



ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN PUBLIC HEALTH

¹Megha Kumawat, ²Pramod Kumar Mishra, ³Brahmanand Sharma, ⁴Indumati Sharma, ⁵Mahaveer Bairwa, ⁶Onkar Buldak

¹MD Scholar, P.G. Department of Kayachikitsa, PGIA, DSRRAU, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

²Professor & H.O.D., P.G. Department of Kayachikitsa, PGIA, DSRRAU, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

³Associate Professor, P.G. Department of Kayachikitsa, PGIA, DSRRAU, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

⁴Associate Professor, P.G. Department of Kayachikitsa, M.M.M. Govt. Ayurvedic College, Udaipur.

⁵MD Scholar, P.G. Department of Kayachikitsa, PGIA, DSRRAU, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

⁶MD Scholar, P.G. Department of Swasthavritta & Yoga, PGIA, DSRRAU, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Corresponding Author: drmeghakumawat@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj2811102023>

(Published Online: October 2023)

Open Access

© International Ayurvedic Medical Journal, India 2023

Article Received: 08/08/2023 - Peer Reviewed: 25/08/2023 - Accepted for Publication: 10/09/2023.



ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a medical science that dates back thousands of years and has thrived ever since. All knowledge about life is transmitted through science. As everyone is aware, our world is experiencing great pressure on the ability of all living things and nature to survive due to severe pollution, climate change, population growth, and other socioeconomic factors. Maintaining the health of humans and the natural world is a major concern that must also be taken into consideration. Public health also aims to prevent diseases, cure diseases, and increase longevity by enhancing people's quality of life. *Ayurveda* emphasises two points: how to keep a healthy person healthy and how to prevent the patient's illness.

In today's rapidly populating world, the majority of illnesses are caused by daily habits, which can be avoided by adhering to the principles of *Ayurveda*. If someone already has an illness, *Ayurveda* can also help them recover from it. *Ayurveda* would be among the finest solutions for promoting public health and has the capacity to improve the deteriorating state of the world's health.

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, Health promotion, public health, Survival.

INTRODUCTION

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the lack of disease or infirmity," says the World Health Organisation¹. WHO definition of health as per the concepts of "Swasthya"². Ayurveda is a traditional Indian medical system that places more focus on preventing illness than simply treating its symptoms or underlying pathologies. As in the core ideas of Ayurveda, "Arogyam Mulamuttamam," Arogya (Health) is given foremost consideration in this system of medicine. Ayurveda's key goals are "Swasthasya Swasth-yarakshanam" and "Aturasya Vikaraprashamanam," which in the context emphasise the significance of maintaining and promoting health in addition to treating ailments. "Aturashya" refers to the patient, "Vikara" refers to the ailment, and "Prashamanam" refers to relief. "Swasthya" indicates health, "Rakshanam" means protection³. When formulating treatment guidelines and patient assessments for improved outcomes, it is important to keep patients' socio-geographical specificity and personal specificity at the forefront. This will help to attain the goal of public health for diverse ethnic groups. Since each individual is unique from the others and should be treated as such, there are as many differences in people as there are in the universe⁴. According to Ayurveda, the body is made up of Dosha (Humour), Dhatu (Tissues), and Mala (Faeces). A person becomes ill if their Dosha (humour), Dhatu (tissues), and Mala (faeces) are out of balance. Many ideologies have been defined in Ayurveda, such as Tridosha, Sapta Dhatu, Mala, Panchamahabhuta (Five elements), Guna (Quality), Rasa (Taste), Prakriti (Constitution), Agni (Gastric fire), Srotas (Channels), and its personalised approach to Nidan (Aetiology), Chikitsa, Rasayan (Macrobiotics/Life lengthening drugs⁵), and Yoga. An individual can have a healthy life if they adhere to these ideas in everyday life. With current science, we can only partially alleviate the symptoms of diseases, but with Ayurveda, we can also prevent illness and, if we do contract a disease, we can treat

it. Ayurveda plays a crucial part in public health⁶. It is essential to include public health as an equal or separate stream from community medicine.

AYURVEDA AND PUBLIC HEALTH

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the lack of disease or infirmity," says the World Health Organisation⁷. *Ayurveda* defines *Swastha* as a condition of equilibrium for the *Dhatu* (tissue system), *Dosha*, *Agni* (enzymes and metabolites), *Malakriya* (a type of excretory functions), *Prasanna* (ecstasy), *Indriya* (senses), *Aatma* (Soul), and *Mana* (Mind)⁸.

These definitions can be compared, and it turns out that both examples mean the same thing. The three distinct Doshas-Vata, Pitta, and Kapha-are described by Ayurveda. Five classes are further separated into each of these Doshas. Due to certain of its characteristics, Vata is sometimes compared to the neurological system, while Pitta is compared to the gastrointestinal system, notably the gastric enzymes and metabolites. Phlegm and synovial fluid are used as comparisons for kapha. *Ayurveda* also describes seven different types of *dhatu*, namely *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Shukra*. Every *Dhatu* has its roots in a previous *Dhatu*. For instance, *Meda* is made from *Mamsa*, which is made from *Rakta*, which is made from *Rasa*, etc. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* have control over the regions of *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Shukra*. After then, the body keeps working and aids in carrying out daily tasks. Waste items (by-products of our regular actions) are *malas*. *Ayurveda* is based on the *Dosh-Dhatu-Mala* concept. *Doshas* are components of the body that carry out bodily activities.

Seven Dhatus make up the body, while *Malas* are the waste products of the body. Good health is the outcome if each of these functions well. Sickness arises if any link in this cycle of events becomes out of equilibrium.

In dealing with the public health issues the modern world is currently facing, the straightforward routines

outlined in ancient classical writings are quite helpful. Personal hygiene is referred to as *Swasthavritta*, and it entails a *dinacharya*, or daily schedule, that includes activities like cleaning teeth, using mouth-wash, scraping the tongue, taking a shower, working out, eating, and sleeping, among others.

Ritucharya are the routines and diets that must be followed according to the season. *Sadvritta* is the sphere of a person's social conduct and behaviour that is founded on religious ceremonies and practises. *Rasayana* and *vajeekarana* are two rejuvenating techniques used to delay ageing; they promote longevity, immunity to disease, and mental acuity.

The focus of secondary prevention is on early diagnosis and treatment, which can be accomplished by a variety of diagnostic techniques, including *Nadi pariksha* (pulse examination), *Darshana* (inspection), *Spharshana* (palpation), and *prashna* (interrogation), and therapeutic techniques, including *shaman* (alleviation) & *sodhana* (purification). *Yoga* is an atomistic science that emphasises mental, spiritual, moral, social, and physical health.

Vagbhata and *Sharangadhara* emphasised this in the literature of *Ayurveda*. Decade-by-decade decline of physical characteristics, which establishes ageing milestones.

Due to their job structure or hectic schedules, people no longer maintain any kind of discipline. People are becoming well, but they are unfit to sustain their health and sense of fulfilment. *Dinacharya* should be practised as the only means to achieve satisfaction and health. Our hectic daily schedule is important to bring about a profound shift in the body, the mind, and the consciousness. *Ayurveda's* main focus is on longevity, but this concept goes beyond simply emphasising long life to include all the prerequisites for living a good life and experiencing a healthy death, which is the inevitable end to the cycle of life. As a result, even while it applies to people of all ages, the *Ayurvedic* notion of public health places a primary emphasis on each person's ability to age gracefully and fully.

The following therapy objectives can be achieved using traditional methods, including *yoga*, *panchakarma*, and *Rasayana* therapeutics-

1. Strengthen immune system.
2. Efficient detoxification system.
3. Responsive inflammatory system.
4. Optimal metabolic system.
5. Balanced regulatory system.
6. Enhanced regenerative system.
7. Harmonize the life force.
8. Free radical scavenging or antioxidant.

• **Noble contribution of Ayurveda to modern day health scenario⁹:**

Panchakarma and *Rasayana* therapy are the only forms of traditional medicine that provide any hope for improving health in this era of lifestyle disorders, and WHO has recognised this fact.

- In prevention of the diseases – Metabolic, genetic disorders, allergy, auto-immune diseases, Seasonal variations, Aging / Geriatric.
- Alternative therapy- Allergic disorders, auto immune disorders, Rheumatoid arthritis & other collagen disorders, Parkinson's disease Alzheimer's disease, Skin disorders, Gastro – intestinal disorders.
- Complementary area of cooperation – Cancer, DM, IHD, CVA, Iatrogenic disorders, Br Asthma, Neuro - muscular disorders, Psychosomatic diseases – Ulcerative colitis, IBS, Psychological disorders – Stress syndromes, Anxiety neurosis, Sleep disorders, MSD, Joint Disorders and many more.

CHALLENGES¹⁰

Producing competent *Ayurvedic* medical practitioners is the main obstacle that needs to be overcome for *Ayurveda* to promote good health; perhaps the current system hasn't been totally successful in instilling confidence in *Ayurveda* graduates to practise just pure *Ayurveda*. There may be a number of reasons for this, such as students' failure to comprehend fundamental *Ayurvedic* ideas and concepts, inadequate infrastructure in *Ayurveda* institutions, inexperienced teachers, etc. Several other factors might contribute to such issues & discrepancies, for example,

- Natural medications used in clinical studies lack quality control and standardisation, and variable dosages are employed.
- Establishing appropriate placebos is challenging because of the flavour, scent, and other factors. The length of herbal medicine treatments varies greatly.
- *Ayurvedic* teaching institutions are in poor condition, government-run *Ayurvedic* institutions in poor standing, an inadequately effective and unresponsive educational system, loss of faith in their own system among *Ayurvedic* doctors.
- Most trials use insufficient randomization, and the patient batch wasn't picked carefully. The majority of trials do not have enough patients to reach statistical significance.
- Due to the usage of minerals and metals, traditional medicines have been made to have hazardous consequences by the media.
- There is no connection, mutual understanding, or cooperation amongst the countries that support *ayurveda* to combat harmful marketing tactics.

Despite these substantial challenges, there are many important conceptual steps that can be taken to advance *Ayurveda* in the direction of promoting public health¹¹.

- raise knowledge of *Ayurveda* and its guiding principles for therapeutic practise.
- Describe the range of therapies available to combat stress and disorders associated with it. Analyse the treatment options using the best available scientific data and medication that is simple for patients to use.
- Standardization and quality control of the herbal drugs with proper clinical trials.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda and other conventional medical systems could benefit from the growing emphasis on public

health since they will be better able to meet current needs. Most people consider public health to be related to or a subset of community medicine.

However, key public health ideas are also described in the old *Ayurvedic* writings using their own idioms. Although many of the principles of *Ayurveda's* classical texts—principles like infectious disease, immunity, nutrition, etc.—are covered in the current paper, the focus is on public health and health in general. The most important option for maintaining one's health, wellbeing, and the general public is *ayurveda*.

REFERENCES

1. Constitution of the World Health Organization Am J Public Health Nations Health. 1946;36(11):1315–23. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.36.11.1315.
2. Sushruta Samhita edited with Ayurved Tattva Sandipika Hindi commentary by Kaviraj Ambikadutta Shastri Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi (2017) Vol. 1 Chapter 15, verse 48, page no.84.
3. Charak Samhita, Pandit Kashi Shastri hindi commentary, Sutra Sthana 30/ 26-page no. 450 reprint edition 2012.
4. Astanga Hridayam edited with Nirmala Hindi Commentary by Dr. Brahmanand Tripathi Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan Delhi, Sutra Sthana 12/ 67–68-page no. 181 reprint edition 2012.
5. Bhusan Patwardhan- Ayurveda for all: 11 action points for 2011. J Ayurveda Integr Med. 2010 Oct-Dec; 1(4): 237–239.
6. Suresh Kumar, et al., An Ayurvedic Approach to Public Health, IRJAY, June: 2020 Vol- 3, Issue-8;1- 7, <https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2020.3803>.
7. Constitution of the World Health Organization Am J Public Health Nations Health. 1946;36(11):1315–23. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.36.11.1315.
8. Sushruta Samhita edited with Ayurved Tattva Sandipika Hindi commentary by Kaviraj Ambikadutta Shastri Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi (2017) Vol. 1 Chapter 15, verse 48, page no.84.
9. Prof.M.S. Baghel- Ayurveda India-global scenario. ppt visited on December 13, 2018.
10. Alisha, Singh NR, Jitendra V. Role of Ayurveda in Public Health: Compass and Challenges. J Ayu Herb Med 2019;5(1):28-30
11. https://apha.confex.com/apha/134am/techprogram/paper_133135.htm, Last accessed date 28 February-2019.

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Megha Kumawat et al: Role of ayurveda in public health. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2023 {cited October 2023} Available from: http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/2569_2572.pdf