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Concept of *Angul Praman* in relation to *Prakriti* and *Ayu*: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda emphasize an inventive view of health during treating the disease. It is the science which has detailed conception of anthropometry at that time. As Ayurveda deals not only with diseases but also provides the background for healthy long life. The concept of *angul pramana* (measurement) is a significant tool for the knowledge of both longevity as well as disease. It varies from individual to individual according to *prakriti* (body constitution). As the body constituents are different from one another, so the measurement is performed by own finger of an individual. Ayurvedic text has also established a concept of longevity in accordance to *angul pramana* and different *prakriti*. *Prakriti* and *pramana* both are included in *dashvidha pariksha*. Also *kaphaj prakriti purusha* has *pralamb bahu* (long arms) and lean and thin of *vata prakriti*. *kapha prakriti* individuals are *dirghayu* (long life), *pitta prakriti* are *madhyam ayu* (moderate life span) and *vata prakriti* have *alpayu* (short life span). So *pramana* provides scientific value of anatomical and physiological judgment of health of an individual.

KEYWORDS

Angul Pramana, Prakriti, Ayu, Anthropometry



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INTRODUCTION

Pramana means measure, scale and standard¹. *Angul pramana* is one of the important concepts of ayurveda which is of anatomical significance for determination of *ayu* (longevity), *ojas* (immunity) and *bala* (strength) of an individual². In relation to measure the body entities there are two types of *pramana* – *anjali pramana* and *angul pramana*³. *Anjali pramana* is considered for the measurement of *dosha* and *dhatu* while *angul pramana* is useful for rule out growth and development of different body parts. *Angul pramana* play a major role in determination of life span of a person. It enlightens that individual having appropriate measurement will attain the long life⁴. In *ayurved* different *acharya* describe the length and breadth of different *anga-pratyanga* (body parts) measuring by *angul*⁵. As length and breadth of fingers of every person differs from each other, that's why for measuring body parts own *angul* of individual is taken, considered as *swa-angul*⁶. In modern science *pramana sharir* is described under the heading of anthropometry which is useful for assessing height, age, race and nationality of an individual. It deals with the systemic measurement of body size and shape⁷. In

ayurveda physical and psychological constitutions are measured in the form of *prakriti*. *Prakriti* and *pramana* both are included in *dashvidha pariksha*⁸ (methods of examining the patient). In the context of *prakriti*, *kaphaj prakriti purusha* has *pralamb bahu* (long arms) and lean and thin of *vata prakriti*. It seems to have a correlation between *prakriti* and *praman*⁹. Same as, in case of *prakriti*, *acharya* charka has mentioned that *kapha prakriti* individuals are *dirghayu* (long life), *pitta prakriti* are *madhyam ayu* (moderate life span) and *vata prakriti* have *alpayu* (short life span). So the present paper is aimed to make easy the concept of *angul pramana* and relation of *angul pramana* with body constitution (*prakriti*) in estimating life span (*ayu*) and quality of life of an individual.

Description of *pramana* in ayurvedic literature:

Acharya Susruta has mentioned *anguli pramana* for assessing life span and economic status of an individual¹⁰. Also he has mentioned that age for growth and vitality of man is 25 and woman 16 years¹¹. So the measurement is accurate after attaining this age. In the context of *dasha vidha pariksha* (method of examining the patient), *pramana* is illustrated at point of



examination to assess growth of individual and disease¹². Entire body in height and breadth of eighty four *angul* is considered as *ayam* and *vistar* of body¹³. If *Ayam* and *vistar* of body is equal measuring by *swa-angul*, is called *sama sharir*. *Ayama*,

Parinaha, *Vistara* and *Utsedha* are the four dimensions of *pramana Sharir*¹⁴. Height of body is considered as *ayam*. *Vistar* means distance from the tip of middle finger of right hand to the tip of middle finger of left hand with expanded arms, is called *vistar*¹⁵.

Table 1 Measurements described by Sushruta and Charak arranged in ascending order (less than 4 *Angula*)

Name of measure-Susruta	Measure in <i>angula</i>	Name of measure-Charak	Measure in <i>angula</i>
<i>Naasaputa Maryada</i>	2/3		
<i>Paadakanishthika</i>	0.8		
<i>Paadaanamika</i>	1.2		
<i>Paadamadhyama</i>	1.6		
<i>Paadangushtha</i>	2		
<i>Paadapradesini</i>	2		
<i>Vrushana vistara</i>	2		
<i>Chibuka</i>	2		
<i>Dashana</i>	2		
<i>Naasaputabhaaga</i>	2		
<i>Karnamula</i>	2		
<i>Bhurantrara</i>	2		
<i>Nayanantara</i>	2		
		<i>Stana paryanta</i>	2
		<i>Hrudayam</i>	2
<i>Kanishthika</i>	3 ½		
<i>Angushta</i>	3 ½		

Table 2 Measurements described by Susruta and Charak arranged in ascending order (Four and Four and Half *Angula*)

Name of measure-Susruta	Measure in <i>angula</i>	Name of measure-Charak	Measure in <i>angula</i>
<i>Prapada aayama</i>	4		
<i>Paadataala aayama</i>	4		
<i>Paarshni vistara</i>	4		
		<i>Paada utsedha</i>	4
		<i>Jaanu aayama</i>	4
		<i>Chibuka</i>	4
		<i>Ostha</i>	4
		<i>Akshimadhya</i>	4
<i>Mehana</i>	4		
<i>Vadanantara</i>	4		
<i>Nasa</i>	4	<i>Nasa</i>	4
<i>Karna</i>	4	<i>Karna</i>	4
<i>Lalata</i>	4	<i>Lalata</i>	4
<i>Greeva</i>	4		
<i>Drishyantaraayama</i>	4		
<i>Hastaatala vistaara</i>	4		



<i>Mukha</i>	4		
		<i>Sirodhara utsedha</i>	4
<i>Pradeshini</i>	4 ½		
<i>Anaamika</i>	4 ½		

Table 3 Measurements described by Susruta and Charak arranged in ascending order (5-11 Angula)

Name of measure-Susruta	Measure in angula	Name of measure-Charak	Measure in angula
<i>Prapada vistara</i>	5		
<i>Paadataala vistaara</i>	5		
<i>Paarshni aayama</i>	5		
		<i>Aasya aayama</i>	5
		<i>Mehana parinaaha</i>	5
<i>Angushtha mula-Pradesini</i>	5		
<i>Sravana-Apanga antara</i>	5		
<i>Madhyamanguli</i>	5		
		<i>Paada vistaara</i>	6
		<i>Vrushana aayama</i>	6
		<i>Mehana aayama</i>	6
		<i>Amsa</i>	6
<i>Hastatala aayama</i>	6		
		<i>Vrishana parinaaha</i>	8
		<i>Skandha</i>	8
		<i>Kaksha</i>	8
		<i>Bastisiras aayama</i>	10
		<i>Udara vistaara</i>	10
		<i>Parswa vistaara</i>	10
<i>Mastaka-Avatukeshanta</i>	10		
<i>Keshanta-Mastaka antara</i>	11		

Table 4 Measurements described by Susruta and Charak arranged in ascending order (12 -16 Angula)

Name of measure-Susruta	Measure in angula	Name of measure-charak	Measure in angula
<i>Bhagavistaara</i>	12	<i>Bhagaparinaaha</i>	12
<i>Mehana-Nabhi</i>	12		
<i>Nabhi-Hriraya</i>	12		
<i>Hṛ daya-greeva</i>	12		
<i>Stanantara</i>	12	<i>Stanantara</i>	12
<i>Mukhaayama</i>	12	<i>Aanana utsedha</i>	12
<i>Manibandha sthoulya</i>	12		
<i>Prakoshtha sthoulya</i>	12		
		<i>Udara aayama</i>	12
		<i>Parswa aayama</i>	12
		<i>Ura utsedha</i>	12
		<i>Hasta</i>	12
		<i>Trika Utsedha</i>	12
<i>Paada aayama</i>	14	<i>Paada aayama</i>	14
<i>Paadamadhya parinaaha</i>	14		
<i>Gulphamadhya parinaaha</i>	14		
<i>Jangha Madhya parinaaha</i>	14		
<i>Ja anumadhya parinaaha</i>	14		



<i>Karna-Avatuantara</i>	14	<i>Prapaani</i>	15
<i>Indrabasti parinaaha</i>	16	<i>Jangha parikshepa</i>	16
<i>Amsapeetha Kurparantaraayama</i>	16	<i>Janu parikshepa</i>	16
		<i>Kati vistaara</i>	16
<i>Manibandha-Kurparantara</i>	16		

Table 5 Measurements described by Susruta and Charak arranged in ascending order (18 -120 Angula) ¹⁶

Name of measure-Susruta	Measure in Angula	Name of measure-Charak	Measure in angula
<i>Jangha aayama</i>	18	<i>Jangha aayaama</i>	18
<i>Uru aayama</i>	18	<i>Uru aayama</i>	18
<i>Urovistaara</i>	18	<i>Prushtha Utsedha</i>	18
<i>Greeva parinaha</i>	20	<i>Sirodhara parinaaha</i>	22
		<i>Aanana parinaaha</i>	24
		<i>Uro vistara</i>	24
<i>Hasta aayaama</i>	24	<i>Uru parikshepa</i>	30
<i>Janu upari sakthi aayama</i>	32		
<i>Uru parinaaha</i>	32		
<i>Bhuja parimaana</i>	32	<i>Sira parinaaha</i>	32
		<i>Purushaayama</i>	84
<i>Purushaayaama</i>	120		

Terminologies used in *pramana sharir*¹⁷

1. *Shira* (heads circumference)
2. *Skandha* (shoulder joint)
3. *Aratani* (from elbow joint to little finger)
4. *Prabahu* (from shoulder joint to elbow joint)
5. *Prapani* (from elbow joint to wrist joint)
6. *Jangha* (from knee joint to ankle joint) circumference
7. *Uru* (from hip joint to knee joint) circumference
8. *Janu* (knee joint) circumference

9. *Gulpha* (ankle joint) circumference
10. *Parshini* (heels) breadth and length
11. *Pada* (foot) length
12. *Manibandha* (wrist joint) circumference
13. *Tala* (palm of hand) length and breadth
14. *Pradeshini* (index finger) length
15. *Kanishthika* (little finger) length
16. *Anamika* (ring finger) length
17. *Shroni* (pelvis) circumference
18. *Chibuka* (chin) length
19. *Nasa-putta* (area of nostril) length
20. *Karna moola* (base of ear) length
21. *Bhru* (eyebrows) length



22. *Nayna-anter* (space between two eyes) length
23. *Vadana-anter* (cavity of mouth)
24. *Lalata* (forehead) length
25. *Mukha-ayam* (width of mouth)
26. *Greeva* (neck) circumference
27. *Vrishana* (testis) length
28. *Mehan* (penis) length
29. *Bhag* (vagina) width
30. *Stana-anter* (space between nipple)
31. *Tarka* (cornea) circumference
32. *Drishti* (pupil) circumference
33. *Dasana* (teeth) length
34. *Udara* (abdomen) circumference
35. *Kaksha* (axilla) length

Individual having appropriate measure possesses longevity, strength, *ojas* (immunity), happiness, power, wealth and quality of life¹⁸. *Pramana* of *purusha* provide detailed information of anatomical features that is helpful to know abnormality of body.

Method of measurement:

Measurement is indicated by individual's own finger i.e. *swa-angul*. *Swa angul* is considered as length of proximal interphalangeal joint of middle finger of right and left hand. It is most accurate for estimation of *angul pramana*¹⁹. Also length of middle finger, divided by five is *swa*

*angul pramana*²⁰. *Swa angul* provides a flexibility of individualization. It is hard to replace the concept of *swa angul* by any modern instrument as vital growth varies in relation to many factors like country, race, profession, gender etc. Individual having balanced proportion of muscles, compactness of body do not get ill health easily. The person having balanced musculature can tolerate hunger, thirst, sun, cold and equilibrium of *agni* (digestive power) and normalize metabolism²¹. *Vridha* Vagbhatta also described *angul pramana* of different parts of body. The entire body is of eighty four *angul*²². It is equal in *ayam* and *vistar*. So if each part of body in this measure is wholesome (normal) whereas the less or more is unwholesome. These measurements are not valid for *asta-nindit purusha* i.e. *atti-hrishva* (too short), *atti-dirgha* (very tall), *aati-gaur* (too white in color), *atti-krishna* (too black), *atti-roma* (excess hair on body), *aroma* (no hairs), *atti-sthula* (obese) and *atti-krish* (very emaciated)²³. These are the eight conditions of unhealthy individual. *Acharya* Susruta has mentioned the height of an individual is one twenty *angul*²⁴. Commentator Dalhan explained that given height is measured by standing the person on his toes with raised



arms²⁵. *Acharya* Charak and *vridha* Vagbhatta has mentioned height of an individual eighty four *angul*. Commentator Chakrpani has explained that height is to be measured from *pada-tala* (sole) to *shira-paryanta* (top of head)²⁶. *Laghu* Vagbhatta has mentioned that height of person is three and half times of length of his hand of an individual²⁷.

Relation of prakriti with pramana sharir:

Prakriti is natural state of an individual based on the *doshik* predominance determined at the time of conception in uterus and remain unaltered during the life time. It provides information about the both physical as well as psychological constitution of an individual. This reflects the innate abilities and susceptibilities of an individual. These are seven in number i.e *vata*, *pitta*, *kapha*, *vata-pitta*, *pitta-kapha*, *kapha-vata* and *sama prakriti*²⁸. *Vataj*, *pittaj* and *kaphaj* are *heena*, *madhayam* and *uttam* respectively²⁹. The individuals of *kapha prakriti* have long life span (*dirghayu*), *pittaj* have moderate life span (*madhyam ayu*) and *vattaj prakriti* have short life span (*alpayu*)³⁰. *Acharya* vagbhatta mentioned that *kapha prakriti purusha* has long upper limb, big and elevated chest and wide forehead³¹. As *kapha prakriti* have most

accurate measurement of body so they are of *deerghayu*. While *vata prakriti* individuals are lean and thin and less developed body constitution, they have inaccurate measurement of body having short life span. And *pitta prakriti* have mixed or in between measurement, so they are of moderate life span.

Relation of ayu to pramana sharir:

The physician before initiating the treatment of the patient should first of all examine his *ayu* (longevity). If he has long life span then *ritu* (season), *agni* (digestive power), *vaya* (age), *deha* (body build), *bala* (strength), *sattva* (mind), *satamya* (habituation), *prakriti* (constitution), *bhesajya* (drugs) and *desha* (habitat) should be examined³². *Ayurvedic* text shows that *pramana sharir* has major role in the determination of life span of an individual. The person with appropriate measurement will attain long life.

Features for dirghayu (long life span): The individual whose hands, feet, flanks, back, nipples, teeth, face, shoulder and forehead are big. Their finger joints, eyes and arms are long. Their eye brows, space in between the nipples and chest is broad. Their calves, penis and neck are short are of *deerghayu* (long life span). The person who has



features opposite to these should be understood as *alpayu* (short life span) and with mix features are *madhymayu* (moderate life span). The individual with deep located bony joints, veins, and ligaments, well developed body, steady sense organ, each ensuing division of the body (origination from feet to head) is having long life span³³. The individual with broad fingers, hand and feet has fifty years of lifespan. The individual with broad chest, long arms and finger has sixty years of life span. The individual with long nose has seventy years of lifespan³⁴. The individual with six *angul* length of ear, nose and forehead will live for hundred years. The individual who is able to touch his knee with his hands in standing erect position is of having long life span³⁵. The infant with long chin, short eyebrows will die in second month³⁶.

DISCUSSION

Pramana sharir is important concept among the ancient concepts of Indian medical science. It has great anatomical significance. It is useful for estimating the status of health and longevity of an individual. Measurement of body is helpful in observing *ayu* and *bala* of body as *pramana* is one among *dashvidha pariksha*. *Pramana sharir* also describe the

biological entities of body. It is fact that two individuals are not ever alike in their measurements as during adolescent they go through many changes in varying degrees. The development of tissues and maturation of body of individual living under different conditions shows differences in body appearance and extent. *Praman sharir* forms a quantitative expression to the variations. As *kapha prakriti* have most accurate measurement of body so they are of *deerghayu*. While *vata prakriti* individuals are lean and thin and less developed body constitution, they have inaccurate measurement of body having short life span. And *pitta prakriti* have mixed or in between measurement, so they are of moderate life span. The concept of *ayu* is critical concept of ayurveda. In modern science there is no such concept is found which can estimate the longevity only by measuring the body. The concept of *pramana* also helps to estimate prognosis and treatment by the help of *dashvidha pariksha*.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda is not only science of life but also a treasure of knowledge regarding mankind and has created many ways to prevent the deviation from health. *Angul pramana*



provides an accurate measure of body. It is a tool which is used for anatomical assessment of both healthy and diseased. In healthy individual it helps to determine longevity and quality of life while in diseased person it helps in diagnosis and prognosis of disease. The normal proportion indicates good health as well as excellent quality of life. *Pramana* provides scientific value of structural and functional judgment of health of an individual. *Kaphaj prakriti purusha* has *pralamb bahu* (long arms) and well developed body constitution so these are *dirghayu* (long life) while individuals of *vata prakriti* are lean and thin with weak body constitution, they are of *alpayu* (short life span). *Pitta prakriti* have mixed or in between measurement, so they are of moderate life span. So there is a significant relation between *pramana sharir, prakriti* and life span of an individual.



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