

Editorial

New challenges for Ayurveda: How it will stand?

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Modern medicine has been extraordinarily developed with the amalgamation of technology in the field of diagnostic, prognostic, and curative procedures. Newer technologies are being introduced each day for finer and precise understanding of human being and diseases. Molecular genetics, radio-diagnostics, and invasive cardiology are few examples that show the power of human brain to probe physiology and investigate pathology. The world is so nearer now that everything can be made possible within minutes at a remote location by the use of information technology. The integration of technologies (e.g., telemedicine and webinars) has made this difference in the field of medicine too.

However, Ayurveda introduces itself as a 5000-year-old science. Many Ayurvedists are proud to be a part of this age-old science. Tradition and culture also change according to the current trends. There is no or little change in the form of Ayurveda as it is being practiced. Although the principles of Ayurveda are called immortal (that never die and are always applicable), it is a need to be contemporary with the current scientific trends for the benefit of the society and for nurturing Ayurveda.

Efforts are being made to update the age-old scientific wisdom in various aspects by focusing on its pharmacologic and therapeutic potential. A large number of scientists are directed toward herbal research including the development of new active principles beneficial in various disorders. Still the major potential of Ayurveda, the fundamental principles, is neglected and that is why majority of the herbal researches are concluded with little in hand. The fundamental principles of Ayurveda, including the unique concept of *Agni* (digestive fire), *Tridosha* (three bio-humors) taking part in the metabolism of *Dhatu* (tissues) leading to the formation of *Mala* (excretory products) in normal physiological manner, and the disturbed level of these functions landing the individual in disorders (*vyadhi*), are totally neglected in developing a new proprietary or patent drug. What is being done in major pharmacies is based upon the modern pharmacological researches carried out on the drug molecules. The motivation behind drug development is totally modern views and references. This requires reassessment in a holistic way.

Many new diseases are identified, invented, narrated, explained, and introduced in modern science. Scientists are able to research upon the causation and formation of diseases up to the DNA level. But when it comes to Ayurveda, we need to consider the fundamental principles to form the *Samprapti* (pathophysiology) and then formulate the treatment protocol including *Shodhana* (purification procedures) or *Shamana* (medicinal management). Merely giving a herbal drug, which is justified on the basis of

modern research, would not be sufficient in that case. At first, the amplification of the fundamental principles of Ayurveda by integrating modern investigation tools to formulate the pathogenesis from an Ayurvedic aspect is needed. For example, electro myelography and nerve conduction studies can be useful to ascertain the diagnosis of a disease that is related to *Mamsa Dhatu* (muscular tissue), which may be *Mamsagata Vata*, *Mamsavritta Vata*, etc., in Ayurveda and muscular dystrophy in modern medicine. Similarly, these tests can be useful to assess the efficacy of Ayurvedic procedures such as *Shashtika Shali Sweda* and *Pinda Sweda* (types of fomentation using red rice cooked in milk). This will provide the objective data. But merely prescribing some drugs based on modern researches without diagnosing the *Awastha* (status) of *Dosha*, level of *Dhatu*, and *Aama* status as per Ayurveda would be of partial benefit. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to standardize the fundamental diagnostic principles, integrating it with the modern investigative tools and utilizing it for attaining a diagnostic and treatment perspective. This may help the young generation, fast and high in intelligence, solve the challenges in understanding newer diseases using Ayurveda.

Even when Ayurveda is crossing Indian boundaries, the fundamental principles will remain the same and applicable; only the availability of medicines will differ as the seasonal variation will have to be considered. We are getting many enquiries concerning the explanation for diseases diagnosed according to modern medicine. Eosinophilic esophagitis is one of the recently enquired diseases where gastroscopy and other findings are normal. In such diseases, proper understanding of the concept of vitiated *Pitta*, *Aama*, disease *Amlapitta* is important before treating the disease by herbal medicine. Genetically modified foods are other important causes in considering the etiopathology of new diseases. Bombarding of materials that are incompatible with the body at the cellular and genetic level ultimately leads to disorders through the channel of *Aama* (undigested improperly metabolized component).

Updating Ayurveda, by integrating with modern technologies, without changing the basic principles, is a challenging task that needs great insight in the field of Ayurveda and intellect nourished with modern tonic. Dr. Gopal Basishta, Senior Rheumatologist, USA, with the unique approach of Symbio Health, is working on the idea of rewriting Charaka Samhita by incorporating modern technologies in it. The much needed project will be started soon. Such efforts are the need of the present hour. Otherwise Ayurveda will not remain Ayurveda; soon it will be covered up by the curtains of modern herbalist research.

AYU is gaining more popularity among authors, readers, and reviewers. It stands steady, bearing a remarkable height among the national and international medical journals. The present issue of AYU is again meant for knowledge covering all aspects of Ayurveda, including literary, clinical, pharmaceutical, and pharmacologic researches. It is the unique composition of AYU that despite of all odds; it maintains the balanced combination among the specialities of Ayurveda. The issue starts with a thought-provoking article on critical review of Sushruta Samhita by Prof. Hari Shankar Sharma, Japan. The first part of the article focuses on the historical perspective of Sushruta Samhita and its parallel applicable references on international level. Along with this, the issue comprises a total of 30 articles

with 6 review articles, 13 clinical research articles, 1 case report, 5 pharmaceutical standardization articles, 3 pharmacological research papers, and 2 short communications. The issue ends with three communications in the Letter to Editor section. The issue includes articles from various foreign institutions utilizing Ayurveda. We hope this will be another popular issue in the field of Ayurvedic medicine.

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