

## A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO THE CLASSIFICATION OF DISEASES

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**ABSTRACT:** *Ayurvedic texts have adopted multiple approaches to the classification of diseases. Caraka while choosing a binary classification in Vimana sthana declares that the classifications may be numerable and innumerable basing on the criteria chosen for such classification. He gives full liberty to the individual to go in for the newer and newer classification, provided the criteria are different. Taking cue from this statement an attempt has been made at categorizing the diseases mentioned in Ayurvedic texts under different systems in keeping with the current practice in the Western Medical Sciences.*

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurvedic texts have given a detailed account of many diseases that were prevalent in those times. The etiology, pathogenesis varieties, symptomatology, prognosis and Therapeutics – all have been detailed quite descriptively. However it seems that very little effort was made by them in categorizing the diseases in a systematic way. Classification was mainly restricted to give an account of the varieties of the diseases and also a individual disease was classified with different view points. For Ex. Prameha was classified based on the constitution of patient in to two groups as afflicting sthula and Krisa Patients<sup>1</sup>. Again two types of pramehas – Sahaja and Jattoraja have been mentioned in respect of time of origin<sup>2</sup>. Basing on the involvement of Dasas 20 varieties were described<sup>3</sup>. Besides this, diseases have been classified in to innumerable groups on the basis of a different criteria<sup>4</sup> like prognosis, intensity etc., which would be discussed in the coming pages. After going through the texts carefully one cannot but appreciate the tremendous flair the ancient Indian Masters had, for classification and their vast array of

nomenclature. However with due regards and apologies one has to accept that an approach to systematize the diseases based on the system involved is lacking. May be it was not necessary for them under the prevalent conditions. ‘System’ here refers for a group of organs having similar functions Eg. Respiratory System G.I.T. etc. The present write up makes an initial attempt in that direction.

Classification is defined as the ordering or arrangement of objects (in the context, diseases) into groups or sets based on the relationships. (These relationships can be based on observed or inferred properties). Nomenclature is naming of the pathological conditions. The concept of classification and nomenclature are closely related. The element of grouping distinguishes classification from nomenclature.

Classification is an important aspect of most sciences and the subject of classification in Medicine continues to engage the minds of many thinking people. Each classification should have a basis and should have a

purpose and some utility which varies depending upon the basis of the classification. Classification is based on recognition of similarities and recognition of the 'nature' of this similarity distinguishes one classification from another.

Ayurvedic texts have described more than 200 diseases and an equal number of pathological conditions. The diseases have been classified with various view points

### Criteria of Classification

1. Prognosis
2. Intensity
3. Location
4. Site of origin
5. Nature of the Causative factors

First two types of classification help in clinical decision making as to how one has to proceed – whether to accept the case or simply refer to a specialist. Third groups helps in deciding the types of treatment to be chosen either Satwavajaya or Yukti – Vyapasraya. Fourth one gives a clear idea about the dosa to be treated either Kapha or Vata and the type of the purificative procedure to be adopted – either Vamana or Virechana. The fifth classification helps in deciding as to which cause should be treated first either exogenous or endogenous. Not stopping at this Charaka puts all diseases in to one group based on the “Similarity of ‘pain’<sup>6</sup>. He adds – “Multiplicity of classification of diseases may be numerable or innumerable”<sup>7</sup>. In fact the numerability of diseases has been described in the Nineteenth chapter of Sutrasthana<sup>8</sup>. The peculiarity of this classification is that, here Charaka classifies diseases based on the number of varieties, each diseases is having. For Ex. he puts all these diseases having eight subtypes in one group. Similarly those diseases having 7,6,5,4,2,1 and 20 varieties

which facilitate the understanding of the disease in various contexts.

Charaka has tried various classification at different sites in the course of his incestrious texts Caraka Samhita. For Ex. he adopts binary classification in Roganika Vimana – Chapter – 6/3. He classifies diseases into two groups each on the basis of 5 different criteria<sup>5</sup>.

### Grouping

Curable	Incurable
Mild	Severe
Mental	Physical
Amasoya	Pakwasaya
Endogenous	Exogenous

have been put into different groups. Innumeration of the disease classification has been described in 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> chapters of Sutrasthana. The most important classification appears in the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of Sutrasthana where Nanatmaja (specific) and Samanyaja (non-specific) classification has been made<sup>9</sup>. Probably this is the most useful classification in as much as it is most scientific and systematic. Specific diseases / pathological conditions belonging to three body systems – Vata system, Pitta system and Kapha system have been enumerated. This classification clearly identifies the dosa involved and treatment becomes easier. This is one way is over simplification of the therapeutic procedure as the dosa involved and treatment becomes very specific. Susruta’s classification of diseases into Adyatmika, Adidaivka, Adiboutika is peculiar in its own way as it takes into consideration, the acts of past life too<sup>10</sup>.

Thus we find multiplicity of the classification based on different criteria. Charaka defends such variations by stating

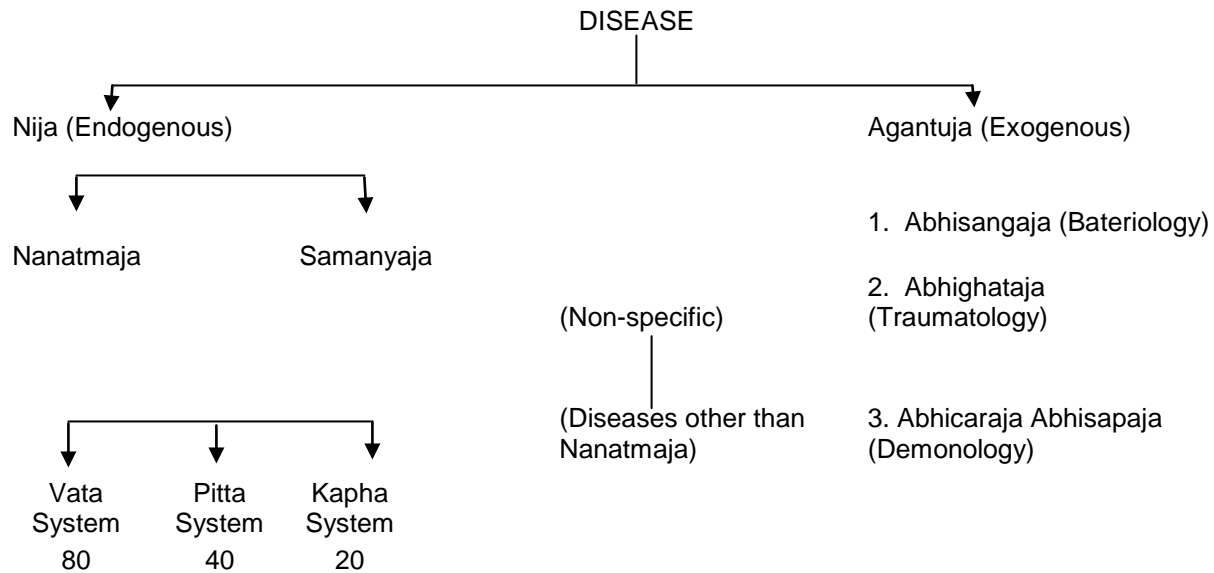
that the individual has the liberty to classify the things as he likes<sup>11</sup>. Infact the two terms numerable and innumerable having mutually contradictory meaning have been applied to the something, i.e. disease. But the criteria followed for classification in the number of groupings and this is justified. Charaka adds: "If something is already classified into some groups in a particular manner one may classify it on the basis of different criteria which may result in changes in the number of groups in different ways<sup>12</sup>. Thus an attempt at a new classification herewith carries Carakas permission and blessings both.

Systematic approach to disease classification has two components.

1. Enumeration of diseases belonging to different systems.

2. Sub grouping of these diseases having similar symptomatology.

The present classification takes care of both these things. However there can be one more component of this systematization. Once systems are outlined / defined, a subgrouping depending upon the organ involved. Ex. Diseases of the stomach, colon, etc. Infact Glipses of this classification – Amasaya Samutha and pakwasaya Samutha is an example. Terms like Amasayagata, Pakwasayagata vata Gudagatavata point towards such as approach. Terms like 'Hridroga', 'Grahani' Netraroga, Karmaroga give a Clue towards attempts at topological classification. This approach too has been adopted in classifying the diseases of GIT where it has become a necessity.



### CLASSICATION BASED ON ORGAN SYSTEMS

#### 1. Respiratory System

Swasa

Kasa

Swara Bhedha

Rajayakshma

Urakashata

Kshina

2. *Cardio Vascular System*

Hridroga – 5 types

Hriddrava

Hridgraha

Hrinmoha

Dhamini Praticaya

Rasagatavata

Raktagavata

Siragatavata

3. *Gastro Intestinal System*

Anorexias

Diarroheas

-----Acute-----

Atisara (6 types)

Pravahika

Visucika

-----Chronic-----

Grahani

Jirnatisara

Constipation

-----Acute-----

Alasaka

Anaha

-----Chronic-----

Vibanda

Vilambika

Vomitings

Nija

5 types

Agantija

5 types

Hiccoughs

Annaja

Yamala

Abhaktachhanda

Anannabhilasa

Arocaka

Bakta Dwesa

Dyspepsias

Vidagdajirna

Vishatabdajirna

Amajirna

Rasasesajirna

Dinapaki Ajirna

Prakrita Ajirna

Amlapitta

Diseases of the GIT can also classified as under

Diseases of

the mouth

including

Orophatynx

Osatagata – 8

8

Dantagata – 10

10

Dantamulagata

15

Jiwhagata

5

Talugata

9

Kanthagata

17

Sarvagata

3

Diseases of the

Stomach &

Duodenum

Amalapitta

Chardhi

	Kshudra		Hikka
	Gambhira		Amasayagatavata
	Mahati		Alasaka
	Pain abdomen/ Pain abdomen		Annadravasula
Colics	Udarasoola 8 types		Parinamasula
	Parinamasula		Grahani
	Tuni	Diseases of the	
	Pratituni	Intestines	Gulma
Abdominal			
Distention	---	Localised	Koshtagatavata
	----	Gulma	Pakwasayagatavata
		Pleehodara	Atisara
		Yakritodara	Pravahika
		Baddodara	Vilambika
		Kshatodara	Visuci
	----	Generalised	Baddodara
	----	Udarasamanya	Chidrodara
		(V,P,K,S) Jalodhara	Antravidradhi
Diseases of the Rectum			
Arasas			4. <i>Hepatobiliary System</i>
Guda Bramsa			Kamala --- Sakhasrita
Gudapaka			Koshta Sakharita
Sanniruddhaguda			Kumbhakamala
Gudgatavata			Halimaka
Bhagandara			Panaki
			5. <i>Haemopoietic System</i>
			Pandu
			Rakatapitta

Pleehodara

*6. Urogenital System*

Mutrakrishra	Parivartika
Mutraghata	Avapatika
Mutrasmari	Niruddha Prakasa
Prameha	Sephastamba
Napumsakata	Medrapaka
Vridhhi	Sooka Dosa
Sukragatavata	Vrishnakshepa

*7. Helminthiasis/Parasitology*

Krimi	Bahya	(2)
	Kaphaja	(7)
	Purishaja	(5)
	Raktaja	(6)

*8. Metabolic and Endocrinal Disorders*

Madhumeha
Medoroga
Atisthula
Atikrisa
Atiloma
Aloma
Atigowra
Atikrishna
Atidirga
Atihraswa – Kubjatwa
Vamanatwa

*9. Diseases of the connective tissue, tissue, Bones and Joints*

Sandhivata	Urusthamba
Amavata	Urusada
Vatarakta	Snayugatavata
Kroshtukasirsa	Mamsa –
medogatavata	
Janu Bheda	Asthikshaya
Janu Vislesa	Asthisosa
Vatakantaka	Asthimajjavatavata
Gulpagraha	Asthi Bhagna
Vatakhuddata	Sandhimukta (Chyuti)
Apabahuka	Hanugraha
Amsasosa	

*10. Diseases of the Nervous System*

Pakshaghata	Antarayama
Ekangavata	Bahirayama
Sarvangavata	Grivasthamba
Pangu	Manyasthamba
Khanja	Jihwasthamba
Kalakanja	Vaksanga
Gridrasi	Mukatwa
Viswachi	Minminatwa
Ardita	Gadgadatwa
Kampavata	Jnanendriyagatavata
Akshepaka	Sirahsoola – 11 types
Apatanaka	Padadaha
Apatantraka	Padaharsa

*11. Psychiatry*

Unmada

Apasmara		Pishataka
Atatwabhinivesa		
Tantra		Diseases of the
Klama		Sclera (3)
Bharma		Balasangrathitha
Anawasthitachittatwa		Sirajala
Aswapna		Sirajapidika
Atipralapa		Diseases of the
Mada		Cornea (4)
Murcha		Savranasukla
Sanyasa		Avranasukla
		Ajakajata
		Akshipakatyaya
<i>12. Diseases of the Organs of special sense</i>		
<i>Diseases of the Eye</i>		
Diseases of the		Diseases of
Eye lashes (2)	Paksmakopa	Refractive media (17)
Upapakshma	Mala	Timiras
		Dhumadarsi (6)
Diseases of the	All vartmagata	Nakulandyam
Lids (19)	diseases except	Hraswajadyam
Pakshamakopa		Pittavidagdha
		Drishti
		Kapha Vidagdha
Diseases of the Lacrimal		Drishti
Apparatus (6)		Gambhirika
	Sravas – 4	Vataviparyaya
	Puyalasaka	Anyatovata
	Upanaha	Shuskha Akshipaka
		Bahyaroga
Diseases of the		
Conjunctive (12)	Abhisyanda – 4	Diseases of Uvealtract (7)
	Arma - 5	Adimantha (4)
	Suktika	Hatadimantha
	Arjuna	Akshipaka

	Sasopha		Kucikarnika	Utpata
	Asopha		Karnapippali	Unmantha
Miscellaneous			Mamsamkura	(Gallira)
	Sirotpata		Palisosa	Vidarika
	Siraharsha		Parilehi	Syava
	Amladyushita		(Lehya)	
	Parvani			
	Alaji		Diseases of the External Auditory Meatus	
	Krimigranthi		Panssika	Karnahallika
B. <i>Diseases of the Ear</i>			Karnarsa	Karnakandhu
Diseases of the Pinna			Karnabhudha	Karnavidradhi
	Durvidda	Paripota	Karnagutha	
	(Dukhavardana)	Tantrika	(Karnavatika)	

#### Diseases of the Middle ear Cavity

Putikarna	Karnasotha	Krimikarnika
Karnapaka	Karnasrava	
Karnapratinaha	Karnasula	- 5 types

Diseases like Karnasotha, Karna Vidradhi, Karnapaka, Karnabuda, Karnasrava can occur both at Middle ear and External Auditory Meatus. Similarly Krimi Karnika can effect any part of the ear.

Diseases of the root of the Ear  
(Karna Moolagata rogas) - 5 types.

#### Diseases of Vestibulo - Chochlear apparatus (Internal Ear)

Badiryam  
Pranada  
Karnakshedam

Badiryam can be due to Karnagutha, a disease of external auditory meatus and may also due to diseases other than those of ear.

#### C. *Diseases of the Nose*



Diseases of the External N Nose  
including Vestibule

Arbuda  
Nasapaka  
Sopha

Diseases of the Internal Nose

Arsas            Nasasrava  
Bramsathu      Putaka  
Dipta            Puyasonita  
Kshawathu      Sonitapitta

Diseases of P.N.S.

Pinasa  
Pratisyaya  
Putinasya

Diseases of the Nasal Septum

Nasanaha  
Nasasosa

*13. Diseases of the Skin and its appendages  
including Venerology*

Kushta            --            Kshudra - 11

Ajagallika 7 Gardabhika

Maha

Sitapitta            Vivarata  
Udarda              Gandamala  
Kotha                Agnirohini  
Visarapa            Kaksha  
Jalagardabha      Anusayi

Khalitya

Yavvana

Pidika

Palitya  
Padminikantaka  
Indralupta  
Arumsika  
Irivellika  
Darunaka  
Yavaprakhya  
Masaka  
Vyanga  
Nillika  
Nyaccha

Chippa  
Khunaka  
Nakhabhedha  
Padadari  
Kadara  
Alasaka  
Indravidda  
Ahiputana  
Vanara

Damstra

Tilakalaka  
Twakgatavatam  
Phiranga  
Upadamsa

Jatumani

*14. Fevers*

Dosaja  
Visama Jwara  
Dhatugata Jwara  
Pidakamaya Jwara

*15. Neoplasms*

Granthi  
Arubuda  
Gandamala  
Apaci  
Galaganda

Ashtila  
Pratuastils  
Vatsthila  
Vidari  
Pasanagardabha  
Valmika  
Sarkara

*16. Wounds and Ulcers*

(A) Nija Vyadhijanya  
(Specific  
Infective)  
Sosajanya (Tubercular)  
Madhumehajanya (Diabetic)  
Kushtajanya (Lapromatous)  
Phirangajanya (Syphylitic)  
Tropical  
Malignant  
Vidradhijanya (Non-specific  
Infective)  
- Sadharna (Dosaja)  
- Nadivrana

(B) Agnatuja China  
Bhinna  
Viddha  
Grishta  
Picchita  
Kshata  
Agni dagda

*17. Toxicology*

Sthavara Visa  
Janagama Visa

*18. Diseases of the Children*

Ulbaka Mahapadmaka  
Kulnaka Ahiputana  
Jalasirsaka Utphullika  
Masthlunga Coraka  
Nabhi Roga  
Paridagdhaschavi  
Ostha Bhedha Parigarbika  
Talu Vikrithi Phakka  
Balagraha Sayyamutra  
Kshiralasaka

*19. Diseases of the Women*

Yonivyapat Mudagarbha  
Yoni Kanda Sitika Roga  
Pradara Sthana Roga  
Somaroga Kshira Dosa  
Garbasyagatavata Vandyatwa  
Garbhiniroga

*20. Miscellaneous*

Congenital Diseases\*  
Kubja  
Kuni  
Pangu  
Muka  
Minmina

## Diseases of intrauterine life Upavishtaka

Nagodara  
Linagarbha  
Mritagarbha  
Mritajata  
Jatamatramrita

## Others

Sotha  
Daha  
Snayuka  
Vidradhi

\* Export Kuni all contigenital diseases have appeared under the sub-group. Diseases of Nervous System, in as much as they can also be acquired.

Once we have come to the end of classification a few words are necessary. No classification is complete. Each classification has its own advantages and disadvantages; omission and commissions. American College pathologists classifies the disease on the basis of four modalities viz., Topology, Morphology, Etiology and Function. W.H.O. has developed ICD (International Classification of Diseases) based on systems involved. Of late W.H.O. is encouraging a RFE (Reason For Encounter). Classification which classifies the reasons for seeking health care from the perspective of the patients and this is patient oriented. Ayurvedic approaches seems to have many things in common with this. In all these classifications there are some lacunae / drawbacks. The present classification is no exception. Certainly there are some overlapping, which cannot be avoided. Eg. Pleehodara comes both at Abdominal swellings and Blood disorders. Amavata and Vataraktam inspite of being metabolic by nature have been put under Musculo skeletal system basing on the site of appearance / involvement. Two separate classification have been adopted for GIT based on different criteria. By this an attempt has been made to include all diseases conditions both medical and surgical into the system. Further

Yakritodara, Baddodara and Kshatodara have been kept localized Abdominal swellings, because the swelling in this case is localized. Vatodara, Pitoodara, Kaphodara, Sannipotodara and Jalodara have been considered as generalized swellings. Vriddhi has been considered specific for Scrotal swelling and hence has been kept under Urogenetal system. Antravidhi (Hernea) however has been put into GIT. Madhumeha has been separated from Pramehas to include among metabolic disorders basing on the view that all premehas except Madhumeha are urinary abnormalities while Madhumeha is a metabolic disorder similar to D.M. (Refer to author's article under publication – Ancient Science of Life). In it are included all Kushtas and most of Kshudra rogas. However Vrana though manifests in skin has been given different unit because of the importance it enjoys, in the system. Many Vatavyadhis appear in different systems based on the organ involved, though all of them come under Vata system. Thus Pakshaghata, Pangu, etc., move under Nervous system; Urusthamba and Urusada are included under the diseases of connective tissue and Gudabramsas enters GIT; so on and so forth. In the organs of special sense Netra Rogas and Karna Rogas

and even Nasa Rogas have been classified based on the anatomical locations.

Diseases seen exclusively in women and children have been kept under different heads. No further classification has been attempted under these units. A separate head is maintained for neoplasms where all 'mass'es have been included. Ulcers and Fevers have been given independent units. Toxicology includes the whole Visa tantra. Swellings find their place under many heads based on the organ involved. However Oedemas (Sothas) have been kept under miscellaneous group. Vidrdhi too has been kept under this group. Some more diseases which cannot be grouped under any other system have been included under this miscellaneous group.

The initial division has diseases into Nija and Agnatuja varieties and subsequent divisions into Nija and Agantuja should be considered as basic classification. When diseases are grouped into systems all the divisions overlap and this does not invalidate the classification, in as much as the criteria for categorization is different.

The current endeavor as said earlier is a new step in this direction and as such no claims for perfection are being made. However sincere efforts have been made to minimize overlapping, repetitions and other shortcomings.

## REFERENCES

1. Caraka Cikitsa 6/15
2. Susruta Cikitsa 11/3
3. Caraka Cikitsa 6/6
- 4 & 5. Caraka Vimana 6/3

## LAST WORD

ICD classification and classification based on topology are slowly losing their importance. Current trend is to focus on biomolecular and ultra structural origins of diseases on the alteration at cellular and sub-cellular levels. At this level the doctrine of specific causes loses its ground because various types of results may produce the same result in terms of biochemical changes produced. The emphasis in classification of diseases probably should be underlying disturbance of control of mechanism which has to be treated rather than on a given disease belonging to a particular system. What Charaka and Susruta thought about a disease was disequilibrium of normal body constituents (tridosas), which of late have been found to operate at cellular and sub-cellular levels. Restore the equilibrium of dosas and the disease is cured. In other words restore the normalcy of cellular function / structure and disease disappears on its own.

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|----------|---------------------------------------------|-------|
| 6 & 7.   | Caraka Vimana                               | 6/3   |
| 8.       | Caraka Sutra                                | 19/3  |
| 9.       | Caraka Sutra                                | 20/10 |
| 10.      | Susruta Suta                                | 24/4  |
| 11 & 12. | Caraka Vimana                               | 6/4   |
| 13.      | Astange Hridaya                             |       |
| 14.      | Kasyapa Samrita                             |       |
| 15.      | Madhava Nidana                              |       |
| 16.      | Sarangadhara Samhita                        |       |
| 17.      | Ayurveda and Modern Medicine – Y.V. Lele    |       |
| 18.      | Davidsons Text Book of Medicine             |       |
| 19.      | API's Text Book of Medicine                 |       |
| 20.      | Love and Baily's short practice of Surgery. |       |