

CRITICAL STUDY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN AYURVEDIC CLASSICS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH MODERN METHODOLOGY.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Research methodology is a corner stone of any science. *Ayurveda* witnessed a shift in some principles, at a very early stage in its evolutionary history. *Ayurveda Samhitas* talk about the validation of knowledge and distinguish between real and chance effect of therapy and in turn enrich the knowledge. *Aims and objectives:* To establish proper protocols of research in *Ayurveda* which benefit *Ayurveda*. Unless *Ayurveda* is dilated, it cannot catch up with modern sciences, so to throw light on Research methodology in advancement of *Ayurveda*. *Study and Design:* Conceptual critical review. *Methods and materials:* Literature search of authoritative texts of *Ayurveda* and probable hypothesis is framed; conclusion is drawn based on current research. *Discussion:* While dealing research in *Ayurveda* it is first necessary to understand the methodology of *Ayurveda*. Modern medical science use Aristotelian logic and reductionist scientific methodology to guide its prepositions. The epistemological difference between the two systems should be taken into account while developing protocols of research. *Conclusion:* The epistemological base of *Ayurvedic* research methodology can certainly be compared with the modern counterpart.

Keywords: Research methodology, epistemology, *Ayurveda*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ancient life science that has been providing its mettle for ages. But due to paucity of research and documentation, the science remains largely unexplored. *Ayurveda* witnessed a shift in some principles, at a very early stage in its evolutionary history. *Charaka* has described *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* as three

*dosha*¹, while *Sushruta* added the fourth one *rakta* in it². *Ayurveda samhitas* talk about the validation of knowledge and distinguish between real and chance effects of therapy in turn enrich the knowledge. Research comprises creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge and using this knowledge to devise new

applications. Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. Facts are required to be supported by the figures and that figures can be obtained through a research. Research done now-a-days in *Ayurveda* are more helpful to modern medical science rather than to *Ayurveda*. So, there is certainly a need to develop some protocols of research which will benefit *Ayurveda*.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Ayurveda seems to have perpetuated itself as a tradition of practices and knowledge transmitted through one person to another. Unless *Ayurveda* is dilated, elaborated it cannot catch up with other sciences. In order to re-model *Ayurveda*, new methodology of research should be supplemented.

The present work is based on compilation of literary research material from *Ayurvedic* classics, analyzed to find out the methodology of research in *Ayurveda* and enumerate some protocols of research to make the research fruitful to *Ayurveda*. It also aims at studying *Ayurvedic* and modern research methodology in a comparative manner.

REVIEW

There are various evidences of research in *Ayurvedic* classics. *Charak Samhita* begins with a quest, ‘the quest for longevity’³. Thus the first word itself suggests the chain of quest and attempts or researches done in the way to complete the goals. *Charak Samhita* has explained the importance of proper examinations while explaining the importance of choosing wholesome regimen.⁴ *Aacharya Chakrapani* has explained the word ‘*Aishana*’⁵ which represents the word ‘Research’. Re-editing of *Aginivesha tantra* by *Charaka* to update it by deleting or elaborating certain topics is an example of literary research. We can have example of drug research in *Charaka Vimana* 8/87. We come across the examples of animal trials while dealing with the action of poisons over animals and birds.⁶ *Ayoga*, *Atiyoga*, *Samyakyoga* of *panchkarma* are the examples of clinical trials, as these features can’t be obtained without the patients. Moreover, *Charaka* has explained the qualities of a good researcher, viz. knowledge, critical approach, insight into other science, good memory, promptness and preservice.⁷

SCOPE

The scope of research in *Ayurveda* can be enlisted as:

1. Exploration of textual information in variety of ways is a kind of literary research.
2. Many *Ayurvedic* concepts are still not that familiar and clear e.g. *avarana*, *ashayapkarsha*, etc.
3. There is certainly scope of research in establishing *rasa*, *guna*, *veerya*, *vipaka* of new drugs.
4. Preventive measures for lifestyle disorders.
5. Substitute drug (*pratinidhi dravya*) research.
6. Research on unknown and ambiguous drugs.
7. Research on dose of drugs.
8. To develop new diagnostic methods in *Ayurveda*.

DISCUSSION

While dealing in research in *Ayurveda* it is first necessary to understand the methodology of *Ayurveda*. Modern medical science use Aristotelian logic and reductionist scientific methodology to guide its prepositions. Medical theories are governed by cellular and molecular biology. *Ayurveda* uses the Indian schemes of logic of *Vaisheshik* and *Nyaya* schools, *tridosha siddhant* and *dravyaguna shastra* to guide its medical theory. Thus we see that there is epistemological difference between these two systems of medicine. In present perspective, the *pramanas* are very

useful at all steps of research such as planning, operation and reporting. Nidus of knowledge is acquired by *Aptopdesha* and afterwards examinations are to be carried out by *pratyaksha*, *anumana* and other *pramanas*.

Example of one of the *aptopdesha* or authoritative statement is, '*medokshaye pleehavridhi*'⁸. There is definitely need to find the cause and effect of various such statements to understand the science of *Ayurveda*. After building hypothesis by using *Aptopdesha*, it's the duty of researcher to collect data by using *pratyaksha pramana*. Experiments and to some extent surveys depend on direct perception. *Anumana* (inference) helps in interpretation of data collected after an experimental study. It helps in deriving results. While writing the report of research, *panchavayavi vakya* is used: *Pratigya* (hypothesis), *hetu* (reason), *udaharan* (example), *upanaya* (justification) and *nigamana* (conclusion). To establish cause and effect relationship the logical reasoning is given by *yukti*. *Sheshvat anumana* can be compared to retrospective cohort study, *poorvavat* to prospective cohort study and *samanyatodooshta* to cross-sectional study.

It's quite essential to develop research protocols which will help to explore the concepts of *Ayurveda*. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for any clinical research can include *Ayurvedic* protocols viz. *prakriti, desha, kala*, etc. along with modern aspects. Work should be done in the validation of such protocols. Research should be more specific while dealing with disease. Say 'Role of drug X in *ruksha guna janya vataj kasa*', etc. The criteria to determine *rasa, veerya, vipaka* of drugs can be made by using their respective features. There is also scope of research in the *chikitsa siddhant* (principle of treatment) of various diseases, in which

conditions of *dosha, dushya, kala, vaya*, etc. they are applicable.

CONCLUSION

The epistemological difference between two methodologies can certainly be overcome as we can see various similarities between *Ayurvedic* and modern approach. Some minor changes in modern research protocols according to *Ayurvedic* point of view will definitely benefit the *Ayurvedic* research. The processes of developing the new protocols from *Ayurveda* point of view can be painstakingly time consuming. It can need to be revised several times as progress through steps.

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