

DIAGNOSTIC METHODS IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT: *This is an analytical study of the Diagnostic methods Prescribes in Ayurveda. As in the case of disease and treatments the concept of diagnosis also is unique in Ayurveda. It goes to the Nidana of Doshicimbalance by studying the physical, physiological, psychic and behavioural aspects of the patient. The paper gives an insight into the various diagnostic methods enunciated in Sastras which turns out to be a fore-runner of any of modern diagnostic methods.*

I. BASIC CONSIDERATION:

1. Immediate objective of Ayurveda is to free the purusa-human beings in particular and all the living creatures in general from the clutches of the disease.
2. If that is not possible, then Vaidya's next objective is to obviate the pain and to mitigate the suffering to its lower level, after coming to proper diagnosis of a disease.
3. That is why Roga pariksa (Diagnosis) is given first place and principles of treatment and drugs are given next places in order of importance.
4. Diagnosis or Roga Pariksa comprises of a knowledge of etiology and symptomatology both and also includes the pathology.

Roga and Arogya are two words denoting opposite conditions of individual organism i.e. Purusa. They are only to be found in living organism neither in a dead body or in an inanimate substance. Roga is a word

which denotes disease. Roga is a word which denotes disease. It is derived from the root-Run meaning pain or suffering an exclusive property of Atma i.e. spirit occupying a body i.e. a living organism. It implies disturbed or unbalanced condition of body elements or mind.

5. The pain or suffering has two places of origin and manifestations viz. the body or the mind.
6. Body and/or mind are not to be found as the seats of pain in isolated conditions. But only when both of them are united together, animated and made active by contact of the consciousness which is reflexion of the life force or soul or spirit.
7. Arogya is a just opposite of Roga i.e. happy, joyful condition i.e. ease i.e. sense of well being a result of balanced condition or equilibrium of body elements or mind.

So when we have to investigate and understand a clean picture of a disease we

cannot examine a disease without a reference to a living person and there too, particularly to the body and mind. That is why in Ayurveda these two or the patient as a whole is called 'Vyadhi Adhithana' 'Cikitsa Adhkita' or Purusa or 'Karma Purusa'. We get descriptions in our-ancient Texts of pariksa or Roga pariska independently and also both overlapping each other. Though these are two separated headings for the sake of description, it signifies that in a disease condition by examining a patient his body and his mind both, that we can come to the right judgment of a disease. This emphasis the "Purusa Pradhanya Sidhanta" of Ayurveda.

8. The living organism or individual as a whole is the real concern of Ayurveda, undue emphasis on fractions i.e. cells different organs or systems is not favoured by Ayurveda.

How to recognise a Disease?

Diagnosis is the result of various processes by which we come to a conclusion about nature and localization of a lesion and the cause of the suffering of a person.

II. METHOD OF EXAMINATION OF A PATIENT:

How to examine a patient for coming to a correct diagnosis of a disease?

The process involved are enumerated as under:

a) Observation of Sings i.e. Physical findings-pratyaksam-by use of our five sense. Here inspection (Darsana) and Palpation (Sparsana) are most important, next comes Auscultation including percussion (Srotra) olfaction (Ghrana) is used occasionally. Taste is forbidden

b) Experimentation – Yukti – i.e. by judgement on the basis of the correlation of effects of different causes as in the case of Upasaya and Anupasaya. Behaviour of animals towards different types of food or flames changing different colours when coming in contact of different articles i.e. clinical and laboratory examinations.

c) Interrogation – Prasana or questions for getting the information of patient's background and development of present and past illnesses.

d) Comparison and Contrast – Upamana or Simile and Visesa – contrast or differentiation.

e) Inference – Anumana or Tarka – after observation of physical findings and their relation with particular pathology applied in:

i) Clinical examination of patients e.g.- in examining a sick infant, one should infer the seat of the disease. Wherever he touches frequently or does not allow to touch and cries. If he keeps his eyes closed constantly the disease is affecting the head; by closing fits tightly-in anal region etc.

ii) Physical examination –Urine, stool, sputum and food e.g. floating in water of stool or its sinking for Sama and Nirama.

iii) Chemical Examination –Blood, Urine, Vomit and food.

iv) Physiology function –Circulation, Elimination - Digestion, Absorption, Blocking by Nadi Sparsa etc. Pariksa and various Srotodusti Pariksa.

f) And last but not the least is the Reliable Authority "Aptopadesa" on the validity of

which relation between the cause and effect are known and correlation with the problem under investigation.

The above six methods are further applied in following special methods:

g) Ganita and Yantras –

Mathematics and Instruments: In special circumstances the application of instruments (Yantrani) to help in diagnosis is also permitted-e.g. in Surgery.

Susruta has described – “Nadi Yantra” and “Salaka Yantras” and applied them for visualizing and finding out hidden diseases and Salyas- e.g. Probe for finding the direction of Sinus and Fistula; Sound for finding patency or, blockage or stricture of Urethra and also for presence of stone. Proctoscope for observation of colour, size and site of internal piles. In Pramantah Praksa i.e. Anthropometry for measurement and weights yard sticks or Tapes or balances and weight, height, time etc. and here comes the field for use of Samkhya- figures and fractions Sankhya Ansasa Kalpana for ascertaining facts and calculation of Dirgha, Hraswa, Krsasthula, Sighra, Manda, Guru laghu, Anu (Suksma) or Mahat etc.

h) **Special methods of examination** of urine and blood have been developed as in evidence by-Tail Bindu Pariksa of Urine; and blood examination by delay in clotting, or by washing the blood stained swab and agreeability or disagreeability to a Dog or a Crow and in cases of poisoning change of colour of food, or utensils and even flame of fire by contact of poisoned food and reaction of different pet animals and pet birds is described. This may be considered as first step in future development of pathological laboratory examination, and animal

experimentation in laboratory. Similarity Nadi Pariksa was also developed.

i) Asta Sthana Pariksa – Here (1) Nadi Pariksa is given foremost place;(2) Mootra and (3) Mala pariksha have already been mentioned next;(4) Jihvu pariksha –tongue examination for its colour, movement, shape and taste sense etc.(5)Srotra-ear and capacity for hearing and(6) Sparsa-skin for sensation of touch and lusture, colour, temperature etc- these two are to be examine for their proper or impaired functions and for finding out signs of any obstruction, inflammation, wounds, change of colour etc. (7) Dirg and Caksu-the eye is to be examined not only for its proper function but for change of its normal lusture colour for oedema, discharge for deviation of the eye ball, retraction or tightness of lids for dilation or constriction of the pupil etc. it may also indicate physical diseases and mental unrest, or moods of the person(8) Akriti-the Facis- The patient’s face may be observed for expression of emotional upset-grief, rage worry, fatigue, anxiety, elation or depression; physical changes-pallor or plethora, cynosis, jaundice, leanness plumpiness, puffines etc.

j) **Ten fold examination of a patient:** Diseases of a patient is not our only concern. For successful diagnosis and treatment, the examination of a diseases (vikrititah or roga pariksha) is to be made in the background of nine other relevant points rogi-pariksa-prakrtyadi pariksa or atura partksa. They are 1.Prakriti constitution; 2. Sara-Dhatu-which is of best quantity and top vitality; 3. Satwa-Temperament Strong or Fickle mind; 4.Samhanana-Strong build or loose flabby-weak body; 5. Pramana-measurement of checking proper development of body in height, weight and girth; 6. Abyavarharana Sakti; 7. Jarana Sakti-capacity of eating and digestion of food 8.Vyayama Sakti-or Bala capacity for physical endurance and work

and 9. Vayas or age- immature-young age. Madhya, Mature fully developed Youth, adult, or Vrddha declining old age. These form the background for a disease to take a sever course or a mild course i.e. the relation position of the patient's inherent strength and stability and severity of the attack of a diseases.

k) Caraka has elaborated the examination of a total person along with his environment and circumstances and describe 48 items to be examine for their normalcy or otherwise in a patient and on their basis to assess the prognosis. To put it in brief they include the physical, physiological, psychic and behavioral aspects of the person and also the characteristic change in his environment.

III. FIVE FACTORS OF IDENTIFICATION OF DISEASE:

i) Disease is manifested by its characteristic signs and symptoms or Linga Jnana i.e. observation of abnormal changes. Linga Jnana is the major factor in coming to a proper diagnosis.

Linga may be of two types: Some lingas denote clearly the existing condition of the disease, its severity or mildness and the Dosha which is responsible for the vitiation and the site or the tissue which is affected. Such symptoms are called Rupa other may be not so definitive but may be vague yet useful to herald the disease before it actually becomes manifest. They are called Purva Rupa-Prodromes.

2) Long before a disease becomes manifest, vitiation process is already in progress from the very moment the etiological factor has come into contact of the system and has disturbed its normal condition. So in understanding a disease Ayurveda has given importance to the knowledge of the Causative Factor Nidana or Hetu.

It is Nidana which is responsible for disturbing the Dosa samya balance of the Doshas end the dhatu samya homogeneity of tissue either completely or partially. Doshas have characteristic features and functions in normal and abnormal conditions. Specific Doshas are disturbed by specific etiological factors with which they have natural affinity or similarity. Dosas first encounter with etiological factors; they in turn, when vitiated, vitiate the tissues (Dhatus & Malas). But the nature of vitiation either mild or severe or no vitiation at all depends upon the favorable attitude of Dosas and Dhastus on the basis of their similarity or dissimilarity or equalities and functions with etiological factors (Paras paranubandha of Nidana Dosa-Dusya or Ananubandha). They generally provoke a particular dosa and create hyper condition-Vrdhi, or sometimes the Dosas are abnormally subdued by some causative factors of opposite nature i.e. Ksaya-Hypo-condition. In other world's increase or decrease in quantity and quality and functions, disturbing equilibrium of doshas and dhatus in the disease.

This process of provocation or reduction leading to manifestation of disease is usually or prolonged process. It starts with the trauma or with first contact of causative factor with tissue and gradually passes through four successive stages viz: Samcaya (Incubation) Prakopa (Flaring up) Prasara (Spreading in general circulation) and Sthana Samsraya (Settling down in a particular site-Localization) which collectively are given the name of Samprapti and which in short is defined as Dosa Dusya Sammurchana ar inter action and mutual vitiation process of the Dosas and particular Dhatus, Malas Srotas and Organs of the body before a well defined typecal disease is manifested i.e. next two stages of Vyakti and Bheda (manifestation and

differentiation) in which signs and symptoms when progressed further denoting well defined typical disease along with other differentiating points.

These conditions are termed as termed as Vyakti and Bheda, two further stages of Smaprapti. Here it is implied that (1) not only the causative factor which is an external agent should be given important in a process of disease manifestation but condition of the local or general internal factors, i.e. receptiveness or resistance of the doshas, the Dhatus and Matas-tissue, the systems and the secretions and exertions also play equally important role in pathogenesis (2) the factor responsible for nature and acquired immunity such as Prakrti-constitution, Sara-dhatu tissue endowed with best vitality and quality; Satwa the psychic strength, Samhanana-the body build: Vayas the age, Agni-digestion and metabolism; Bala-physical strength and power or resistance to diseases; Ojas-the vital essence Ahana Nutrition; Nidra-sleep habit and Brahmacharya-Abstinence or judicious restraint of sexual urge etc, also come into play in making a man prone or immune to a disease. They are also considered for assessment of disease course and effectiveness of the drug.

An additional factor to help in diagnosis is Upasaya i.e. in a condition of doubt or confusion in coming to a diagnosis of a disease, by judicious use of tired and tested provocation or suppressing agents, i.e. the Drugs and Diets the use of which flares up or checks the severity of a disease, we may come to a conclusion as regards the Dosa predominance or nature of that disease.

This fivefold method is called Nidana Panchaka and is prescribed to come to a clear understanding of a disease i.e. Roga Vijnana or Roga Viniscaya.

IV. DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS:

But a question arises – when we have only 3 doshas correspondingly disease should also be of limited numbers how can we arrived at a conclusive diagnosis of disease which are innumerable?

- (a) Firstly, though Dosas are only three, in vitiated condition they affect the whole body or mind or body or only a particular region, system or organ of the body as the case may be. That is why the disease are classified Regionwise-Kosthas-rita or belonging to Abhyantara Roga marga i.e. Disease of chest and/or abdomen; or Sakhasrita-or belonging to Bahirroga Marga i.e. disease of the skin and muscles, Blood etc. tissues; and Marma Asti Sandhi gata-or belonging to Madhya roga marga-Disease of Heart, Head, bladder or Joints.
- (b) Then again they are named organ wise according to their localization as Shirogata, Netra, Karna, Nasa, Mukhagata Bastigata, Urogata, Hrdgata, Rasadi Dhatugata, Purishagata etc. Similarly they are described system wise-as those affecting Prana Vaha srotas etc. thirteen srotas. In all these various grouping or classification of disease, vitiation doshas have reached the site of the disease, through the medium of blood circulating in the vessels, and symptoms manifest themselves according to the site, structure and function which is disturbed by vitiation Dosh.

After Sthana Samsraya or localization there they vitiated that organ according to specific nature of the vitiated Dosa i.e. Vata leading to atrophic, Kapha leading to Hypertrophic or Pitta leading to inflammatory or suppurative changes. Here the question of

local tissue resistance has been referred as “Yatra Sangah Khavaigunyat” Lina Dosa,”Dhatu Samsrita Dosah”, “Vilambita Pradusana”. Thus produce variety of effects and of multiple form and severity. These are methods by which diseases confined to particular region or Dhatu or organ are grouped together.

Then their function differentiating points are based on the1 predominance of particular features of or severity of pain or grouped of associated symptoms, change of colour or disturbance of function with reference to the organ affected. To emphasise this point the examiner is instructed by Madhava that-while investigating for disease-one should examine different system (Srotamsi) different organs (Angani) and different joints (Sandhin, cha) repeatedly and carefully (Pasyet Yatnat, Muhurmuhuh).

Secondly- The Dosas have their specific features in health and in vitiation process but diseases have no definite number, no definite constant picture. They differ from man to man and differ in their course at different periods in the same person. Ayurveda has described Swara and other diseases having different picture in Ama, Pacyamana and Pakwa Awastha. Modern medicine too describes different stages of the disease. Whatever is described in the books is to be taken as just as an illustration of commonly occurring condition, which is likely to differ from individual to individual according to severity of the causative factor and the response of the causative factor and the response of the internal factors and the state of his Bala or innate resistance power. (Co-operation of the host –susceptibility or immunity of local tissues or individual as a whole.

Thirdly – the individual’s body-build or constitution and temperament-just like

Medium, obese or lean-sthula Krsa and Sama Samhanana and Dosika Prakriti or sama Prakiti, Pravana Sttwa or Hina Sattwa-according to his mental stamina change the picture of a disease in two persons on account of inherent internal factors-A disease may be taken apparently as a mild while patient is well advance in the damage caused by the disease or a disease may be apparently taken as a severe disease while actually there is very mild pathology. “Guruvyadhitah Laghu Vyadhita iva, Laghu Vyadhitah guru vyadnita iva.”

Disease are classified according to their source of origin:

Those which have their source from within i.e. Intrinsic factors are-(1) Nija-those due to disturbance of Dosas (ii) Agantu-those coming suddenly from external assault e.g. trauma and infliction of wounds bites, contusions, blows etc., agents provocative of rage lust etc. or by possession of supernatural forces or entry of bhootas or by condemnation and courses from powerful and pious men.

Again from another angle:-

- a) Sarira – related to body –Sarira-deserve to be treated by elimination or purificatory medicines or allaying the symptoms without eliminating process.
- b) Manas – related to mind – require to be treated by allaying disturbed emotions and persuasion pacification and sedation of mind.

Diseases are again said to be – (1) Doshaja i.e. effect of vitiation Dosas-and (2) Karmaja-due to destiny, fruits of his previous faulty deeds or sins (3) Both and also due to (4) Krmija, bhutaja etc-due to

worms infestation and infection from unknown sources.

They are again classified as Pradhana or Main or Primary diseases and Apradhana or subsidiary or secondary diseases. The original one or complication of some previous disease and group of independent diseases complicating with each other or syndrome. That is called Vyadhisankara. Again on the basis of their cause either produced due to specific cause or due to after effect of a pre-existing diseases called Swatantra Roga and Paratantra or Rogaja Roga respectively or those arising within the one's own self-Adhyatmika; coming from outside-environmental factor- Adhibhautika; or caused by superhuman factor – Adhidaivika.

They are again described to be the result of sins or as a torture from super natural beings existence of which either in diseases do not follow general rules of relation of symptoms and doshas and their curative medicines. On the contrary they show extra-ordinary and curious symptoms and signs, are not amenable to ordinary antidoshic treatment and have to be treated by specific treatment of grahas as indicated in spiritual type of treatment (Daiva Vyapasraya Chikitsa).

Diseases are grouped as those affecting single individual or affecting many individuals at a time in a community. For the latter the causes must be common and should be severely powerful to effect different persons irrespective of their age, sex, social and economical status, caste or creeds. They are recognized to be due to the vitiation of one of the four factors which are all common to the whole community i.e. Grama, Nagaraadi / Janapada-the Air (Vata) water (Jala) the locality (Desa) or time or season (Kala) they are called Janapadodhwamasaniya Rogas-or epidemic

(pandaemic) diseases. They are characterized by peculiar mode of onset, incidence and death rate, peculiar mode of treatment-preventive and curative.

Diseases are also classified as those which are communicable or non-communicable. Asamkramaka or Samkramak Roga; Anupasargika Roga-Anaupasargika. Communicable diseases are those which spread from one person who suffered to the other healthy ones by way of direct and frequent contact of skin and other organs, by the medium of food and breath air which two persons use the same articles or sleep together, and by the common use of articles of toilets and cosmetics. Some fevers, tuberculosis, ophthalmias and skin diseases are such diseases. In this way idea of contagion and infection become evident. These have also special problems of prevention and cure.

Nija Diseases are again to be differentiated in two categories. (1) Those which remain confined to the sufferer and those which are transmitted to the progeny the which are transmitted to the progeny the latter are called sancari roga, kulaja,sahaja or adibala pravrttaroga familiar or hereditary while the former are called. Asancari roga or jatottara kalaja roga familiar or hereditary and acquired diseases. There are the words used respectively for them in modern text books. Again Sastra sadhya Snehadi those which required surgical treatment or radical treatment and those fit for medical attention or conservative treatment.

Surgical Diseases:

The diseases of suppurating nature – abscesses – situated anywhere on the surface or in internal organs, the tumours and polyps, the fractures and dislocations, stones in the bladder, fistula and piles, decayed

tooth, cataract, malpresented and monster foetus and dead foetus, tapping of fluids from Ascities hydrocele and hernia. Atresia and strictures, Necrosed bones (ostomyelitis)-all are mentioned to be treated with proper surgical procedures-Traumatic wounds, Injuries on Head and abdomen required suturing deformed lips and ears required plastic surgery. In addition the inflammation should be treatment so as to prevent it from going to next stage of abscess.

The 8 types of wounds produced during fights and burns from various sources are Agantu diseases and also fall under this class. Importance of judging proper stage of the diseases at which surgical intervention be preferred as again conservative is stressed.

There are diseases peculiar to the two sexes:

In women those affecting the generative organs and breasts and functions of menstruation and reproduction; and in males also-those related to the organs and functions of procreation are distinct. These are described as Yoni Vyapat and ksira Dosa and Stana Roga, Rakta gulma, Garbha Linga and Garbhini Rogas, in women and Sukradosa and Klaibya in Men-special hints of examination of relevant organs and discharges and points in the history of these cases are emphasized.

The diseases produced as a result of poisoning: are a separate variety and fall under Agantu-acquired Vyadhi and special points for their diagnosis are enumerated. In addition to symptoms of Visa Vegas of the poisons of Jangama and Sthawara groups. Site and time of the bite in the case of biting of a Janagama Visa-poisonous animal and place, time and nature of the food,

utensils used, companions and other circumstantial evidence in the case of Sthawara Visa-food poisoning and result of the same food on pets or lab animals was taken note of and enquiry about the clothes, shoes, water, air, food and vehicles etc. which are likely to be poisoned and used in the conditions of wars was also not to be neglected. Examination of these items was necessary to apply proper line of treatment and specific Agadas (Antidotes) in respective types of poisons. Poisons may be of acute or chronic nature (Dusi Visa) or some may be the result of improper or faulty treatment or faculty and harmful combination of inner non-poisonous substances (Gara-Krtima Visa; Samyoga and Samskaraja Visa).

Diseases peculiar to age: They are also mentioned – as Bala Rogas, Children's diseases peculiar at the age of infancy and childhood e.g. and Swabhavika Roga or Jara-changes and disabilities due to senility or those appearing in old age only. These diseases have special problems of etiology, diagnosis, course of development and also specific therapeutic measures. Upadamsha, Phiranga and Yaksra of Sahasa and Dhatukhya, their origin is of youth-adult age.

Mental diseases – are mentioned in a separate class. Here person's behaviour towards other, talk, understanding and expression, mood, sleep and dreams, thought and memory all are mainly affected at particular age and show particular symptoms and they required treatment on quite different lines.

Occupational Diseases: are also hinted at some occupations are mentioned which produced such conditions for body or mind where care for personal Hygienic and health

is bound to be neglected or risks are much more.

Social Diseases or Evils : Adharma, intentional overlooking of standards of decency or morality laid down by the religion or society results in conflict unrest and chaos in society and this disturbed and irrational society provides the environment, unwhole-some for maintenance of good health and good conduct of an individual. In

its way investigation of a disease in a person leads us to the consideration of status of the society in which he lives.

These are the methods of diagnosis pointed out in our Shastras. We start from nothing of complaints and before coming to a definite conclusion we have to consider the disease process in different aspects as enumerated above.