



A Review on Concept of *Aahar* in *Ayurveda* and Sign and Symptoms of Consumption of Poisonous Food Articles.

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ABSTRACT

There are three *pillars* of health-1. *Aahar* (Diet) 2. *Nidra* (sleep) 3. *Brahmacharya* Of the three pillars of health *Aahar* or diet is the most important. Of all the factors that are responsible for the growth and development of the human body, diet is the most important. Today there are various concepts regarding diet plan. People are very confused about their diet and continuously asking their *vaidya* what should they eat which diet plan should they follow? *Acharya Charak* explained the concept of *aaha matra*, *aahar sevan kaal*, *matrapuravak aahar sevan* in details. *Acharya Charak* explained that, *aahar* should be taken in appropriate quantity depending upon their respective *agni bala*.

Key words- *aahar*, *matra*, *poisonous food*, *life*, *arogya*, *annavaha-srotas*, *pathaya*, *apathaya*.

Introduction-

Ayurveda that is named the science of life, where in the laid down the good and the bad of life, the happy and unhappy life, and what is wholesome and what is unwholesome in relation to life, as also the measure of life. (1) Life is spoken of by such synonyms as “the union of the body senses, mind and spirit”, “the support”, “animation”, “the flux”, and “the link” between the past life and the future one. (2)

Life-

The period of time during which all these *saririka*, *mansika*, *adhyatmika* aspects exist and function together is called *Ayus* (life).

Arogya (health)-

These three aspects always try to maintain a perfect co-ordination and harmony. Such a condition is known as *arogya* (health). But any imbalance in this harmony, even by slight change, in any one of these aspects makes for *roga* (ill health, disease). The health state is a happy state (*sukha*) while a diseased state is unhappy (*dukha*), miserable (*atanka*) and even painful (*roga*).

Annavaḥa Srotas-

The group of organs concerned with *anna adana* (ingestion of food), *annapachana* (digestion), *sarakitta vivechana* (separation of nutrient and waste portion) and *rasa sosana* (absorption of nutrient) is known as *annavaḥasrotas*. Beginning with *asaya* (mouth) till its terminal the *guda* (anus), it is a continuous tube of irregular shape and size. Hence it is also called *mahasrotas* (big canal).

Aim & objective-

To study the concept of food and poisonous food according to *Ayurveda*.

Literary Review -

Definition of Aahar- According to *Acharya Charak* commentator *Chakrapani* opines that *aahar* means anything which is ingested and thus it includes both diet and drugs. *Acharya Charak* commentator *Gangadhar* says that anything which is ingested by the tongue down to the throat is called *Aahar*. Therefore, drugs are also included in *Aahar*. From the above statement, it can be concluded that the word *aahar* means any substance which is taken in via the mouth and swallowed through the throat.

The virtues of measured diet- The measured diet not only does not impair one's health but positively promotes one's strength, complexion, health and life. (3) Food substance consisting essentially of protein, carbohydrate, fat and other nutrients used in the body of an organism to sustain growth and vital processes and to furnish energy.

1. The measure of Guru aahar like pisti-

One should never, accordingly eat such heavy articles as pisti, flattened rice, etc, on top of a meal. Even while hungry, one should take such article in right measure.

2. The articles of diet to be eschewed- According to *Charak sutra* dried meat, dried vegetable, lotus rhizomes and lotus stalk, being heavy are not to be taken habitually, nor should the flesh of an emaciated animal be used. Coagulated milk, cream cheese, pork, cow's and buffalo flesh, fish, curds, black gram and wild barley should not be used habitually.

1. The articles of diet to be practised- *Sastika rice*, *Sali rice*, green gram, rock salt, emblic myrobalan, barley, rain water, milk, ghee, flesh of *jangam* animals and honey may be habitually taken.

That should form the daily diet, which not only helps to maintain present well-being, but serves as a

prophylactic against coming disease.

The classification of food—

Classification of *aahar* according to *Achrya Charak* –(4) (5)1.classification basis “origin”-2 types

(a) *sthavarm* (vegetable product)((b)*jangama* (animal product)

2. “*prabhava*”-2types

(a) *hitam* (wholesome)

(b) *ahitam*(unwholesome)

3. “*virya*”-2 types

(a) *sita* (b)*usna*

4. nature of intake - 4 types(a)Potion

(b) Eatable

(c)Masticable

(d) Lickable

5. “*mahabhuta*” -5types(a)*parthiva*

(b) *apya*

(c) *tejasiya*

(d) *vayaviya*

(e) *akasiya*

6. “*rasa*”-6 types

(a) *Madhura*

(b) *Amla*

(c)*Lavan*

(d) *Katu*

(e) *Tikta*

(f) *kashaya*



7. “virya” -8types

i. *Guru*

ii. *Laghu*

iii. *Sita*

iv. *Ushna*

v. *Snigdha*

vi. *Ruksha*

vii. *Manda*

viii. *tikshna*

8. “guna” 20 types-

i. heavy

ii. light

iii. cold

iv. hot

v. unctuous

vi. dry

vii. slow

viii. fast

ix. stable

x. fluid

xi. soft

xii. hard

xiii. clear

xiv. viscid

xv. smooth

xvi. rough

xvii. subtle

xviii. gross

xix. dense

xx. liquid



“Aahar” eaten is appropriate amount-

After *Aahar* no pain is felt in flanks. One does not feel backache. One does not feel heaviness in abdomen. One does feel that his special senses are fresh. One satisfies his hunger and thirst. One feels easy in sitting posture, sleeping posture, respiration, laughing and talking. (6)

Important of timely *Aahar* consumption-

Time of meal is as suited to the individual. However, generally the second meal is taken after seven and half hours of the first meal and night meal before three hours in the night. A person should take meal only when he feels hungry. lunch should be taken early between 12 and 1 pm. It is time of peak of *pitta* period. *Pitta* is responsible for the digestion. *Ayurveda* recommends that the lunch should be the largest meal of the day. Dinner should be lesser and lighter than lunch.

Important and sequence of *rasa in aahar* consumption-

Madhur (sweet) *rasa aahar* like fruits are advisable to take in the beginning of meal , *aahar* with *amla* and *lavana* (sour and salty) *rasa* in the middle and *katu,tikta*, *Kasaya* (bitter, astringent and pungent) *aahar* should be taken at the end of meal for healthy one. (7)

Examination of intake and digestive capacity-

Agni in digestive system, which digests *aahar* is supposed to be most important to his people. Examination of *aahar shakti* is done with the help of intake of *aahar* and digestive capacity. *Bala* and life span is dependent on *aahar*.(8) *Agni* is examined by *jaranshakti* i.e.digestive capacity by *anuman praman*.(9) *Aahar*,after complete digestion is brought in bioform of various body entities. Role of *agni* is important to calculate *aahar matra* . the quantity of *aahar* is decided as per the digestive capacity of an individual.

Sign and symptoms of poisonous food articles –

Symptoms depends on cause of poisoning. Symptoms may be severe in poisoning occurring in raw food. They may appear within hours days or weeks of poisoning and can last for several days. Major symptoms of food poisoning include;

- nausea
- vomiting
- watery or bloody diarrhea
- fever
- abdominal cramps

Older, pregnant women, Children, people with chronic illness etc., may suffer from severe symptoms. The major complication caused by food poisoning is dehydration due to excess water loss from body. *Ayurveda*

explains that people who have taken poisonous food will exhibit symptoms like dryness of mouth, restlessness, sweating, tremor

, loss of stability during walking etc. (10)

Ayurvedic reference of food poisoning (*saviushaannam*)-

“*Annapanm vishadrakshetvi sheshenamhipate*”(11) A.S.SUT.7/2

Through the above *sloka ayurveda* advises that food should be protected from getting contaminated. Contaminated food may increase all the *doshas* namely *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. All *doshas* when increased at the same time requires effortful treatment for attaining the equilibrium. *Ayurveda* explains symptoms and treatment for contamination of different types of food like rice, fruits, meat etc.

Types of food poisoning-

1. non-bacterial food poisoning
2. bacterial food poisoning

1. non-bacterial food poisoning- the non-bacterial products include poisons derived from plants and due to toxins and certain chemicals present in the food articles.

2. bacterial food poisoning- bacterial food poisoning is due to contamination with bacteria or their toxins.

Cause of food poisoning-

Food poisoning can be caused by microorganism like bacteria, virus, parasite, etc. Micro-organisms or their toxins enter the food items during growing harvesting, processing or preparation. Important organisms that may cause food poisoning are *clostridium botulinum*, *clostridium perfringens*, *Escherichia coli* (E. coli) *salmonella* etc.

Diet in food poisoning-

Do's (*pathya*)- if affected with food poisoning one should following food and regimen to avoid further complications.

- Light and easily digestible food like gruel
- Warm food
- Green gram
- Drink enough warm water
- Soup
- Take good rest

- Adequate sleep

Don'ts (*apathy*)- following food and regimen should be avoided to get relieved from the symptoms of food poisoning.

- Cold water and food
- Heavy and fatty food
- Non vegetarian diet
- Milk and milk products
- Strenuous exercise
- Day sleep

yoga and pranayama- After getting relief from acute and severe symptoms, simple, *yoga* postures can be practiced to achieve physical and mental relaxation. Following *yoga* postures will be appreciable.

- *Shavasana*
- *Sukhasana*
- *Padmasana*

Pranayama helps to attain mental stability and cleans all body channels. It helps to bring the body tissues back to normal and to energize them.

Ayurvedic treatment for food poisoning- *Ayurveda* focuses on digestion of undigested food , increase of digestive fire and expulsion of toxins.

Medicines-

- *Abhayariushta*
- *Sanjivani vati*
- *Kutajarishta*
- *Mustarishta*
- *Ajeyghrita*
- *Ardraka*
- *Amrit grita*
- *Bharangyadikwatha*
- *Vilwadilehya*
- *Ashtachuna*

- *Kutaja*
- *haritaki*

purification therapy- expulsion of remaining toxins in the body and should be done based on condition of patient.

- *vamana* (emesis)
- *Virechana* (purgation)

DISCUSSION- toxins come from many sources; food, bacteria, and the environment. Cells in your body constantly produce waste that must be filtered and drained from your body. When your lymphatic system is congested or your circulation poor, the natural process of eliminating toxins may be compromised. Similarly, if you are constipated, have trouble sweating, are dehydrated, or your kidney don't produce enough urine, toxins may accumulate.

Certain foods may contain toxins in them, just like the air we breathe. More often the biggest source of toxins from food is indigestion. Bacteria, wherever they reside in your body, create toxins. Eating too much fats, sugar, salt, or of any one type of food can also cause an excess of a particular nutrient in the blood, also considered toxic in *ayurveda*.

Food such as milk and ghee that are commonly consumed in the day to day of life have been characterized as toxic in certain contexts. Ghee or milk consumed when the digestive fire and metabolism is on a low ebb works like poison (*visopamam*). '(12)'

Poisons, which remain in the body for a long period of time and cause intractable diseases, are known as *garavisha*. '(13)' The adverse effects of treatment are also very well described in the texts and intrinsic diseases caused by improper treatment are described very early in the evolutionary history of *ayurveda*. '(14)'

CONCLUSION-

Ahara is the best of all medicines and is considered one among the three sub-pillars of *ayurveda*. Every living and non-living being in this universe is composed of five basic elements, the *panch-mahabhootas*, namely earth (*prithvi*), water, fire (*teja*), air (*vayu*), and *akasha* the *panchmahabhuta* components of ingested food nourishes their respective tissue elements in the body. **Sequence of food intake-** *guru*, *madhura* and *snigdha* food should be taken initially during the course of a meal followed by *amla*, *lavana ahara*. Food which is *ruksha*, *katu*, *tikta* and *kashaya* should be taken in the last part of the meal for proper activation of *agni*, proper absorption and assimilation of food. After taking food, it is advised to take rest for *muhurta matra* (48 minutes) for proper digestion. '(15)'

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