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Effect of *Asta Ahara Vidhivisheshayatan* on *Annavaha Srotas*

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ABSTRACT

The most burning issue in today's world of health conscious society is 'Diet'. What to eat? How much food should we consume? etc are some of the most asked questions to a dietician. Even modern science has now acknowledged the age old fact that diet is the single most important factor responsible all kinds of metabolic, genetic and immunological disorders. But still the matter of fact remains that modern science has barely been able to scratch the surface of the principles of dietics and how human body responds to diet. The answers lies in the ancient texts of Ayurveda, which have propagated *Asta Ahara Vidhivisheshayatan* (eightfold Dietic rules) viz. *Prakriti, Karan, Samyoga, Rashi, Desha, Kala, Upayoga Samstha and Upayokta*. Since food is first dealt by the Alimentary Tract; *Annavaha Srotas* was selected in order to analyse the effect of *Asta Ahara Vidhivisheshayatan*. In order to provide these set of Dietic principles a statistical backing; a survey study was conducted taking a sample size of 100 volunteers. These volunteers were divided into two equal and random groups viz. healthy volunteers and volunteers with GIT disorders. A set of scientific and factual questionnaire was utilized to assess the correlation between the Dietic rules and GI tract. About 74% of the healthy volunteers followed the *Ayurvedic* Dietic principles whereas only 18% followed them in unhealthy volunteers. Hence this study shows a highly significant correlation between the positive effects of *Asta Ahara Vidhivisheshayatan* on complete health.

KEYWORDS

Asta Ahara Vidhivisheshayatan, Dietic principles, *Annavaha Srotas*.



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INTRODUCTION

Food which is consumed goes under digestion in *Annavaha Srotas* i.e in digestive system. *Annavaha Srotas* is the channel which is in charge of the intake of food. Mainly constructed of the digestive tract, and absorbs nutrients through the food consumed. Gastro-intestinal tract is responsible for nourishing the body, influencing the hormones and nerves. Hence if this *Srotas* keep working correctly, then all the nutrient will be absorbed efficiently, and the body will function correctly. In order to keep this healthy, dietics rules are very important.

Ayurveda has given three sub pillars- *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya*, which support the body itself¹. A strict Dietic code has been mentioned in Charaka Samhita which influences the health of *Annavaha Srotas*. They are *Prakriti*, *Karan*, *Samyoga*, *Rashi*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Upayoga Samstha* and *Upayokta*². So, the physician conversant with these 8 factors will find no difficulty in ascertaining *Hita* and *Ahita Ahara*, for the particular persons. Unfortunately hardly one or two percent individuals in India follow these codes and rules of dietetics. When these rules are followed properly, they act like preventive medicine, in order to keep diseases and ageing at bay.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

AIM: To establish the relation between *Annavaha Srotas* and *Asta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan*.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study each factor of *Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan* separately
2. To find out its effect on *Annavaha Srotas*.
3. To study the contribution of *Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan* in maintenance and promotion of the health.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. *Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan*

Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan includes the factors responsible for wholesome and unwholesome effect of the *Ahara* on body and methods of *Aharasevana* (Special rule for diet intake.). The eight factors which determine the utility of various types of food are:

Prakriti- It means natural quality of food substances i.e. inherent attributed like *Guru*, *Laghu*. These are the innate properties of substances. It is known that each and every individual has got specific physical and mental temperament (i.e. *Prakriti*)³.

Karana-Karana means the processing of the substances. Processing results in the



transformation of the inherent attributes of substances i.e it refers to the alteration\ modification\ conversion in the qualities of food items by various *Samskaras*. Transformation of the attributes is effected by dilution (*Jalasyoga*), application of heat (*Agnisannikarsha*), cleansing (*Shaucha*), churning (*Manthan*), storing maturing, flavouring, impregnation, preservation, container etc^{3,4}.

Samyoga- *Samyoga* means combination of two or more food items together. This mixture results in the manifestation of specific attribute, which is usually not manifested by individual substances. Single item may be good for health; combination may be harmful³.

Rashi- *Rashi* means quantity. The correct quantity of food is that amount, which without disturbing the equilibrium of *Sharir Dhatus* and *Doshas* gets easily digested as well as gets metabolised in proper time. For proper maintenance of health, one should first of all eat in proper quantity of food⁵.

Desha- *Desha* denotes the habitat. That is the place of origin of food stuff. It determines the difference in the qualities of the substances according to their geographic region, due to different soil, use and their acclimatization to that particular region, whether the food is offspring of cool country or warm country⁶.

Kala-It is described in dual context⁶. The one deals with the daily - seasonal variation and the other deals with individual conditions of age and diseases.

Upayogasanstha- *Upayogasanstha* consists of Dietic rules. When to eat when not to eat is indicated by this. It is expected that one should eat only when previous diet is digested. If these rules are not followed it may prove dangerous to *Agni* efficiency. Other directions appropriate for proper digestion of food are collectively termed as *Upayogasanstha*⁶.

Upagoyta- *Upagoyata* denotes the person who consumes the food. He should think of own constitution, habit and then eat accordingly⁷.

2. *Annavaha Srotas*

Following are the causes of vitiation of *Annavaha Srotas*⁸:

1. Untimely intake of heavy quantity of food
2. Unwholesome food consumption,
3. Disturbance or vitiation of *Agni*.

General symptoms of *Srotodushti* are as follows⁹:

1. Increase in the activity of *Srotas* (*Atiyoga*)
2. Decrease in the activity of *Srotas* (*Hinayoga*)
3. Obstruction of the channels
4. Altered direction of the *Srotas* (*Mithyayoga*)



Below are the signs and symptoms of vitiated *Annavaha Srotas*^{8,10,11}:

1. *Ananna abhilasha*- aversion of food
2. *Arochaka*- anorexia (Ageusia)
3. *Aadhmaan*- Distension of abdomen
4. *Shula*- pain in abdomen (colic pain)
5. *AnnaVidwasha*- aversion towards food.
6. *Chardi* – vomiting
7. *Pipasa* – thirst
8. *Andhya*- blindness
9. *Maranam* – death

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Sample size: 100 randomly selected and non-biased volunteers were chosen and evenly distributed in two homogenous groups:

- GROUP A - 50 healthy volunteers
- GROUP B - 50 patients suffering with GI disorders.

Steps in study:

1. Bilingual written consent obtained from volunteers before starting the project.
2. Questionnaires' formed have been filled.
3. Observation data have been collected.
4. Statistical test have been applied.
5. Discussion and conclusions have been drawn out.

Study design: The following points were covered in the Questionnaires':

1. *Prakriti* – What is the consistency (*Guna*) of ingested food by the volunteers (i.e unctuous, dry, heavy, light etc.)?
2. *Karan*- What is the method of cooking adopted by the volunteers? Does he follow *jala\ agnisannikarsha\shooch\manthan Sanskara* etc?
3. *Samyoga*- Whether the volunteers consumes food in either healthy or unhealthy combination?
4. *Rashi*- Symptoms of *Matravat, Hinmatra & Atimatra* was analysed in order to assess the quantity of food taken by volunteers. The symptom complex (either *Matravat, Hinmatra & Atimatra*) which scores more than 50% was being considered significant as the quantity of food consumed by volunteers.
5. *Desha*- whether the volunteer consumes food in accordance to nature of *Desha* or opposite to it?
6. *Kala*- What is the diurnal Dietic schedule of the volunteer? (Whether the volunteer has food on time or not?)
7. *Upayoga Samsthana*- Whether the volunteer follows the rule of *Upayoga Samsthana* for example; does he consume food served hot, unctuous, in proper quantity? Etc.
8. *Upayokta*- the following assessment of volunteers was done.



a. *Koshtha Parikshana*- This is done by *prashna pariksha* by asking about the bowel habit and frequency.

b. *Agni Parikshana*- This is done by *Prashna pariksha* by asking about the eating habit and digestion of the food.

c. *Prakriti Parikshana*- *Prakriti* of the volunteers is decided by analysing all the

information obtained from above examination.

If 5 or more than 5 factors of *Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan* are followed then it can be considered that volunteers are following the dietary rules. But if less than 5 factors are followed than it is considered that they are not following the dietary rules given by our *Acharya's*.

Table 1 Compliance with *Asta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan principles*

Sr.no.	Points	Group A		Group B	
		Follows the rule	Doesn't follows the rule	Follows the rule	Doesn't follows the rule
1	<i>Prakriti</i>	27	23	8	42
2	<i>Karan</i>	44	6	39	11
3	<i>Samyoga</i>	26	24	17	33
4	<i>Rashi</i>	47	3	22	28
5	<i>Desha</i>	38	12	33	17
6	<i>Kala</i>	40	10	20	30
7	<i>Upayoga Samstha</i>	41	9	21	29
8	<i>Upayokta</i>	16	34	9	41

OBSERVATIONS

1. Compliance with *Asta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan* principles is given in table no. 1

2. *Srotodushti Lakshan* wise distribution is enlisted in table no. 2

Table 2 *Srotodushti lakshan* wise distribution

Sr. no	Lakshana	Group A	Group B
1	<i>Ana-annabhilasha</i>	4	46
2	<i>Aruchi</i>	-	48
3	<i>Avipaak</i>	-	43
4	<i>Chardi</i>	-	17

3. Number of patients with different diseases are presented in the form of figure, refer figure no. 1.

RESULTS

Table 3 *Asta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan Principles*

Sr. no	Name of rule	Z value	P value
1	<i>Prakriti</i>	3.9835	P<0.01
2	<i>Karan</i>	1.311	P>0.05
3	<i>Samyoga</i>	1.8179	P<0.05
4	<i>Rashi</i>	5.4055	P<0.01
5	<i>Desha</i>	1.1019	P>0.05
6	<i>Kala</i>	4.0825	P<0.01
7	<i>Upayogasamstha</i>	4.1204	P<0.01
8	<i>Upayokta</i>	1.6166	P>0.05

The above set of observation was systematically subjected to 'Z' test Analysis in order to obtain level of significance for establishing the alternative



hypothesis. Statistical Analysis of *Asta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan* Principles is shown in table no. 3

DISCUSSION

1. *Prakriti*: In group A 54% followed the rule while 46% didn't follow the rule.

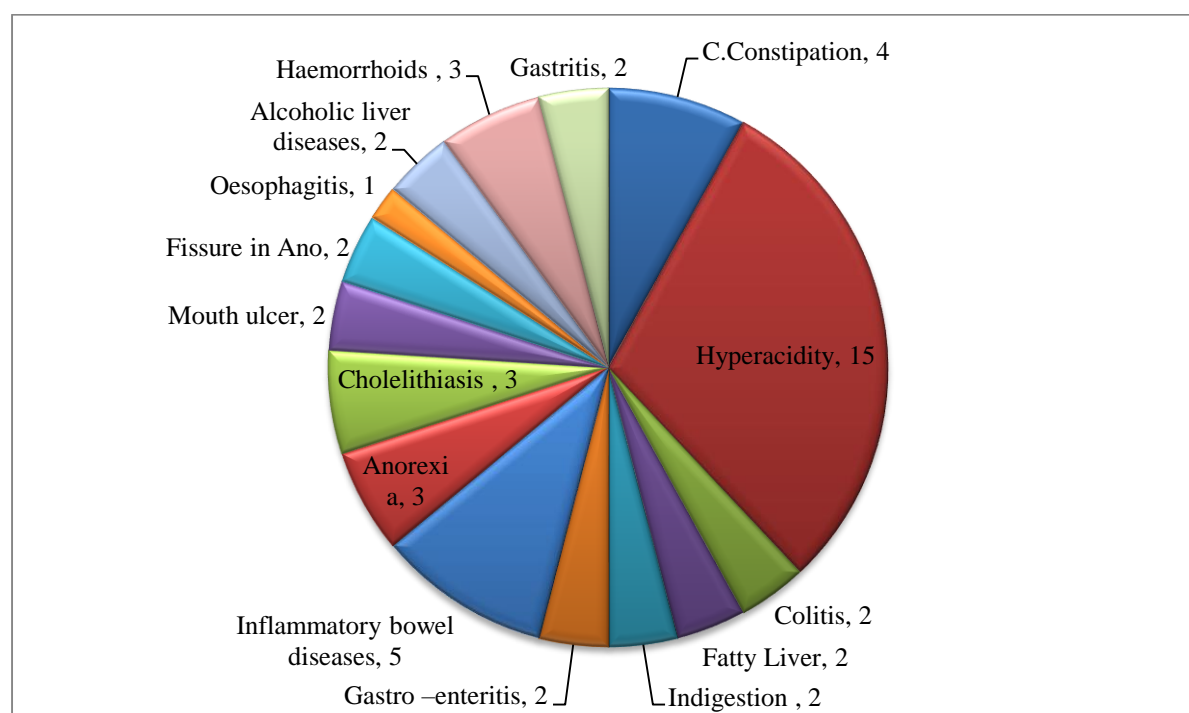


Fig 1. No. of patients with different diseases

2. *Karan*: In group A 88% followed the rule while 12% didn't follow the rule. Whereas in Group B 83% followed the rule and remaining 17% didn't follow the rule. *Sanskar* is the rule followed by both the groups. This indicates that the majority of the population is aware of the importance of *Sanskar*.

3. *Samyoga*: In group A 52% followed the rule while 48% didn't follow the rule. Whereas in Group B 39% followed the rule and remaining 61% didn't follow the rule. In today's era it is difficult to find *Hitakara*

Whereas in Group B 16% followed the rule and remaining 65% didn't follow the rule. The nature of food substance is generally not considered before eating. This can be seen in both the groups.

Ahara. In any terms there is incompatible mixture of food substances. Hence we can see that almost in both the groups this rule is not followed.

4. *Rashi*: In group A 94% followed the rule while 6% didn't follow the rule. Whereas in Group B 69% followed the rule and remaining 31% didn't follow the rule. The person who was taking *Amatravat Ahara* in group A i.e. 6% falls under healthy criterion because other factors like *Agni*, *Kostha* etc. factors may be influencing the same *Matra*. Same is the explanation for 31% patients of



Group B who are following even they are unhealthy.

5. *Desha*: In group A 78% followed the rule while 22% didn't follow the rule. Whereas in Group B 71% followed the rule and remaining 29% didn't follow the rule. Maximum no. of healthy volunteers as well as the unhealthy volunteers was seen to take diet acc to *Desha*. This shows that max. of people accept the influence of *Desha* on *AnnavahaSrotas*

6. *Kala*: In group A 80% followed the rule while 20% didn't follow the rule. Whereas in Group B 40% followed the rule and remaining 60% didn't follow the rule. Here generally it was observed that food was not taken on time. The reason for this may be the office duty hour which does not permit the food to be eaten in right time. Even the seasonal regime which should be followed was not seen followed by the Group B.

7. *Upayoga Samstha*: In group A 82% followed the rule while 18% didn't follow the rule. Whereas in Group B 42% followed the rule and remaining 58% didn't follow the rule. This is *AharaVidhi Vidhan* which was not followed by the Group B.

8. *Upayokta*: In group A 32% followed the rule while 68% didn't follow the rule. Whereas in Group B 18% followed the rule and remaining 82% didn't follow the rule. Majority of the people didn't consume the food which was suitable for their body. This

may be due to lack of knowledge about their body.

9. Discussion on applied study (i.e effect of *AstaAhara* on *AnnavahaSrotas*). The given study was conducted under two groups. Group A comprising of healthy volunteers and Group B consisting of patients. 50 samples were taken from each group. In Group A it was found that out of 50 volunteers 37 people were following the dietic rules, and left i.e 13 were not following the rules given in our text. In Group B out of 50 patients 41 were not following the rules, while remaining 9 followed the rules.

CONCLUSION

Every factor described in *Asta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan* has a functional logic behind it responsible for maintaining health. The emphasis is not only on its importance at the somatic level but also at the psychic as well as spiritual level. Ayurvedic dietetics does not follow the modern norms of fixing a constant amount of *Ahara* for all individuals in general but instead relies on the status of *Agni* and *Bala* for each and every individual. On these 8 factors health depends. For the persistence of health at least any 5 of the factors need to be considered and involvement of factor less than that will have negative impact on the



health of the person. Overall study showed that people following the dietic rules are least prone for developing digestive system disorders whereas those who neglect it develops the disease of digestive system.



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