell. Efficacy of the drugs should not be affected by time, Sun, fire, water, air and organism. Herbs are fresh and should be collected from northern direction. How can all the drugs be collected from northern side of India? In Ayurveda there are thousands of drugs being used; out of them many drugs are only present in the southern side of India many in other directions like eastern and western. Here northern direction symbolizes the northern side of the area from where we are collecting drugs; there are many logics behind the collection from north side like the north side is governed by planet Moon which is the God of herbs. In present era how we can interpretate it; that it helps us in conservation of herbs if we are collecting herbs only from north side of the collecting area of the forest than the plants and herbs which are present in the other side's helps in propagation and restoring the flora of the forest.⁹

Seasonal Collection of Plant Parts

In order to denote richness in the inherent quality of the dravyas, *Acharya Charka* has given indications of season, during which they should be collected and specified part to be collected. Branches and leaves should be collected in rainy and spring seasons, roots of the plants in summer or late winter, when the leaves have fallen down or are fully matured, bark, tubers and latex in autumn, heart wood in early winter and flowers and fruits according to their season.⁹ The scientific rationale of the recommendation to collect particular part of the plant in a specific season is based on so many interesting evidences. It is observed that those parts of the

plants do have more medicinal potency in the suggested collection season and also they grow faster after collection of useful part of those plants in recommended season.

Method of Collection

In *Charak Samhita*, specific method of collection of medicinal plants was prescribed. Plants should be collected by one with auspicious behavior, benevolent conduct and cleanliness and with wearing white dress after worshipping, observing fast and facing towards east and north.⁹ The ritual of praying to plants before collection of them was useful to create awareness and responsibilities towards plant kingdom. Ayurveda also believes that plants also have *chetana* in it these rituals helps in getting more positive energy from plants. Concept of *upvasa* will help in maintain proper hygiene. This concept might be used to apply good conservation of those plants in forests.

Storage of Collected Drugs

After collection they should be kept in suitable and good container and stored in the rooms facing eastward or northward, devoid of direct wind but should be well ventilated and daily ritualized with offering of flowers and other things. Daily offering and other rituals suggest that the *Acharya* has the view that the store house should be inspected daily and *dhupama* karma acts as the insect repellent. Storing bags and boxes should be hold in a swing of ropes well covered and making them unapproachable for fire, water, humidity, smoke, dust, rats, and other quadrupeds.¹⁰ The Drugs become more effective in action by the enriched factors of favorable habitat, season of collection ,quality of storage vessels and proper concentration of *Rasa, Guna, Veerya* etc.¹¹

Qualities of the ideal formulation

Qualities of the formulation which was prepared after following the methods told in the *vimana* and *kalpa sthana* should possess the following qualities. It should be small in quantity, but quick in action. It should be able to eliminate morbid *doshas* in large quantity but easily. It should be light for digestion, palatable, pleasing and curative of the concerned disease. It should not cause serious complication, should not cause depression in excess. It should possess agreeable smell, colour and taste.¹²

Conclusion

Ideal formulation is the key for success in Ayurvedic treatment but the changes in the pattern of formulation in the last two decades, in the form of patent medicines, has become the point of discussion. Most of the Ayurvedic pharmacies are pumping irrational patent products in to the market without following the basic principles of formulation mentioned in the classical texts which further leads to the failure in the therapeutic results same is followed in the premier institutes of the Ayurveda. Scholars are also doing research on the patent medicines without following the basics of drug formulation as told in Ayurvedic *Samhitas*. These premier institutes have all the necessary facilities with all the modern equipments required for research so the need of the hour is amalgamation of ancient fundamentals of formulation with the modern methods of research.

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